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THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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Dead trees form an eerie tableau on the shores of Maubara Lake in Timor-Leste.
UN Photo/Martine Perret

Introduction

At the outset of the Security Council's 23 February 2021 open debate on climate and security, world-renowned naturalist David Attenborough delivered a video message urging global cooperation to tackle the climate crisis. "If we continue on our current path, we will face the collapse of everything that gives us our security—food production; access to fresh water; habitable, ambient temperatures; and ocean food chains", he said. Later, he added, "Please make no mistake. Climate change is the biggest threat to security that humans have ever faced." Such warnings have become common. And while the magnitude of this challenge is widely accepted, it is not clear if the global community, in particular the major carbon-emitting states, will show the level of commitment needed to reduce carbon emissions enough to stave off the more dire predictions of climate modellers.

While climate mitigation and adaptation measures are within the purview of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and contributions to such measures are outlined in the Paris Agreement, many Security Council members view climate change as a security threat worthy of the Council's attention. Other members do not. One of the difficulties in considering whether or not the Council should play a role (and a theme of this report) is that

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there are different interpretations of what is appropriate for the Security Council to do in discharging its Charter-given mandate to maintain international peace and security.

Notwithstanding these tensions, the issue has gained traction in the Council in recent years. An increasing number of Council members are choosing to hold signature events on climate change and security, during their monthly Council presidencies, to support the integration of climate change language into formal Council outcomes (that is, resolutions and presidential statements), and more broadly, to approach peace and security issues with greater sensitivity to the harmful effects of climate change.

In open debates and Arria-formula meetings, Council members and other member states have also increasingly framed this risk in more holistic terms, linking climate change and security to other thematic issues on the Council's agenda. For example, they often discuss the impacts of climate change on women and youth—and the role that these groups can play in responding to climate-security risks—and they explore how climate change, pandemics, hunger, and conflict interact to compound security risks in conflict-affected and other vulnerable settings. Council members have often seen efforts to tackle climate-security threats as an element of the UN system's conflict prevention work, and in more recent years, many of them have also viewed addressing climate change as an important part of the UN's peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts.

A further focus of this report is the significant institutional architecture that has been established just since 2018, both within and outside the UN system, to help undergird the efforts of the Security Council and the broader UN family on this issue. This has included the establishment of an Informal Expert Group of Members of the Security Council on Climate and Security and a Group of Friends on Climate and Security, among other initiatives. These developments have largely reflected the initiative of Council members and other member states to foster a better understanding of climate-security risks and consistent and meaningful responses to them.

Efforts within UN peace operations to develop responses to climate-related security threats continue to make progress, but are uneven and lack sufficient resources. The Council can enhance its focus on climate-related security matters, but in order for climate risks to be assuaged in relevant situations on the Council's agenda, the rest of the UN system will need to continue to build its capacity and expertise on this issue.

The report explores the above-mentioned themes in the following sections:
- The first section briefly analyses whether the Council is an appropriate venue to address climate-security matters.
- The second section looks to the UN Charter and Security Council and General Assembly practice for guidance on Council involvement on climate change and security matters.
- The third section outlines the ways in which the Council has engaged on this issue in meetings and in formal outcomes. It also describes the institutional mechanisms that have been established to help the Council and the UN more broadly to address climate-related security threats in a more consistent and impactful manner.
- The fourth section discusses Security Council dynamics on climate change and security.
- The fifth section offers some observations on the Council's approach to climate and security matters and presents options for the way forward.

The report concludes with annexes summarising climate change language in Security Council outcomes, and listing other relevant documents.

The Climate-Security Conundrum

The Council is the UN organ conferred under Article 24 of the UN Charter with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Addressing the challenges of climate change does not fit neatly into conventional notions of peace and security, which tend to focus narrowly on the absence of violent conflict. Moreover, the Council must make choices about effective time and resource allocation. Its agenda is already packed with crises featuring more evidently direct drivers of insecurity: some question how much time the Council should accord to climate and security matters, when

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faced with more immediate threats to peace and security in particular situations.

The best way to avert the worst security impacts of climate change lies in significantly reducing global carbon emissions. As the UNFCCC is the primary vehicle through which such efforts are pursued, no one would reasonably expect the Security Council to play a key role in this regard. It is similarly highly unlikely that the Council would sanction those countries most responsible for carbon emissions, especially as some of the body's permanent members are among the world's biggest emitters and would resist sanctioning themselves.[1]

As well, the relationship between climate change and conflict complex and not well understood. In one article based on interviews with 12 leading social scientists, the authors conclude that low socioeconomic development, low state capacity, intergroup inequality, and a past history of conflict are most associated with conflict risk and that "climate variability and/or change is low on the ranked list of most influential conflict drivers across experience to date".[2] There are "notable uncertainties about climate-conflict links", and there is "limited understanding" of these connections, "whether through agriculture, economic shocks, disasters or migration".[3] In addition, although climate change may be one of many factors leading to or exacerbating conflict, it can be a challenge to pinpoint its exact role or the relative strength of its impact; this conceptual murkiness, in turn, makes it difficult to offer effective policy prescriptions[4] —presenting a dilemma for an organ such as the UN Security Council in identifying concrete measures to tackle the security implications of climate change. As Conca has written, "While conflict modelers agree on the importance of several contextual factors, there is no single, consensual 'base model' to which climate-related factors may simply be added."[5]

Despite these conceptual difficulties, there are persuasive arguments to support the Security Council's engagement on climate change and security. While Sakaguchi et al. question the extent of the climate change-security connection, they nonetheless note that "62.3 percent of the studies [in their analysis] find evidence that climate change variables are associated with higher levels of conflict."[6] They add that more work is needed on understanding the role of climate change in causal mechanisms related to conflict;[7] an argument for more research on this relationship, rather than a dismissal

of such a connection. In this regard, in a recent article assessing the literature over the past decade on the relationship between climate change and security, the authors note, "more than half of the review studies considered here have called for more research that explicitly investigates pathways and intermediate factors".[8]

Furthermore, there is wide agreement that climate change is a risk multiplier.[9] In a report jointly issued by two leading think tanks on climate policy, the authors observe that, among its negative effects, climate change can "increase resource demands, environmental degradation and uneven development, and exacerbate existing fragility and conflict risks".[10] They further note that while climate change is "rarely a direct cause of conflict…there is ample evidence that its effects exacerbate important drivers and contextual factors of conflict and fragility, thereby challenging the stability of states and societies".[11] With mitigation efforts to date failing to curb global warming, it is also clear that climate change will become a greater risk factor for conflict in the future.[12] As its security implications become more grave, the Council may increasingly be compelled to address the climate crisis. In the meantime, the Council has a Charter-mandated conflict prevention role that supports addressing climate risks before they deteriorate into violence.

In addition, implementing the risks assessments and risk management strategies that the Council has encouraged in various settings can play a meaningful security role. As the International Crisis Group has argued, "while climate change itself does not cause conflict per se, resource governance—how people in power manage access to land, water and other parts of nature's bounty amid climate change—can increase or reduce the risk of violence".[13] Examples of risk management strategies could include working with host governments and other local actors to develop transhumance routes that limit the potential for conflict between communities or mediating between different groups contesting dwindling resources.

Nonetheless, the Council is still searching for how it can most effectively address the adverse effects of climate change, and how its efforts relate to those of the constellation of actors within and outside the UN system working towards the same goal. As the Council grapples with the most appropriate role to play on climate change and security, it is important to underscore that the Council's voice matters, especially on an issue of such global importance. For all its faults, the Security Council is the most powerful and perhaps the

1. Binder, Martin, and Monika Heupel. 2018. "Contested Legitimacy: The UN Security Council and Climate Change." In Climate Change and the UN Security Council, by Charlotte Ku and Shirley V. Scott, 186-208. Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp.191-192. Binder and Heupel similarly note "…while the Council has the legal authority to authorize the use of force against states whose failure to substantially reduce their CO_2 emissions it deems to constitute a threat to peace and security, such a step is still no plausible scenario given that three of the five permanent Council members (P5) – the United States, China and Russia – are among the world's largest emitters".

2. Mach, Katharine J., Caroline M. Kraan, W. Neil Adger, Halvard Buhaug, Marshall Burke, James D. Fearon, Christopher B. Field et al. "Climate as a risk factor for armed conflict." Nature 571, no. 7764 (2019): 193-197, p.4.

3. Mach, Katharine J., and Caroline M. Kraan. "Science–policy dimensions of research on climate change and conflict." Journal of Peace Research (2021): 0022343320966774. p.169.

4. Sakaguchi, Kendra, Anil Varughese, and Graeme Auld. "Climate wars? A systematic review of empirical analyses on the links between climate change and violent conflict." International Studies Review 19, no. 4 (2017): 622-645, p.641.

5. Conca, Ken. "Is there a role for the UN Security Council on climate change?." Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development 61, no. 1 (2019): 4-15, p.7.

6. Sakaguchi, Kendra, Anil Varughese, and Graeme Auld. "Climate wars? A systematic review of empirical analyses on the links between climate change and violent conflict." International Studies Review 19, no. 4 (2017): 622-645, p.640.

7. Ibid, 624.

8. von Uexkull, Nina, and Halvard Buhaug. "Security implications of climate change: a decade of scientific progress." (2021): 3-17, p.6.

9. Adrien Detges, Daniel Klingenfeld, Christian König, Benjamin Pohl, Lukas Rüttinger, Jacob Schewe, Barbora Sedova, and Janani Vivekananda,. 2020. 10 Insights on Climate Impacts and Peace: A Summary of What We Need to Know. Berlin: Adelphi, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. https://berlin-climate-security-conference.de/sites/berlin-climate-security-conference.de/files/documents/10_insights_on_climate_impacts_and_peace_report.pdf, p.11.

10. Ibid, p.11.

11. Ibid, p.4.

12. United Nations. 2020. "Climate Security Mechanism, Toolbox, Briefing Note." https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/csm_toolbox-1-briefing_note.pdf, p.4.

13. International Crisis Group. 2021. How Climate Science Can Help Conflict Prevention. April 20. https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/how-climate-science-can-help-conflict-prevention.

most recognisable part of an international institution that still commands a high level of respect across the globe.[14] The Security Council may not have all or even many of the answers to the security effects of climate change, but it can be expected to galvanise awareness of and international responses to a crisis whose threat to international peace and security will likely continue to grow.

The UN Charter and Security Council Practice

The UN Charter is the starting point for assessing whether the Security Council can play a role on climate change and security. The UN's founders did not foresee the threat of climate change, but there are clues both in the Charter and in Council practice that might help address important questions that are frequently raised.

Is the Council overstepping its authority by delving into an issue that may often only have tangential links to conflict?

It is the Council's prerogative to decide what matters it should address. Member states and the Secretariat can refer situations and disputes to the Council, but the Council itself is the ultimate arbiter of its own work. The precise nature of "international peace and security" in Article 24 (1) is not specified, and it is up to the Council to determine what this entails.[15] The lack of a clear definition of "peace and security" in the Charter may be one reason why determining what issues fit appropriately within the Council's mandate is so hotly contested.

The Security Council's efforts to combat climate change are often cast in terms of its conflict prevention work—a need to understand and respond to a severe environmental challenge that can exacerbate the risk of conflict. In this regard, the Charter is replete with conflict prevention language, beginning with the preamble, whose opening lines highlight the determination of the United Nations "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Article 34 of Chapter VI on "Pacific Settlement of Disputes" is particularly relevant, as it states:

> The Security Council may investigate any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute, in order to determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.

The terms "situation" and "dispute" are broad enough to include a wide range of phenomena. Climate change could reasonably be among these, even if one were to consider it as primarily a sustainable development issue. As Luck has argued: "Article 34's references to 'disputes' and 'situations' undoubtedly encompassed economic and trade issues, as well as social and human rights matters", adding that a "number of delegations at San Francisco [where the Charter was drafted] emphasised the economic and social roots of conflict".[16]

The trajectory of Security Council practice also reflects precedents for this organ to have a role on climate change and security matters. Since the end of the Cold War, the Council has broadened the array of issues that it addresses. This broader perspective is consistent with the view that threats to "human security"—defined by General Assembly resolution 66/290 as an "approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people"—not only heighten the risk of conflict but also undermine efforts to sustain peace and stability in a long-term, durable way. In this respect, members continue to address various issues that reflect an expanded vision of the Council's mandate and encompass human security concerns, such as the protection of civilians, children and armed conflict, sexual violence in armed conflict, pandemics, and hunger and conflict. Human rights abuses—perceived by many Council members as a risk factor for conflict, as are other human security threats—are discussed in the Council's work in country-specific situations, just as climate change is, although not without controversy.

Is the Council infringing on the authority of other UN organs with more expertise in this area?

Based on the Charter, it appears that different organs should be able to simultaneously address an issue, such as climate change, which straddles the various pillars of the UN's work (peace and security, development and human rights). While the Charter lays out the responsibilities of the different organs of the UN system, it does not separate them into silos. The Charter links different parts of the UN system, suggesting that various UN organs and bodies were intended by the framers of the Charter to work together to address complex issues. For example, under Article 11 (3), the General Assembly "may call the attention of the Security Council to situations which are likely to endanger international peace and security", while ECOSOC "may furnish information to the Security Council and shall assist the Security Council upon its request", according to Article 65. In practice, although the Council most frequently draws on the expertise and advice of the Secretariat, it also, on occasion, makes use of the input of the General Assembly, ECOSOC and other UN entities. In this regard, the ECOSOC president has briefed the Security Council on various occasions during the last two decades; the last such briefing was in November 2020 during a high-level open videoconference session on "contemporary drivers of conflict and insecurity", under the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace agenda, in a meeting that focused largely on the implications of climate change and COVID-19 on peace and security.

