

# Climate, Peace and Security: Opportunities for the UN Peace and Security Architecture

29 November 2022, 3-6 PM

Trusteeship Council

*Will be streamed on  
UN Web TV*

## Keynote Speaker:

**Miroslav Jenča**, Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Department of Peace Operations

## Panel Discussants:

**Mely Caballero-Anthony**, Professor of International Relations and holds the President's Chair of International Relations and Security Studies at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (virtual)

**Hafsa Maalim**, Senior Associate Researcher with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) (virtual)

**Michael Keating**, Executive Director of the European Institute of Peace (EIP) (virtual)



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## Introduction and objective

Until now, the Climate and Security discourse in the Security Council has focused on how the effects of climate change exacerbate national and regional insecurity with implications for the maintenance of international peace and security. However, the effects of climate change go beyond their impact on the outbreak and intensity of hostilities. They are critical variables that impact effective peacebuilding by national authorities, the UN, and the International Community. The effects of climate change influence the success of all our peace efforts. From the prevention of conflict to transitions out of conflict, including the transitioning of UN peacekeeping and political missions.

Broadening the Security Council's awareness of how climate, security and peacebuilding interact would offer a basis for it to embrace additional tools and entry points to better achieve its mandate. It would highlight that peace and sustainable environmental practices at the local, national, and global levels are mutually reinforcing.

Kenya and Norway, together with Albania, France, Gabon, Ghana, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Nauru, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States, therefore propose to build on our previous discussions, open debates, and Arria-formula meetings to have a discussion on Climate, Peace, and Security (CPS).

## Background

According to the recent IPCC report AR6 Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, climate change impacts and risks are becoming increasingly complex and difficult to manage. Multiple climate hazards will occur simultaneously, and multiple climatic and non-climatic risks will interact, resulting in increased overall risk across sectors and regions. While the report identifies non-climatic factors as the main drivers of intrastate conflict to date, it emphasises that extreme weather and slow onset climate change can also have adverse impacts on conflict and humanitarian crises, including prolonging or escalating violent conflict. Current climate action remains insufficient<sup>1</sup> and as global warming increases, "impacts of weather and climate extremes, particularly droughts, [...] will increasingly affect violent intrastate conflict."<sup>2</sup>

As the impact of climate change intensifies, more regions around the world will be affected, especially those that who already have the least capacity to cope. A majority of the country situations on the agenda of the UN Security Council are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Not by choice but by necessity, UN special political missions and peacekeeping missions are already increasingly incorporating climate-related security risks into their analysis. To continue helping States and communities reduce vulnerabilities and increase their resilience<sup>3</sup> requires the UN to "climate-proof" its own peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding actions, and increase its operational resilience to ensure continued implementation of its mandates in the face of extreme weather events and other climate change related effects.

Mitigation will remain our first line of defense, but we also need to put in place systems now to prepare to deal with the larger impacts on human security in the future from climate hazards,

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<sup>1</sup> [Climate Plans Remain Insufficient: More Ambitious Action Needed Now | UNFCCC](#)

<sup>2</sup> [New IPCC Report Calls for Adapting Today to Ensure Tomorrow's Climate Security – International Military Council on Climate and Security \(imccs.org\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Climate change multiplying factors that lead to insecurity for millions, Rosemary DiCarlo tells "Arria Formula" meeting | Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs \(un.org\)](#)

resulting disasters, instability, and conflict. Prevention and building peace now are less costly than resolving large-scale peace and security crises down the road.

For the Security Council the question is how the UN peace and security architecture can increase its preparedness and climate resilience. How it can use its peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding actions to prevent climate-related conflict, and how the UN can also leave a positive legacy with host countries and communities.

### **Guiding Questions**

- What could the UN peace and security architecture achieve by integrating climate, peace and security considerations to guide conflict prevention, peacebuilding, mediation and peacekeeping efforts?
- What are potential entry points for the UN peacebuilding architecture, including the Peacebuilding Commission's engagement in Climate, Peace, and Security?
- What is the best way to ensure that climate, peace, and security is integrated in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping efforts at different levels?
- How can climate adaptation and mitigation efforts be coordinated, combined, and integrated with prevention, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping efforts to ensure that our efforts to achieve and maintain a sustainable environment and a sustainable peace are mutually reinforcing?
- How can new partnerships support a Climate, Peace and Security approach to conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping and what would practical cooperation look like leveraging the different strengths of the UN and its partners?

### **Format**

The Arria-formula meeting will take place in Trusteeship at 3pm on 29 November 2022. The meeting will be broadcast on UN Web TV and interpretation will be provided.

All Member States and Permanent Observers are invited to attend. The meeting will be co-chaired by Kenya and Norway. Following the opening remarks, the Assistant Secretary-General will set the stage, after which the panel discussants will be invited to provide their reflections. Members of the Security Council, beginning with the co-sponsors, will be invited to make interventions (3 minutes) and ask questions, after which the floor will be open to Member States. Attendance at PR level is indicated.

