

Promoting Climate-Resilient Peacebuilding in Fragile States International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), August 2015

Summary

This 29-page report published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development provides guidance on integrating climate resilience into peacebuilding interventions. The report provides a brief overview of the challenges of fragile states and guidance on operating in them, as well as a brief summary of the linkages between climate impacts and the drivers of instability. It then argues for addressing climate and peacebuilding jointly, and offers some entry points for achieving this integration. It closes with an overview of existing toolkits, guidance notes and frameworks for peacebuilding from the World Bank, USAID, UN and others, and examines how climate resilience could be integrated into them.

In detail

The report opens with an introduction that illustrates the often self-reinforcing difficulties of fragile states and the risks that climate change poses to them. It notes that over a third of official development assistance is now spent in fragile and conflict-affected countries, reflecting a recognition that violence and instability can persist and spread unless they are addressed in these contexts. The authors outline the considerable difficulties of operating effectively in fragile states; these include, amongst other challenges, the limited ability of fragile states to absorb development assistance.

The authors briefly outline the links between climate change and conflict. These include increased resource competition, population displacement, and particularly the additional stress on social, economic and natural systems that can overwhelm state capacities. This last risk carries the greatest risk for weak or fragile states. In addition, the authors note the negative feedback cycles that particularly affect fragile states, whereby the conditions of fragility increase the countries' vulnerability to climate impacts, which in turn can negatively affect the security environment and adaptive capacity.

Achieving integration

The authors make the case for integrating climate considerations into peacebuilding, aiming for peacebuilding programs that are resilient to current and future climate extremes. However, the report acknowledges the difficulties of coordination between these fields, given their different institutions, tools and approaches. Nevertheless, the report's key contribution is to outline principles, entry points and challenges for practitioners, as well as opportunities for integrating this approach into the existing body of guidance for peacebuilding interventions.

The principles for achieving integration are:

- 1) act based on thorough analysis of the local context;

- 2) balance near- and longer-term priorities;
- 3) focus on managing natural resources that affect livelihoods;
- 4) reach across disciplines and sectors to collaborate;
- 5) incorporate climate into future-oriented peacebuilding planning; and
- 6) aim for resilience to shocks and stressors, whether climate-driven or not, as an overarching objective.

A table illustrates how climate considerations could be integrated into the UN Secretary-General's five peacebuilding dimensions, particularly around basic services, government functions and economic revitalization.

Challenges

Generating accurate climate data in fragile contexts, and developing and retaining the expertise to translate it into decision-shaping information is identified as a significant challenge. The uncertainty that climate change presents, and the orientation toward demonstrable results and meeting the immediate needs of an affected population can trump longer-term imperatives, according to the authors. Practicalities such as how development, relief and peacebuilding are funded can work against integrated approaches, and actors are often overstretched to address cross-cutting issues.

The report draws on desk-based research, practitioner surveys and interviews, as well as discussions at a practitioner workshop held in Nairobi in January 2015, which was co-organized by the project consortium and also served as a consultation workshop for [A New Climate For Peace](#). This is particularly beneficial in grounding the challenges section in real-world experience, and identifying how analysis on this topic could be most useful, i.e. by integrating it into existing peacebuilding resources.

Conclusions

The report concludes with a summary of the main points of the report – fragile contexts are difficult but are where the need is greatest; climate and fragility interact and so must be addressed jointly; and integrating this into existing peacebuilding guidelines is most effective for practitioners. The conclusion reiterates the authors' argument that in order for peacebuilding to be effective and sustainable, integration is a difficult but necessary objective.

Two annexes cover international guidance on working in fragile states and an overview of existing peacebuilding resources, with suggestions for ways of integrating climate resilience.

>> Crawford, Alec, Angie Dazé, Anne Hammill, Jo-Ellen Parry and Alicia Natalia Zamudio (2015): Promoting Climate-Resilient Peacebuilding in Fragile States. Winnipeg / Geneva: IISD. Retrieved at: <https://www.iisd.org/sites/default/files/publications/promoting-climate-resilient-peacebuilding-fragile-states.pdf>.