

Draft policy brief for Planetary Security working group on resilience (WG7).

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Policy Brief

Building resilience by linking climate change adaptation and peacebuilding

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Summary

This policy brief explores the opportunities and challenges linking climate change adaptation and peacebuilding measures. It claims that integration of both sectors offers huge potential as it may help to exacerbate and trigger climate-related conflicts as well as promote peace. The design, integration and design of climate adaptation and peacebuilding needs remains, however, a practical challenge. The policy brief outlines key questions that must be solved to move forward in developing more holistic approach of resilience.

Climate change as a driver of conflict and risk multiplier

Global climate change manifests itself in changing rainfall patterns, temperatures and sea levels. This can lead or contribute to changes in crop growth, land degradation, desertification, inundations of low-lying land, the frequency and severity of storms, floods and droughts. These direct effects will also be accompanied by more indirect effects such as changes in food productivity and/or distributional pattern of human diseases such as malaria¹.

Although climate change is global in nature, the actual impacts are likely to be highly localized. One explanation is geographical: Some regions are simply more affected by global climate change than others. The other explanation is socio-political: A number of countries are ill-equipped and prepared to cope with or adapt to a changing climate. They suffer from a lack of finance, technologies, knowledge and rule of law to cope with the consequences of climate change. Moreover, some countries are characterized by protracted tensions and violence or political fragility. For these countries, and in particular for the more marginalized and disadvantaged groups within these countries – such as, for instance, farmers – climate change means a far a greater challenge. Within these countries, but not limited to those, climate change may lead to increasing competition over scarce or abundant resources which may push social stability beyond a 'tipping point'². In other words, climate change may aggravate existing, fragile situations and contribute to social upheaval and even violent conflict.

The climate-conflict linkage is, however, far from straightforward but mediated by a range of political, institutional and societal factors³. Moreover, if designed and implemented properly, there is a chance that adaptation

may contribute to hedge tensions and catalyse processes of stabilization, if not peace. As a result, lot depends on the design and implementation of adaptation measures to achieve resilience. This policy brief seeks to shed light on the complex interrelations between resilience, adaptation and peace and explores the potential and challenges in linking adaptation and peacebuilding.

Interlinkages between adaptation and peace(building)

We suggest to distinguishing between three kinds of interrelations between adaptation, resilience and peace⁴:

1. Adaptation can serve as a peace builder being a catalyst for dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution. By increasing a country's ability to adapt to climate change, stakeholders are also likely to increase their social resilience and thus improve their capacity to achieve peaceful conflict resolution and conflict transformation in other areas of society. In principal, thus, adaptation has the potential to empower countries to better withstand various social and economic stressors, while avoiding the destabilization of their governing institutions and societal structures. If adaptation processes are participatory, they can ideally give marginalized groups a voice to integrate their concerns in building resilient communities.
2. Adaptation has also a potential to be a cause of or contributing factor to conflict through - among other to processes of 'maladaptation'. Adaptation measures may generate friction or resistance, predominantly from those who profit from the status quo or are interested in diverting adaptation-related funding for other purposes⁵. In a worst case scenario, adaptation measures may also potentially be a direct cause of conflict. At the local level, as an example, efforts to provide

¹ Urmilla B.; Bronkhorst S.; Salsa S. (2014): Climate change and conflict: conflict-sensitive adaption in Africa. In: Urmilla B.; Bronkhorst S.; Salsa S. (eds.): Conflict-sensitive adaption in Africa. Berlin: Berliner Wissenschaftsverlag

² Bronkhorst, S. 2014. Adaptation must be conflict sensitive. Conflict-sensitive Adaptation: Use Human Rights to Build Social and Environmental Resilience. Brief 1. Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee and IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy.

³ See, for instance, WBGU. (2007). Welt im Wandel: Sicherheitsrisiko Klimawandel. Berlin: Springer; Rüttinger, L., Stang, G., Smith D., Tänzler D., Vivekananda J. et al. (2015): A New Climate for Peace – Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks. Berlin/London/ Washington/Paris: adelphi, International Alert, The Wilson Center, EUISS.

⁴ Tänzler, D.; T. Mohns and K. Ziegenhagen (2013): Adaptation to climate change for peace and stability. Strengthening of approaches and instruments as well as promotion of processes to reduce the security risks posed by climate change in the context of climate change adaptation. Dessau-Roßlau: Umweltbundesamt.