While some member states emphasise that climate change is

14. Fagan, Moira, and Christine Huang. 2019. United Nations Gets Mostly Positive Marks from People Around the World. September 23. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/09/23/united-nations-gets-mostly-positive-marks-from-people-around-the-world/A 2019 Pew Research Center Poll found that: "Across 32 surveyed countries [in various regions], a median of 61% have a positive view of the UN, while a median of just 26% have a negative view.".

15. Penny, Christopher K. 2018. "Climate Change as a 'Threat to International Peace and Security'." In Climate Change and the UN Security Council, by Charlotte Ku and Shirley V. Scott, 25-46. Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, p.34. Penny has likewise observed, "The Charter itself does not define 'threat to international peace and security' (or, to be more precise, 'threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of agression'). Instead, the meaning of this concept has developed through actual organizational practice."

16. Luck, Edward, C. 2014. "Change and the United Nations Charter." In Charter of the United Nations Together with Scholarly Commentaries and Essential Historical Documents, by Ian Shapiro and Joseph Lampert, 121-142. New Haven: Yale University Press, p.129.

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primarily a sustainable development issue outside of the Council's purview, those holding a less traditional view of peace and security might note that the Security Council—and the wider UN membership—has explicitly emphasised the linkages between security and development on numerous occasions. In January 1992, at the dawn of the post-Cold War era, the Security Council met at the heads of state and government level for the first time in its history to discuss the agenda item: "The responsibility of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security".[17] In the presidential statement adopted at the end of the meeting, the Council stated: "The non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to peace and security."[18] In the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, the world's heads of state and government reaffirmed their "commitment to work towards a security consensus based on the recognition that many threats are interlinked, that development, peace, security and human rights are mutually reinforcing".[19] And more recently, in the April 2016 resolution adopted concurrently with the General Assembly on the UN peacebuilding architecture, the Security Council affirmed that one of the roles of the Peacebuilding Commission is to: "promote an integrated, strategic and coherent approach to peacebuilding, noting that security, development and human rights are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing."[20]

These pronouncements about the linkages between peace and security, on the one hand, and development, on the other, would seem to suggest a role for the Security Council on climate change and security, working on the issue in conjunction with other UN entities. However, there is a caveat to this view. Security Council outcomes that emphasise the security-development nexus also at times refer to the distinct activities of various UN bodies, which can be perceived as a nod to the concerns about infringement on the prerogatives of other UN entities. For example, while resolution 2282 (the sustaining peace resolution of 27 April 2016) recognises the linkages between security and development, it also recognises that "an integrated and coherent approach among relevant political, security and development actors, within and outside of the United Nations system, *consistent with their respective mandates* [emphasis added], and the Charter of the United Nations, is critical to sustaining peace."[21] This implies an effort to distinguish between the roles of different UN entities, as those with a more conservative view of "international peace and security" might point to the reference to "respective mandates" as a way of differentiating the Council's work from that of other UN entities.

General Assembly resolution 63/281(2009) on "Climate Change and its possible security implications" is another document open to interpretation as to whether the Council encroaches on the prerogatives of other organs with respect to climate change, reflecting the tensions among the membership on this issue. In that resolution, the General Assembly recognises the different responsibilities of UN organs, maintaining that the Security Council is primarily responsible for peace and security and that the General Assembly and ECOSOC are responsible for sustainable development issues, including climate change.[22] Read in isolation, this implies that the Council does not have a role with regard to climate change. However, the resolution also invites "the relevant organs of the United Nations, as appropriate and within their respective mandates, to intensify their efforts in considering and addressing climate change, *including its possible security implications*" [emphasis added].[23] This could be interpreted as envisioning a potential role for the Security Council, in light of the "possible security implications" of climate change.

Security Council Engagement: Evolution and Key Themes

Despite the challenging road that the Council has travelled on climate and security matters since 2007, its engagement has persisted and accelerated significantly in the past few years. Not only are more meetings being held on climate change and security as a thematic topic, but language on climate change and security is increasingly being included in Security Council outcomes.

Council Debates and Briefings on Climate Change and Security

The Security Council has had several thematic debates on climate and security matters. The first time the Council focused explicitly on climate change as a thematic topic was on 17 April 2007 during a ministerial-level open debate on the relationship between energy, security and climate, which was convened by the UK and included a briefing by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.[24] Prior to the meeting, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of 77 (G77) + China sent letters to the Security Council expressing concern about infringement on the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. However, there have been fissures in the NAM and the G77 on this issue over the years, with several members from both groups supporting Council engagement on climate change and security.

17. United Nations. 1992. Security Council 3046th meeting. January 31. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/RO%20SPV%203046.pdf.

18. United Nations. 1992. Note by the President of the Security Council S/23500. January 31. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/PKO%20S%2023500.pdf.

19. United Nations. 2005. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 60/1. 2005 World Summit Outcome. September 16. https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf.

20. United Nations. 2016. Security Council Resolution 2282 (2016). April 27. https://undocs.org/S/RES/2282(2016), p.1.

21. Ibid, p.2.

22. Vivekananda, Janani, Day, Adam, and Susanne Wolfmaier. 2020. What can the UN Security Council do on Climate and Security? Berlin: Climate Security Expert Network. https://climate-security-expert-network.org/sites/climate-security-expert-network.com/files/documents/what_can_the_un_security_council_do_on_climate_and_security_v2.pdf, p.10.

23. United Nations. 2009. General Assembly Resolution A/RES/63/281. June 3. https://undocs.org/A/RES/63/281, op.1.

24. United Nations. 2007. Security Council 5663rd meeting. April 17. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_pv_5663.pdf

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The Council again took up climate change on 20 July 2011, in an open debate initiated by Germany that featured a briefing by Secretary-General Ban and Achim Steiner, the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme.[25] It adopted a presidential statement, which was only finalised during the debate, after difficult negotiations.[26] Early in the meeting, with the fate of the document still unclear, Ambassador Susan Rice (US) complained about the Council's inability "to reach consensus on even a simple draft presidential statement that climate change has the potential to impact peace and security in the face of the manifest evidence that it does". Failure to reach agreement would be "pathetic" and "a dereliction of duty", she added.

While modest in substance, the presidential statement marked the first and, by mid-2021, the Security Council's only thematic product on climate change and security. It reaffirmed that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change "is the key instrument for addressing climate change". It expressed concern that possible adverse effects of climate change may, in the long run, aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security. And it noted the importance of including conflict analysis and contextual information on the possible security implications of climate change in the Secretary-General's reports, "when such issues are drivers of conflict, represent a challenge to the implementation of Council mandates or endanger the process of consolidation of peace". Implementation of this presidential statement was generally weak for many years, in part because of the lack of capacity of the Secretariat to follow through on this request, but action has picked up since the launch in 2018 of the Climate-Security Mechanism, a small team within the UN Secretariat that strives to enhance the organisation's capacity to respond to climate-related security risks.

Since 2018, the Council has held five thematic meetings (four open debates and one debate) specifically focused on climate change and security. Since climate change is not a formal agenda item with a periodic reporting cycle, these thematic meetings have been held at the initiative of monthly Security Council presidents, who have considered the relationship between climate change and security important enough to feature in discretionary events during their presidencies.[27] These were: a debate on "Understanding and addressing climate-related security risks" initiated by Sweden on 11 July 2018; an open debate on "Addressing the impacts of climate-related disaster on international peace and security on 25 January 2019 convened by the Dominican Republic; an open debate on "climate and security" held on 24 July 2020 and initiated by Germany; an open debate on the "Humanitarian effects of environmental degradation and peace and security" on 17 September 2020 spearheaded by Niger; and an open debate on 23 February 2021 on "Addressing climate-related security risks to international peace and security through mitigation and resilience building" hosted by the United Kingdom. (The Council's meetings on climate change and security, with the briefers for each, are listed in Annex I.)

In the lead-up to the July 2020 open debate, Germany sought to pursue a thematic resolution on climate change and security. This initiative was carefully planned. During its campaign for a 2019-2020 Council term, Germany made clear that climate change and security would be a priority; upon entering the Council, it was already considering the pursuit of a thematic outcome on this issue. It worked for several weeks with nine other members that supported the initiative to develop the text. These members—Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Niger, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, UK, and Vietnam—were expected to co-sponsor the draft and joined Germany in an effort to garner support from the remaining Council members (China, Indonesia, South Africa, Russia, and the US). Among this latter group, the three permanent members (China, Russia and the US) were the main targets of advocacy because of their power to veto the draft.

The draft was ambitious. It invited the Secretary-General to consider the security implications of the effects of climate change in a wide array of activities, ranging from conflict prevention to peacebuilding support and humanitarian response. Among its more notable features, the draft requested the Secretary-General:

- to submit a report within six months of the adoption of the resolution (and every two years thereafter) on the security implications of the negative effects of climate change;
- to appoint a Special Representative who would be responsible for coordinating the UN's efforts to address climate-related security threats, as well as for advocating for these efforts and exchanging information on climate-security threats within the UN system and with external actors; and
- to identify Climate and Security Advisors to be deployed in relevant field operations and have access to mission leadership.

The draft had to be shelved well before the 24 July open debate, however, because of the political climate. While China and Russia were not supportive of the initiative, the US expressed the strongest opposition. US Ambassador Kelly Craft reportedly indicated that the US mission was under orders from Washington to block a thematic outcome on climate and security.

Common threads link the Council's meetings on climate and security between April 2007 and February 2021. Member states with varying views on Council involvement on this issue have emphasised the importance of international efforts to curb carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change, although developing countries have tended to place the primary responsibility for mitigation on the developed world and to underscore the need to enhance support to developing countries for climate financing and technology transfers.[28] In these debates, opponents of a Council role on this issue have consistently voiced concerns about encroachment on the work of other UN entities that they believe are more competent to address climate change.[29] Proponents of Council engagement have recognised the central role of the UNFCCC and other parts of the UN system in addressing climate change; nonetheless, they have maintained that

25. United Nations. 2011. Security Council 6587th meeting. July 20. https://undocs.org/S/PV.6587. Check also: United Nations. 2011. Security Council 6587th meeting (Resumption). July 20. https://undocs.org/S/PV.6587(Resumption%201).

26. United Nations. 2011. Statement by the President of the Security Council. July 20. https://undocs.org/S/PRST/2011/15

27. The UNSC monthly presidency rotates in accordance with the English language alphabet.

28. United Nations. 2011. Security Council 6587th meeting (Resumption). July 20. https://undocs.org/S/PV.6587(Resumption%201), p.11, 25. Check also: United Nations. 2021. Security Council VTC meeting. February 25. https://undocs.org/S/2021/198, p.34.

29. United Nations. 2007. Security Council 5663rd meeting. April 17. https://undocs.org/S/PV.5663, p.24. Check also: United Nations. 2011. Security Council 6587th meeting. July 20. https://undocs.org/S/PV.6587, p.25-26. And check also: United Nations. 2019. Security Council 8451st meeting. January 25. https://undocs.org/S/PV.8451, p.64.

the Security Council has a responsibility to try to deal with climate-related security effects. Rather than viewing the Security Council as a usurper of the authority of other UN organs, they believe that the different parts of the UN system, including the Security Council, need to work together to confront the security challenges of climate change. They have often referred to climate change as a "threat multiplier" that can exacerbate conflict risks and instability,[30] although they recognise that climate change is usually not the primary driver of conflict. Another concern consistently raised in these meetings—by both those supportive of a Security Council role on climate-security matters and those against—is the threat that climate change poses to small island developing states because of rising sea levels.[31]

At the same time that certain themes have recurred, the substance of the discussions has evolved over the years. Several but not all member states have increasingly maintained that climate change should be more systematically integrated into the Council's work. More and more, climate-related security threats are being linked to other thematic issues addressed by the Council, and described as a matter that should be tackled with holistic responses. In this regard, the disproportionate effects of climate change on women and youth and their role in addressing climate risks have become a greater focus of the recent debates on this issue, although there was already some discussion of the impact of climate change on women in the 2011 open debate.[32] Member state interventions on these issues have emphasised the importance of female and youth participation in generating responses to the adverse effects of climate change.[33]

In the open debates in 2020 and 2021, several Council members and other member states drew comparisons between climate change and COVID-19. Both were described as transnational threats whose interaction worsens the conditions of the vulnerable. As two phenomena that undermine human security, they have the potential to exacerbate conflict. The EU statement in the July 2020 open debate captured this sentiment:

> "This meeting is also timely in the current pandemic context, as coronavirus disease (COVID-19) continues to hit countries across the world with unrelenting force, exposing and exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and compounding the impact of climate change on food and water security, livelihoods, social cohesion and security. That threatens to undermine development gains and human rights, as well as escalate violence and disrupt fragile peace processes."[34]

It has also been observed that climate change, like COVID-19, would be most effectively tackled through enhanced international solidarity.[35]

There has also been a heightened focus on addressing climate-related security threats as part of the UN's peacebuilding agenda in the more recent debates. Peacebuilding was only referenced once in the 2007 open debate. The linkages among climate change, security and peacebuilding were raised in the 2011 open debate, and have become more prominent in the open debates on climate and security since 2019. Some member states have maintained that integrating climate change considerations into peacebuilding efforts could help to prevent conflicts from erupting or escalating.[36] In addition, there have been calls for the Security Council to make use of the Peacebuilding Commission's advisory role with respect to climate-related security threats.[37]

Meetings on Related Topics

Over the past decade, the Council has also explored the climate-security nexus as a part of broader discussions on emerging and non-traditional threats to international peace and security. These meetings were usually initiated as optional, signature events of Council presidencies.[38] In several of these meetings, climate change has been discussed as one of several transnational security threats (for example, transnational organised crime, piracy, drug and human trafficking, and pandemics). Other meetings in which climate change has been referred to have had a narrower focus – for example, the briefing convened by Bolivia on "Preventive Diplomacy and Transboundary Waters" in June 2017.

