COP27 SHARM EL-SHEIKH EGYPT 2022

CRSP Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace

Policy Paper

# Knowledge Gaps in the Nexus of Climate, Peace and Security

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December 2023

**Policy Paper**

Knowledge Gaps in the Nexus of Climate, Peace and Security

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## About CRSP

Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP) was launched in Sharm El-Sheikh by H.E. Minister Sameh Shoukry, President of COP27 and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, in partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The initiative aims to ensure that integrated climate responses contribute to sustainable peace and development in line with national ownership and context specificity. Through building capacities and addressing knowledge gaps, the CRSP initiative works to connect the climate, peace, and security communities, catalyze successful examples of targeted policy interventions, and impact through actions that ensure that meet the needs of women, youth, and local communities are at the forefront of climate responses.

## About CCCPA

Established in 1994, the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA) is an Egyptian public agency and an African Union (AU) Center of Excellence in training, capacity building, and research on peace and security. CCCPA is the Secretariat of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development and the Chair of the African Union Network of Think Tanks for Peace (NeTT4PEACE), launched in February 2023. The Center is a major voice from the region on a wide range of topics, including (a) conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding; (b) climate, peace, and development; (c) preventing radicalization and extremism leading to terrorism; (d) disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; (e) combating transnational threats; and (f) the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agendas.

## About NUPI

Established in 1959, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs [NUPI] is a leading independent research institute on international politics and areas of relevance to Norwegian foreign policy. Formally under the Ministry of Education and Research, NUPI nevertheless operates as an independent, non-political instance in all its professional activities. Research undertaken at NUPI ranges from short-term applied research to more long-term basic research.

## Acknowledgments

This document is published within the context of operationalizing the COP27 Presidency Initiative 'Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace' (CRSP). The lead authors, Thor Olav Iversen and Fareeda Khalifa, wish to acknowledge the inputs and feedback from Ambassador Ahmed Abdel-Latif (CCCPA), Dr. Cedric de Coning (NUPI), Catherine Wong (UNDP), Minoo Koefoed (NUPI), Sara Rabie (CCCPA) and Darin Hany (CCCPA) to the draft policy paper.

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# Abstract

There is a growing body of research on the relationship between climate change and peace and security. Research shows that the effects of climate change can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, such as food and water security, and in combination with other factors can also increase the risk of violent conflict. It is increasingly recognized that actions taken to prevent and manage conflict can be coordinated and integrated with actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Such cross-disciplinary cooperation can generate outcomes that are beneficial for both a sustainable peace and environment. The COP27 Presidency initiative titled "Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace" (CRSP), has taken a leading role in this movement by spearheading a discursive pivot from a climate security nexus towards a climate and peacebuilding nexus, with multifaceted and holistic approaches.

The literature on how to integrate climate adaption and mitigation actions in efforts to build sustainable peace is still underdeveloped. However, there are related fields, such as the relationship between peace, conflict and natural resource management that may offer comparable lessons. This policy paper takes stock of the existing knowledge and identifies knowledge gaps for policy practice in the crucial, complex and emergent field of climate, peace and security. It classifies significant gaps in our actionable knowledge by sorting them into operational knowledge gaps, climate finance knowledge gaps, and gaps in the knowledge infrastructure.

# Introduction

The United Nations (UN) Secretary General's recently published New Agenda for Peace (NA4P)[1] predicts that failure to tackle challenges posed by climate change will have devastating impacts on peacebuilding efforts and considers climate change to exacerbate the risks of instability. It therefore recommends addressing the effects of the climate crisis by increasing investment in underprioritized conflict settings, which currently receive a limited share of climate finance. Moreover, the NA4P recommends the recognition of climate, peace and security as a political priority, including through existing bodies, such as the UN Security Council and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Such recognition of the likely impacts of climate change on peace and security is reflected in several recent publications, which conclude that climate change worsens conflict risk and compound fragility.[2] This includes the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report, which emphasized that adaptation may build peace in conflict-prone regions by addressing both grievances that lead to conflict and vulnerability to climate change.[3]

