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CLIMATE-FRAGILITY POLICY PAPER:

CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION AND FUND

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Climate-Fragility Policy Paper

Climate Change in the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission and Fund

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The **Climate Security Expert Network**, which comprises some 30 international experts, supports the **Group of Friends on Climate and Security** and the **Climate Security Mechanism** of the UN system. It does so by synthesising scientific knowledge and expertise, by advising on entry points for building resilience to climate-security risks, and by helping to strengthen a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities of addressing climate-related security risks.

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SUMMARY

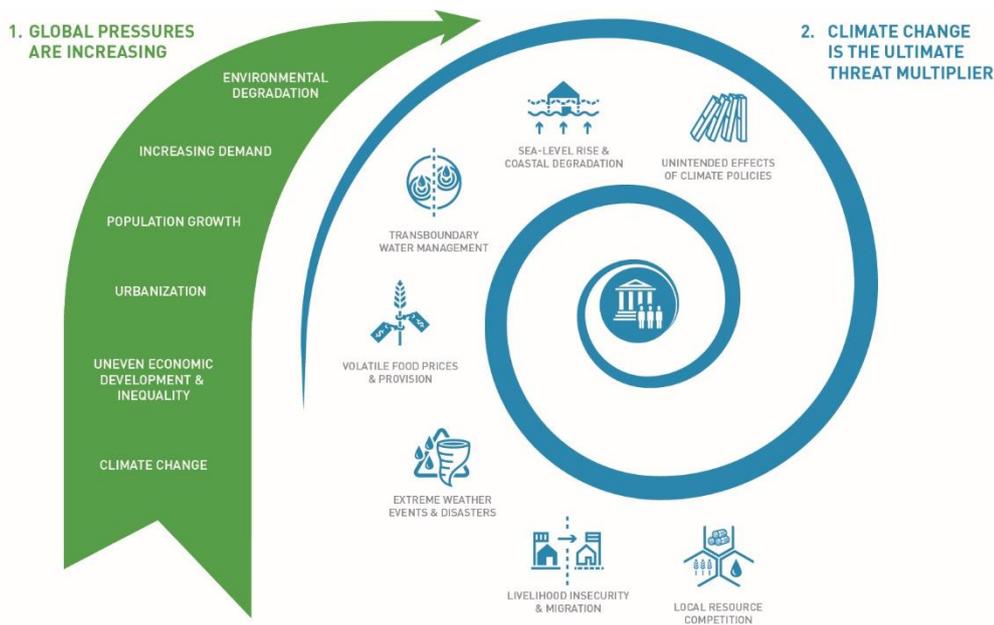
Climate change poses complex risks to sustainable peace and security. A growing body of research on the links between climate change, fragility and conflict shows that climate change will make peacebuilding more urgent and complex. Climate-sensitive peacebuilding has the potential to significantly contribute to addressing climate-fragility risks, especially in combination with conflict-sensitive climate change adaptation. The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) have both started to address the links between climate change, fragility and conflict and these experiences can be used to further strengthen their engagement on the topic. Both institutions are important levers for advancing the topic, in particular in making sure that UN peacebuilding efforts are climate-sensitive and more combined programmatic responses to address climate-fragility risks are financed and implemented.

BACKGROUND AND AIM OF THE POLICY PAPER

Climate change is a growing threat to international peace and security. It acts as a risk multiplier and obstacle to building and sustaining peace. It exacerbates and compounds existing risks and pressures in a given context and contributes to conflict and fragility.

Climate change is increasingly converging with pressures such as population growth and movement, widening inequality, unplanned urbanisation, food and water scarcities and governance deficits, creating a number of complex climate-fragility risks that threaten the stability of states and societies. These risks include natural resource competition, livelihood insecurity and migration, extreme weather events, volatile food prices, transboundary water management, and the unintended impacts of climate policies (see figure below).¹

Figure: Seven compound climate fragility risks threaten states and societies. Source: Rüttinger et al. 2015



Although climate change is reshaping the international security landscape, the international community still lacks a clear vision as to what roles different parts of the UN can and should play in preventing climate-fragility risks and building resilience against them. In order to address the security implications of climate change, institutions and actors in the development, humanitarian, climate change adaptation and peacebuilding fields all have important roles to play: they can increase the resilience of states and societies to a whole range of shocks, pressures and risks, which include climate, conflict and fragility risks.

