III. Entry points for policy and practice

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Introduction

There are multiple entry points for focusing policy and practice on the linked risks of climate change and conflict. Consideration of this interrelationship can occur at various levels, including during holistic risk assessments, as well as at the policy, and programme design and implementation levels. As a starting point, climate change interventions in fragile contexts must do no harm, and ideally contribute to reducing conflict risks. In the best case, they will help to build resilience against a whole range of shocks and pressures, including climate-fragility risks. The institutions responsible for climate change policy—such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member states, the relevant United Nations bodies, and global and regional development banks—and for practice, most notably development and humanitarian agencies, and private contractors and companies, need to ensure that their internal systems and structures promote resilience even where there is state fragility or conflict risk. For this to be possible, international institutions must restructure in such a way as to maximize citizen participation and build accountable and transparent national public institutions.[1]

There is however a lack of clear and tested policy prescriptions or empirical evidence on effective programming on which to base the development of an appropriate response that adequately accounts for conflict and climate change. Programming in relation to conflict dynamics, climate change and the interaction between them is necessarily tied to uncertainty.

Understanding the complexity of a context: holistic vulnerability and risk assessments

In attempting to address risks pertaining to climate change and conflict, capturing the complexity of a given context is imperative. Stresses such as scarcity 'should not be viewed in isolation from the contextual factors that make an individual, community or society vulnerable—or resilient—to its effects'.[2] Risk is not a simple outcome that can be understood as part of a linear model, but is the result of complex interactions between multiple

[1] Vivekananda, J., Smith, D. and Schilling, J., 'Understanding resilience in climate change and conflict affected regions of Nepal', *Geopolitics*, vol. 19, no. 4 (2014), pp. 911–36.

[2] Evans, A., 'Resource scarcity, climate change and the risk of violent conflict', 9 Sep. 2010, Background paper for *World Development Report 2011*: *Conflict, Security and Development* (World Bank: Washington, DC, 2011), p. 10.

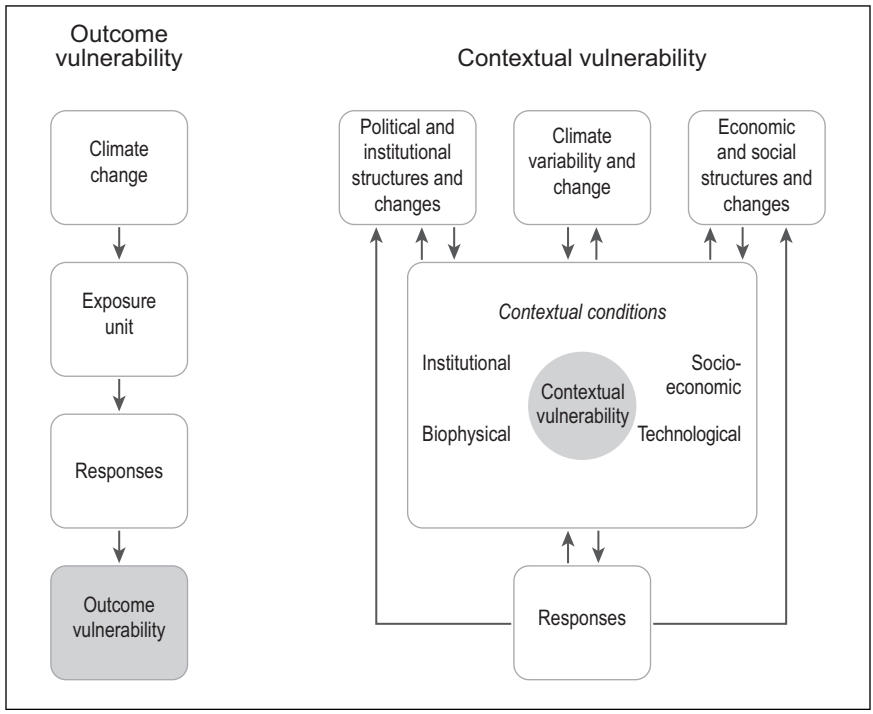

Figure 12.2. Frameworks depicting two interpretations of vulnerability to climate change

Source: O'Brien, K. et al., 'Why different interpretations of vulnerability matter in climate change discourses', *Climate Policy*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2007), p. 75. Reprinted with the permission of Taylor & Francis Ltd, <http://www.tandfonline.com>.