There is a growing sense of awareness of issues relating to climate, peace and security, which is also reflected through upscaled efforts. The COP27 Presidency initiative titled "Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace" (CRSP) further spearheaded a discursive pivot from a climate security nexus to a climate and sustaining peace nexus, with multifaceted and holistic approaches, while also highlighting the importance of sharing knowledge and experience.[4] In the wake of COP27, Norway and Kenya arranged an Arria-formula meeting in the UN Security Council with an emphasis on how climate change could also create opportunities for peacebuilding and diplomacy, and how peace and sustainable environmental practices at the local, national and global levels are mutually reinforcing.[5] COP28 continues the emphasis on the nexus of climate, peace and security with its health, relief, recovery and peace day.[6]

Concurrently, the African Union's Peace and Security Council has adopted several communiqués that emphasize the importance of addressing the interface between climate change, peace and security. This is particularly the case for the Communiqué adopted at its 984th meeting in March 2021 on the theme: "Sustainable Peace in Africa: Climate Change and its Effects on Peace and Security in the Continent" whereby member states were encouraged to advance a holistic approach to climate change resilience and boost prevention of conflict.[7] Additionally, the Communique adopted on 26 November 2021 "Climate Change and Peace and Security: The need for an Informed Climate-Security-Development Nexus for Africa" underscores the importance of advancing integrated responses that yield potential co-benefits of climate adaptation, peacebuilding and sustainable development.[8]

On the policy level, relevant efforts include the African Union's Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan[9], in addition to the inclusion of conflict sensitivity and peace-positive approaches in many countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).[10] Several endeavours seek to bridge gaps between research, policy and practice, such as the CRSP Initiative.

Despite the aforementioned efforts, there is no coherent view on the most appropriate strategies for designing policies and projects that integrate considerations of synergies between climate change, peace and conflict, particularly in line with advancing principles of national ownership and context specificity. Reviews conducted have so

far categorized learning from practice as embryonic, offering highly limited insights.[11]

Furthermore, the cross-cutting nature of both climate change and peacebuilding, which on their own encompass a multitude of factors and entry points towards a broad range of interconnected fields relating to sustainable peace and development, must be considered. This brings significant challenges when seeking to develop holistic and integrated responses and acquiring a thorough overview of relevant knowledge. Thus, it is critical to be cognizant of this additional complexity when advancing integrated approaches.

There is a need to build and disseminate the evidence base for peacebuilding in relation to climate and environmental change.[12] Much of the relevant literature explores the complex interactions of climate change and conflict[13], rather than operationally relevant recommendations in terms of policy recommendations, project design, monitoring and evaluation or other conceptual or operational components. There is also a need to build collective knowledge management systems that integrate tailored approaches and context specificity in order to make climate responses more effective in sustaining peace.[14] This entails both improved monitoring and data collection systems, that integrate climate change in peacebuilding and vice versa, as well as consolidated analytical frameworks. Moreover, ideas about appropriate programmatic responses to the nexus of climate, peace and security remain relatively under-developed.[15]

The policy paper aims to make a contribution towards an understanding of the policy and practice interface by systematically assessing the available evidence to detect gaps in actionable knowledge on the nexus of climate, peace and security. The main intended audience are thus the practitioners, policymakers and researchers of this emergent field.

The policy paper is structured into three sub-categories of knowledge gaps, as follows: (1) operational knowledge gaps, which can be filled through changes during the project design and implementation phase, as well as mainstreaming conflict-sensitivity in planning and programming; (2) climate finance knowledge gaps, which outlines gaps with regards to knowledge of how climate finance can be leveraged to improve upon peace and security; and (3) knowledge infrastructure gaps, which tackle insufficiencies in the infrastructure for producing and disseminating knowledge in the field.

# I. Operational Knowledge Gaps

In many contexts, fragility and conflict coincide with heightened vulnerability to climate impacts, posing a challenge for prioritization, as peacebuilding and climate adaptation efforts are equally timely and necessary. Furthermore, until recently, little analysis has shed light on the co-benefits of climate action for peace and security.[16] This section therefore maps a series of knowledge gaps which can, and do, hinder improvement of relevant policy and project design and implementation.