This policy paper focuses on two institutions that are integral parts of the UN peacebuilding architecture, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). The PBC is an intergovernmental body that supports peacebuilding in countries that are emerging from conflict and advises the General Assembly and the Security Council. The UN Secretary General's PBF is the UN's financial instrument of first resort to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict.

The aim of the paper is twofold: 1) to show how climate change is impacting efforts to build and sustain peace, and 2) to provide concrete recommendations on how climate change could be better integrated into the PBC's and PBF's works.

¹ For more information on these seven climate-fragility risks, see www.newclimateforpeace.org.

CLIMATE CHANGE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTS CONFLICT RISKS AND PEACEBUILDING EFFORTS

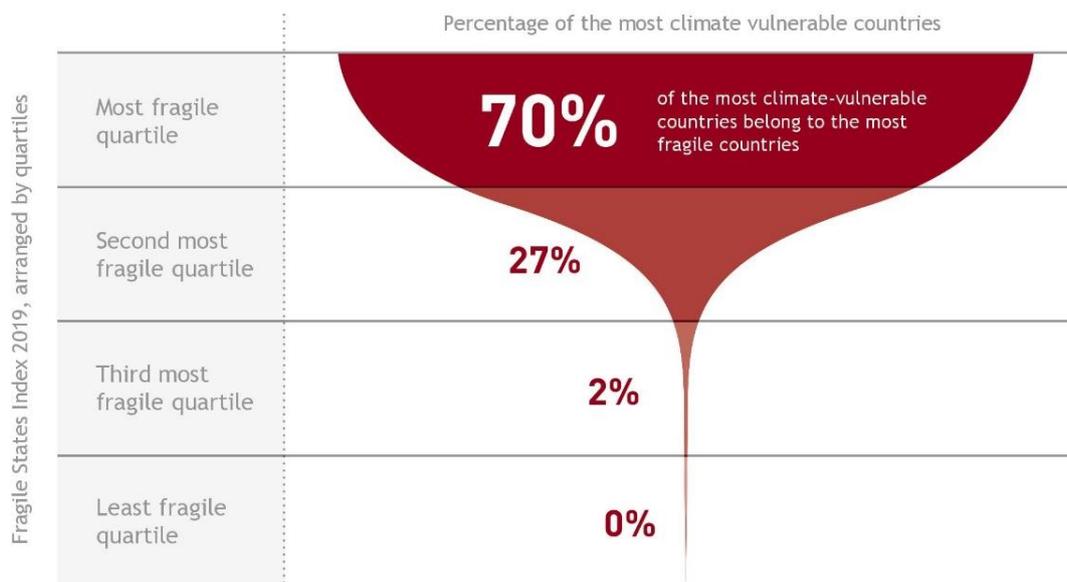
There is a growing body of research on the links between climate change, fragility and conflict. In terms of the different pathways and interactions through which climate change can exacerbate conflict and fragility, four are of particular relevance when it comes to building and sustaining peace:

- **Natural resource conflicts:** Climate change can alter access to and the availability of natural resources such as land and water, which in turn can contribute to increased competition over these resources. In particular, if natural resource and conflict management institutions are dysfunctional, and if certain groups are excluded from these institutions, this competition can escalate into violence (Rüttinger et al. 2011). At the same time, natural resource issues are part of larger conflict dynamics such as civil wars, in which natural resource access and availability can provide funding for armed groups, and grievances can be exploited by different conflict actors to mobilise support (Evans 2010 and Matthew et al. 2009). Examples of such conflict dynamics can be seen across the world - these include conflicts between farmers and herders in many parts of the Sahel, around Lake Chad, and Central and East Africa, and the struggle of many indigenous communities to assert their right to natural resources. These cases highlight both the importance of understanding the role of natural resources in conflict and post-conflict settings and the impact climate change will have in potentially exacerbating these conflict dynamics. This is particularly important to be factored in mediation efforts and peace processes.