The focus of these meetings indicates the growing interest that a regionally diverse group of member states has demonstrated for the need to tackle the security impacts of various transnational security challenges. The briefings and member state interventions in many of these meetings have emphasised the inter-connected nature of emerging threats to international peace and security and the importance of coordination at the international, regional, national and local levels to address them most effectively. (Please see Annex II for a list of, and information about, these meetings.)

Arria-formula Meetings

Arria-formula meetings have been a common format for discussing climate-security issues. These are informal meetings convened at the initiative of a member or members of the Security Council (at times with the support of non-Council members) to gather information from individuals or organisations with special knowledge of a topic. There have been six Arria-formula meetings on climate change as a security threat (or on directly-related subjects) as at the end of 2020.

The Arria-formula meetings on climate change and security have all been public sessions and several have been webcast. As such, they may have helped to raise awareness and increase knowledge of climate-related security threats among Council members and the wider

30. On climate change as a "threat multiplier", check United Nations. 2011. Security Council 6587th meeting (Resumption). July 20. https://undocs.org/S/PV.6587(Resumption%201), p.13, 21. Check also: United Nations. 2018. Security Council 8307th meeting. July 11. https://undocs.org/S/PV.8307, p.9, 23. United Nations. 2019. Security Council 8451st meeting. January 25. https://undocs.org/S/PV.8451, p.33, 37. And check also: United Nations. 2021. Security Council VTC meeting. February 25. https://undocs.org/S/2021/198, p.11, 36, 49.

31. United Nations. 2007. Security Council 5663rd meeting. April 17. https://undocs.org/S/PV.5663, p.22-23. Check also: United Nations. 2011. Security Council 6587th meeting (Resumption). July 20. https://undocs.org/S/PV.6587(Resumption%201), p.19, 20. And check also: United Nations. 2019. Security Council 8451st meeting. January 25. https://undocs.org/S/PV.8451, p.18, 28, 37, 65.

32. United Nations. 2011. Security Council 6587th meeting (Resumption). July 20. https://undocs.org/S/PV.6587(Resumption%201), p.16-17.

33. On the importance of the participation of women and youth check: United Nations. 2019. Security Council 8451st meeting. January 25. https://undocs.org/S/PV.8451, p.34, 59. Check also: United Nations. 2021. Security Council VTC meeting. February 25. https://undocs.org/S/2020/198, p.53, 66, 72.

34. United Nations. 2020. Security Council VTC meeting. July 28. https://undocs.org/S/2020/751, p.37.

35. Ibid, p.17, 38.

36. United Nations. 2011. Security Council 6587th meeting (Resumption). July 20. https://undocs.org/S/PV.6587(Resumption%201), p.11, 23, 37.

37. United Nations. 2020. Security Council VTC meeting. July 28. https://undocs.org/S/2020/751, p.39, 78-79.

38. The one exception was the 26 May 2016 meeting on "The Challenges in the Sahel Region". Spain, which was not Council president, requested the briefing; however, Egypt, which held this monthly presidency, collaborated with Spain to prepare a background note for the meeting.

UN membership. These sessions have allowed a diverse group of stakeholders to share their perspectives—including Council members, other UN member states, UN officials, non-governmental organisations and civil society representatives.

The co-sponsorship of the three Arria-formula meetings on climate-related security matters between 14 December 2017 and 22 April 2020 reflects a coherent and well-planned effort to generate momentum in support of the issue and to maintain a continuity of focus on it over time. The large number of co-sponsors included contemporaneous Council members, as well as members gearing up for Council terms, many of whom staunchly advocated for Council involvement on this issue during their tenures.

The relatively high number of such Arria-formula meetings could also be an indication of the political sensitivities around Council engagement on this issue. In this respect, influential Council members may not have been entirely comfortable with the matter being addressed in a more formal way, so the Arria-formula format (which does not require consensus to convene, nor do all members always participate) became a sensible alternative.[39]

There may be less need for the Arria-formula format to be used to discuss climate-related security threats if this issue continues to gain traction in formal Council settings. The fact that Council members have shown greater willingness to hold formal meetings on climate change and security as signature events of their monthly presidencies reflects the effort to mainstream the issue in the Council's work, regardless of the political headwinds. (Annex III provides a list of relevant Arria-formula meetings and information about them.)

Mainstreaming in country- and region-specific cases

References to climate change in Council outcomes have become more frequent since 2017. Prior to 2017, language on climate change was sporadically included in presidential statements and only once in a resolution on a thematic or country/region-specific matter. These outcomes tended to note the Council's concern about climate change among a variety of political and security threats and its commitment to address this broad array of threats. Since 2017, there has been an increase in the number of times the Council has referenced climate change in outcomes, as well as a substantive change in the language. The more recent outcomes have tended to emphasise the importance of addressing climate and ecological changes, among other factors, in UN and host government risk assessments and risk management strategies.

What happened in 2017 to herald the shift in focus that has continued to this day? Perhaps most importantly, enterprising members, starting with Sweden and the Netherlands, took the initiative by assiduously promoting this issue, making a concerted effort to integrate climate-security language more systematically into the Council's country-specific outcomes. The Security Council's visiting mission to the Lake Chad region in March 2017 on a trip focused on the security and humanitarian challenges in the region may have also

played a role. During the visiting mission, some of the government officials in Niger and Nigeria that met with members shared their view that climate change had had a harmful effect on livelihoods in the region. Among them was Nigerien President Mahamadou Issoufou, who told Council members that he did not believe that Boko Haram would have "taken root" without the shrinking of Lake Chad, observing that the Lake had lost 90 percent of its surface area since the 1960s with a devastating effect on local livelihoods. The linking of climate change to security described during the visiting mission appeared to make an impression on a number of members as an issue meriting careful attention. In the past few years, there has also been continuity of interest and follow through on climate change and security matters; several incoming Council members have taken the baton from those leaving the body and continued to promote the issue. This helps explain why there have been more thematic meetings on climate change and security since 2018 than in the prior 11 years dating back to the UK's 2007 open debate.

Shortly after this visiting mission to the Lake Chad Basin region in March 2017, the Council adopted resolution 2349, which addressed the negative security, humanitarian and developmental dimensions of the Boko Haram crisis in the region. The resolution recognised the "adverse effects of climate change and ecological changes among other factors on the stability of the Region, including through water scarcity, drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity, and emphasise[d] the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies by governments and the United Nations relating to these factors". This language has become a model for text on climate change and ecological changes in many Council outcomes in the following years, with variations, depending on the region or country.

To date, in addition to a small number of thematic outcomes, language on climate change and security has been integrated primarily into outcomes dealing with Africa. In addition to the Lake Chad Basin, the Council has recognised the negative effects of climate change in West Africa, Somalia, Mali, Sudan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Central Africa. It has also referred to climate change in a resolution on the "Silencing the Guns in Africa" initiative in February 2019, as well as in two earlier thematic outcomes (an October 2015 Women, Peace and Security resolution and a July 2014 counter-terrorism resolution).

In 2021, the Council, for the first time, expanded the geographic focus of outcomes referencing climate change beyond Africa. On 29 January 2021, it adopted resolution 2561, which renewed the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), and on 27 May 2021, it adopted resolution 2576, renewing the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). Prior to the adoption of resolution 2561 on Cyprus, proposals to incorporate climate-security language in outcomes on cases outside of Africa—including Haiti in 2019 and Iraq in 2020—were not successful.

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39. A Council member seeking to hold a formal meeting on a controversial topic will usually seek to secure the support or at least acquiescence of all other members. If this is not possible, that member will try to secure the support of at least nine Council members. This is because if several members object to the meeting, a procedural vote may be held to determine whether the meeting can be convened. Nine affirmative votes are needed for a procedural motion to pass.

Institutional Developments

There have been significant institutional developments since 2018 that have supported the work of the Security Council and the wider UN system in addressing climate-related security threats. Notable among these have been the establishment of the Climate-Security Mechanism (CSM), the Group of Friends on Climate and Security and the Informal Expert Group of Members of the Security Council on Climate and Security. Research initiatives have also been launched that support the UN's engagement on climate-related security matters. Furthermore, the Secretary-General is increasingly focusing on the threat of climate change, including its negative effects on international peace and security. All of these efforts represent a growing commitment to the issue among a broad range of actors within and outside of the UN.

Climate-Security Mechanism

In 2018, the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) jointly established the "Climate-Security Mechanism" (CSM) to harness information and analysis on the linkages between climate change and security and to integrate this lens into the organisation's prevention, peacebuilding, and adaptation. The CSM—which is supported through voluntary contributions—consists of a small team from the three participating entities and works closely with a large number of UN agencies, funds and programmes, UN peace operations, as well as with partners outside the UN system. It has created a "toolbox" that includes a series of short guidance documents designed "to help the UN system develop a shared language and approach to the challenges brought on by climate-related security risks".[40] These documents include:

- a "briefing note" that provides an overview of linkages between climate change and peace and security;
- a "conceptual approach" that delineates a common perspective for assessing climate change-related security risks across the UN system;
- "data sources" on security risks related to climate change; and a
- "conflict analysis checklist" with climate change-related questions for consideration during conflict analyses.

The toolbox—which the CSM has introduced to a wide audience of UN and non-UN practitioners through webinars and workshops—emphasises that climate-related security threats are context specific; that they interact with various political, social, economic, and demographic challenges contributing to instability; and that climate change has wide-ranging and interlinking development, peace and security, humanitarian, and gender implications. Not least, it also stresses that climate security risk prevention and management mechanisms need to consider and build upon existing coping capacities in states and communities to be effective.

The CSM has also worked with UN regional offices, including the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the UN Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), to help address climate-related security risks. In 2020, in collaboration with UNOCA, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and UN Country Teams in the sub-region, it "developed a two-year project to strengthen the knowledge base regarding the interlinkages between climate change and security in Central Africa and the capacity of subregional actors to develop effective risk prevention and mitigation strategies".[41] The CSM also supports UNOWAS to expand its work on climate security and conduct analytical deep dives, which will inform the mission's political and prevention work in West Africa and the Sahel.

Group of Friends on Climate and Security

Germany and Nauru are the co-founders and co-chairs of the Group of Friends on Climate and Security. Initially consisting of 27 UN member states, the Group has more than doubled in size since its establishment on 1 August 2018. As at 7 May 2021, it consisted of 57 member states—representing all five UN regional groups (the African Group, the Asia-Pacific Group, the Eastern European Group, the Western European and Others Group, and the Latin American and Caribbean Group)—and the EU. Ten current Security Council members—Estonia, France, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Niger, Norway, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the UK, and the US—belong to the Group. The Climate-Security Mechanism (CSM) and the ICRC are permanent observers. The goal of the Group is to inform policy on climate change's security effects, to heighten public awareness of these effects, and to strengthen the UN system's efforts to counter them.

The Group meets periodically during the year. Some meetings are held at expert level and others at permanent representative level (at least twice per year). Briefers have included senior UN officials and think tank experts.

The plan for 2021 is for the Group to convene regularly, and as at 30 April, the Group had met twice. On 5 March, it convened virtually at ambassador level. During the meeting, the permanent representatives of Ireland, Niger and the UK provided an update on recent developments in the Security Council on climate-related security matters; one of the ambassadors emphasised the importance of strengthening the capacity of UN field missions to integrate climate-security concerns into their work. Featured briefers at the meeting included Johan Rockström, the Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research; Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP; and George Conway, the Deputy Director of the UNDP Crisis Bureau. Rockström described the "Weathering Risk" project, a climate and security risk and foresight assessment led by the Potsdam Institute and adelphi (a Berlin-based think tank that studies environmental issues).[42] Andersen noted how climate science is informing the work of UNEP, and Conway spoke about the work of the CSM. Several issues were raised in the ensuing discussion. Among other things, member states in the Group underscored the importance of integrating climate change considerations in a coherent way throughout the UN's work, drawing on local knowledge to address climate-related security risks in affected countries, and stepping up global mitigation and adaptation measures. Several themes explored in the 5 March meeting were revisited in a subsequent meeting of the Group of Friends, held at expert level on 1 April.

The Group of Friends currently has two standing agenda items:

40. United Nations. 2020. "Climate Security Mechanism, Toolbox, Briefing Note." https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/csm_toolbox-1-briefing_note.pdf , p.10.

41. United Nations. 2020. Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa. December 1. https://undocs.org/S/2020/1154, p.12.

42. For information on Weathering Risk, check www.weatheringrisk.org.

Institutional Developments

one on the work of the CSM, and a second on the work of and dynamics in the Security Council, including the activities of the Informal Expert Group of Members of the Security Council on Climate and Security (IEG). (The work of the IEG is described below). A CSM representative briefs on the first standing agenda item, while one of the IEG co-chairs briefs on the second. These standing agenda items are designed to strengthen the interactions between the Group of Friends and key actors in the UN system working on climate change and security matters. Over time, the Group of Friends could become a useful sounding board for ideas on how to advance the climate security agenda in the Security Council.