There are considerable knowledge gaps in terms of the policies addressing the interface of climate, peace and security. Many gaps are created by the disconnect between policies on climate change adaptation and mitigation, and those focused on resolving conflicts and achieving sustainable peace and development. Considering the integration of climate risks with peace and security challenges through advancing

a climate adaptation and peacebuilding nexus may for instance identify entry points for complementary interventions.[17] In this regard, a recent UNDP and CRSP study examines knowledge gaps in climate change related tools and policies, including NAPs and mitigation plans. It unpacks them to show how such policies refer to climate, peace and security risks by considering the extent to which interlinkages are expressed, including on the co-benefits of adaptation and mitigation for conflict prevention and sustaining peace.[18] Further building on such efforts may stimulate integrated policies.

With regards to practical implementation, the UN University has published a report evaluating several projects identified as climate-security projects approved by the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) between 2016 and 2021, concluding that there is a need to improve project design.[19] Among the gaps identified in the evaluation is the need to improve operational guidance, which requires more dedicated testing of projects.[20] In this regard, a potential approach that can be used is to deliberately fund projects that share certain commonalities across countries, climates, conflict or communities to identify if outcomes can be generalized upon, and to study different project designs. This might, for instance, include funding modalities related to the interlinkages between gender, climate, and conflict in areas with different community structures or conflict dynamics to assess how replicable a certain model is across community contexts.

Another method to produce more actionable knowledge is supporting focused learning projects and iterative or adaptive project designs.[21] Large-scale climate action projects may interact with or exacerbate conflict drivers, as tensions are impacted, possibly triggering or embedding conflict. Thus, testing the technical feasibility and operational success of smaller projects is often a valuable precursor to scaling up to larger initiatives.[22] An iterative and adaptive approach furthermore encourages reflection on Theories of Change throughout the project cycle, through revisions and check-ins that strengthen learning and reflection.[23]

Such learning would also require longitudinal evaluations and data that not only capture change in the project time frame, but also for years after its conclusion. Knowledge production in the field of climate, peace and security is however often hampered by the limited timeframes of relevant projects.[24] The lack of long-term projects is particularly caused by the emerging status of the broader policy field. It therefore direly needs investment in longitudinal studies.

Given the crucial role of women and youth in fostering peace and security, these are important areas for further applied research. The synergies of the gender-climate-peacebuilding nexus are garnering increased attention, recognizing gendered effects of climate change and that women and girls can play unique roles in contributing to action on climate change. In a project funded by the UN PBF in Yemen, the inclusion of women in local water management created significant gains and co-benefits, in terms of expanding women's agency and economic opportunities. Women's participation furthermore enhanced overall results through better water management and dispute resolution.[25]

Relatedly, there is insufficient evidence to thoroughly evaluate climate, peace and security projects with a focus on youth. There is a small number of relevant projects, and lack of independent evaluations or project data that allow for inferences about project results.[26] Reviews and evaluations however suggest that simply expanding opportunities for inclusion and participation in climate mitigation, adaptation and

peacebuilding may not be enough.[27] A deeper understanding of challenges and opportunities facing youth in this regard could enhance knowledge of climate, peace and security dynamics and in turn support youth participation.

There are also strong transboundary dimensions to the nexus of climate, peace and security. Knowledge gaps in addressing the interlinkages between human mobility, climate and conflict lead to significant limitations on the policy level, which is creating a lack of policy coherence. In that sense, climate policy and practice does not sufficiently take the different patterns of human mobility, including forced displacement, into consideration. Similarly, this requires concerted efforts towards fostering better management of climate-induced displacement to effectively meet the livelihoods, humanitarian and protection needs of affected communities.[28] Recent studies on climate-related security and peacebuilding stress the importance of cross-border, sub-regional and regional approaches[29], with a need to drive further innovation and develop effective approaches in this space.[30]

While policies addressing climate change, peace and security largely remain on the national level, regional and transboundary approaches are often siloed, dispersed and minimal, and maintain less effect due to inadequacies in addressing interlinkages and cross-border issues. Hence, the development of solid institutional frameworks is essential for fostering regional resilience, that enable the management of natural resources across national boundaries.[31]

In this regard, it is also key to recognize the centrality of integrated approaches towards our understanding of climate adaption and sustaining peace. Such analysis can leverage the co-benefits of addressing the root causes of conflict and fragility, as well as the implications of climate change.[32] Climate-related security risks are generally better integrated into adaptation than mitigation projects[33]; however, mitigation may also impact climate and security. An example of this is in the DRC, where internationally funded forest preservation projects at times have affected local conflict dynamics.[34] Improving our understanding of the conflict risks and potential peace dividends related to climate mitigation is therefore necessary.

