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The 2030 Global Sustainable Development Goals and The Rights of Climate Refugees/Migrants

The 2030 Global Sustainable Development Goals, also known as Agenda 2030, is the first United Nations document to include migration as a vital part of achieving its goals. As outlined in the agenda's introductory sections, it is based on the principles of universality and inclusivity, most notably highlighted in the pledge to "leave no one behind." From this perspective, migration is seen as a key element of sustainable development. Today, it is impossible to consider sustainable development without also considering migration.

Within this context, the issue of climate refugees and climate migrants is especially significant. While climate migrants are anyone who moves due to climate change, climate refugees are those forced to leave their homes (either within or across borders) because of the social, economic, and political effects of climate change.

Even though many scientific studies suggest that by 2050, the number of people forced to relocate mainly because of climate change could be between 200 million and 1 billion, the current international legal system neither recognizes nor defines the status of climate refugees or climate migrants.

In this presentation, I will explore how the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals address the challenges faced by climate refugees and migrants, focusing on their ongoing legal uncertainty and reviewing any legal progress made between 2015 and 2025.

Keywords: climate change, climate migrants, climate refugees, human rights, legal limbo, migration, SDGs