- **Livelihood insecurity:** Climate change threatens the livelihoods of many populations around the world that are dependent on climate-sensitive sectors such as fishing, herding and agriculture. As women play a key role in agriculture, they are therefore particularly affected by land degradation, drought and food insecurity. Livelihood insecurity can, in turn, drive a number of risk dynamics. It can act as a push factor for migration, contributing to people moving from the countryside to cities, where they often settle in more peripheral and poorer areas such as slums, leaving them vulnerable to a whole range of risks from crime to extreme weather events (Édes et al. 2015). It can change transhumance routes and create tensions in host communities. It can also lead to increased intergenerational tensions, as young people feel let down by the neglect, inaction or corruption of the older generation, whom they see responsible for the current situation, and rising gender-based violence, including domestic violence and forced sex work, as many women and girls whose husbands have been killed or migrated, are forced to find ways for themselves and their families to survive (Vivekananda et al. 2019). Moreover, in search for alternative livelihoods, people can turn to adverse livelihood strategies that further damage their environment such as deforestation, or become more vulnerable to recruitment by criminal actors or non-state armed groups such as militias and terrorist organisations. These dynamics can be seen in a wide variety of non-state armed groups, including the Taliban in Afghanistan, Boko Haram around Lake Chad, Islamic State in Syria, and criminal gangs in Guatemala (Nett and Rüttinger 2016; Vivekananda et al. 2019). These dynamics are particularly important in post-conflict settings in which providing livelihoods for vulnerable groups such as ex-combatants is often an integral part of stabilisation and peacebuilding efforts. Stabilisation and peacebuilding plans and programs, including Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs, need to take into account of and be resilient to climate change. Otherwise, these actions might exacerbate vulnerabilities and set the scene for the next crisis.

- ➔ **Disasters:** Extreme weather events such as tropical storms, hurricanes and typhoons can increase conflict risks and contribute to political instability, particularly in fragile contexts. A government's preparation for and reaction to a disaster is critical. In the worst-case scenario, government actions can create grievances and increase the risks of conflict, especially if certain segments of the population have the perception that they are being excluded from aid delivery, i.e. treated unfairly (Harris et al. 2013). On the other hand, in the best-case scenario, disasters can be used as an opportunity to build peace and increase resilience. In the aftermath of a disaster, there can be a window of opportunity for governments to reach out to conflict actors and build trust. One example, which is not climate-related but shows the possibility of peacebuilding after a disaster, is the efforts of the Indonesian government and international community in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami in Aceh (Rüttinger et al. 2015). Responses to disasters can also be used as entry points to promote transformation that can reverse previous patterns of gender-based and other forms of discrimination and inequality, for example through capacity-building and social empowerment (Le Masson et al. 2006).
- ➔ **Volatile food prices:** Climate change, together with other factors such as population growth, energy prices and the growth of biofuel production, is increasingly affecting food supply. Changes in food supply can lead to food price hikes and volatility, which in turn can act as a catalyst for political instability (Brinkmann and Hendrix 2011). Protests and riots against food prices can often be used as a political tool to demonstrate people's discontent against a government, as well as by opposition groups to gain support. In 2008, the global food crises saw riots in response to food and fuel price inflation across 48 countries, including Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Haiti and Pakistan. Analysis of these cases showed that the risk of unrest turning violent is contingent on contextual factors such as unemployment, marginalisation of certain groups and political instability (Evans 2010).

Figure: State fragility and climate vulnerability



Based on: Fund for Peace Fragile States Index (2019), ND-GAIN Vulnerability country rankings (2017) Lists adjusted to match respective entries, 175 total countries; N = 44 (ND-GAIN bottom quartile)



In countries affected by conflict and fragility, these risks can create negative feedback loops. Climate change increases conflict risks and makes peacebuilding more challenging, and the resulting fragility and conflict further increases the vulnerability of societies to climate change. This is especially worrisome as there is an increasing confluence of countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change and affected by conflict and fragility: 70% of the bottom quartile of countries most vulnerable to climate change are also in the bottom quartile of the most fragile countries in the world² (see figure above).

The map below shows the countries that receive PBF funding and their vulnerability score to climate change according to the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) index. All countries in red are in the bottom quartile of the index and all orange countries are in the third quartile.

ND-GAIN COUNTRY INDEX

The ND-GAIN Country Index is composed of two key dimensions of adaptation: vulnerability and readiness.

