

## II. Climate security policy and initiatives

JANANI VIVEKANANDA AND LUKAS RÜTTINGER

### Introduction

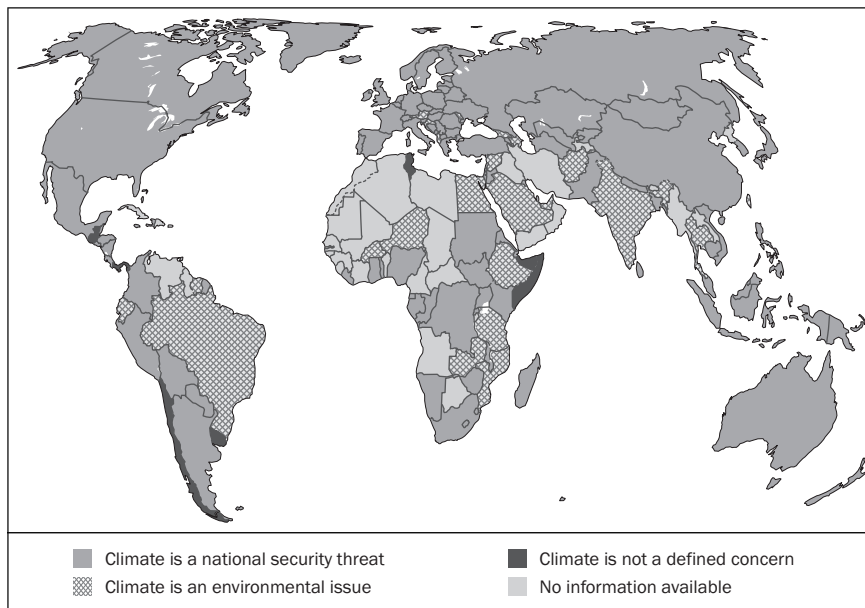
Climate change has increased in prominence over the past decade in line with growing confidence in and public awareness of climate science. Mirroring the growth in academic literature and the number of assessments, policy papers and research papers by think tanks and government institutions, the potential security implications of climate change have been gaining more attention from foreign and security policymakers at the national and international levels in recent years.

For the climate change, development and humanitarian sectors, 2015 was a landmark year. United Nations member states reached historic agreements and set global agendas that will shape development priorities for decades to come. The major global processes were the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–30 (the Sendai Framework), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change adopted in December 2015 at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).<sup>1</sup>

Despite these potentially paradigm shifting new global agreements, the current international aid architecture for dealing with conflict and climate change run in parallel. This has inhibited joined-up policy on the interconnection between the vulnerabilities, risks and opportunities associated with the climate, conflict and environment nexus. However, concepts such as resilience have helped to bring the idea of ‘interconnectivity’ to the fore and an increasing number of donors are integrating individual issues across their policy, programmes and funding decision-making processes.

This section explores the role climate security plays at the national, regional, and international political levels. The focus is on the multilateral institutions and the UN system, and how climate-fragility risks affect and are addressed by important multilateral development, humanitarian and security policy processes.

<sup>1</sup> The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–30 was adopted by the UN General Assembly in June 2015. UN General Assembly Resolution 69/283, 3 June 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the UN General Assembly in Sep. 2015. UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1, 25 Sep. 2015. For details of the SDGs see UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), <<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>>; and chapter 9 in this volume. The Paris Agreement was adopted at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Paris, 30 Nov. 2015 to 11 Dec. 2015, <[http://unfccc.int/meetings/paris\\_nov\\_2015/meeting/8926.php](http://unfccc.int/meetings/paris_nov_2015/meeting/8926.php)>. Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC, opened for signature 22 Apr. 2016, not yet in force.



**Figure 12.1.** Level of concern about how climate change threatens security

*Credit:* Hugo Ahlenius, Nordpil, <<https://nordpil.se/>>.

*Source:* American Security Project, Global Security Defense Index on Climate Change, <<http://www.americansecurityproject.org/climate-energy-and-security/climate-change/gsdicc/>>.

### National and regional initiatives and strategies

A number of countries have begun to include climate change as a strategic security risk in their national security strategies, for example the United Kingdom in 2008 and the United States in 2010. Also in 2008, the High Representative of the European Union (EU) for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission identified climate change as a key strategic challenge.<sup>2</sup> In 2011 the European External Action Service made climate security a priority of its climate diplomacy efforts.<sup>3</sup> In 2015 a global assessment found that the defence organizations of 70 per cent of countries in the world explicitly regarded climate change as a national security concern (see figure 12.1).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 'Climate change and international security', Paper from the High Representative and the European Commission to the European Council, S113/08, 14 Mar. 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Youngs, R., *Climate Change and EU Security Policy: An Unmet Challenge* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace/Carnegie Europe: Washington, DC/Brussels, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> American Security Project, Global Security Defense Index on Climate Change, [n.d.], <<http://www.americansecurityproject.org/climate-energy-and-security/climate-change/gsdicc/>>.