In order to encourage interactivity and allow time for the panel to react and respond, we ask that interventions are kept short. Questions will be gathered in batches. In case of time constraints, countries that host peacekeeping operations or special political missions, countries that the Peacebuilding Commission engages with, and those speaking on behalf of groups or regional organizations will be prioritized.

To inscribe to the speaker's list, please email Teale Harold at [teale.harold@mfa.no](mailto:teale.harold@mfa.no) by 3PM on 28 November. Member States are also invited to send longer/full versions of their statements by 30 November 2022 for inclusion in a compilation. UN Agencies, civil society and academic institutions are also invited to make submissions in writing.

## Exploring Opportunities

While climate change may worsen existing vulnerabilities, the decision whether to respond in ways that increase cooperation or conflict will always remain a human choice. Efforts to strengthen the resilience of communities and States increase the likelihood that they will opt for cooperation. This is why the IPCC report identifies “environmental peacebuilding (EP) through natural resource sharing, conflict-sensitive adaptation and climate-resilient peacebuilding” as areas that “offer promising avenues for addressing conflict risk.”<sup>4</sup> New opportunities could arise from (but not be limited to):

### a) “Climate-informed” mediation and peacemaking

Cooperation on environmental and natural resource management have already proven to offer entry points for dialogue and trust building by addressing joint problems. It can also generate peace dividends by strengthening social cohesion and societal resilience, thereby contributing to sustaining peace and laying the foundation for finding ways to also cooperate in other areas.<sup>5</sup> These can then support peacebuilding and reconciliation between divided communities. Joint early-warning mechanisms could also help prevent any potentially cascading effects and/or relapse into conflict. At the right time, and in the right format, climate change and environmental discussions can pave the way to discuss broader issues and build trust.

Mediators will increasingly need to consider short-, medium- and long-term implications of climate change for their engagements and integrate climate-informed practices into mediation and other forms of peacemaking. Such approaches are not only necessary to help conflict parties address the risks associated with the adverse effects of climate change, they also allow mediators to take advantage of potential opportunities for bringing conflict parties together to discuss shared responses to common climate-related threats. A key purpose of climate-informed mediation is to provide platforms to engage and better support the efforts of conflict parties to find a peaceful and sustainable solution to their dispute. It can also to enhance the chances that an agreement can stand the “climate test” over time.<sup>6</sup>

The transnational character of climate-related security risks also increases the relevance of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). Identifying cross-border cooperation on scarce resources as a potential measure to reduce and/or prevent conflict could open up new areas for cooperation between multilateral organizations and financial institutions, including in support of mediation efforts. Various international organizations have supported multi-country collaboration on water and the oceans, and assisted countries to successfully negotiate numerous regional cooperation frameworks, treaties, and protocols.

### b) “Climate-positive” resilience-building and climate-resilient peace

The IPCC AR6 report highlights the need to identify synergies between conflict risk reduction and adaptation, and to address the root causes of these problems in parallel. Adaptation can reduce the adverse impacts of climate change and contribute to building peace and preventing conflict. In many

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGII\\_FullReport.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FullReport.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://environmentofpeace.org/>

<sup>6</sup> [DPPAPracticeNote-TheImplicationsofClimateChangeforMediationandPeaceProcesses.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

cases, however, adaptation is constrained by financial, institutional, and technological access and capacity.

Increased financial support for conflict-informed adaptation and resilience measures could be used to address and reduce shared climate-related security risks and strengthen social cohesion and community resilience to conflict risks. Addressing adaptation and resilience in conjunction with peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts – by aligning financial flows – could increase efficiency, maximize the impacts of limited resources and provide entry points for bottom-up cooperation on prevention and mitigation strategies for both climate and conflict risks.

Conflict-sensitive climate adaptation and mitigation efforts can generate peace dividends, just as climate-sensitive peacebuilding can contribute to the sustainability of climate adaptation and mitigation efforts in conflict-affected regions. Integrating climate-related risks as a concern when relevant could strengthen the sustainability and resilience of peace processes.

### **c) Partnering for inclusive peace**

Climate, Peace, and Security efforts, if done in an inclusive and participatory manner, provides an opportunity to strengthen governance, address inequality and empower marginalized persons and communities by expanding the circle of interlocutors involved in finding sustainable solutions. The IPCC AR6 report states that “gender-based approaches provide under-utilised pathways to achieving sustainable peace”.<sup>7</sup> Inclusive approaches could mean supporting women to take on leading both adaptation and peacebuilding and security efforts, or empowering youth to lead on finding innovative and locally sound solutions to diffuse tension exacerbated by the effects of climate change and prevent negative coping mechanisms. And as studies have shown: mediation strategies that systematically include women, lead to more sustainable peace.

Actions should be guided by the best available science, as well as traditional knowledge from indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems. “Partnering for peace” is vital, peacebuilders might not be experts on climate adaptation and mitigation, likewise, climate experts might not fully understand how climate adaptation and mitigation programming may affect local, national or regional political dynamics or impact on peace processes. We must ensure that UN peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding actions are guided by an integrated and multi-disciplinary approach to Climate, Peace and Security risk assessment and risk management.

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<sup>7</sup> [IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGII\\_FullReport.pdf](#)