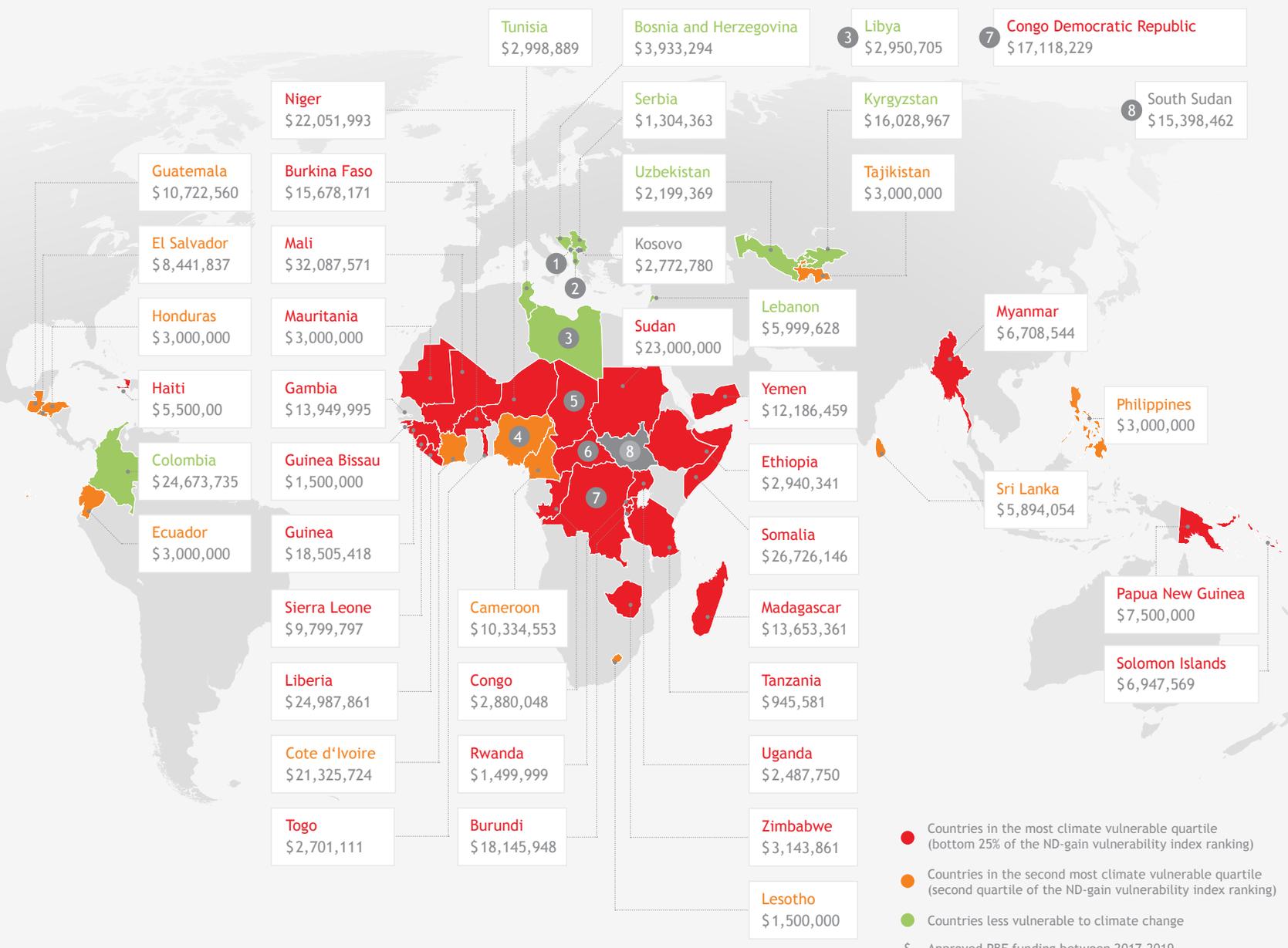
VULNERABILITY measures a country's exposure, sensitivity and capacity to adapt to the negative effects of climate change. ND-GAIN measures overall vulnerability by considering six life-supporting sectors - food, water, health, ecosystem service, human habitat, and infrastructure.

READINESS measures a country's ability to leverage investments and convert them to adaptation actions. ND-GAIN measures overall readiness by considering three components - economic readiness, governance readiness and social readiness.

Higher values reflect lower vulnerability and higher resilience.

² Based on a comparison of the bottom quartile of ND-GAIN vulnerability index and the bottom quartile of the Fragile States Index 2018. All countries that were not in both indices were excluded.