In the run-up to COP 21, renewed efforts could be seen from individual states to put the topic on the political agenda. In October 2015, France's Ministry of Defence organized a high-level conference on climate change and security, bringing together a large number of defence ministers in particular from countries affected by climate change and fragility.<sup>5</sup> In November, the Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands organized the first international Planetary Security Conference under the title 'Planetary Security: Peace and Cooperation in Times of Climate Change and Global Environmental Challenges', and committed to make it an annual event to provide a forum for experts, policymakers and practitioners.<sup>6</sup>

### **The United Nations Security Council**

Climate change has been discussed as a security concern in different forums at the international level, but in particular in the UN Security Council. In 2007 the UK initiated the Security Council's first debate on the impacts of climate change, and a General Assembly resolution on climate change and its possible security implications followed, as well as a report by the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, in 2009.<sup>7</sup> In 2011 another Security Council debate was initiated by Germany, which resulted in, among other things, a request from the Security Council to the Secretary-General to start providing 'contextual information' on the possible security implications of climate change as part of the Security Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security.<sup>8</sup> Open and informal Security Council Arria-formula meetings followed in 2013 and 2015. The interventions from more than 50 delegations at the meeting in 2015 underlined the increased attention on the topic.<sup>9</sup>

The question of whether the Security Council should play a more proactive role on climate change and its security implications has been somewhat contentious. In the beginning it was met with opposition, in particular from the Group of 77 (G-77)—a loose coalition of developing nations represented at the UN. However, mirroring developments at COP 21, it seems that diverging interests have led to an erosion of the G-77's unified stance on climate secu-

<sup>5</sup> French Ministry of Defence, 'Conférence internationale Climat et Défense, 14 octobre 2015' [International Conference Climate and Defence, 14 October 2015].

<sup>6</sup> The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Conference on Planetary Security', 2–3 November 2015.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, 'Climate Change and its possible security implications', Report of the Secretary-General, A/64/350, 11 Sep. 2009; and UN General Assembly Resolution 63/281, 11 June 2009.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, Security Council, 6587th meeting, S/PV.6587, 20 July 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Werrell, C. and Femia, F., 'More than 70 countries tell UN Security Council to prioritize climate security risks', Center for Climate and Security, 6 Aug. 2015. Arria-formula meetings are informal but confidential meetings used by members of the Security Council to have a frank and private exchange of views among themselves and with invited persons.

rity (for more on COP 21 see below). A growing number of G-77 countries, in particular those most affected by climate change, have started to urge the UN to take a more proactive role, specifically by monitoring and reporting on climate-fragility risks.<sup>10</sup> States are unlikely to agree to the Security Council taking on anything more than a limited monitoring and reporting role. Many states, in particular emerging powers such as Brazil and India, will be wary of allowing an extension of the Security Council's mandate to embrace a broader environmental security mission, unless and until a credible reform process has been enacted. In addition, some countries continue to oppose what they see as the securitization of the debate around climate change; they prefer to frame it as a development issue.<sup>11</sup>

Despite these obstacles, the topic is likely to return to the Security Council. Since the efforts of the Secretary-General to provide contextual information on the topic have thus far been rather weak, and processing information on the security implications of climate change might be tolerated by countries critical of a more proactive 'climate security' role for the Security Council, it is probable that security issues relating to climate change will be further discussed in the Security Council.

### **The Group of Seven**

In 2012, under the presidency of the USA, the then Group of Eight (G8) issued a joint statement recognizing 'climate change as a contributing factor to increased security risks globally'.<sup>12</sup> In 2013, under the British presidency, foreign policy officials decided to commission a study on climate change and fragility and an open online platform to share and disseminate knowledge and research on the topic. In 2014 the Group of Seven (G7) foreign ministers then commissioned an international consortium of think tanks—led by adelphi and including International Alert, the Woodrow Wilson Center and the EU Institute for Security Studies—to undertake the study and develop the platform.<sup>13</sup>

Under the German presidency, the report was welcomed by the G7 foreign ministers at the Lübeck Summit in April 2015. They agreed 'on the need to better understand, identify, monitor and address the compound risks asso-

<sup>10</sup> United Nations, Security Council, 7499th meeting, S/PV.7499, 30 July 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Bhatiya, N., 'A post-Paris agenda for climate security at the UN', Century Foundation, 16 Jan. 2016.

