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Small Islands, Big Effect: U.N. General Assembly Adopts Resolution on Climate Change and Security

By Alexander Carius, Executive Director, Adelphi Research

The General Assembly of the United Nations (U.N.) at its 63 General Assembly on 3 June 2009 adopted a draft resolution on "Climate change and its possible security implications" (A/63/281), which have been proposed by the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS). The resolution was adopted by a consensus and 101 states supported it. For the first time in the history of the U.N., the United States co-sponsored a climate protection resolution. The European Union (E.U.), and especially Germany, has been particularly concerned from the beginning about the importance of supporting the PSIDS. The resolution urged the U.N. bodies to strengthen their efforts to combat climate change and to avoid intensifying potential security risks. The U.N. Secretary General was requested to submit a comprehensive report outlining the possible security risks of climate change at the next General Assembly meeting. The report should consider the views and expertise of the Member States and relevant regional and international organisations. This was the first time in history that a U.N. resolution established a direct link between climate change to international peace and security. The professional opinions of the Member States and regional and international organisations are expected to be presented at the end of July 2009. At the end of August, the first working draft of the report will be available. The Committee for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (UNDESA) will develop the report for the General Secretary. The tight schedule should allow for conclusions and recommendations to be considered for the Copenhagen Process and the U.N. Climate Summit, which will be on 22 September 2009 in New York.

In the spring of 2007, the United Kingdom's initiative on climate change was discussed at the U.N Security Council, which was met with considerable opposition. Some held fundamental reservations against climate policies as a topic for the Council, while others feared that the Security Council's enforcement of decisions on climate policy may restrict the sovereignty of states. Yet the re-launch of the PSIDS in the General Assembly was successful. Due to the fact that PSIDS first drafted a resolution, they consequently could emphasise the massive threat that climate change imposes on them. The current text of the resolution is short and compromises nearly a year-long struggle. However, the negotiations of the G77's developing countries did not reach a consensus. Reservations regarding the referral to the U.N. encompass all regional and political groups. Ultimately though, a political process was initiated that now addresses the security implications of climate change at the U.N. level. The consensual adoption of the resolution will also be included in future U.N. negotiations. Due to the short time frame (presentation of the report at the next U.N. General Assembly meeting), the General Assembly must continue to intensely work on the topic of climate change and security. Furthermore, the formation of the resolution text was collectively conceived so that the Security Council could address the topic in the future.

This resolution now initiates at the U.N. level a parallel process to the E.U. roadmap process on climate change and international security. The German E.U. Presidency initiated in 2007 a joint paper on climate change and international security that the Council and the European Commission published in March 2008. Until the end of 2009, the European Union will continue making concrete recommendations and adapt them with international and regional organisations so that security implications of climate

change can be mitigated. These parallel processes offer the E.U. Member States the unique opportunity for their expectations and suggestions to be included at the U.N. level.

The Draft Resolution is available at <http://www.un.org/ga>

The U.N. press release on the General can be found at <http://www.un.org/News>

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POLICY & RESEARCH

Battle for the Amazon: No Chance for Peru's Indigenous People

In Peru, the peaceful protests of indigenous groups against legislative decrees that open up the Amazon rainforests to logging, mining, oil and agro-industry, erupted into bloodshed when Peruvian Special Forces staged a violent raid, leaving 25 dead and more than 100 wounded. The Peruvian Rainforest Inter-Ethnic Development Association (AIDESEP) has been coordinating protests and blockades of waterways and roads across the Amazon region for two months now, demonstrating against the series of laws passed under the auspices of Free Trade Agreements Peru signed with both Canada and the United States. Indigenous groups argue that these laws threaten the integrity of the Amazon, its cultural and biological diversity, by allowing the deforestation and privatization of traditional lands without their prior consultation. Since their concerns were ignored they decided to take action, wearing traditional warrior paint and armed with bows and arrows, to demand full and effective participation in all matters that concern them. "We are fighting for our children," said one of the protestors. "We want peace. We don't want to fight. But we all have the right to defend our territory, where we live." This right was clearly recognized within international law two years ago with the approval of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (see ECC 10/2007).