For the remainder of 2021, the Group intends to hold both country- and region-specific and cross-cutting discussions—allowing members to delve into geographical areas where climate change poses security risks and to explore the connections between climate change and thematic issues such as peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and migration, among others. It plans to hear from experts living in areas suffering the security effects of climate change.

Certain themes consistently emerge in the public statements of the Group of Friends—including its September 2019 joint position[43] and interventions made on its behalf in the Security Council by Nauru and Germany during the 24 July 2020 and 23 February 2021 open debates, respectively. A consistent message is that addressing the adverse impacts of climate change, including in relation to peace and security, requires coordinated action from various parts of the UN system, including the Security Council. The Group has repeatedly called for the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General to coordinate the UN's response to climate-related security risks. It has emphasised the need for these risks to be analysed in a periodic report of the Secretary-General. In the Group of Friends' 24 July 2020 statement to the Council, Nauru maintained that: "Such reports should include an assessment of early warning indicators and foresights of climate-related security risks, as well as concrete recommendations for action by UN organs to address these risks." It added that this "would contribute to the ability of the Security Council to detect, address and prevent looming crisis and conflicts before they become a reality". The importance of enhancing efforts to mitigate the emission of greenhouse gases and adapt to the consequences of climate change is another key message of the Group of Friends.

Informal Expert Group of Members of the Security Council on Climate and Security

During 2019 and early 2020, several members of the Security Council had informally and discreetly discussed the idea of establishing an informal expert group on climate and security to facilitate more systematic engagement by the Council on climate-related security matters. The proposal for such a group had been one of the elements of the draft resolution on climate change and security that ten Council members had pursued in the lead-up to the 24 July 2020 debate, but that was aborted due to resistance from the US, China and Russia.

At the 24 July 2020 virtual open debate on climate and security, Germany publicly announced for the first time the intention to establish an informal expert group. In the open debate, Belgium supported this initiative. Current Council member Ireland, which had won a seat in the June 2020 election for a 2021-22 term, also welcomed the Group's creation during the meeting.

Following the debate, ten members of the Security Council (Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, Tunisia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the United Kingdom, and Viet Nam)—as well as three of the incoming members of the Security Council (Ireland, Kenya and Norway)—released a joint statement in which they emphasised the need for the Council to address climate-security risks and for the UN system to strengthen its operational readiness in special cases in this regard. In the statement, the ten Council members announced that they would convene an "Informal Group of Experts of the Security Council in order to assist the Council to achieve a more comprehensive and systematic approach on climate-related security risks in situations on the agenda".

On 27 August 2020, the ten members submitted a letter to the Secretary-General in which they described their rationale for establishing the expert group, as well as its envisioned functions and working methods.[44] They said that "the Council would benefit from a more systematic approach and more consistent attention to [climate-related security risks]…including during the formulation of mandates and consultations on their renewal". They added that the expert group would "provide a space for transparent, regular and systematic consultations between country experts and United Nations entities on climate-related security risks in order to improve the understanding of the adverse effects of climate change on peace and security and help strengthen the Council's efforts to mainstream the climate and security agenda in its daily work". They also announced that Niger and Germany would serve as initial co-chairs of the expert group for the remainder of 2020. Finally, they asked for the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), "in the context of the Climate Security Mechanism", to serve as the secretariat for the informal expert group, coordinate the flow of information to Council members regarding its work, and facilitate the group's meetings.

The establishment of the Informal Expert Group was controversial. China and Russia emphasised that the group had no formal standing as a subsidiary body of the Council, noting its informal nature and the fact that its formation did not have the support of all Council members. The members of the Informal Expert Group had never claimed that the Group would be a formal subsidiary body of the Council; hence, consensus was not a prerequisite to its formation. However, the ten members launching the group agreed to a compromise, calling the new entity the "Informal Expert Group of Members of the Security Council on Climate and Security" rather than the "Informal Expert Group of the Security Council on Climate and Security". The inclusion of the term "members of" in the Group's title was meant to emphasise its informal standing, just as informal Council products such as press statements are issued by "members of the Security Council", whereas the organ's formal outcomes (resolutions and presidential statements) are adopted by the Security Council.[45]

China and Russia also raised objections to the proposal that

43. At the time of writing, 36 members of the Group of Friends had signed the joint position. Signing the document is not a requirement for membership in the Group, which is designed to bring together member states with a desire to promote the climate-security agenda, but not to compel them to adopt particular positions

44. United Nations. 2020. Letter dated 27 August 2020 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General. August 28. https://undocs.org/S/2020/849.

45. There are two other informal subsidiary bodies of Council members. One is Informal Expert Group on the Protection of Civilians, which was formed in 2009, and has always been chaired by the UK.

Institutional Developments

the Climate-Security Mechanism (CSM) serve as a secretariat for the expert group. In particular, they did not believe that Secretariat resources should be expended on this initiative; while the CSM is funded through voluntary contributions, staff from the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs—who are supported by assessed contributions—oversee it. They may have also feared that a Secretariat role in the work of the Informal Expert Group would accord it a level of legitimacy that they did not wish to see. In 2021, the co-chairs of the Informal Expert Group (Ireland and Niger) were serving as the Secretariat for this body, and it remained unclear whether the CSM would eventually play this role, as envisioned by several Council members.

On 20 November 2020, the Informal Expert Group met for the first time. The meeting, which was held at ambassador-level, focused on the security implications of climate change in Somalia. Special Representative and head of UNSOM James Swan briefed, and Dan Smith, Director of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, participated in the meeting. All fifteen Security Council members and four incoming members (Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, and Norway) took part in the meeting; India was the only incoming member not participating. During the meeting, Russia indicated that it was participating as an observer, but not joining the Informal Expert Group.

The day before the meeting, China sent a letter to Germany and Niger, as the Group's co-chairs, saying that they would send an expert to the meeting to follow the discussion, but that their participation "should not be interpreted as China joining" the Informal Expert Group. They further declared in the letter: "we all understand that there is no official decision of the Council to establish an informal expert group on climate and security and it's inappropriate for the DPPA to act as the secretariat for such an informal group", while acknowledging that they "respect the right of Council members to discuss issues of common interest".

On 12 March 2021, the Informal Expert Group met again. The expert-level meeting focused on the Sahel, and it explored how the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) in particular is addressing climate-security risks in the region. Ngozi Amu, the Team Leader and Head of Research and Analysis of UNOWAS, briefed the members of the Group. Russia was the only Council member that did not attend the meeting, while China and India attended as observers.

Another expert-level meeting of the Informal Expert Group took place on 30 April and focused on South Sudan. Deputy Special Representative (Political) for South Sudan and Deputy Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Guang Cong briefed. Cong referred to flooding and drought in parts of South Sudan as factors increasing conflict risks, and he described the mission's efforts to mitigate herder-farmer tensions. While Russia did not participate, the 14 other Council members were present, with China and India again taking part as observers.

Research Initiatives

In 2019, the Climate Security Expert Network (CSEN) was launched as "a hub for research on the linkages between climate and security, the effects of climate change on security and responses to these issues".[46] The Berlin-based think-tank, adelphi, serves as the Secretariat for the Network. Comprised of approximately 30 experts and supported by the German government, the CSEN assists the Climate-Security Mechanism and the Group of Friends on Climate and Security by "synthesising scientific knowledge and expertise, advising on entry points for building resilience to climate-security risks, and helping to strengthen a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities of addressing climate-related security risks".[47]

The CSEN produces reports on the climate-security risks in various countries and regions—many of which are on the Security Council's agenda—that include entry points for addressing these risks. Each report is accompanied by a concise fact sheet that highlights its key elements. To date, CSEN experts have written reports and accompanying fact sheets on the following cases: Afghanistan, Ethiopia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Caribbean, Mali, Nepal, North Africa and the Sahel, Northern Central America, Pacific Islands Region, South Asia, and Sudan.[48] They have also written longer policy papers to help inform decision-making on climate-security issues, including in relation to the UN system.[49]

In 2020, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) initiated the Climate-related Peace and Security Risk project, a three-year initiative funded by the Norwegian government that assesses climate-related security and development risks in certain cases on the Security Council's agenda.[50] As part of this initiative, SIPRI and NUPI are producing fact sheets highlighting the relevant risks in different situations and proposing recommendations for international and national responses; the facts sheets are produced after consulting with a wide range of stakeholders, including the host government. The first of these focused on Somalia and was published in February 2021, shortly before the Security Council considered the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM).[51] As at May 2021, additional fact sheets had been published on South Sudan,[52] the Sahel,[53] and Mali.[54] The SIRPI-NUPI initiative is also intended to develop research collaborations between Nordic-Baltic experts

The other is the informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security, which was established in late 2015, and is chaired in 2021 by Ireland and Mexico.

46. Climate Security Expert Network. n.d. https://climate-security-expert-network.org/.

47. Ibid.

48. Climate Security Expert Network. n.d. Library. https://climate-security-expert-network.org/library.

49. Rüttinger, Lukas. 2020. "Climate Change in the UN Peacebuilding Commission and Fund." February. https://climate-security-expert-network.org/sites/climate-security-expert-network.org/files/documents/csen_policy_paper_climate_change_in_the_un_pbc_and_pbf.pdf. Check also: König, Christian, and Janani Vivekananda. 2020. "How Can UN Organs Respond to Climate-Security Risks." July. https://climate-security-expert-network.org/sites/climate-security-expert-network.org/files/documents/how_can_un_organs_respond_to_climate_security_risks.pdf. And check also: Vivekananda, Janani, Day, Adam, and Susanne Wolfmaier. 2020. What can the UN Security Council do on Climate and Security? Berlin: Climate Security Expert Network. https://climate-security-expert-network.org/sites/climate-security-expert-network.com/files/documents/what_can_the_un_security_council_do_on_climate_and_security_v2.pdf.

50. SIPRI. 2021. "SIPRI and NUPI form Cooperation to Inform Security Council". February 4. https://www.sipri.org/news/2021/sipri-and-nupi-form-cooperation-inform-un-security-council#:~:text=The%20aim%20of%20the%20collaboration,regions%20on%20the%20council's%20agenda.

51. SIPRI and NUPI. 2021. "Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet, Somalia." February. https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/210203%20FINAL%20Fact%20Sheet%20Somalia%20Skisser%20LR11.pdf.

52. SIPRI and NUPI. 2021. "Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet, South Sudan. March. https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/Fact%20Sheet%20South%20Sudan_HR.pdf

53. SIPRI and NUPI. 2021. "Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet, the Sahel. April. https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/NUPI_Fact_Sheet_Sahel_LR5.pdf

54. SIPRI and NUPI 2021. "Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet, Mali. May. https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/210526%20Final%20Mali%20Climate%20Peace%20Security%20Fact%20Sheet_EN.pdf

and cross-regional partnerships with research institutions in conflict-affected and otherwise vulnerable states.

The Secretary-General

Secretary-General António Guterres has increasingly used his office to raise the alarm about the climate crisis. In a trip to the Asia Pacific in May 2019, he noted that climate change is an existential threat for some of the Pacific Island States. More recently, briefing the Security Council at the UK's February 2021 debate on climate-related security risks, Guterres called the "climate emergency…the defining issue of our time", and advocated for enhanced "preparations for the escalating implications of the climate crisis for international peace and security". He outlined four priorities to address the crisis. First, he called for the cutting of emissions, including through ambitious, nationally determined contributions. Second, he urged increased investment to help countries and communities adapt and develop resilience to climate-related disasters such as storms and droughts. Third, Guterres encouraged the "embrace of a concept of security that puts people at its centre", whereby "[p]reventing and addressing the poverty, food insecurity and displacement caused by climate disruption contribute to sustaining peace and reducing the risk of conflict". Finally, he called for a collaborative approach among different actors within and outside of the UN system to help tackle the climate crisis.[55]

Three climate envoys support the Secretary-General's efforts to tackle climate mitigation and adaptation, although none of them have roles related to the immediate security effects of climate change. The Special Advisor to the Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General of the Climate Action Team occupies the most operational role day-to-day. Appointed in February 2020 and overseeing a small team, Selwin Hart is tasked with focusing on "Member State support, coalition-building, UN system engagement and public mobilization necessary to implement the Paris Agreement". He helps to promote the Secretary-General's efforts to enhance Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and phase out fossil fuel and coal, among other responsibilities.[56] Michael Bloomberg, the UN Special Envoy on Climate Ambition and Solutions, is responsible for mobilising "strong and more ambitious climate action" by "support[ing] the work of the Secretary-General in growing and strengthening the coalition of governments, companies, cities and financial institutions committing to net-zero before 2050 in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement".[57] And Mark Carney, who was appointed in December 2019, serves as the UN Envoy for Climate Action and Finance. He works towards "shifting public and private finance markets and mobilizing private finance to the levels needed to achieve the 1.5˚C goal of the Paris Agreement".[58]

Council Dynamics: The Current State of Play

All current members of the Security Council recognise that climate change poses an existential threat to human civilisation. They all share the view that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international mechanism for dealing with the mitigation and adaptation challenges of climate change and that international efforts to reduce carbon emissions must be significantly stepped up as a matter of urgency. One hundred and ninety-one countries (including all Security Council members) have agreed to the Paris Agreement, which was negotiated under the auspices of the UNFCCC. The US, whose decision to withdraw from the agreement went into effect in November 2020, rejoined it in February 2021.