<sup>12</sup> US Department of State, 'G8 Foreign Ministers Meeting Chair's Statement', Washington, DC, 12 Apr. 2012. Russia was excluded from the G8 in 2014 following its military intervention in Ukraine.

<sup>13</sup> Rüttinger, L. et al., *A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks* (Adelphi/International Alert/Woodrow Wilson Center/European Union Institute for Security Studies, EUISS: Berlin/London/Washington, DC/Paris, 2015). In 1997–2013 the G7 met in G8 format, but following the Russian annexation of Crimea, the G7 nations decided in Mar. 2014 to meet without Russia until further notice.

ciated with climate change and fragility’ and integrate ‘climate-fragility considerations across foreign policy portfolios’.<sup>14</sup> In addition, a high-level working group was established to evaluate the report’s recommendations, identify areas for cooperation and joint action, and facilitate exchange.

### **The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and climate change adaptation**

The security implications of climate change played a role in the run-up to COP 21. Policymakers—among them the French and German foreign ministers and the US Secretary of State and President Barack Obama—used the security implications of climate change to garner high-level political support and underline the need for a strong and ambitious international agreement on climate change.<sup>15</sup> However, since the UNFCCC’s mandate does not include security and fragility issues, they were not part of the discussion and negotiations at COP 21.

Under its original 1992 mandate, the UNFCCC had a narrow focus on reducing or preventing the emission of greenhouse gases. Over time, mainly driven by developing countries, climate change adaptation and development issues were included in the UNFCCC process. At first, this was met with resistance from many developed nations, which feared that the negotiations would become too complex and fragmented. However, including adaptation provided a basis for compromise and bridging the diverging interests between UN member states. This was also the case at and in the lead-up to COP 21. In the negotiation process leading up to COP 21, countries agreed to publicly outline the climate actions they intended to take under a new international agreement. These so-called Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) included mitigation and adaptation efforts, reflecting the understanding and fact that mitigation and adaptation are equally important to addressing climate change, and that adaptation and development are now also at the heart of the UNFCCC. The INDCs were heralded as one of the major factors behind the success of the negotiations at COP 21.<sup>16</sup>

Although security and fragility risks were not part of the negotiations, both mitigation and adaptation to climate change are highly relevant in address-

<sup>14</sup> Group of 7 (G7) Foreign Ministers Meeting, Communiqué, Lübeck, 15 Apr. 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Fabius, L., Climate and security, Speech by Laurent Fabius, New York, 30 Sep. 2015, <<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/climate/events/article/climate-and-security-speech-by-laurent-fabius-new-york-09-30-15>>; German Federal Foreign Office, ‘Auswirkungen des Klimawandels auf staatliche Fragilität’ [Climate change impacts on state fragility], 14 Apr. 2015; Kerry, J., Remarks on climate change and national security, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA, 10 Nov. 2015; ‘Obama: climate change an economic, security imperative’, Reuters, 1 Dec. 2015; and Carius, A., ‘The foreign policy dimension of climate change’, A New Climate for Peace Blog, 22 Oct. 2015.

<sup>16</sup> ‘What to look out for in the Paris Agreement: 10 key points’, IDDRI (blog), 17 Nov. 2015.

ing these risks. Mitigation is the most effective strategy for preventing long-term climate-fragility risks arising in the first place, while climate change adaptation efforts provide a clear entry point for managing climate-fragility risks in the short-to-medium term and for building enduring resilience. At the same time, as more money and effort are invested in climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, strategies and programmes, the risks of unintended negative effects also increase. If not managed responsibly and designed in a conflict-sensitive way, these well-intentioned policies can undermine economic development, contribute to political instability and exacerbate human insecurity.

The lack of recognition of the potential security implications of climate change as part of the UNFCCC process is mirrored in many climate change adaptation policies. They often show gaps when it comes to addressing climate-fragility risks, starting at the assessment level. Although climate change vulnerability assessments have become increasingly standardized and sophisticated, they seldom include the role or drivers of fragility and conflict, or address trans-boundary issues. More worryingly, they often exclude the broader social impacts of climate change and possible security implications.<sup>17</sup> These gaps often lead to adaptation strategies that do not take climate-fragility risks into account.<sup>18</sup>

### **Development, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding**

Climate-fragility risks can also be addressed through development, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding programmes that help to improve the resilience of states and societies to a broad range of shocks, including the impacts of climate change. However, in order to effectively address climate-fragility risks and build more resilient states and societies, these kinds of interventions have to reflect the multidimensionality of the systemic risks outlined in section I of this chapter. This means that development, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding programmes have to overcome their sectoral silos and integrate their approaches. However, explicit recognition of and concerted action on the interconnectedness of different types of risks and vulnerabilities are absent from most of the international policy frameworks emanating from these processes. Three key UN policy processes emerged in 2015–16: the Sendai Framework, the SDGs, and the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS)—the first of which will take place in 2016.