contextual factors. Integrated assessment approaches have to be systemic and comprehensive in order to analyse these interactions.[3] Climate risk assessments tend to focus on outcome vulnerability, while any conflict analyses in fragile states require a greater depth of understanding of contextual vulnerability (see figure 12.2). Contextual vulnerability—rooted in political economy—is determined exclusively by the internal characteristics of the vulnerable system, which determine the risk of harm from a wide range of hazards. Outcome vulnerability—also known as end-point interpretation or integrated cross-scale vulnerability—represents an integrated vulnerability concept that combines information on potential climate impacts and the socio-economic capacity to cope and adapt.

[3] Füssel, H.-M., 'Vulnerability: a generally applicable conceptual framework for climate change research', *Global Environmental Change*, vol. 17, no. 2 (May 2007), pp. 155–67; and Füssel, H.-M., 'How inequitable is the global distribution of responsibility, capability and vulnerability to climate change: a comprehensive indicator-based assessment', *Global Environmental Change*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Oct. 2010), pp. 597–611.

Risk assessment tools that consider climate risks tend to be rooted in scenario-based approaches that allow for linear causal analysis from climate predictions, to an impact, to a set of consequences. They rarely consider the knock-on consequences, such as those relating to the political economy of climate impacts, in fragile states. This does little to deepen understanding of the second- or third-order socio-political and economic risks posed by climate change in difficult environments, or to inform policy on adaptation, which does not take account of the complex political economy of such fragile contexts.[4]

Thorough conflict analysis and 'do no harm' guidelines can act as a minimum standard for all engagement on climate-related risks in fragile states.[5] However, to effect changes in programming, more comprehensive approaches are needed that link climate vulnerability with peace and conflict assessments. While such multi-hazard risk tools are not a silver bullet and pose challenges in terms of the different range and scale of activities, and the actors involved, they can provide a good starting point for designing programmes that build resilience against climate-fragility risks.

Operationalizing resilience

Operationalizing resilience on the ground requires deep understanding of the context and integrated approaches to programme design.[6] This necessitates understanding the risk landscape that individuals and institutions face, the different layers of risks and the interaction of risk factors across these layers. Risks are dynamic, affected not only by climatic changes and external forces, such as economic trends or government decisions, but also by the decisions taken by those most closely involved.[7] A multitude of toolkits and guidance notes exist that explain how to integrate different issues into programme design, but these focus on the integration of one issue, such as climate change, into another area of humanitarian and development work. None explicitly bring together conflict, climate and the environment. Analysis of these tools illustrates that—if done correctly—integrating climate change is not about 'adding on' a new issue area but fundamentally altering the nature of policies and programmes being proposed.

[4] Hamza, M., Smith, D. and Vivekananda, J., *Difficult Environments: Bridging Concepts and Practice for Low Carbon Climate Resilient Development* (Institute of Development Studies: Brighton, 2012).

[5] Peters, K. and Vivekananda, J., *Topic Guide: Conflict, Climate and Environment* (Overseas Development Institute/International Alert: London, 2014).

[6] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Guidelines for Resilience Systems Analysis: How to Analyse Risk and Build a Roadmap to Resilience* (OECD: Paris, 2014).

[7] Stark, J., Mataya, C. and Lubovich, K., *Climate Change, Adaptation and Conflict: A Preliminary Review of the Issues* (USAID: Washington, DC, 2009).

Little research exists on effective implementation of adaptation projects in fragile states. The limited research that is available highlights the challenge of absorptive capacity in such contexts.[8] There has been some initial work on conflict-sensitive adaptation.[9] This indicates that for resilience projects to effectively address climate-fragility risks and contribute to building resilience, they need to include a thorough assessment of the local context and link climate change adaptation with development, peacebuilding and conflict prevention more comprehensively.[10]

Conflict-sensitive climate change adaptation and mitigation

The troubled history of the politics of aid is highly relevant to the current climate change-related aid architecture and aid flows. Policies, programmes and funding in support of climate change adaptation and mitigation are subject to the same political interference as development and humanitarian aid.[11] While climate change is a predominantly scientific discipline, the solutions to address climate change are inherently political, not least because the reason that some people are more vulnerable to climate change than others is related to a combination of exposure, vulnerability *and* capacity.[12]

'Poorly designed adaptation and mitigation strategies can increase the risk of violent conflict'.[13] Practical examples from East Africa, the special territory of Aceh in Indonesia and the region of Darfur in Sudan show how techno-centric approaches to complex challenges such as the combination of climate change, conflict and fragility fail to address the risks presented.[14] Thinking about and acting on climate or conflict as technical and apolitical

[8] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *2008 Annual Report: Resource Flows to Fragile and Conflict-affected States* (OECD: Paris, 2008); and OECD, *Conflict and Fragility: Resource Flows to Fragile and Conflict-affected States* (OECD: Paris, 2010).