The main division among Security Council members is not, therefore, whether climate change exists or whether it has adverse socioeconomic, developmental, or even security effects. The division is over what role the Security Council should play in combating this threat, and under what circumstances. Often, the question comes down to whether the security impacts of climate change are clear enough in a given situation on its agenda to merit the Council's attention.

As at mid-2021, there are 12 Security Council members that believe that the Security Council, working in cooperation with

other parts of the UN system, should be an important factor in the effort to resolve the security effects of climate change. Many of these countries have emphasised that climate change should be integrated more systematically into the Council's work, and that enhanced analysis of climate-related security threats is needed to help the UN, including the Security Council, to develop more effective responses. They often emphasise that factors such as drought, water scarcity, food insecurity, desertification, and displacement that are caused or exacerbated by climate change are conflict risk multipliers. They see the Security Council as part of a larger constellation of actors within and outside the UN system working together to address the security impacts of climate change.

Many of the elected members that support Council involvement on this issue have emphasised that addressing climate-related security threats is a priority of their Council tenures. A number of these members are particularly sensitive to the issue because they have witnessed its impact first-hand in their home countries and regions. When the Dominican Republic convened a debate on climate change and security during its January 2019 presidency, its then-foreign minister, Miguel Vargas Maldonado, stated: "The Dominican Republic brings to the table the voice of the countries that suffer more intensely

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55. United Nations. 2020. Letter dated 27 August 2020 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General. August 28. https://undocs.org/S/2020/849.

56. United Nations. n.d. Selwin Charles Hart Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Climate Action and Assistant Secretary-General for the Climate Action Team. https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/profiles/selwin-hart.

57. United Nations. 2021. Mr. Michael R. Bloomberg of the United States - Special Envoy on Climate Ambition and Solutions. February 5. https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/personnel-appointments/2021-02-05/mr-michael-r-bloomberg-of-the-united-states%C2%A0-special-envoy-climate-ambition-and-solutions%C2%A0-%C2%A0%C2%A0%C2%A0.

58. United Nations. 2019. Mr. Mark Joseph Carney of Canada - Special Envoy on Climate Action and Finance. December 1. https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/personnel-appointments/2019-12-01/mr-mark-joseph-carney-of-canada-special-envoy-climate-action-and-finance.

Council Dynamics: The Current State of Play

the effects of natural disasters as a result of climate change, due to both their geographic location and their institutional and/or economic vulnerabilities. For that reason, we feel that it is particularly urgent for the Security Council to reach consensus on the best way to include climate-related effects in its work on security."[59] Current Council members from the developing world have expressed similar sentiments. At the 23 February 2021 open debate on "Addressing climate-related security risks to international peace and security through mitigation and resilience building", Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta said: "no body with such a strong mandate should step aside from this challenge. That is why one of our priorities… during our term on the Security Council, is to clarify the importance of the climate and security nexus."[60] President Kenyatta went on to observe how the "drought-stricken Horn of Africa, the drying up Lake Chad basin and the shrinking Sahel and savannah grasslands have worsened economic vulnerabilities and set in motion political, demographic and migratory dynamics that increase the threat of insurgency and violent extremism".[61] At the same open debate, Tunisian President Kaïs Saïed alluded to the negative impact of climate change in Africa and affirmed: "The Republic of Tunisia gives the highest priority to this matter through its current membership of the Security Council and through other international and regional bodies."[62] Niger has also often referred to the ways in which climate change has bred insecurity in the Sahel region, including by contributing to farmer-herder tensions over scarce resources.[63]

When Germany left the Council at the end of 2020, Ireland and Norway both vied to replace it as a co-chair of the Informal Expert Group on Climate and Security, alongside Niger. With neither country keen to forfeit the role, they struck a compromise of splitting co-chairmanship of the Group during their 2021-2022 Council tenures; Ireland is serving as a co-chair of the Group in 2021, while Norway is expected to assume this role in 2022. The two countries have agreed to work closely together to promote an efficient and smooth transition between the two periods.

The biggest change to Council dynamics in 2021 has been the reversal of the earlier US position. The Biden administration's views on climate change in general, and on Council engagement on this issue in particular, are diametrically opposed to those of the previous administration, which included climate deniers at the highest level. During the Trump administration, the US joined China and Russia in contesting the integration and expansion of climate language in some country-specific Council outcomes, and as noted above, it disapproved of a thematic resolution on climate and security in July 2020. The Biden administration has embraced a Council role on climate-related security matters. It has supported the inclusion of climate change and security language in a number of Security Council outcomes. In his statement to the Council during the 23 February

2021 open debate, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry declared: "…here in the United Nations Security Council, the United States will work closely with our like-minded colleagues to focus the Security Council's attentions on the climate crisis and its consequences for international peace and security."[64] Less than one month later, on 18 March 2021, President Biden announced that the US would join the Informal Expert Group on Climate and Security during a virtual meeting with Security Council members. And on 8 April 2021, the US joined the Group of Friends on Climate and Security.

China and Russia have long been sceptical of Council engagement on this issue. They believe that climate change is fundamentally a sustainable development issue (rather than a matter of international peace and security) that is more appropriately addressed by other parts of the UN system, such as the General Assembly, the UNFCCC, ECOSOC, and the UN's development system. While emphasising the importance of mitigation and adaptation measures in addressing climate change, both countries underscore the need for donor countries to provide support to developing countries through technology transfers and climate financing. They chafe at what they believe is an effort by other Council members to draw generalised links between climate change and threats to international peace and security. China and Russia have noted that climate change can worsen conflict in particular situations on the Council's agenda, but emphasise that evidence of direct causal linkages between climate change and conflict is lacking. Russia in particular cautions that focusing on climate change could divert the Council's attention from other more basic security threats; in this respect, Russian ambassador Vassily Nebenzia has asserted that, "to assume that climate change is the root cause of security issues would mean failing to determine its true causes and taking the wrong path when trying to resolve those issues".[65]

India, like China and Russia, has strong doubts about a Council role, although it did agree in March 2021 to include a reference acknowledging the adverse effects of climate change and the need for risk assessments and strategies in a resolution renewing the mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). India has suggested that climate change should be discussed in more representative fora than the 15-member Security Council, while warning against "securitization" of the issue. In the February open debate on climate and security, India's Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar, expressed concern that a "securitized" approach would "establish a parallel climate track" when the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement represent "a delicately balanced global democratic effort to take climate action".[66] In the past, it has posited the risk, in its view, that the Council could pursue coercive measures to address this challenge.[67] It emphasises, as Russia and China do, the importance of developed countries honouring commitments to provide climate financing, technology

59. United Nations. 2019. Security Council 8451st meeting. January 25. https://undocs.org/S/PV.8451, p.24.

60. United Nations. 2021. Security Council VTC meeting. February 25. https://undocs.org/S/2021/198, p.13.

61. Ibid, p.13.

62. Ibid, p.15.

63. Ibid, p. 19. See also United Nations. 2020. Security Council VTC meeting. July 28. https://undocs.org/S/2020/751, p.5.

64. United Nations. 2021. Security Council VTC meeting. February 25. https://undocs.org/S/2021/198, p.37.

65. Ibid, p.40

66. Ibid, p.33.

67. In the open debate on "Addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security" in January 2019, the Indian representative stated: "Thinking in security terms usually engenders overly militarized solutions to problems that inherently require non-military responses to resolve them. In short, it brings the wrong actors to the table. As the saying goes, if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." United Nations. 2019. Security Council 8451st meeting. January 25. https://undocs.org/S/PV.8451, p.43.

transfers and capacity-building to the developing world to help address the climate crisis.[68]

The Council dynamics surrounding climate and security can be expected to shift in the years to come. 2022 will see four members (Brazil, China, India, and Russia) with reservations about climate-security matters being under the Council's purview. Brazil, which has been reluctant about Council engagement on climate change and security in the past,[69] won a seat for a 2022-2023 term in the Council in the 11 June 2021 Security Council elections in the General Assembly.

Options for Action

This section proposes some potential avenues for advancing the climate-security agenda in the Security Council. It discusses possible approaches to integrating climate-related security language into outcomes, while touching upon efforts in the field to address climate-related security threats. It explores the possibility of the Council once again attempting to pursue a thematic resolution on this issue, and it describes ways in which the UN's peacebuilding work can be an entry point for enhanced Council engagement on climate change and security. Finally, it proposes some options for the work of the Informal Expert Group on Climate and Security.

Climate Change and Country- and Region-Specific Outcomes

Efforts to integrate climate change language into country- and region-specific outcomes are certain to continue. Incorporating climate-security language into the operative part of resolutions on peace operations with greater consistency in cases where climate change poses security risks could help to move the agenda forward, as such references are most frequently made in the preambular parts of resolutions. Field presences are likely to be accorded enhanced resources to execute climate-related tasks—for example, calls for risk assessment and risk management strategies on climate change's adverse effects—if they are referenced in the operative section—that is, in the part of resolutions where mandates are outlined. In addition, including climate-security language in the operative part of more resolutions, as opposed to the preamble, could help to elevate the normative profile of the issue.

Most country- and region-specific outcomes referring to climate change have focused on African cases. However, as noted above, the Council expanded climate change language to resolutions on Cyprus and Iraq in February and May 2021, respectively. Continued efforts to expand climate change text to other relevant situations would seem a logical step; at the very least, this would help to develop the normative framework for Council engagement on this issue with the goal of promoting constructive responses to security concerns. Mandate renewals for the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) and the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) have been considered prime candidates for the inclusion of climate change language. As at mid-2021, the political environment appears more favourable toward casting the net wider, given that the new administration in the US is positively disposed to the Council's work on climate change and security. The UNAMI example demonstrates this point. In a departure from 2020, the integration of climate and security language in the UNAMI resolution succeeded in 2021, due at least in part to the change in the position of the US, which is the penholder on Iraq. The US is also the penholder on Haiti, as well as an influential actor on the Afghanistan file, giving it a significant voice in the negotiations on BINUH and UNAMA.

Of course, securing references to climate change in Security Council outcomes is only a small part of the equation. The most important consideration is how this language is implemented on the ground and what impact it makes in real life situations.

A number of UN peace operations already do considerable work to address climate-security concerns, often in conjunction with UN Country Teams and other partners.[70] In December 2020, UNOWAS collaborated with UN Women and the Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel (which consists of representatives from various countries in the sub-region) to conduct climate-security risk assessments in Nigeria and Liberia.[71] These assessments—and well as other fieldwork by UNOWAS and UN Country Teams in the sub-region—are expected to form the basis of an upcoming report that will "inform the support that ECOWAS and the United Nations…provide to Member States in the development of national climate change adaptation plans, including the integration of conflict prevention approaches."[72] As noted above, UNOCA, the UN Climate-Security Mechanism, the Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECCAS), and UN Country Teams in Central Africa are collaborating to enhance their understanding of the relationship between climate change and security in Central Africa and to strengthen the capacity of the sub-region to mitigate these risks.[73] In Somalia, an environment advisor, who was deployed to the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) in the autumn of 2020, has been training Somali government officials and UN staff to analyse the linkages between climate change and security, and advising UN mediation efforts when environmental factors play a role in exacerbating tensions. In this regard, as at May 2021, a UN environmental peacebuilding specialist was expected to be temporarily deployed to work with the UNSOM environment advisor to help

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68. United Nations. 2021. Security Council VTC meeting. February 25. https://undocs.org/S/2021/198, p.34.

69. Ibid, p 60-61.

70. In this regard, it is worth noting that Security Council outcomes with climate change references emphasise the importance of risk assessment and risk management strategies for host governments and the UN (emphasis added), not the just the UN peace operation under consideration.

71. United Nations. 2020. Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. December 24. https://undocs.org/S/2020/1293, p.13.

72. Ibid.

73. United Nations. 2020. Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa. December 1. https://undocs.org/S/2020/1154, p.12.

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mediate between two sub-clans in Hirshabelle State contesting land and grazing rights. While there may be differing views about how much climate change has contributed to herder-farmer conflicts in Africa, UN peace operations in places such as the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, South Sudan, and Sudan have continued to work in conjunction with UN country teams and other actors on the ground to mitigate tensions related to transhumance.[74] Aside from specific initiatives, climate-related information is also increasingly finding its way into assessments and analysis conducted by UN peace operations.[75]

Despite these activities, the UN's efforts to address climate-security threats are very much a work in progress, and the depth of these efforts varies. Nonetheless, if the Security Council continues to reflect concern about the current or potential security implications of climate change in outcomes on peace operations, these missions are likely to require enhanced capacity to report on and mitigate these effects. Until the political environment allows for such funds to be derived from assessed contributions—and it remains unclear when this time might come—member states will need to provide support through voluntary contributions, if peace operations are to pursue more systematic approaches to the climate change-security nexus. In this regard, Dröge has argued that in part "a successful approach to limit climate-related security risks…depends on financial resources for UN institutions as a whole, and especially those who provide the Security Council with information."[76] As at May 2021, the only UN peace operation with a full-time environment advisor is the UN Mission in Somalia, although UNOWAS and UNOCA are in the process of contracting one environment advisor each; these positions are funded through voluntary contributions. Climate-related security threats vary by situation, and identifying tailored responses and appropriate resource allocation would be helped by bringing more climate-related expertise into peace operations and more systematic training of UN staff in analysing and understanding responses to climate-related adverse security implications. Strengthening the capacity of the Climate-Security Mechanism through the UN's regular budget, politically untenable at present, would also strengthen efforts to integrate climate change considerations into the UN's peace and security work.