<sup>17</sup> Fritzsche, K. et al., *The Vulnerability Sourcebook: Concept and Guidelines for Standardised Vulnerability Assessments* (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ): Eschborn, 2014); and Least Developed Countries Expert Group, *National Adaptation Plans: Technical Guidelines for the National Adaptation Plan Process* (UNFCCC: Bonn, 2012).

<sup>18</sup> Rüttinger et al. (note 13).

*Key UN policy processes in 2015–16*

The Sendai Framework was adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015. The main aim of the Sendai Framework is to substantially reduce the various negative effects caused by disasters globally by 2030. It is the successor instrument to the Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005–15, and builds on the lessons learned and experiences gained from 10 years of implementation of the Hyogo Framework. Among the main obstacles in the past were financial constraints and limited human capacity, and in many cases early warning systems were poorly coordinated.<sup>19</sup> In trying to overcome these challenges, the Sendai Framework prioritized improved understanding of disaster risk and increased availability of multi-hazard early warning systems. However, despite the recognition that between 2005 and 2009 over 50 per cent of people affected by natural hazard-related disasters lived in fragile states, conflict and fragility risks still fall outside the final text of the new framework.<sup>20</sup>

The UN's 17 SDGs cover a wide spectrum of challenges from poverty to security as well as climate change and environmental degradation.<sup>21</sup> Climate-fragility risks are covered within this new framework, but not explicitly addressed. Most of the goals have a sectoral focus, for example on health or water, or focus on a particular dimension of sustainability—social, economic or environmental. In terms of climate-fragility risks, SDG 13 'Taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts' and SDG 16 'The promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development' stand out and provide clear entry points. However, they do not emphasize the connections between risks of conflict, or natural disasters and climate. The challenge will be to effectively link programming across these two SDGs.

The WHS has the institutional remit and the scope to tackle both conflict and climate issues, and will engage actors working across the climate change, disasters and peacebuilding communities.<sup>22</sup> It is therefore perhaps the most pivotal current process in which climate and security risks should be jointly addressed. The WHS was initiated by the UN Secretary-General to discuss solutions to the growing and complex challenges faced by the

<sup>19</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 69/283 (note 1).

<sup>20</sup> The importance of the links between vulnerabilities related to disasters, climate change and conflict was well recognized in the preparatory documents running up to the Sendai Framework: in the Chair's Summary; in the Mid Term Review; and in the Declaration of the Third African Ministerial Meeting For Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 13–16 May 2014. However, despite this substantive acknowledgement, all the actual references to conflict and violence were deleted from the draft agreement as part of the political bartering process involved in negotiating multilateral consensus around the final text.

<sup>21</sup> UNDESA (note 1).

<sup>22</sup> On the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, 23–24 May 2016, see <<https://www.worldhumanitarianissummit.org/>>.



global humanitarian system. A two-year global consultation process came to an end in October 2015 and the global synthesis report on the consultations prepared by the WHS secretariat contains explicit recognition of the connection between disasters, conflict and climate change.<sup>23</sup> It remains to be seen whether this recognition can be translated into formal commitments in the outcomes of the first WHS in Istanbul in May 2016.

The consultation processes in the lead-up to the three global initiatives referred to above saw increased calls for the impacts of climate change on resource availability to be considered in the context of conflict resolution or peacebuilding measures, and for the inclusion of climate change in conflict policy and vice versa.<sup>24</sup> For example, the summary statement of the 2014 Fifth Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which was part of the consultation process for the Sendai Framework, noted that ‘violent conflict is closely associated with disaster risk and related efforts to prevent conflict need to be considered as part of overall efforts to build resilience to disasters [including climate-related disasters]’. Furthermore, it noted that ‘Integrated and coordinated approaches to disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and related aspects of conflict prevention can reduce the fragmentation of resources and improve the impact of investments’.<sup>25</sup> However, in this case these connections were lost in the political process of negotiating the final text of the Sendai Framework.