⁵ Tänzler, D., Carius A. & Maas, A. (2013a): The need for climate-sensitive adaption to climate change. Backdraft: the Conflict Potential of Climate Change adaptation and mitigation. Adelphi: Berlin

communities with additional water taps stirred tensions since as an initial effort, taps were located sparsely, benefiting the selected communities, but angering neighbouring communities without taps. With the increasing availability of climate finance for adaptation purposes, the overall questions of how to distribute assistance equally among affected communities and how to avoid risks of elite capture, corruption and organised crime need to be addressed.

3. Adaptation can be hindered by sudden or long-lasting conflicts. This happened, for example, in Mali. In addition, analysis of international support for adaptation suggests that not all fragile or conflict prone countries benefit to the same degree from support given to establish adaptation frameworks. To avoid a situation in which climate change further increases the risk of destabilization or violent conflict, conflict-sensitive adaptation needs to be ensured – especially during processes of peacebuilding and consolidation.

Potential responses at the policy level

Climate change is simultaneously increasing the complexity of a range of global challenges, including fragility. If strategies fail to take into account the interdependent and systemic nature of these climate and fragility risks, they will fail or, in the worst case, exacerbate the risks they try to address. Single-sector interventions will not be enough to prevent climate change impacts from increasing fragility, or fragility from undermining climate resilience. At the same time, integration action across sectors also has the potential to create significant co-benefits even when the goals and tools are different. Two key areas stand out in terms of integration and strengthening the resilience of states and societies to climate and fragility risks:

1. Climate change adaptation programmes help countries anticipate the adverse effects of climate change and take action to prevent, minimize, and adapt to its potential impacts.
2. Peacebuilding and conflict prevention programmes address the causes and effects of conflict by reducing

tensions and creating an environment for sustainable peace.

There are already a number of approaches in the two areas that can help to systematically address the challenge ahead⁶. Related to climate change adaptation these are climate vulnerability assessments as a key initial element of national adaptation planning. With the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process supported by international climate policy, countries are more and more moving beyond a just technical understanding to a more comprehensive notion of resilience. The ongoing planning processes could be leveraged to increase national and regional planning capacity and improve adaptation plans at both levels. One key element at the implementation level is the increase of climate finance resources. However, it is not clear that states in fragile situations will be able to benefit from initiatives such as the Green Climate Fund. Moreover, since adaptation efforts will affect people's livelihoods, asset base, and power dynamics, interventions need to distribute benefits and resources in a conflict-sensitive way that does not aggravate tensions between communities (see box below). However, there is limited guidance on how to do this effectively.

In the realm of peacebuilding climate change is not yet sufficiently reflected in fragility or peace and conflict assessments, though there are calls for a better understanding of the links between climate and fragility at the highest political levels. At the strategic level, a holistic understanding of resilience and peacebuilding is growing. Initiatives like the *New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States* that take a multi-stakeholder approach to building resilience can be encouraged to fully reflect the consequences of climate change. At the implementation level, multi-donor trust funds can help coordinate donors, harmonize aid, create country ownership, and mobilize resources. However, cases of using these funds to systematically address climate change-related risks are rare. Further relevant at the implementation level, is that climate-sensitive peacebuilding is still in the pilot phase.

⁶ Rüttinger et al. 2015

On conflict sensitivity:

Conflict sensitivity is an approach that seeks, at minimum, to avoid causing harm ('do no harm' principle) by a certain intervention and, at maximum, contribute to broader societal-levels of peace in conflict-prone areas.

A central element of conflict-sensitive approach a *conflict analysis*. The analysis provides decision-makers with a deeper understanding (1) of the conflict context and (2) of the interaction between the intervention and the conflict context. In light of this knowledge, decision-makers may then (3) refrain or revise the intervention according to the overarching conflict-sensitive approach they prefer (e.g. a minimalist 'do-no-harm' or a maximalist 'promote-peace' approach). It is thereby very important that decision-makers continue to (4) monitor and evaluate the intervention throughout implementation stage and revise accordingly.

The challenge: Integrating climate change adaptation and peacebuilding

Why does it make sense to integrated adaptation and peacebuilding? As outlined above, conflict and fragility affected states and societies are at heightened risk of suffering from the negative effects of climate change. In particular in contexts in which governments already have difficulties in providing basic state services, where substantial number of the population depends on the natural resource base for livelihoods, and where subtle or open tensions already exist, climate change can act as a risk multiplier. Thus, adaptation measures have to take into account fragility and conflict risks, while peacebuilding and conflict prevention measures have to take into account climate risks. Ideally, adaptation and peacebuilding measures can be fully integrated. These integrated programs would try to maximise co-benefits and synergies between both sectors.