A Thematic Climate Change Outcome: Building on the 2011 Presidential Statement

Council members supporting the organ's engagement on climate change and security matters could decide to pursue a thematic resolution or presidential statement on climate change and security, resurrecting the aborted 2020 effort. With a new US administration supportive of the climate-security agenda and 12 of 15 Council members favourably disposed to Council engagement on this issue, 2021 could be a good year to revive that initiative. Given concerns expressed by China and Russia about addressing climate change and security thematically in the Council, the sponsor(s) of the text would

likely have to moderate their desire for a strong outcome. However, even if the final result were a pared-down version of the ambitious product originally envisioned, it would be viewed as a step forward by those supporting Council engagement on climate-security matters, given the limited substance of the 2011 presidential statement.

Securing one or more of the core elements of the 2020 draft—for example, the request for a periodic Secretary-General's report on climate change and security, the appointment of a Special Representative on Climate and Security, the call for climate advisors in UN peace operations, or the encouragement of UN field presences to consider the security effects of climate change in their assessments, analysis and activities—would give climate change and security a stronger foothold in the Council's work. A second thematic outcome on this issue (adding to the 2011 presidential statement) could also send a strong political signal to the UN Secretariat and UN field presences of the importance of addressing climate-security risks in conflict-affected and other vulnerable states.[77]

In a thematic outcome, the Security Council could also make a bold call to the international community of states to step up mitigation and adaptation efforts, while also recognising the primary role of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) regarding such efforts. Given concerns about encroachment, it would be important to emphasise that the UNFCCC is the main international mechanism for negotiations on climate change. However, if there is no significant progress in mitigating carbon emissions and building resilience in vulnerable states, the negative security impacts of climate change are likely to become clearer, an argument for the Council to pronounce itself on this matter in line with its conflict prevention mandate outlined in the UN Charter. There are few, if any, international institutions with the political clout of the Security Council, and a strong statement on the importance of mitigation and adaptation could send a powerful message to UN member states on the need for action. It might be a tall order to integrate such messaging into a Council outcome, as some of its permanent members are the largest carbon emitters. But given the gravity of the challenge, the major powers adopting a Security Council outcome speaking to the importance of mitigation and adaptation would be a meaningful sign of leadership.

Climate Change, Security and Peacebuilding

It makes sense that the UN's peacebuilding efforts consider the adverse effects of climate change. Peacebuilding brings holistic approaches to addressing inter-related security, development, humanitarian, and human rights risks that undermine peace and stability; climate change exacerbates many of these challenges. Peacebuilding seeks to build the resilience of post-conflict or otherwise vulnerable states to prevent a (re)lapse into conflict, at a time when "the climate crisis is…eroding the resilience of communities", in the words of UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed.[78] Climate change is frequently viewed as a risk factor for instability. The

74. United Nations Department of Peace Operations. 2020. "Preventing, Mitigating, and Resolving Transhumance Related Conflicts in UN Peacekeeping Settings: A Survey of Practice." https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/transhumance_and_un_pkos_final_web.pdf, p.ix.

75. Interview with UN official, 18 April 2021.

76. Dröge, Susanne. 2020. "Addressing the Risks of Climate Change: What Role for the UN Security Council SWP Research Paper 6, 2020." German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP). June. https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/research_papers/2020RP06_UNSC_Climate.pdf, p.6.

77. Interview with a UN official, 13 April 2021.

78. United Nations. 2020. Press Release: Climate Emergency, Inequality among Threats to Be Faced in Post-COVID-19 World, Deputy-Secretary-General Tells Security Council Debate on Conflict Drivers. November 3. https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/dsgsm1498.doc.htm.

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UN's peacebuilding efforts are designed to target risk factors "aimed at preventing the outbreak, continuation and recurrence of conflict… and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development".[79]

Awareness of climate-related security risks has prompted the UN's peacebuilding architecture to focus increasingly on this issue. Several relevant meetings in this regard were held in 2020. In July 2020, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) held its first meeting on peacebuilding challenges in the Pacific Islands, which focused extensively on the risks posed by climate change to the region. In September 2020, a PBC meeting on the Lake Chad Basin featured extensive discussion on the risks posed by climate change and environmental degradation. And in September 2020, the Commission submitted a statement to the Council's open debate on the humanitarian impacts of environmental degradation—which cited these examples in highlighting climate-related challenges and noted that building climate resilience can be seen as conducive to peacebuilding. Perhaps most notable in terms of the UN peacebuilding architecture's commitment to this issue, the Security-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has directly addressed climate-related security threats by investing some $63.4 million since 2017 on 29 projects related to climate security in 20 countries; several of these countries are on the Security Council's agenda. The PBF further intends to commit "greater resources to specifically prevent and tackle conflicts resulting from global warming" in its 2020-2024 strategy.

The Security Council could make greater use of the advisory role of PBC by soliciting its input more frequently, including in country- or region-specific cases where climate change is a security concern. This could include briefings by officials from the Peacebuilding Support Office (or the PBC chair) that focus on how the Security Council can best work with other parts of the UN system to address the security effects of climate change in vulnerable and post-conflict settings. These briefings, and other input from the UN's peacebuilding architecture, could also include specific advice on how to craft mandates that are sensitive to the security impacts of climate change. One such example was the letter that the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission transmitted to the Council in December 2019 on the peacebuilding priorities in West Africa and the Sahel, only weeks prior to the renewal of the Office's mandate through an exchange of letters between the Secretary-General (S/2019/1009 of 19 December 2019) and the Security Council (S/2020/85 of 31 January 2020). Among its many elements, the letter noted the "adverse effects of climate change" as one of several "[s]erious challenges" that required "a comprehensive approach to address the root causes of conflict in the Sahel and West Africa, prevent further escalation of conflict, and build and sustain peace". These concerns were echoed in the PBC Chair's briefing to the Council on 16 November 2020 at the meeting on the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

Several elements would appear important in generating more regular input from the PBC on particular mandates. First, the country designated as the informal coordinator between the Council and PBC (usually an elected member to the Council who concurrently serves on the PBC) can play a critical role in identifying opportunities for the PBC to provide advice, and in working with Council members to secure agreement to invite the PBC Chair as a briefer or otherwise solicit the PBC's advice. Germany was particularly active during 2019-2020 in expanding the number of files in which the Council sought the PBC's advice. Kenya, which succeeded Germany in 2021, has been playing a similarly active role, for example, in securing an invitation to the PBC Chair to brief the Council on the Great Lakes region in its meeting in April 2021.

Second, the member who holds the pen on the relevant file can also lead on seeking PBC advice, as happened when Côte d'Ivoire was the penholder on the Sahel and West Africa in 2019. As a post-conflict country in West Africa, the credibility of Côte d'Ivoire's request to the PBC may have been enhanced in the eyes of other Council members. France has played a similar role in encouraging the PBC to submit advice on the Central African Republic in advance of mandate renewals of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA), although to date, climate change has not featured in these discussions. Finally, as the PBC operates by consensus and consists of 31 member states with diverse views, the PBC chair's ability to negotiate effectively and strike agreements that generate meaningful and substantive advice for the Security Council can be vital. In 2020, under Canada's chairmanship of the PBC, there was a significant increase in the number of press statements and written products adopted by consensus, many of which required multiple rounds of silence procedure before they were agreed.

The Informal Expert Group: Potential Future Activities

The Informal Expert Group, still nascent, could become a key forum for equipping Council members with enhanced understanding of climate-related security threats in various countries and regions. Local experts, civil society actors, government officials, UN staff in relevant regions, representatives of regional and sub-regional organisations, and others with specialised knowledge could provide Informal Expert Group members with fine-grained, contextualised analysis that could help to inform mandate formulations, interventions in debates and other public meetings, and the questions posed of UN officials during closed consultations and other informal meetings. In this regard, meetings of the Informal Expert Group on specific countries or regions could be held shortly before mandate renewals or briefings on those same items in the Security Council proper, so that the information gleaned from Informal Expert Group meetings is current and fresh in the minds of diplomats when they apply it to their work in the Council.

Another option for this Informal Expert Group would be to follow up on climate change-related provisions in Council outcomes to gauge how well they are being applied in country- and region-specific cases and discuss avenues for improved implementation. Since UN country teams are often heavily engaged in climate-related security work, it would be helpful if representatives of relevant UN funds, programmes and agencies were available to answer questions at these meetings, in addition to the primary briefer, if the work of a peace operation is being discussed. This is a practice that has been employed by the Informal Working Group on the Protection of Civilians since 2013, whereby various parts of the UN family relevant to the situation under discussion are present to answer questions following the initial briefing.

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79. United Nations. 2016. Security Council Resolution 2282 (2016). April 27. https://undocs.org/S/RES/2282(2016), p.1-2.

Options for Action

Persuasion

Internal disagreements will continue to challenge the Council's efforts to expand its focus on climate change. In general, a strategic approach that strives to underscore climate-related risks in the cases where they are most noticeable, rather than in all cases where such risks may occur, would appear prudent. Sceptics need to be persuaded that there is a relationship between climate change and security that requires the Council's attention in various contexts. Council visiting missions, where members can directly see the impacts of climate change on the security environment, could be an important vehicle in this regard, as was the case with the visit to the Lake Chad Basin in March 2017. Council members organising future Council visiting missions should be attuned to where climate change is affecting the security environment and whether the responses of the UN and host governments are working; in such cases, members could include activities in the programme of such visits that focus on the ways in which climate-related risks are being managed. New research by CESN, NUPI/SIPRI, the International Crisis Group, and others could also be useful entry points for engaging sceptics, making persuasive arguments backed by science-based evidence, and garnering more support for Council involvement in addressing climate-related security risks.

Conclusion

The Security Council is increasingly grappling with climate change as a security threat. More and more, meetings on climate change and security (and related topics) are being convened, climate-security language is being incorporated into resolutions, and various mechanisms are being established to help support the Council's work on this issue. But it is difficult to determine the future course of Council engagement on climate and security. While most members of this organ are committed to a Council role, some influential members have strong reservations about the extent to which it should devote energy and resources to climate change. In addition, the Council is still trying to understand and define the nature of the challenge (which varies depending on the context), and to ascertain the Council's precise role, and added value, in addressing climate and security matters. Its outcomes can have strong political and legal significance, but they require resources and know-how to implement. While the Council has emphasised the need for risk assessments and risk management strategies in particular contexts, and called for better reporting on climate-security risks, it will be more challenging to carry out such tasks if funding is not available for climate advisors in peace operations.

Even if the worst-case scenarios are avoided, the climate crisis is likely to deepen. Its consequences for human security will mount, bringing linkages between climate-related factors and conflict into sharp relief. In such a world, the Council failing to respond will make it appear out of touch with fundamental threats to international peace and security—and human survival.

Annex I: Thematic Meetings on Climate-Security Matters

TOPIC	DATE	ORGANISER	FORMAT	BRIEFER(S)
Relationship between energy, security and climate (S/PV.5663 and Resumption I)	17 April 2007	United Kingdom	Open Debate	Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
Impact of climate change (S/PV.6587 and Resumption I)	20 July 2011	Germany	Open Debate	Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Achim Steiner
Understanding and addressing climate-related security risks (S/PV.8307)	11 July 2018	Sweden	Debate	Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed; Minister of Water Resources of Iraq, Hassan Al-Janabi; representative of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change, Hindou Ibrahim
Addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security (S/PV.8451)	25 January 2019	Dominican Republic	Open debate	Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo; Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Achim Steiner; Chief Scientist of the World Meteorological Organization Pavel Kabat; Research Assistant at the Environmental Security Program of the Stimson Center, Lindsay Getschel
Climate and security (S/PV. 8748)	14 July 2020	Germany	Open debate	Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, Miroslav Jenča; Director of the Centre National d'Études Stratégiques et de Sécurité in Niger, Mahamadou Seidou Magagi; Director of the Sustainable Pacific Consultancy in Niue, Coral Pasisi
"Humanitarian effects of environmental degradation and peace and security" (S/2020/929)	17 September 2020	Niger	Open Debate	ICRC President Peter Maurer; Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Ibrahim Thiaw; Earth Ambassador, artist and activist, Inna Modja
Addressing climate-related security risks to international peace and security through mitigation and resilience building (S/2021/198)	23 February 2021	United Kingdom	Open debate	Secretary-General António Guterres; Chair of the UN Youth Advisory Group. Nisreen Elsaim

Annex II: Formal Meetings on Topics Related to Climate and Security[80]

TOPIC	DATE	ORGANISER	FORMAT	BRIEFER(S)
"Natural resources and conflict" (S/PV.5705)	25 June 2007	Belgium	Open Debate	Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe; President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa (Bahrain); President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis (Lithuania)
"New challenges to international peace and security and conflict prevention", including pandemics, climate change, and transnational organised crime (S/PV.6668)	23 November 2011	Portugal	Briefing	Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Yury Fedotov; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres; Director-General of the World Health Organization, Margaret Chan
"Conflict Prevention and Natural Resources" (S/PV.6982)	19 June 2013	United Kingdom	Open Debate	Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson; Chair of the Africa Progress Panel and former Secretary-General, Kofi Annan; Managing Director of the World Bank, Caroline Anstey; Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Rebeca Grynspan
"Peace and security challenges facing small island developing states"; climate change, transnational organised crime, drug and human trafficking, and piracy were among the issues raised (S/PV.7499)	30 July 2015	New Zealand	Open debate	Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Prime Minister of Samoa, Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi; Prime Minister of Jamaica, Portia Simpson Miller; Minister of Finance of Seychelles, Jean-Paul Adam; Premier of Niue, Toke Talagi; Minister of Finance of the Cook Islands, Mark Brown; Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, Thomas Mayr-Harting
"Challenges in the Sahel Region" (S/PV.7699)	26 May 2016	Spain/Egypt	Briefing	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas; Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and Assistant Secretary-General, Jean-Paul Laborde; Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Monique Barbut; Coordinator of the Association des Femmes Peules Autochtones du Tchad, Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim; African Union High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, Pierre Buyoya; European Union Special Representative for the Sahel, Angel Losada
"Water, peace and security"; the meeting explored such issues as the relationship between climate change and water scarcity, the management of transboundary waters, and the harmful impact that conflict can have on access to clean water (S/PV.7818)	22 November 2016	Senegal	Open debate	Chair of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, Danilo Türk; Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Christine Beerli; President of Strategic Foresight Group, Sundeep Waslekar
"Preventive Diplomacy and Transboundary Waters" (S/PV.7959)	6 June 2017	Bolivia	Briefing	Secretary-General António Guterres
"Addressing complex challenges to international peace and security"; the meeting explored non-traditional security threats, such as climate change, famine, pandemic diseases, transnational organised crime, and drug trafficking (S/PV.8144)	20 December 2017	Japan	Open debate	Secretary-General António Guterres

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80. This list draws from Climate Security Expert Network, "Climate Security at the UNSC – A Short History", available at: https://climate-security-expert-network.org/unsc-engagement.