[9] Tänzler, D., Mohns, T. and Ziegenhagen, K., *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* (German Federal Environment Agency: Dessau-Roßlau, 2013); Campbell, I., 'Conflict sensitive approaches to local climate change adaptation in Nepal', Saferworld guidance note, May 2011, <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/700-conflict-sensitive-approaches-to-local-climate-change-adaptation-in-nepal>; and Harris, K., Groenewald, H. and Rai, S., *Water and Conflict: Making Water Delivery Conflict-sensitive in Uganda* (Center for Conflict Resolution/Rwenzori Development and Research Center/Saferworld/Youth Development Organization: Kampala/London, Aug. 2008).

[10] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *What does 'Resilience' Mean for Donors?* (OECD: Paris, 2011); and Schilling, J. et al., 'Vulnerability to environmental risks and effects on community resilience in mid-west Nepal and south-east Pakistan', *Environment and Natural Resources Research*, vol. 3, no. 4 (2013), pp. 1–19.

[11] Levine, S., Peters, K. and Fan, L., *Conflict, Climate Change and Politics: Why a Techno-centric Approach Fails the Resilience Challenge* (Overseas Development Institute: London, 2014), pp. 5–12.

[12] O'Hara, P. A., 'Political economy of climate change: ecological destruction and uneven development', *Ecological Economics*, vol. 69, no. 2 (Dec. 2009).

[13] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability* (IPCC/Cambridge University Press: Cambridge/New York, 2014).

[14] Levine, Peters and Fan (note 11).

challenges implies that technical and apolitical solutions are possible.[15] The lack of consideration of the political dimensions of climate aid means that there are fewer conditions set by donors for aid recipients to meet governance and social accountability standards. This increases the potential for inadvertent negative socio-political consequences, or the deliberate misuse of aid for political ends.

The growing number of examples of—intentional or inadvertent—inappropriate uses of climate and disaster aid that have been detrimental to peace underscore the importance of the application of conflict-sensitive approaches to climate aid expenditure.[16] For example, in Aceh, a failure to understand post-conflict political dynamics around land rights undermined a climate-related reforestation initiative and may have inadvertently exacerbated underlying political tensions.[17] Such examples show how important it is not to see climate adaptation policies and programmes as merely scientific and technical exercises. Their political dimension must be explicitly taken into account to avoid creating new or fuelling old conflicts.

Managing different time frames

In general, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and natural resource management policies emphasize thinking and acting over long-term time frames, and seeking sustainable change—whatever that may look like in a particular context.[18] However, the need to proactively take climate change into account in policies and practice can be a difficult case to make in immediate post-conflict contexts or where cessation of conflict and stabilization are being urgently sought. Contexts severely affected by ongoing violent conflict may not be considered appropriate targets for interventions aimed at addressing the long-term impacts of climate change by donors focused on stabilization and state-building. The argument often presented is that institution building (in other key sectors) and showing quick results and peace benefits are more important.[19] Building the right institutions to deal with future risks will be a partial success at best, however, if consideration of the institutional capacity required to deal with climate change risks is not included. In addition, the

[15] Levine, Peters and Fan (note 11).

[16] Peters, K. and Levine, S., '10 things not to do with climate aid', Overseas Development Institute Blog, 25 Feb. 2014.

[17] Levine, Peters and Fan (note 11).

[18] Kriesberg, L. and Dayton, B. W., *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution,* 4th edn (Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, MA/Plymouth 2011); and Levine, S., Ludi, E. and Jones, L., *Rethinking Support for Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change: The Role of Development Interventions, Findings from Mozambique, Uganda and Ethiopia* (Overseas Development Institute: London, 2011).