Concurrently, local engagement on climate, peace and security cannot be relegated to a secondary position. Engagement at the local level serves as a tractable way to engage in fragile environments, opening opportunities to address local sources of violence and strengthen local governance.[35] Policy interventions should therefore be drafted in coordination and co-created with local actors that possess such valuable knowledge about the needs and coping strategies of their own communities.[36] Such inclusive approaches can also support and contribute to local ownership of climate adaptation and mitigation projects, in turn facilitating their implementation and sustainability. Greater exploration of this dynamic, particularly through iterative, adaptive and comparable project designs, could improve programming approaches in climate, peace and security. The potential role of local and indigenous knowledges in addressing the nexus of climate, peace and security is further explored in the later section on gaps in knowledge infrastructures.

On the conceptual side, attaining greater precision in defining key concepts is necessary to improve project categorization, evaluation, and guidance.[37] This could enable easier identification of how climate responses and environmental strategies are prioritized and taken into account within a given project, and would thus support assessments of projects and their impacts. Concurrently, lack of clarity on key concepts

and typologies has spiked concern from practitioners, particularly on how climate and peacebuilding are perceived as trendy and likely to secure more funding, incentivizing exercises in box ticking and green washing.[38] This reinforces the need for precision to discourage malpractices due to loose categorization.

To tackle this challenge, a potential step would be to establish clearer external criteria on how to define particular thematic areas or elements, as well as what projects can be considered of relevance.[39] Another measure would be to develop standardized climate and peacebuilding markers, allowing projects to self-identify the extent and type of engagement in the field. This move towards more standardized concepts could make a complex and ambiguous field more coherent and comparable, with clear markers for a variety of relevant actors and stakeholders to coordinate around.

# II. Climate Finance Knowledge Gaps

This section details gaps in our knowledge with regards to how climate finance can be leveraged to diminish risks in the field of climate, peace and security, especially since there has been minimal work with a specific focus on climate finance in the context of fragility and conflict.[40] There is a particular need for greater understanding of how to leverage climate finance in conflict-affected countries, as more than two thirds of countries receiving support from the Global Environment Facility between 1991 and 2016 had ongoing armed conflicts.[41]

There is a growing body of research and literature that engages with the co-benefits approach of climate finance and peacebuilding. The Fifth Assessment Report defines co-benefits as "the positive effects that a policy or measure aimed at one objective might have on other objectives, irrespective of the net effect on overall social welfare".[42] The co-benefits approach contends that greater conflict-sensitivity in climate finance not only can improve risk management in fragile and conflict affected settings, but also unlock much-needed climate finance in those contexts. Thus, the principle of the co-benefits approach could leverage better understanding of the interlinkages between conflict and security and climate risks. It could also highlight the entry points that holistic, conflict-sensitive climate finance could present in catalysing peacebuilding efforts in fragile and conflict affected settings.

Despite growing recognition, the co-benefits of climate finance and peacebuilding remain underutilized. A main cause could be that the frameworks for climate finance and peacebuilding architecture hinders, or limits, synergies between the policy making, evaluation and implementation of both fields.[43] The knowledge gap that persists between the climate finance architecture and peacebuilding processes could thus be bridged through targeted policy and practice interventions in each field. Such interventions may allow for more integrated climate responses that target sustaining peace in fragile and conflict-affected settings, utilizing conflict-sensitive climate finance.