Annex II: Formal Meetings on Topics Related to Climate and Security

TOPIC	DATE	ORGANISER	FORMAT	BRIEFER(S)
"The Role of Natural Resources as a Root Cause of Conflict" (S/2018/901)	16 October 2018	Bolivia	Briefing	Secretary-General António Guterres
"Contemporary drivers of conflict and instability and insecurity"; the discussion focused on the security implications of climate change and COVID-19, among other factors (S/2020/1090)	3 November 2020	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Open debate (VTC)	Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed; Chief Executive Officer of the New Partnership for Africa's Development Ibrahim Assane Mayaki; Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies Hilary Beckles; President of ECOSOC, Ambassador Munir Akram (Pakistan)

Annex III: Arria-Formula Meetings on Climate-Security Matters

TOPIC	DATE	ORGANISERS	BRIEFERS
Security dimensions of climate change	15 February 2013	Council members Pakistan and the UK	Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; High Representative of the Secretary-General for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Gyan Chandra Acharya (Nepal); Minister-in-assistance to the President of the Marshall Islands, Tony deBrum (the Marshall Islands); Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impacts Research, Hans Joachim Schellnhuber; World Bank Vice-President for Sustainable Development, Inger Andersen
Climate change as a threat multiplier for global security	30 June 2015	Council members Spain and Malaysia	Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson; Foreign Minister of the Marshal Islands Tony deBrum; Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad, Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim; Kiribati Climate Action Network, Pelenise Alofa; Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University, Professor Michael Gerrard
Security Implications of Climate Change: Sea Level Rise	10 April 2017	Council member Ukraine, with cooperation from non-Council member Germany in preparing the session	Ambassador Harald Braun of Germany; Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of Internally Displaced Persons, Walter Kalin; President of the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies, Major General Munir Muniruzzaman
Climate Change: Preparing for security implications of rising temperatures	14 December 2017	Council members France, Italy, Japan, Sweden, and the UK; the Netherlands and Peru, which were about to enter the Council in 2018; and other non-Council members Germany, the Maldives and Morocco.	Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Halbe Zijlstra; Co-founder and President of the Center for Climate and Security, Caitlin Werrell
Water, peace and security	26 October 2018	Council members Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Netherlands; members states entering the Council for terms in 2019-2020 (Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Germany, and Indonesia); and Italy, a Council member in 2017 during a split term with the Netherlands	Chair of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, Danilo Türk; UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Miroslav Jenča; Executive Vice President and Managing Director of the World Resources Institute on behalf of the Water, Peace and Security Initiative, Manish Bapna
Climate and security risks: the latest data	22 April 2020	Council members Belgium, France, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, and Viet Nam	Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo; President and CEO, International Crisis Group, Robert Malley; Director of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Dan Smith

Annex IV: Climate Change Language in Security Council Outcomes

ISSUE	OUTCOME	LANGUAGE
Peace consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2009/20 10 July 2009	The Security Council expresses its concern on the impact of the global economic crisis on West African economies, since the region is already confronted with development challenges such as rising food insecurity, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and youth unemployment. The Council encourages continued engagement of financial institutions and development partners to mitigate the adverse effects of the decline in economic growth and other destabilizing factors in West Africa.
Maintenance of international peace and security	S/PRST/2011/15 20 July 2011	The Security Council recognizes the responsibility for sustainable development issues, including climate change, conferred upon the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The Security Council underlines General Assembly resolution 63/281 of June 3, 2009, which: reaffirms that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the key instrument for addressing climate change, recalls the provisions of the UNFCCC, including the acknowledgement that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions, and invites the relevant organs of the United Nations, as appropriate and within their respective mandates to intensify their efforts in considering and addressing climate change, including its possible security implications. The Security Council notes General Assembly resolution 65/159 of December 20, 2010, entitled 'Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind'. The Security Council notes that, in response to the request contained in General Assembly resolution 63/281, the Secretary-General submitted a report to the General Assembly on 'Climate change and its possible security implications' (A/64/350). The Security Council expresses its concern that possible adverse effects of climate change may, in the long run, aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security. The Security Council expresses its concern that possible security implications of loss of territory of some States caused by sea-level-rise may arise, in particular in small low-lying island States. The Security Council notes that in matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security under its consideration, conflict analysis and contextual information on, inter alia, possible security implications of climate change is important, when such issues are drivers of conflict, represent a challenge to the implementation of Council mandates or endanger the process of consolidation of peace. In this regard, the Council requests the Secretary-General to ensure that his reporting to the Council contains such contextual information."
Peace and security in Africa	S/PRST/2012/26 10 December 2012	The Security Council expresses its concern about the underlying problems in the Sahel region and remains engaged in addressing the complex security and political challenges in this region that are inter-related with humanitarian and developmental issues as well as adverse effects of climate and ecological changes.
Peace and security in Africa	S/PRST/2013/10 16 July 2013	The Security Council reaffirms its concern about the alarming situation in the Sahel region and its commitment to address the complex security and political challenges in this region that are interrelated with humanitarian and developmental issues as well as adverse effects of climate and ecological changes. The Security Council welcomes, in this context, the deployment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) following the transfer of authority from the African-led International Support Mission in Mali to MINUSMA on 1 July 2013.
Peace and security in Africa	S/PRST/2013/20 12 December 2013	The Security Council reiterates its continued concern about the alarming situation in the Sahel region and reaffirms its continued commitment to address the complex security and political challenges in this region, which are interrelated with humanitarian and developmental issues as well as the adverse effects of climate and ecological changes. The Security Council reiterates its strong condemnation of the recent terrorist attacks perpetrated in the region. The Security Council also strongly condemns the abuses of human rights and violence against civilians, notably women and children, committed in the region by terrorist and other extremist groups.
Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	S/PRST/2014/17 27 August 2014	The Security Council reiterates its continued concern about the alarming situation in the Sahel region and reaffirms its continued commitment to address the complex security and political challenges to the stability and development of the region despite the collective efforts undertaken by the region and the international community and reaffirms its continued commitment to address these challenges, which are interrelated with humanitarian and developmental issues as well as the adverse effects of climate and ecological changes. The Security Council reiterates the importance of a coherent, comprehensive and coordinated approach encompassing governance, security, humanitarian, human rights, developmental and environmental aspects to respond to the threats across the Sahel region as well as to address the root causes of these challenges.

Annex IV: Climate Change Language in Security Council Outcomes

ISSUE	OUTCOME	LANGUAGE
Women and peace and security	S/RES/2242 13 October 2015	PP. Noting the changing global context of peace and security, in particular relating to rising violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, the increased numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, the impacts of climate change and the global nature of health pandemics, and in this regard reiterating its intention to increase attention to women, peace and security as a cross-cutting subject in all relevant thematic areas of work on its agenda, including threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts,
Peace and Security in Africa	S/PRST/2015/24 8 December 2015	The Security Council takes note of the report (S/2015/866) of the Secretary-General on the progress toward the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and welcomes the briefing on 25 November 2015 by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (SESG) for the Sahel, Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie. The Security Council encourages further progress by the United Nations system and its partners toward the implementation of the UNISS, including through support to the Group of 5 for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) in order to assist in addressing the security and political challenges to the stability and development of the Sahel region. The Security Council reaffirms its continued commitment to address all these challenges, which are interrelated with humanitarian and development issues as well as the adverse effects of climate and ecological changes. The Security Council reiterates the importance of national and regional ownership of the UNISS, and commends the growing leadership role assumed by the countries of the region. It welcomes in this regard, the establishment of the G5 Sahel, which aims to enhance ownership of the initiatives focused on addressing the threats to peace, security and development in the Sahel.
Peace consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2016/11 28 July 2016	The Security Council commends the Special Representative for its participation in the briefing on Peace and Security in Africa: Challenges of the Sahel Region" that was held on May 26th, encourages further progress by the United Nations system and its partners towards the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), including through support to the Group of 5 for the Sahel (G5), in order to assist in addressing the security and political challenges to the stability and development of the Sahel region and reaffirms its continued commitment to address such challenges, which are interrelated with humanitarian and development issues as well as the adverse effects of climate and ecological changes.
Peace consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2017/2 20 January 2017	The Security Council encourages further progress by the United Nations system and its partners towards the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), including through support to the Group of 5 for the Sahel (G5), in order to assist in addressing the security and political challenges to the stability and development of the Sahel region and reaffirms its continued commitment to address such challenges, which are interrelated with humanitarian and development issues as well as the adverse effects of climate and ecological changes, and, in this regards, highlights the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies relating to climate change impacts.
Lake Chad Basin Region	S/RES/2349 31 March 2017	OP. 26: Recognizes the adverse effects of climate change and ecological changes among other factors on the stability of the Region, including through water scarcity, drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity, and emphasises the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies by governments and the United Nations relating to these factors
Peace Consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2017/10 24 July 2017	The Security Council encourages further progress by the implementation of the UNISS, including through support to the G5, in order to assist in addressing the security and political challenges to the stability and development of the Sahel region and reaffirms its continued commitment to address such challenges, which are interrelated with humanitarian and development issues as well as the adverse effects of climate and ecological changes, and, in this regard, highlights the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies related to climate change impacts
Peace Consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2018/3 30 January 2018	The Security Council recognizes the adverse effects of climate change and ecological changes among other factors on the stability of West Africa and the Sahel region, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity, and emphasizes the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies by governments and the United Nations relating to these factors The Security Council expresses concern over the overall humanitarian situation in the region, characterized by the impact of armed conflict and terrorism, extreme poverty, food insecurity, forced displacement, adverse effects of climate change and epidemics, which contribute to the high levels of structural, chronic and acute vulnerability in the region and continue to affect populations, and call for significant humanitarian and development actions

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ISSUE	OUTCOME	LANGUAGE
The Situation in Somalia	S/RES/2408 27 March 2018	Recalling its Presidential statement S/PRST/2011/15, recognising the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters among other factors on the stability of Somalia, including through drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity, and emphasising the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies by governments and the United Nations relating to these factors
Mali (MINUSMA mandate renewal)	S/RES/2423 28 June 2018	PP: Recognizing the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of Mali, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity, and emphasizing the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies by the government of Mali and the United Nations relating to these factors OP. 68: Notes the importance for the Government of Mali and the United Nations to take into consideration, as appropriate, the security implications of the adverse effects of climate change and other ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, in their activities, programs and strategies in Mali
Darfur (UNAMID mandate renewal)	S/RES/2429 13 July 2018	PP: Recognising the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, on the situation in Darfur, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity OP. 47: Requests the United Nations and the Government of Sudan to consider the adverse implications of climate change, other ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, in their programmes in Darfur, including by undertaking risk assessments and risk management strategies relating to these factors and further requests the Secretary-General to provide information of such assessments in mandated reporting as appropriate
Somalia (AMISOM reauthorisation)	S/RES/2431 30 July 2018	PP: Recalling its Presidential statement S/PRST/2011/15, recognising the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters among other factors on the stability of Somalia, including through drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity, and emphasising the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies by governments and the United Nations relating to these factors
Peace Consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2018/16 10 August 2018	The Security Council expresses its concern for increased tensions between pastoralists and farmers in the region driven by competition for natural resources, rapid population growth, weak governance, pressures related to climate and ecological factors, and the circulation of small arms and light weapons The Security Council expresses concern over the overall humanitarian situation in the region, characterized by...adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes, natural disasters and epidemics, which contribute to high levels of structural, chronic and acute vulnerability in the region and continue to affect populations, and call for significant humanitarian and development action as well as the disbursement of previously pledged funds The Security Council recognizes the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters among other factors on the stability of West Africa and the Sahel region, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity, continues to stress the need for long-term strategies by governments and the United Nations, based on risk assessments to support stabilization and build resilience, and further requests that such information be taken into consideration by UNOWAS in its activities
Central African Region	S/PRST/2018/17 10 August 2018	The Security Council recognises the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters among other factors on the stability of the Central Africa Region, including through drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity, continues to stress the need for long-term strategies by governments and the United Nations, based on risk assessments, to support stabilisation and build resilience, and further requests that such information be taken into consideration by UNOCA in its activities
Central African Republic	S/RES/2448 13 December 2018	PP: Recognizing the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of the Central African Region, including through drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity, and stressing the need for adequate risk assessment by the United Nations relating to these factors and for long-term strategies by governments of the Central African Region and the United Nations to support stabilization and build resilience