[19] Dabelko, G. D. et al. (eds), *Backdraft: The Conflict Potential of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, Environmental Change and Security Program Report 2013*, vol. 14, no. 2 (Woodrow Wilson International Center: Washington, DC, 2013).

potential climate adaptation, development or peacebuilding co-benefits that integrated approaches could yield might not be realized.[20]

Climate variability and climate change could fundamentally undermine existing agreements on the peaceful management of conflict. One example is where agreements are based on an assumption that natural resource assets such as water will be present and unchanging. If the availability and distribution of resources alter, for example as a result of climate change, new terms in agreements will be required, and the processes for renegotiation will become crucial to ensuring the sustainability of peace.

Taking a long-term trajectory of decades or more, agreements over the use of natural resources need to consider the possibility that resources might vary or diminish below the threshold of being able to support livelihoods reliant on those resources. In addition, there may be limits to climate change adaptation as a result of irreversible slow-onset events.[21] More research is needed to fill the void in understanding the impacts of slow-onset events on different communities across a range of contexts, and in understanding the relationship with processes of violence prevention, peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

There remains a significant evidence gap in the understanding of the tensions and trade-offs arising from the different time frames associated with humanitarian responses, the long-term investment required for disaster resilience, cycles of peace and conflict, and donor funding and political cycles. Exploring the way these time frames intersect could yield a better understanding of the costs and opportunities of building conflict, climate and disaster resilience.

A constructive starting point would be to increase awareness and understanding among the peacebuilding and state-building community of the links between climate change and conflict drivers such as unemployment, food price volatility, unequal resource allocation and marginalization. The goal would be to promote the integration of climate and environmental risks earlier in stabilization, post-conflict reconstruction and state-building processes. Alongside this, the promotion of locally identified priorities for context-appropriate sequencing into peacebuilding processes could create opportunities for conflict resolution and reconciliation. Such measures might include (*a*) increasing the capacity of communities to prioritize risk,

[20] Matthew, R. and Hammill, A., 'Peacebuilding and adaptation to climate change', eds D. Jensen and S. Lonergan, *Assessing and Restoring Natural Resources in Postconflict Peacebuilding* (Earthscan: New York, 2012).

[21] Kreft, S., Warner, K. and Harmeling, S., *Framing the Loss and Damage Debate: A Conversation Starter by the Loss and Damage in Vulnerable Countries Initiative* (Germanwatch: Bonn, 2012).

(*b*) engaging with conflict resolution mechanisms, (*c*) clarifying and securing land tenure, and (*d*) reinforcing customary mediation.[22]

Overcoming silos

There is emerging recognition that disjointed approaches have been adopted to managing the impacts of climate change, and to conflict resolution and/or peacebuilding in contexts affected by violence and armed conflict. This has undermined opportunities for greater policy coherence.[23]

Sectoral divisions not only limit the possibilities of proactive, coordinated co-benefits, but also create a false compartmentalization between issues, which can result in action being taken to advance one agenda at the expense of another. The real danger is when different strands of policy start to undermine one another, or when policies and strategies for development, peacebuilding and climate change adaptation are disconnected or divergent.[24] A comprehensive understanding of policies and issues is, therefore, essential to avoid potentially contradictory policy action.

Compartmentalization goes against the notion of building resilience, but current practice is heavily segregated, with different policy directives, institutional structures, funding streams and expertise. For example, silos exist between communities of practice dealing with humanitarian aid, development, conflict, climate change, the environment and disasters. This compartmentalization is mirrored in the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda. Key components of this agenda—the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–30 (the Sendai Framework) and the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS)—all involve different government and international agencies, and create separate funding streams.[25] Policymakers will need to consider how to overcome this as silos are replicated at the national and subnational levels, undermining efforts to devise holistic and 'resilient' approaches.

Institutional flexibility is essential to supporting effective responses to changing circumstances in fragile states.[26] Development donors will play

[22] 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).

[23] Fifth Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, 'Declaration: Third African Ministerial Meeting for Disaster Risk Reduction', 13–16 May 2014, Abuja, Nigeria.

[24] Smith, D. and Vivekananda, J. A., *Climate of Conflict: The Links Between Climate Change, Peace and War* (International Alert: London, 2007).

[25] See section II in this chapter.