Since May, however, the battle lines have sharpened consistently: Negotiations between President Garcia's government and representatives of the indigenous communities broke off. The president later declared a state of emergency in seven Amazon provinces and decided to send in the military. Thus, the government sent a clear message that it values the interests of foreign investors and business above those of an indigenous minority, which stands in the way of profits from oil and minerals extraction, logging, and agriculture in the Amazon region. "The Amazonian lands belong to the entire nation, not to a small group that lives there", stated the President, unable to recognize the legitimate claim of indigenous people trying to gain a voice in the decision making process that concerns the region's development. (*Christiane Roettger*)

The comprehensive documentation of the conflict can be found at http://www.amazonwatch.org/newsroom/view_news.php?id=1837

Further news on the issue is available at <http://www.newint.org>

More information on the Trade Promotion Agreement is available at <http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/peru-tpa>

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A Foreign Policy Alternative: Transforming America's Energy Sector

The U.S.' addiction to oil must be curbed. Not only is the cost for foreign crude oil extravagant – an average of \$28.5 billion a month – but the security implications have proven detrimental to U.S. foreign policy objectives. Furthermore, the nation's electrical grid system presents another national security risk, as it is outdated and vulnerable to accidents or deliberate attacks. The Center for Naval Analysis' Military Advisory Board (MAB) thus argues in their May 2009 report "Powering America's Defense: Energy and the Risks to National Security" that America's dependence on oil weakens national security. According to U.S. Senators Richard Lugar and John Kerry the report "offers a thoughtful examination of the interrelationship between national security, energy, and climate change, and the ways in which our military can improve its effectiveness and help safeguard our soldiers through energy innovation."

Attacks on oil distribution and transport facilities demonstrate the overall vulnerability of the current energy infrastructure. The tremendous energy demand of the Army itself poses a crucial security risk. The report focuses on ways in which the military can become more efficient and less reliant on oil. The MAB therefore outlines six priorities in an investment roadmap for energy alternatives while mitigating climate change. Since the Department of Defense (DoD) is the single largest energy consumer in the United States, the MAB advises that they should take a leading role in mitigation, by getting to know their carbon footprint and initiating the implementation of these priorities. Such leadership can result in a transformation of the overall U.S. energy system. The report points out, that although investing in renewable energy is costly in terms of time, money and dedication, the economic returns will outweigh the costs of maintaining the status quo. Ultimately, renewable energy will strengthen the environment, employment and national security. (*Jeanette Allan*)

For the report, please see <http://www.cna.org/nationalsecurity/energy/>

For the remarks by the U.S. Senators Lugar and Kerry, please see <http://www.cna.org/documents>

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Always on the Run? The Debate on Climate and Migration

A new guest knocks at the door of the Copenhagen Climate summit scheduled for early December. As part of the preparatory climate talks for Copenhagen at the beginning of June, the relevance of climate-induced migration found its way into the negotiation text on topics of long-term cooperative action. The relevance of this issue was also underlined by a report entitled "Search of Shelter: Mapping the Effects of Climate Change on Human Migration and Displacement". This report, published by the United Nations University, Care International and a number of other institutions, provides information for decision-making. It does not, however, repeat the announcement of alarmist numbers of future climate migrants, which have caused some criticism in the past because of their difficult empirical and methodological basis. Instead, the policy recommendations of the report are based on 23 case studies and on interviews with about 1,000 migrants and nearly as many non-migrants.

The research reveals inter alia the convergence of climate change and other global trends. In Senegal, for example, migrants increasingly move back to the countryside due to global economic crisis. However, since the areas they are returning to are often degraded, competition over access to land is increasing. By focusing on people's

experiences with displacement under extreme environmental conditions that are most likely early signs of a changing climate, the authors give further reason to agree on a strong adaptation framework at the end of this year. Among the policy recommendations is a call for prioritizing the world's most vulnerable populations, to ensure that adaptation funding reaches those who are most in need of shelter. In order to address the remaining gaps of climate-induced migration and to bring this topic to the attention of decision makers, the German Marshall Fund of the United States launched a new initiative. A transatlantic study team has been established to bring together experts from the fields of climate and migration studies. Findings from the group's activities will be published in June 2010 – which, in light of the creeping international climate change process, is still early enough to provide ideas for international adaptation efforts. (*Dennis Taenzler*)

The report "Search of Shelter: Mapping the Effects of Climate Change on Human Migration and Displacement" is available at: <http://www.ehs.unu.edu/article:744>

For more information on the GMF Transatlantic Studies Group, please see <http://www.gmfus.org> or contact Astrid Ziebarth at the German Marshall Fund: ziebarth@gmfus.org

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The Transatlantic Responsibility for Global Food Security

The Food and Agricultural Organization recently projected that world hunger would reach a historic high in 2009 with 1,02 billion people going hungry every day. Concrete regional patterns of this drastic trend are presented by the UN Economic Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in a recent study on food security in Asia, which examines the environmental, economic and social challenges that are at the roots of the region's food insecurity. The authors suggest a regional framework of action to be taken by governments and the international community in order to create greater food security. The specific responsibility of the transatlantic community to engage in such efforts is now stressed in a new report by CIDSE, an international alliance of Catholic development agencies, and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP). CIDSE and IATP argue that policies enacted by the United States and the European Union during the last several decades laid the ground for the ongoing food crisis.

