

Thematic Consultations on “Linkages between Climate Change and Challenges to Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace”

23 April 2020 Chairs’ Summary

1. On 23 April 2020, Germany and France convened thematic consultations on the linkages between Climate Change and Challenges to Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace. The meeting was held within the framework of the informal phase of the 2020 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA). Invited to participate were the Members of the Security Council, the Members of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the Group of Friends on Climate and Security co-chaired by Nauru and Germany as well as representatives from regional organizations. The meeting was held on a virtual platform. The objective of the meeting was to provide input for the final report of the Secretary General on the 2020 review of the PBA.
2. Ms. Barrie Freeman, Director and Deputy Head of PBSO at the Peacebuilding Support Office, identified effects of climate change as an accelerator of crisis and emphasized the need to reexamine underlying challenges through capacity building for climate risk analysis, innovative solutions and learning from good practices. She stated that inclusive dialogue was necessary to build resilience against climate-related security risks. The Deputy Director presented several projects that have been launched by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), including projects focusing on women’s participation, transhumance, resource management and resilience building. Specific examples were projects in the Sahel as well as in the Pacific Region. She underscored the importance of tailoring multidimensional climate-related peacebuilding efforts to country specific contexts. She further reflected on the need for cross-border and regional programs and reflected on several ongoing PBF programs that focus on conflicts related to transhumance, youth inclusion and the role of women in the management of natural resources. She further underlined new peacebuilding risks in the context of the COVID_19 pandemic.
3. H.E. Mr. Abdou Abarry, Permanent Representative of Niger to the UN, presented the emerging security risks posed by the effects of climate change, especially concerning the situation in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel, where socio-economic and peace and security challenges have merged and environmental stress has led to, inter alia, displacement, trafficking of women, ethnic tensions, fight over diminishing natural resources and rise of terrorism. He recommended a holistic approach by all relevant UN bodies, including on peace and security, governance and socio-economic development, maximizing synergies in the UN responses by focusing on long-term resilience, development and climate aspects and by including local knowledge and experiences, especially women’s and youth’s voices, in the discussions on adaptation and mitigation measures. He further recommended strengthening government and institutions. He also commended the support from the PBF to Niger.
4. H.E. Mr. Samuelu Laloni, Permanent Representative of Tuvalu to the UN, reiterated the need for an extended concept of security that includes human security caused by the multidimensional threats posed by climate change and sea level rise. He underlined that the effects of climate change remain the single greatest threat to livelihoods, security and well-being of the people in the Pacific, affect the achievements of sustainable development and lead to further and severe inequality. He highlighted that

the PBC offers a unique platform to sustain international attention and helps in ensuring awareness by bringing together countries, international financial institutions, CSOs, and regional organizations. He underlined the need to promote clear analysis of climate-related security implications and assessments to improve responses to climate change, particularly in the field. He underscored the need to encourage cross-border cooperation, to increase financial support and to assist individual vulnerable countries to develop preventive and mitigating strategies and actions. The Peacebuilding Architecture Review offers an opportunity to improve the way the UN and its members include joint analysis and information on emerging climate risks.

5. Mr. Jake Sherman, Director of the Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations at the International Peace Institute (IPI) noted that an increasing number of countries recognize, and directly experience, the multidimensional intersection of climate change, negative development consequences, instability and increased humanitarian need, and that climate change was a risk-multiplier. He suggested the PBC to deepen its engagement on the issue by offering support to countries highly affected by climate-related security risks, e.g. by mobilizing climate financing, by enhancing its cooperation with non-UN actors (such as the AU) and by serving as a platform for sharing experiences and best practices on building community resilience, adaptation strategies, and preparedness. The Review 2020 could re-emphasize the advisory and bridging role of the PBC within the UN System while being explicitly encouraged to include interrelated and cross-cutting issues in its considerations, such as gender, climate change, and pandemics and to request integrated analysis. The review could advance the PBC's advisory role to the Security Council further with regards to Security Council's mandates for regions or countries under consideration by the PBC.
6. Based on the briefings, the interventions from Member States and the discussion, we make the following recommendations:
 - We emphasize the multidimensional impact of climate change and related challenges to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. These include security risks, such as natural resource conflicts, livelihood and food insecurity as well as climate-related natural disasters such as increasingly frequent and severe extreme weather phenomena, floods, recurring droughts, and the rise of sea level. This does of course not preclude the existence of other, non-climate change related risks. As the most vulnerable countries are disproportionately affected by climate change, a stronger inclusion of climate-related risks in peacebuilding efforts and the integration of regional and local experiences are necessary.
 - We should systematically consider climate-related risks as a central element of the conflict prevention agenda. We underline the need to better anticipate and to enhance systematic and science-based analysis and early-warning of climate-related risks linked to challenges to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We also stress the need to increase expertise and capacities in effective information gathering and analysis regarding the prevention, prediction and addressing of climate-related risks, in particular pertaining to displacement, food insecurity, and human trafficking. Analytical and programming tools should be developed that include the important role of women and youth in analyzing and developing inclusive adaptation and mitigation measures.