Climate finance is risk averse in terms of geographic targeting, particularly with regards to the most fragile contexts, with countries most severely affected by conflict and insecurity having the least access to climate finance. In a review of climate finance implemented by four vertical funds in 146 countries, only one of the top 15 recipients in the combined group of fragile states was classified as extremely fragile.[44] Extremely fragile states averaged around one fifth of the support provided to fragile states per

capita, and projects funded in such states are much smaller. Moreover, it remains poorly understood whether internationally funded climate adaptation projects that are able to reach these contexts contribute to conflict management and reduction.[45]

UNDP emphasizes the necessity of mainstreaming climate-security risks into finance architecture.[46] This requires intentionality in the process of designing climate finance mechanisms, including the use of a dedicated funding platform, special finance vehicles or pathways for financing projects with dual climate and peace dividends. Conflict analysis should also be integrated into climate finance analysis, evaluation and background checks. Consequently, the NA4P has recommended the establishment of a new funding mechanism within, or alongside, the UN PBF for more risk-tolerant climate finance investments.[47] Mainstreaming peacebuilding into climate finance moreover requires the re-engineering of indicators.[48] In the following section, this policy paper will elaborate on the production of data and indicators that are fit for purpose in monitoring the climate, peace and security nexus.

Greater understanding of how climate finance works in conflict-affected contexts is however needed, and the impact of the financing of humanitarian aid on climate action is another important area to explore.[49] Investments in climate-security and peacebuilding by specific funds and peacebuilding initiatives have at times achieved catalytic effects, through testing and uptake by other donors.[50] To enhance such effects, a better sense of the criteria large donors apply to select or approve projects is needed, in addition to a more comprehensive understanding of what kind of proof and knowledge donors require to consider investing in highly fragile and conflict-affected settings.

There is furthermore a need for greater cross-learning and knowledge exchange across different climate funds' focal areas and portfolios.[51] The experience gathered from best practices in a variety of climate and environmental fields may be a good reference for other areas of funding. Identifying examples of programming that yielded peace dividends can entail possibilities for potential replication, across a variety of different, but interconnected projects. This could increase learning and build the knowledge base, particularly using iterative, comparable and adaptive project designs.

There is also a need to better highlight the role of risk preferences and their impact on the finance received by fragile and conflict-affected settings. Research indicates that in many cases, climate finance falls drastically short in fragile and conflict-affected settings due to the misalignment of the complex and insecure operating environments in these settings with the risk appetite of fund providers.[52] Thus, funders tend to stream climate finance to more politically stable settings, that have higher absorption capacities for finance and are more capable of applying effective climate action. The manifestations of this misalignment are manifold, ranging from the complex bureaucratic processes put in place by funders, to the institutional and human capacity gaps that hinder fragile contexts from applying and receiving climate funds.

# III. Knowledge Infrastructure Gaps

There is a continued need to invest in learning and knowledge sharing in this nascent policy field.[53] A main finding of this policy paper is that there are a series of gaps in the knowledge production and dissemination infrastructure with regards to climate, peace and security that is manifested in both geographical and organizational structures.

The NA4P published by the UN recommends establishing "a dedicated expert group on climate action, resilience and peacebuilding to develop recommendations on integrated approaches", which would work under the IPCC.[54] Similarly, it recommends joint regional hubs on climate, peace and security as a modality to exchange experiences and best practices on the national and regional levels, while leveraging their differences to provide technical advice to member states.

There are examples of initiatives that enhance security, promote peace and environmental outcomes that the broader field could benefit from, in addition to equivalent shortcomings that can serve towards extracting lessons learned. Among such initiatives is the CRSP, which seeks to facilitate knowledge sharing by a range of activities that can narrow down the gaps on climate and sustaining peace, chief among the establishment of research-practice networks, as well as policy-oriented research and case studies. Furthermore, SIPRI recommends governments to invest in open and transparent platforms to share best practices as well as lessons from projects with unintended negative consequences, and further advises governments to undertake strategic reviews of how climate change and environmental degradation may affect their peace and security.[55]

There is a growing demand for empirical data that will untangle the complex links between increasing global temperature and conflict.[56] The international community should therefore support improved access to relevant and timely empirical data. However, climate and peacebuilding metrics are often not compatible and difficult to integrate outside their originally intended area of use, thus requiring a redesign of indices and measurement techniques. Such data innovation may advance more integrated responses to climate action and sustaining peace, particularly early warning protocols for disaster and conflict that incorporate indicators of impending environmental and climate impacts.[57] It would also serve to improve the quality of project evaluations and impact assessments.