In light of the convergence of the food, economic and climate crises the authors criticize existing models of food production and consumption, highlighting policy failures such as insufficient agriculture programs, ill-advised economic adjustment policies, commodity speculation and unjust trade rules. These failures have caused a highly vulnerable global food system. The report makes a series of recommendations for U.S. and EU policymakers in order to help establishing a new global food and agriculture system. Apart from a global partnership, with a strong mandate, for agriculture and food security the authors propose adopting measures to address price volatility, such as food reserves and tight regulation on speculation. In addition, they stress the need to establish a right to food, to provide access to land and water for small scale producers, and to make a greater use of local seed varieties. All these measures combined will ensure that agricultural practices are socially and environmentally sustainable. In addition, appropriate action from the transatlantic community is also regarded as key in preventing a scramble for natural resources. (*Dennis Taenzler and Joeran Altenberg*)

For the joint CIDSE/ITAP paper "Global Food Responsibility", please see <http://www.iatp.org/iatp/press.cfm?refid=106056>

For the UNESCAP report "Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security in Asia and the Pacific", please see http://www.unescap.org/65/theme_study2009.asp

The FAO will present the report "State of Food Insecurity in the World" in October, please see <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/20568/icode/>

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CONFERENCE REPORTS

Constructive Adaptation – Results From Bonn

At this year's International Human Dimensions Programme (IHDP) Open Meeting 938 scientists, practitioners and policy makers – from private, government and scientific institutions, international organizations, and NGOs – focused on the "Social Challenges of Global Changes". Questions addressed over four days of panels and discussions dealt with demographic challenges, limited resources, social equity, and institutional adaptability to global change. However the IHDP's focus is on the human dimensions of these challenges, and thus on human security.

The nexus between security and the environment was often discussed in the context of climate change and the need for adaptation. Echoing a refrain from climate change adaptation studies, David Simon and Susan Parnell of the UK cited the biggest problem as "vulnerable people in vulnerable places". Climate change aggravates, but also draws attention to, existing challenges, which is both a challenge and an opportunity. An example of flood management from the Mekong Basin outlined the ways in which the approach to natural disasters has changed throughout time – from passive acceptance, to control, and now to acceptance and constructive adaptation to natural cycles. This does not imply that people have to simply 'live with climate change', but it does show a working example of adaptation based on traditional knowledge and of new bridges between science and policy.

But when talking about adaptation, which should come first – trying to solve existing governance problems, or trying to implement plans of addressing climate change? The answers from the participants pointed towards governance, since what is needed most is the capacity to understand and address the issues where vulnerable systems and vulnerable groups converge. The meeting highlighted the trend toward emphasizing complex interrelated questions that explore the linkages between security issues and other important development aspects such as gender, or with multiplying factors such as climate change. (*Irina Comardicea*)

For more information on the 7th International Science Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change please see www.openmeeting2009.org

For more information on the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP) please see www.ihdp.org

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Making the Difference – Debating Climate Change and Security in Brussels

"Whatever we do now, things are going to be worse in forty years." Participants in the Climate Change and Security Panel, which was part of the "Making the Difference" Conference of the European Commission (EC), discussed the topic with a great sense of urgency. From June 3-4, the EC had invited the international community of policy makers and practitioners in conflict prevention and crisis response to Brussels, to examine and learn from responses to crises and security threats. Despite the sound of the above statement, the spirit of the debate was not fatalist. Participants focused rather on the questions of how to communicate the security implications of climate change to policy makers and what to do about them.

The need for a credible messenger that would be able to influence the international debate on the issue was repeatedly stressed. Participants agreed that the EU should maintain its leadership role in climate issues and push the agenda further to include the security dimension. Linking the consequences of climate change to current security threats, such as state fragility, could be a key to success: "The security community has to understand that it can no longer guarantee security in a world of uncontrolled climate change." This awareness along with realistic estimates of adaptation costs could also contribute to a success at the coming Copenhagen summit.