#### *Development actor policies, planning and projects*

Looking beyond the large multilateral policy processes to the assessment tools, projects, programmes and strategies of multilateral and bilateral development actors, there have been some efforts to integrate climate change adaptation into development policies, planning and projects. So-called climate-proofing efforts try to mainstream climate change into policies and projects, and many development agencies have developed policies and guidance materials to this end. Similar efforts have been made to mainstream conflict-sensitivity and peacebuilding objectives into development cooperation, including climate change adaptation and humanitarian aid. However, mainstreaming efforts tend to be limited in their ability to change and influence programming, in particular if not accompanied by additional resources and expertise.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> United Nations, World Humanitarian Summit secretariat, *Restoring Humanity: Global Voices Calling for Action*, Synthesis of the Consultation Process for the World Humanitarian Summit (United Nations: New York, 2015).

<sup>24</sup> Sendai Framework, the SDGs and the Paris Agreement (note 1).

<sup>25</sup> Fifth Africa Regional Platform For Disaster Risk Reduction, ‘Declaration: Third African Ministerial Meeting For Disaster Risk Reduction’, 13–16 May 2014, Abuja, Nigeria.

<sup>26</sup> British Department for International Development (DFID), *BRACED Programme Mid-term Review* (DFID: London, forthcoming 2016).



### *Peacebuilding policies, planning and projects*

Similar gaps can be identified in the field of peacebuilding. One comparative study identified 66 different assessment tools with a focus on climate change, natural resources and conflict, but only two of these tools integrated all three dimensions.<sup>27</sup> The G7+, a process that brings together 20 self-identified fragile countries to better address their peace- and state-building challenges, has developed a fragility assessment methodology and a number of countries have implemented it, including the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Timor Leste. However, the inclusion of climate change-related trends in these assessments is very limited.<sup>28</sup>

Although there have not been many efforts to integrate peacebuilding and climate change adaptation efforts on the ground, the limited examples that do exist show that significant co-benefits and synergies can be achieved. For example, Mercy Corps' research on how conflict management and peacebuilding programmes can affect resilience to shocks and stresses in pastoral areas in the greater Horn of Africa has shown that peacebuilding efforts can increase food security and drought resilience. This was achieved by creating conditions that enable freer movement and access for pastoralist groups to important resources to enhance coping with and adaptation to severe drought.<sup>29</sup> There have been some discussions led by the UN Peacebuilding Support Office about including disaster risk reduction on the peacebuilding agenda of the next Peacebuilding Support Office strategy, but as of the end of 2015 nothing had yet been formalized.

## **Conclusions**

The security implications of climate change and climate-fragility risks have gained increased political attention at the national and international levels in the past 10 years. This came to a head in 2015 in the lead-up to COP 21. At the same time, first experiences are emerging of how best to integrate action across sectors and link climate adaptation, development and peacebuilding. However, the growing attention at the international level has not yet been translated into anchoring climate security in the institutional framework of

<sup>27</sup> Peters, K. and Janani, V., *Topic Guide: Conflict, Climate and Environment* (London: ODI and International Alert, 2014).

<sup>28</sup> Rüttinger et al. (note 13).

<sup>29</sup> Mercy Corps, *From Conflict to Coping: Evidence from Southern Ethiopia on the Contributions of Peacebuilding to Drought Resilience among Pastoralist Groups* (Mercy Corps: Washington, DC, 2012); and Kurtz, J. and McMahon, K., *Pathways from Peace to Resilience: Evidence from the Greater Horn of Africa on the Links between Conflict Management and Resilience to Food Security Shocks* (Mercy Corps: Washington, DC, 2015).

global governance, and many gaps remain at the assessment, strategic, planning and implementation levels.

The multiple crises of 2014 and 2015 provided clear warning signs of the more frequent and increasingly complex and systemic risks ahead. The combination of growing social, political, economic and environmental pressures and the move towards a multipolar world has pushed the global system and many states to the limit of their coping and crisis management capacities. For example, many European foreign ministries were overwhelmed by the multiple crises they had to manage—in particular in Syria and Ukraine. This highlights the wider challenge that focusing on the urgent crises of today can increasingly limit the ability of institutions to deal with important long-term trends such as climate change. This is especially worrying if the focus on urgent crises takes priority over preparing for and preventing the crises of tomorrow, and it poses important questions about how governments can make sure that in an era in which acute crises absorb much of their attention and capacities, they pay enough attention to longer-term risks and prevention.

With 2016 being billed as the ‘year of implementation’ of the numerous global processes ratified in 2015, the year ahead presents a unique opportunity and a pressing imperative to operationalize linked responses to the risks of climate change and security through integrated practice on the ground. The WHS also represents a major opportunity to deal with compound risk under a new humanitarian approach. If it lives up to its aims, the WHS could lead to a paradigm shift within the humanitarian system and instigate more effective and sustainable means to address growing humanitarian need. It has the potential to embed the interconnections between disasters, climate change and conflict in policy and practice in a way that COP 21, the Sendai Framework and the SDGs could not.