Moreover, there is a need to further integrate local, national and regional data on climate, peace and security. Information sharing remains a major challenge for the UN, which tends to operate in coordination with and contribute to national data systems. Supporting regional and global infrastructures of data is therefore key. Day (2020) suggests systematic integration and publication of quantitative data by UN agencies in climate, peace and security, as they already collect data on social, political and environmental affairs.[58] This could be done through establishing a knowledge management mechanism with a mandate to coordinate such work, allowing both the UN and other practitioners to benefit from such data streams.

The Climate Security Observatory (CSO) Platform recently launched by CGIAR is a promising initiative with regards to sharing knowledge, best practices and data. It is a decision-making resource for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners, seeking to remedy gaps in policy-relevant evidence. The platform provides access to a range of global, national, and sub-national climate and security-related analyses. It moreover aggregates, processes and analyses data for climate, environmental, peace and security as well as socioeconomic indicators.[59]

Generating robust knowledge also requires projects to go beyond purely quantitative indicators and results frameworks, as development data tends to be less available in the least developed areas.[60] This effect is likely to be heightened in fragile and conflict-affected settings, which directly impede travelling, surveying and randomized

sampling. Therefore, a more attainable goal might be to collect narratives from those involved in implementation on project dynamics and outcomes, as well as potential improvements for future projects.[61] Beneficiary communities provide another vital source of narratives and data.

There are numerous practical opportunities to stimulate learning and knowledge production, such as provision of behind-the-scenes support to the growing community of practice.[62] This kind of support could take the form of organizing directed workshops, capacity building activities, fellowship programmes and meetings between practitioners. Additionally, interdisciplinary learning across different institutions and communities of practice by utilizing knowledge from different, but related policy-fields is a potential avenue for increased learning. A promising field for such epistemic cross-fertilization is environmental peacebuilding: A more inclusive definition of relevant activities that also encompasses environmentally focused projects could encourage learning across policy boundaries.[63]

The fact that an increasing number of people from different backgrounds and knowledge traditions work with climate and environmental peacebuilding has been highlighted as a potential source of innovation.[64] In the context of the deep complexity that often characterizes peacebuilding[65], harnessing a plurality of different perspectives and kinds of knowledge is particularly important in order to facilitate effective policy interventions.[66] There is a growing interest in interdisciplinary approaches across different scientific traditions in environmental studies[67], entailing the use of various forms of scientific knowledge, from statistical modelling to deeply contextual case studies and ethnography.[68]

As previously mentioned, local communities possess valuable knowledge about the nexus of climate, peace and security. The knowledge and experience of indigenous peoples, local communities and civil society have been proposed as valuable sources of local knowledge that can complement the scientific and bureaucratic knowledge forms that international organisations and national governments often rely on.[69] This knowledge is particularly pertinent with regards to understanding local causal chains from climate change to peace and security, which are always deeply contextual.[70]

The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform suggests the creation of an "ecosystem for peace" where a diversity of actors could bring together what is often considered opposite knowledge forms and action, integrating bottom-up and top-down approaches.[71] Such a perspective could shift the discourse towards new methodologies that entail greater inclusivity and more self-awareness. This would require combining the knowledge of under-represented groups, such as indigenous peoples and local communities, with big data and new technologies.

Another important field that remains somewhat unexplored is raising public awareness through education. Formal and informal educators could identify and create opportunities to inform potentially impacted communities. Affected young people should be educated on the risk landscape and challenges entailed in climate, peace and security, while promoting awareness, agency and discussion on addressing such risks and their underlying causes.[72] Tailored educational interventions could also be applied to external settings such as the public or decision makers of key donor countries.


# Conclusion

The importance of climate change to peace, conflict and security is well-recognized across policy and practice. It has recently been highlighted as a crucial policy area by both the IPCC and the UN's NA4P.[73] However, the climate, peace and security nexus remains a nascent policy field. This policy paper has attempted to support the development of operational guidance by detailing and categorizing relevant knowledge gaps that stand in the way of more effective policy implementation and design.

A main finding of the policy paper is that a large gap still exists in the infrastructure for knowledge production and dissemination on climate, peace and security at different geographic and organizational levels. Addressing such gaps could provide significant opportunities to produce, curate and share actionable knowledge that would support further development of climate and peacebuilding as a policy field.