[26] Batmanglich, S. and Stephen, M., *Peacebuilding, the World Bank and the United Nations Debates and Practice in Burundi, Liberia and Nepal: Summary of Research and Emerging Recommendations*

a major role in disbursing climate change funds and implementing climate change adaptation projects. This means that they need to evolve to better cope with the complexity, uncertainty and variability of climate change for all sectors, not just those which explicitly deal with climate change. This requires a move away from inflexible structures grounded in sectoral silos, counterproductive incentive systems that advance large-scale fund disbursements, patchy knowledge bases and inadequate consideration of governance in any meaningful sense.[27]

Finding the right financing model

Project and programme financing arrangements involving narrow results and agendas separate climate change investments from development and peacebuilding investments. This can have a detrimental effect on the degree to which local context and local voices shape the direction of international support.

At the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the UNFCCC in December 2015, developed countries reaffirmed their intention to provide an additional $100 billion for adaptation annually from 2020. However, to date, fragile states have received less climate financing than other developing countries.[28] Fragile states are often also the most vulnerable to climate change because they typically have high exposure to the risks of climate change and low capacity for adaptation.

The new funding mechanisms, in particular the main funding mechanism of the UNFCCC, the Green Climate Fund, will have to be adapted to ensure that it does not contribute to the disconnect between peace and development priorities, and actually reaches fragile states.[29] However, it is likely that the financing gap for fragile states will continue to grow while obstacles remain that prevent adaptation finance from reaching countries affected by fragility and conflict.

Conclusions

Exploring the relationship between climate change and variability, conflict, environmental conditions and natural resources is challenging; and contextualization is key. Adopting a holistic approach to risk offers much

(International Alert: London 2011).

[27] Bell, E., *The World Bank in Fragile and Conflict-affected Countries: 'How', not 'How Much'* (International Alert: London, 2008).

[28] 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).

[29] See e.g. Levine, Peters and Fan (note 11).

to inform and improve policy and practice. Things can be done to integrate conflict-sensitive approaches into climate action, integrate climate science into hazard, risk and vulnerability assessments, and use climate change adaptation in support of peace and stability. New approaches to working, new incentives, adequate resourcing and political will be required, however, to capitalize on the opportunities to address these linked challenges.

A number of gaps and obstacles remain at the assessment, planning, financing and implementation levels to comprehensively addressing climate-fragility risks. At the same time, however, experience is emerging of how to link climate change adaptation, development and peacebuilding in order to promote states and societies that are more resilient. Greater experience and further research are needed to better understand how integrated approaches can increase overall resilience and address climate-fragility risks.

An opportunity exists in the emerging resilience agenda to provide a thematic umbrella to integrate efforts across policy fields. Key climate change adaptation, development, humanitarian and peacebuilding institutions have been formulating and initiating new policies and approaches to fostering resilience. While they may have different focus areas, such as climate protection, conflict prevention and economic stability, their definitions of resilience do not significantly differ. They all define resilient states and societies as being able to absorb shocks and radical contextual change through their political processes and institutions while maintaining political or social stability and peace. This means that resilience can serve as an umbrella or common goal to integrate action across policy fields and sectors. However, given the large number of stakeholders and entry points involved, such a comprehensive approach to climate-fragility risks would require global leadership to generate the political momentum and provide a clear direction.

One key lever to catalyse these efforts is financing. A positive example in this regard is the European Commission's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). It is explicitly designed to include work on the security and development implications of climate change, as well as environmental and natural resource management issues.[30] However, it is currently funded at only a modest level. Of the IcSP's total spend of €2.3 billion in the period 2014–20, €11 million was earmarked for climate change- and security-related work.

Another key lever is linking up communities of practice across the different policy arenas. Much of the climate change community is not engaged in, or even aware of, peacebuilding or disaster risk reduction processes such as the Sendai Framework or WHS processes. The Group of Seven (G7) high-

[30] European Parliament and Council Regulation 230/2014 of 11 Mar. 2014 establishing an instrument contributing to stability and peace, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L77/1, 15 Mar. 2014.

level Working Group on Climate and Fragility could lead such a process if its mandate is renewed after 2016. Similarly, the Planetary Security Initiative spearheaded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has strong convening power, which could meet this requirement if it continues to be financed and prioritized at the ministerial level.[31]

[31] For details of the Planetary Security Conference see section II in this chapter.