Integrating approaches throughout key policy stages—assessment, planning, financing, and implementation—will be a complex, though essential, endeavour in this regard.

There are a number of challenges that can undermine a successful integration. These challenges can occur at all stages, during the analysis phase, the design or the implementation phase.

First, there is no common, widely accepted methodology to assess the links between climate change, conflict and fragility. Instead,

there exist a number of peace and conflict methodologies and vulnerability assessment methodologies⁷ that all come with certain advantages and disadvantages. The lack of developed methodology to assess the implications and actual impact is an analytical problem as much as a 'real-world' problem. Fragility and climate impacts are highly context specific. It is hard – and possibly even highly problematic – to develop a one-size-fits-all assessment methodology. In addition, both peace and conflict assessments as well as vulnerability assessments face many problems when it comes to data availability and measuring impact.

Second, it is challenging to work in a conflict- and fragility affected context. The implementing agency (e.g. government, international development agencies, NGO etc.) might have difficulties in obtaining information in the first place. Information is highly politicized in a conflict-ridden context. Moreover, the implementing agency might itself become part of the conflict itself. External actors (e.g. donors/development agencies), for instance, need to be aware that aid/support might be instrumentalised by local conflict groups⁸ (e.g. win 'mind and hearts', build a certain state order) and that already the intention of a policy intervention can already fuel/trigger a violent conflict⁹ (e.g. competition over aid resources, creation of insecure environment to secure continuous funding to insurgency-affected areas). Method-wise, the collection of data in a conflict-prone context is relatively costly and time-consuming and, if done by external actors, shaped by substantial power

⁷ Bush, K. (2009). Aid for peace: A handbook for applying peace & conflict impact assessment (PCIA) to Peace III projects. INCORE, University of Ulster, and United Nations University. <http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/pdfs/Handbook-Aid for Peace-2009 Dec.pdf>

Hoffman, M (2003). PCIA methodology: Evolving art form or practical dead end? In A. Austin, O. Wils, & M. Fischer (Eds.) Peace and conflict impact assessment: Critical views on theory and practice. Berlin: Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management. http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue1_hoffman.pdf

CSC. (2012). How to guide to conflict sensitivity. London: The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium. http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/sites/default/files/1/66/02_HowToGuide_CSF_WEB_3.pdf

⁸ Haider, H., (2014). Conflict Sensitivity: Topic Guide. Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.

⁹ Fishstein, P. & Wilder, A. (2012). Winning hearts and minds? Examining the relationship between aid and security in Afghanistan. Somerville, MA: Tufts, Feinstein International Centre <https://afg.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/WinningHearts-Final.pdf>

differentials between researcher and respondents.

Third, integration and translating policy guidelines/implementing policies in a conflict- and fragility affected context is an organizational challenge. Coordinating and integrating various actors and activities requires substantial resources (e.g. funding, networks, staff, knowledge) and competences. The challenge is even greater in the context of conflict and fragility affected countries that often lack institutions and capacities. The lack of capacities is often mirrored on the side of development organisations and donors that do not provide enough capacities and resources to ensure conflict sensitivity. In addition, frequent political upheavals or turn-overs and complex political economies make political buy-in and support extremely difficult.

The way ahead

There are a number of key questions related to integrating climate change adaptation and peacebuilding that can serve as potential entry points for further policy discussions. However, further examinations are required¹⁰?

- How can insights from peace and conflict assessments inform the process of climate change adaptation to ensure that adaptation programmes and projects go beyond a pure technical understanding of adaptation?
- How to mainstream climate change adaptation in conflict-prone contexts applying conflict sensitive approaches? What kind of guidance is needed?
- How to ensure participatory processes to design and implement adaptation measures in an inclusive manner?
- How to build robust governance structures to address climate and fragility related risks thereby linking local, national, and regional levels – also in order to foster transparent and accountable spending?
- How to use training and capacity building approaches to understand and address current and future conflicts?
- How to ensure coherence of climate change adaptation, development and peacebuilding processes nationally and internationally.

¹⁰ see, for example, Tänzler et al. 2013