However, the discussants agreed that besides a necessary breakthrough at the international level, considerable additional efforts would be needed to deal with the already inevitable risks of climate change for human security. Institutions that can cope with these uncertainties need to be built. Therefore, in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, a strategic shift from reactive measures to risk management is highly warranted. For this, budgets not only need to increase, but significant resources should be directed towards preventive bottom-up approaches that create resilience for vulnerable communities at the local level. (*Joeran Altenberg*)

Additional information about the event is available here: <http://www.making-the-difference.eu/>

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A Holistic Understanding of Resource Cycles: Another Approach to Conflict Prevention

Solutions need to be developed today to prevent anticipated resource scarcities from resulting in conflicts. This was the credo of the conference on "Competition and Conflicts in Resource Use" held in Darmstadt in early May. The conference, organized by the Darmstadt Technical University, witnessed discussions by scientists and sociologists. These were centred around potentially conflict-causing impacts due to the changing availability of energy and non-energy resources, renewables and non-renewables. The main focus was on oil, natural gas, uranium, copper, iron, water and biofuels. There was unanimous consensus that an absolute scarcity among the non-renewable resources exists only with regard to oil and gas. As regards mineral resources, present day conditions may lead to a higher short term demand than available supply. This situation, too, may stoke conflicts in the producer countries. It was also feared that there may be an arms race to secure access to resources of strategic importance.

A farsighted approach towards the production and sustainable use of resources is therefore imperative to meet the demand for rare metals in the long term. Such an approach would involve bringing transparency into the cycle from raw material

production to utilization and recycling, as well as avoiding material losses as far as possible. The spotlight was also on greater transparency in the debate on preventing conflicts in producer countries. Resource supply chains should be traceable from extraction to utilization in the end product. This would put an end to the unequal distribution of income from resources and the financing of conflicts through the exploitation and use of raw materials such as coltan. Apart from the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), the certification or determination of the resource footprint was also proposed as an approach to move forward on this issue. (*Meike Westerkamp*)

Additional information about the event is available here: <http://www.ianus.tu-darmstadt.de/ressourcentagung.php>

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming events are also regularly published at <http://www.ecc-platform.org/>

"The Politics of Climate Change Agreement" in London (6 – 7 July)

This Chatham House conference examines the politics of reaching a multilateral climate change agreement in 2009, what the elements of a deal might be, and what the alternatives are if a deal is not reached. It assesses the role of China, Russia and the new U.S. administration, and whether developing countries can achieve an equitable deal. It also puts forward the idea of the global economic recession as an opportunity to finance low carbon development; a 'new green deal'.

Further information on the event is available at <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk>

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"The International Watersheds Initiative: Implementing a New Paradigm for Transboundary Basins" in Washington D.C. (23 July)

The Canada Institute and the Environmental Change and Security Program invite participants to a presentation and discussion on the findings of the International Joint Commission's "Third Report to Governments on the International Watershed Initiative." The report summarizes accomplishments and progress made in building local capacity for implementing a watershed approach along the international boundary.

Further information on the event is available at <http://www.wilsoncenter.org>

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"Agroforestry – The Future of Global Land Use" in Nairobi (23 – 28 August)

The 2nd World Congress on Agroforestry will assess opportunities to leverage scientific agroforestry in promoting sustainable land use worldwide. The Congress will serve as a forum for agroforestry researchers, educators, practitioners and policy makers from around the world to: Share new research findings, lessons, experiences, and ideas that

will help influence decisions that impact livelihoods and the global environment; explore new opportunities and strengthen existing partnerships in agroforestry research, education, training, and development; And form new networks and communities of practice, and nurture old ones.

More information on the event is available at <http://www.worldagroforestry.org>

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"World Water Week" in Stockholm (16 - 22 August)

The World Water Week in Stockholm is the leading annual global meeting place for capacity-building, partnership-building and follow-up on the implementation of international processes and programmes in water and development. This year, the event places a special focus on transboundary waters, including a high level panel, workshops, seminars and side events that examine the transboundary concept from a variety of angles.

More information can be found at <http://www.worldwaterweek.org/>

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IN BRIEF

Climate Risks Everywhere, Cocoons in the Netherlands and Power in the Desert

In the run-up to Cop15, a synthesis report summarizes new insights from the congress **"Climate Change: Global Risks, Challenges & Decisions"** at the University of Copenhagen in March 2009. The urgency of a success at the coming negotiations is underlined by two recent studies of the International Institute for Sustainable Development that investigates **climate related security threats in the Middle East and Africa**.

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The Directorate General of Development Cooperation (DGIS) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) are funding a new, recently launched, initiative: The **"Conflict and Cooperation over Natural Resources in Developing Countries: a Knowledge, Research and Innovation Programme (CoCooN)"**. CoCooN will focus on evidence-based policy development, interventions and practices in the field of conflict and cooperation over natural resources aiming at adequately managing, resolving and learning from conflicts.

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A number of German companies, among them Deutsche Bank, Siemens, and the energy companies RWE and E.on, recently agreed on forming a consortium with the plan of harnessing **solar power in the deserts of Northern Africa to power Europe**. Dr. Gerhard Knies, of the Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy Cooperation, investigated the potential of this energy source for security and stability in a 2007 forum article for ECC.

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