Annex IV: Climate Change Language in Security Council Outcomes

ISSUE	OUTCOME	LANGUAGE
Silencing the Guns in Africa	S/RES/2457 27 February 2019	PP: Noting that Africa still faces enormous challenges, including: governance deficits, economic difficulties, high rates of unemployment, the mismanagement of ethnic diversity, competition over power and resources, state fragility and weak state institutions, ungoverned spaces which leave room for illegal activities, the continued flow of weapons into the continent and their illicit circulation, mercenary activity, insurgencies and rebellions, inadequate border monitoring and control that facilitates transnational organized crime, illicit exploitation of natural resources, continued crisis that precipitate irregular migration, corruption, illicit financial flows which facilitate funding for illegal activities, climate change and natural disasters, and slow processes in the ratification of AU instruments and policies OP 18: Recognizes the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of a number of AU Member States, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity, and emphasizes the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies by the respective governments and the United Nations relating to these factors
Somalia (UNSOM mandate renewal)	S/RES/2461 27 March 2019	PP: Recognising the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes, natural disasters among other factors on the stability of Somalia, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity, and emphasising the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies by governments and the United Nations relating to these factors, and recalling its Presidential statement S/PRST/2011/15 OP 21: Requests the United Nations and the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States to consider the adverse implications of climate change, other ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, in their programmes in Somalia, including by undertaking risk assessments and risk management strategies relating to these factors and further requests the Secretary-General to provide information of such assessments in mandated reporting as appropriate
Somalia (AMISOM reauthorisation)	S/RES/2472 31 May 2019	PP: Emphasising the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies by the FGS and the UN, of climate change, other ecological changes, natural disasters, energy access, and other factors on the stability of Somalia
Mali (MINUSMA mandate renewal)	S/RES/2480 28 June 2019	PP: Emphasizing the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies, by the government of Mali and the United Nations, of ecological changes, natural disasters, drought, desertification, land degradation, food insecurity, energy access, climate change, among other factors, on the security and stability of Mali
Peace Consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2019/7 7 August 2019	The Security Council welcomes the decision of the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review regarding the scope of UNOWAS' mandate and activities, stresses the need for its independent nature and invites the Secretary-General to present to the Council its recommendations as well as his observations on these recommendations, including on potential areas of improvement or new or refocused priorities, including on Counter Terrorism, effects of climate change on security, intercommunal violence as part of a broad prevention and sustaining peace agenda, and present these by 15 November 2019, in order to usefully inform the Council's discussions on the renewal of the Mission's mandate which will expire on 31 December 2019 The Security Council welcomes the study concluded by UNOWAS on conflicts between pastoralists and farmers in the region, which concludes that tensions are being driven by competition for natural resources, rapid population growth, weak governance, pressures related to climate and ecological factors, and the circulation of small arms and light weapons. It encourages ECOWAS and its Member States, with the support of UNOWAS, to address these challenges in a coordinated and holistic manner. The Security Council further expresses its deep concern about the intensification of intercommunal violence in Central Mali and Burkina Faso, and reiterates that stabilisation of the situation and protection of civilians in this region requires a fully integrated response, led by the governments of those countries, with the support of UNOWAS and the international community, and encompassing simultaneous pursuit of progress on security, governance, humanitarian assistance and development, reconciliation, as well as protection and promotion of human rights The Security Council recognises the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity among other factors on the stability of West Africa and the Sahel region and continues to stress the need for long-term strategies, based on risk assessments, by governments and the United Nations, to support stabilisation and build resilience and encourages UNOWAS to continue to integrate this information in its activities
Central African Region	S/PRST/2019/10 12 September 2019	The Council further encourages UNOCA to take into consideration climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters among other factors affecting the stability of the Central African Region, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity, continues to stress the need for long-term strategies by governments and the United Nations, based on risk assessments, to support stabilisation and build resilience, and further requests that such information be taken into consideration by UNOCA in its activities

Annex IV: Climate Change Language in Security Council Outcomes

ISSUE	OUTCOME	LANGUAGE
MINUSCA	S/RES/2499 15 November 2019	PP: Recognising the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of the Central African region, including through drought, desertification, land degradation, food insecurity, and energy access, and stressing the need for adequate risk assessment by the United Nations relating to these factors and for long-term strategies by governments of the Central African region and the United Nations to support stabilisation and build resilience
MONUSCO	S/RES/2502 19 December 2019	PP: Recognising the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes, natural disasters, and lack of energy access, among other factors, on the stability of the DRC, including through increasingly frequent and extreme weather phenomena, flooding, forest fires, erratic precipitation and food insecurity, welcoming the leadership of the DRC in the development of national strategies to address these issues and in the preservation of the Congo basin forest
UNOWAS (West Africa)	S/2020/85 (the letter to renew the mandate from 1/2/2020 to 31/1/2023) 31 January 2020	Function 2.4 Take into consideration the adverse implications of climate change, energy poverty, ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, including by assisting the governments of the region and the United Nations system in undertaking risk assessments and risk management strategies relating to these factors
UNOWAS (West Africa)	S/PRST/2020/2 11 February 2020	The Security Council recognises the adverse effects of climate change, energy poverty, ecological changes and natural disasters, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity among other factors on the stability of West Africa and the Sahel region and continues to stress the need for long-term strategies, based on risk assessments, by governments and the United Nations, to support stabilisation and build resilience and encourages UNOWAS to continue to integrate this information in its activities
AMISOM (Somalia)	S/RES/2520 29 May 2020	PP: Emphasising the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies by the FGS and the UN, of climate change, other ecological changes, natural disasters, energy access, and other factors on the stability of Somalia
UNITAMS (Sudan)	S/RES/2524 3 June 2020	PP: Recognising the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of Sudan, particularly Darfur, and stressing the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies by the Government of Sudan and the United Nations relating to these factors to support stabilisation and build resilience
MINUSMA (Mali)	S/RES/2531 29 June 2020	PP: Emphasizing the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies, by the Government of Mali and the United Nations, of ecological changes, natural disasters, drought, desertification, land degradation, food insecurity, energy access, climate change, among other factors, on the security and stability of Mali
UNOWAS (West Africa)	S/PRST/2020/7 28 July 2020	The Security Council recognises the adverse effects of climate change, energy poverty, ecological changes and natural disasters, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity among other factors on the stability of West Africa and the Sahel region and continues to stress the need for long-term strategies, based on risk assessments, by governments and the United Nations, to support stabilisation and build resilience and encourages UNOWAS to continue to integrate this information in its activities
UNSOM (Somalia)	S/RES/2540 28 August 2020	PP: Further recognising the adverse effects of climate change, other ecological changes, natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of Somalia, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity, and recalling its Presidential Statement S/PRST/2011/15 OP 13: Requests the United Nations, the FGS and the FMS to consider the adverse implications of climate change, other ecological changes, natural disasters, among other factors, in their programmes in Somalia, including by undertaking risk assessments and risk management strategies relating to these factors, and requests the Secretary-General to provide an update in mandated reporting as appropriate
MINUSCA (CAR)	S/RES/2552 12 November 2020	PP: Recognising the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of the Central African region, including through drought, desertification, land degradation, food insecurity, and energy access, and stressing the need for adequate risk assessment by the United Nations relating to these factors and for long-term strategies by governments of the Central African region and the United Nations to support stabilisation and build resilience

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ISSUE	OUTCOME	LANGUAGE
MONUSCO (DRC)	S/RES/2556 18 December 2020	PP: Recognising the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes, natural disasters, and lack of energy access, among other factors, on the stability of the DRC, including through increasingly frequent and extreme weather phenomena, flooding, forest fires, erratic precipitation and food insecurity, welcoming the leadership of the DRC in the development of national strategies to address these issues and in the preservation of the Congo basin forest
UNFICYP (Cyprus)	S/RES/2561 29 January 2021	PP: Recognising that effective contact and communication between the sides enhances the prospects for settlement and is in the interests of all Cypriots, and helps to address island-wide matters, including health, crime, environmental protection, and issues related to the adverse impacts of climate change
UNOWAS (West Africa)	S/PRST/2021/3 3 February 2021	The Security Council recognises the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, including through drought, desertification, and land degradation, as well as their impacts on food security, among other factors, on the stability of West Africa and the Sahel region and continues to stress the need for long-term strategies, based on comprehensive risk assessments, by governments and the United Nations, to support stabilisation and build resilience and encourages UNOWAS to continue to integrate this information in its activities
UNMISS (South Sudan)	S/RES/2567 12 March 2021	PP: Recognizing the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes, and natural disasters, among other factors, on the humanitarian situation and stability in South Sudan, and emphasizing the need for comprehensive risk assessments and risk management strategies by the GoSS and the UN to inform programs relating to these factors
AMISOM (Somalia)	S/RES/2568 12 March 2021	PP: Emphasising the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies by the FGS and the United Nations, of climate change, other ecological changes, natural disasters and other factors on the stability of Somalia
Peace and security in Africa	S/PRST/2021/10 19 May 2021	The Security Council recognizes the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of a number of African States, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity, and emphasizes the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies by the respective governments and the United Nations relating to these factors
UNAMI (Iraq)	S/RES/2576 27 May 2021	PP: Recognizing that the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes, and natural disasters, among other factors, can contribute to desertification and drought, the humanitarian situation and stability in Iraq, and emphasizing the need for comprehensive risk assessments by the Government of Iraq with the support of the United Nations, upon the request of the Government of Iraq, to take meaningful actions to adapt to or mitigate challenges posed by climate change and ecological change OP. 4 (b)(iv): the Government of Iraq on facilitating regional dialogue and cooperation, including on issues of border security, energy, trade, environment, water, adverse impacts of climate change, infrastructure, public health, and refugees

Annex V: Other Security Council Key Documents on Climate Change and Security

LETTERS

S/2007/186 (5 April 2007) was a concept note for an open debate on energy, security and climate.

S/2007/334 (6 June 2007) was a concept note on an open debate on natural resources and conflict.

S/2011/408 (1 July 2011) was a concept note for an open debate on the impact of climate change.

S/2011/698 (8 November 2011) was a concept note for a briefing on new challenges to international peace and security and conflict prevention including pandemics, climate change, and transnational organised crime.

S/2013/334 (6 June 2013) was a concept note for an open debate on conflict prevention and natural resources.

S/2015/543 (15 July 2015) was a concept note for an open debate on peace and security challenges facing Small Island Developing States.

S/2016/969 (14 November 2016) was a concept note for an open debate on water and peace and security.

S/2017/1016 (1 December 2017) was a concept note for an open debate complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security.

S/2018/901 (9 October 2018) was a concept note for a briefing on maintenance of international peace and security: root causes of conflict — the role of natural resources.

S/2019/1 (2 January 2019) was a concept note for an open debate on the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security.

S/2020/882 (1 September 2020) was a concept note for a high-level open debate on the humanitarian effects of environmental degradation and peace and security.

S/2020/1064 (30 October 2020) was a concept note for an open debate on peacebuilding and sustaining peace: contemporary drivers of conflict and insecurity.

S/2021/155 (17 February 2021) a concept note for a high-level open debate on maintenance of international peace and security: climate and security.

MEETING RECORDS

S/PV.5663 (17 April 2007) and S/PV.5663 Resumption I was an open debate on the relationship between energy, security and climate.

S/PV.5705 (25 June 2007) was an open debate on natural resources and conflict.

S/PV.6587 (20 July 2011) and S/PV.6587 Resumption I was an open debate on the impact of climate change.

S/PV.6668 (23 November 2011) was a briefing by Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization on new challenges to international peace and security and conflict prevention.

S/PV.6982 (19 June 2013) was an open debate on conflict prevention and natural resources.

S/PV.7499 (30 July 2015) was an open debate on maintenance of international peace and security Peace and security challenges facing Small Island Developing States.

S/PV.7699 (26 May 2016) was a briefing by Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel; Jean-Paul Laborde, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and Assistant Secretary-General; Monique Barbut, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; and Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Coordinator of the Association des femmes peules autochtones du Tchadon; Pierre Buyoya, African Union High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, and Angel Losada, European Union Special Representative for the Sahel, on peace and security in Africa and the challenges in the Sahel region.

S/PV.7818 (22 November 2016) was an open debate on water, peace and security.

S/PV.7959 (6 June 2017) was a briefing by Secretary-General António Guterres.

S/PV.8144 (20 December 2017) was an open debate on complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security.

S/PV.8307 (11 July 2018) was a debate on understanding and addressing climate-related security risks.

S/PV.8372 (16 October 2018) was a briefing by the Secretary-General António Guterres on the root causes of conflict — the role of natural resources.

S/PV.8451 (25 January 2019) was an open debate on the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security.

S/PV.8748 (14 July 2020) was an open debate on climate change and security.

S/2020/929 (21 September 2020) was a letter transmitting briefings from the high-level open debate (VTC) on the humanitarian effects of environmental degradation and peace and security, convened 17 September 2020

S/2020/1090 (5 November 2020) was a letter transmitting briefings from an open debate (VTC) on peacebuilding and sustaining peace: contemporary drivers of conflict and insecurity, convened 3 November 2020.

S/2021/198 (25 February 2021) was a letter transmitting briefings from an open debate (VTC) on climate and security, convened 23 February 2021.