- Analyses should be integrated in regular reports by the Secretary-General to the Security Council and the General Assembly. Such reports should assess, for each region in the world, as applicable, the consequences of known or expected climate change impacts, the region's adaptive capacity and level of resilience in conjunction with other existing drivers of conflict, based on viable and scientific data. Similarly, reporting on relevant UN peace operations should include an assessment of implications and challenges from adverse effects of climate change on security, peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts. Climate-sensitive analysis capacity of UN presences and missions should be in particular strengthened. Every conflict should be mapped in order to better identify interfaces between the effects climate change and conflict.
- It is essential to invest in local and national institutions that can help mediate the interests of different groups confronted with the effects of climate change. Addressing governance issues and building social cohesion is key in those contexts. Responses from the UN system should be based on dialogue with affected regions and local populations and should focus on supporting the development of national and regional disaster risk reduction plans. In turn, development programs should be both climate- and conflict-sensitive.
- We encourage a strengthening of the PBC's coordination role to allow for systematic and in-depth exchanges on sharing experiences and lessons learned and strengthen community resilience and regional exchange between relevant actors and stakeholders. Especially vulnerable countries should be encouraged to use the PBC as a platform, in line with the PBC's modus operandi of respecting national ownership.
- We furthermore welcome approaches to make more use of the PBC also as a convening and bridging platform to help ensuring a comprehensive and cross-pillar approach to climate-related risks and challenges to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The PBC could use its unique position and role within the UN peacebuilding architecture to reinforce the inter-linkage between its components by making climate change effects and their security implications a regular topic in its discussions, meetings and exchanges.
- We call for a stronger cooperation within the peacebuilding architecture, and in relation to cooperation with specialized UN agencies, funds and programs, such as the UN Environment Program; the UN Climate Security Mechanism; civil society; the private sector; the World Bank and other international and regional financial institutions; regional organizations such as AU and EU; and academia.
- We reiterate the call to strengthen the PBC's advisory role to the Security Council to ensure greater attention and consideration for the linkages between the effects of climate change and challenges to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.
- We welcome the increasing number of PBF projects that also address climate-fragility risks. We encourage enhancing the partnership between the PBF and regional and sub-regional organizations as climate change effects and related challenges have cross-border effects on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Climate-sensitive peacebuilding and climate-fragility risks could be anchored in the strategic planning of the PBF. Climate-fragility assessments could be part of joint conflict analyses (e.g. with World Bank, EU). The PBC could convene meetings to discuss PBF projects with climate-security components, and identify good practices and lessons learned.

- We encourage the strengthening of the role and capacity of PBSO to further reinforce its role as a facilitator of moving peacebuilding into the wider UN system. We also underline the key role of the new Residents Coordinators in strengthening climate-sensitive approaches to conflict prevention.
7. In his closing remarks, H.E. Mr. Gert Rosenthal, Member of the Independent Eminent Persons on the 2020 Review of the UN PBA, reiterated the need for an integrated and holistic approach of addressing climate-related security risks. He emphasized the need to consider the relation between climate change and the Covid-19 global pandemic, especially considering the necessity to combine economic prosperity with human needs. He reiterated the great progress the PBC has made in its function as a convening, bridging and advisory body. He further underlined the key role of the PBA in bringing together different pillars of the UN and emphasized that diverse and multifaceted challenges need to be included in the 2020 Review in order to come up with better solutions for existing and upcoming challenges.