Developing more precise and applicable key concepts and project criteria is necessary in a field which often struggles to draw tangible boundaries to distinguish itself from other areas of climate action and sustainable development. Another finding is that there is a need to further explore the potential benefits and pitfalls of sub-fields such as transboundary, gender-based and youth-focused projects, preferably via iterative, longitudinal, comparable and adaptive project designs. Additionally, there is a need to understand how to channel more climate finance into the most fragile and conflict-affected settings, which today attract only negligible funding.

In order to bridge some of the identified knowledge gaps, and to speak to the conclusions of this policy paper, some key messages, recommendations and policy proposals are presented under each of the categories of gaps and challenges

classified above; operational knowledge, climate finance knowledge, and knowledge infrastructure.

# Recommendations

## I. Operational

- Improve operational guidance in the field through dedicated project testing and emphasis on project design and theories of change.
- Perform systemic and longitudinal evaluations with data collection structures that not only capture change during the project time frame, but also for years after its conclusion.
- Support focused learning projects as well as adaptive and iterative project designs, including nexus approaches, in order to assess how replicable model are across different contexts.
- Explore the gendered effects of climate change, and particularly how women and girls can play unique roles in contributing to climate action and peacebuilding.
- Expand opportunities for inclusion and participation for youth in climate mitigation, adaptation and peacebuilding, and gain deeper understanding of their constraints, challenges and opportunities.
- Build on cross-border, sub-regional and regional project approaches to drive further innovation and develop more effective approaches, while utilizing local engagement and knowledge on climate, peace and security.
- Attain greater conceptual clarity and develop more accurate criteria for project categorization through identifying more precise, coherent and applicable typologies for climate, peace and security projects.
- Better inform the design and implementation of policies that leverage the co-benefits of climate adaptation for sustaining peace, while addressing root causes of conflict.
- Endorse national and local ownership in a systematic manner in the design and implementation of policies and projects on climate, peace, and security, and build national capacities in developing countries to strengthen such national and local ownership.

## II. Climate Finance

- Improve understanding of how climate finance operates and is distributed in conflict-affected settings.
- Mainstream climate risks into finance architecture, by integrating conflict analysis into climate finance analysis, and creating new platforms for risk-tolerant climate finance.
- Gain clearer understanding of what kind of proof and knowledge donors require to be open to investing in conflict-affected settings.
- Develop more precisely defined criteria by donors for supporting climate adaptation and mitigation projects in conflict-affected settings.

- Improve understanding of the effects of climate change finance on peace, security and conflict in the countries that are the most severely affected by conflict.
- Induce cross-learning and knowledge exchange across different climate funds' focal areas and portfolios, identifying best practices and examples of projects yielding peace dividends that can be replicated.

## III. Knowledge Infrastructure

- Invest in infrastructure for producing and disseminating knowledge with regards to climate, peace and security at different geographic and organizational levels.
- In line with the recommendation put forth by the NA4P, establish a dedicated expert group on climate, peace and security to develop recommendations on integrated approaches, as well as joint regional hubs which support building national capacities in this area.
- Drive data innovation and redesign of monitoring systems by developing more integrated and holistic metrics across conflict and climate, and further integrate local, national and regional data on climate, peace and security.
- Collect qualitative data and narratives from professionals involved in project implementation as well as beneficiary communities to supplement quantitative data and analysis.
- Invest in open platforms such as CGIAR's CSO to share best practices, data and lessons learned.
- Provide support to the community of practice by organizing workshops, fellowship programmes and meetings between practitioners, and utilizing knowledge from different, but related, policy fields such as environmental peacebuilding.
- Adopt an interdisciplinary approach and utilize a variety of scientific knowledge to inform the design of policy interventions.
- Build on the knowledge and expertise of local and indigenous communities about their own communities, environments, and coping mechanisms to complement the expertise of national, regional, and international actors, as well as that of the academic communities.
- Create an 'ecosystem for peace' in which a diversity of actors bring together and integrate bottom-up and top-down approaches, in line with recommendations by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform.
- Educate young people and other relevant groups on the complex risk landscape and challenges entailed in the nexus of climate, peace and security, both inside and outside affected communities.

# Endnotes

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NUPI Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

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