

UN guidelines to protect children displaced by climate change

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In news– The United Nations agencies including UNICEF have recently released new guidelines to provide the first-ever global policy framework that will help protect children on the move in the context of climate change.

About the new guidelines-

- These guidelines were launched by-
 1. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).
 2. The International Organization for Migration (IOM).
 3. Georgetown University.
 4. The United Nations University.
- The new framework is **not legally binding**, however, they contain key principles of international law
- **The guidelines provide a set of 9 principles that address the unique and layered vulnerabilities of children on the move both internally and across borders** as a result of the adverse impacts of climate change.
- **The nine principles are-** Rights-based approach, Best interests of the child, Accountability, Awareness and participation in decision-making, Family unity, Protection, safety and security, Access to education, health care and social services, Non-discrimination, Nationality.
- **Currently, most child-related migration policies do not consider climate and environmental factors**, while most climate change policies overlook the unique needs of children.
- The guidelines note that climate change is intersecting

with existing environmental, social, political, economic, and demographic conditions contributing to people's decisions to move.

- **According to the UN, in 2020 alone, nearly 10 million children were displaced in the aftermath of weather-related shocks.**
- It further added that with around one billion children – nearly half of the world's 2.2 billion children – living in 33 countries at high risk of the impacts of climate change, millions more children could be on the move in the coming years.
- **Developed in collaboration with young climate and migration activists, academics, experts, policymakers, practitioners, and UN agencies, the guiding principles are based on the globally ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child** and are further informed by existing operational guidelines and frameworks.
- The guiding principles provide national and local governments, international organizations and civil society groups with a foundation to build policies that protect children's rights.

Convention on the Rights of the Child-

- **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international human rights treaty** which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children.
- The UN General Assembly **adopted the Convention and opened it for signature on 20 November 1989.**
- The Government of **India ratified the convention on 11 December, 1992.**
- **The Convention defines a child as any human being under the age of eighteen**, unless the age of majority is attained earlier under national legislation.
- **Nations that have ratified this convention** or have acceded to it are **bound by international law.**

- When a state has signed the treaty but not ratified it, it is not yet bound by the treaty's provisions but is already obliged to not act contrary to its purpose.
- **The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child**, composed of 18 independent experts, **is responsible for supervising the implementation of the Convention** by the states that have ratified it.