COUNTRIES RECEIVING PBF FUNDING AND THEIR CLIMATE VULNERABILITY



CLIMATE VULNERABILITY

Country	Score	Rank
Somalia	0.678	181
Niger	0.670	180
Solomon Islands	0.658	179
Chad	0.651	178
Guinea Bissau	0.626	176
Sudan	0.623	175
Liberia	0.617	174
Mali	0.609	173
Congo Democratic Republic	0.588	170
Madagascar	0.584	169
Burundi	0.581	168
Central African Republic	0.580	166
Uganda	0.580	166
Papua New Guinea	0.573	163
Burkina Faso	0.572	162
Mauritania	0.567	160
Ethiopia	0.566	159
Sierra Leone	0.557	156
Haiti	0.556	155
Rwanda	0.555	153
Yemen	0.555	153
Tanzania	0.551	152
Guinea	0.543	146
Zimbabwe	0.543	146
Myanmar	0.542	144
Gambia	0.539	141
Togo	0.539	141
Congo Republic	0.518	138
Cote d'Ivoire	0.514	134
Lesotho	0.509	133
Nigeria	0.489	127
Cameroon	0.483	124
Sri Lanka	0.470	115
Honduras	0.462	113
Philippines	0.459	111
Guatemala	0.457	109
El Salvador	0.448	106
Ecuador	0.446	105
Tajikistan	0.438	100
Albania	0.423	91
Serbia	0.409	82
Lebanon	0.408	80
Tunisia	0.394	72
Kyrgyzstan	0.391	68
Colombia	0.388	61
Montenegro	0.388	61
Uzbekistan	0.388	61
Libya	0.382	55
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.371	41
Kosovo	-	-
South Sudan	-	-



PEACEBUILDING IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

Understanding climate change as a security threat does not mean that solutions lie solely with security institutions and the military. Indeed, it is often quite the opposite. While in some contexts the security sector can play an important role, particularly in disaster responses, addressing climate-fragility risks requires upstream, comprehensive and preventative actions to tackle the root causes of conflict, fragility and vulnerability. Such actions are the responsibilities of development, humanitarian and peacebuilding actors, and each of these actors and institutions has an important role to play.

Peacebuilding is key in this regard, and while climate change adds new urgency to increase peacebuilding efforts, it also adds complexity. In the worst case, climate change can undermine stabilisation and peacebuilding efforts, and peacebuilding projects can even exacerbate climate risks if these are not properly taken into account. To avoid this and to build resilience against climate-fragility risks, peacebuilding should be more climate-sensitive and integrate key elements of climate change adaptation. At the same time, it is just as important to ensure that climate change adaptation funding and projects become more conflict-sensitive in conflict-affected and fragile contexts in order to avoid undermining stabilisation and peacebuilding efforts.

In addition, linking peacebuilding and climate change adaptation can create significant synergies and co-benefits across the spectrum of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, in 2011, Mercy Corps already recognised the positive effects their peacebuilding centres had on building local resilience against extreme weather events: They observed that the peacebuilding centres they had supported in the Greater Horn of Africa region helped pastoralist communities to effectively cope and adapt during a drought (Mercy Corps 2015). A recent review of USAID's peacebuilding efforts in East Africa noted that activities aimed at more inclusive governance structures for conflict resolution led to increased women's participation in decision-making concerning natural resource management, and their election to higher positions in the local government (USAID 2019). These experiences show that development organisations have already started implementing projects that link peacebuilding and climate change adaptation. The emerging lessons learned from these projects are summarised in the box below.

LESSONS LEARNED ON HOW TO EFFECTIVELY LINK PEACEBUILDING AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Efforts to make peacebuilding more climate-sensitive can be informed by the emerging lessons learned on how to effectively link peacebuilding and climate change adaptation:

Integrated analysis and contextualising climate-fragility risks: It is key to properly understand and identify the specific ways that climate change and conflict interact in a given context. This kind of analysis should combine conflict analysis and climate vulnerability assessment expertise, and use disaggregated data on gender, age, and other potential factors driving marginalisation to understand the impacts on different groups.

Addressing governance issues and building social cohesion: Both inclusive, effective governance and social cohesion are key to coping with shocks and stresses such as conflict and climate change. In addition, these can also mitigate the factors that drive conflict and the impacts of climate change. It is especially important that groups that were previously marginalised - for example on the grounds of gender, age, social status, ethnicity or religion - are included in decision-making over natural resources management as well as conflict resolution and peacebuilding mechanisms.

Focusing on availability, restoration and access to natural resources: Improving natural resource management mechanisms can serve as an effective first entry point to conflict and disaster risk reduction. It also helps to create an enabling institutional environment for promoting the goals of resilience-building and peacebuilding simultaneously, and it can quickly have a positive impact on livelihoods and income generation.

Supporting sustainable livelihoods and livelihood diversification: Improving the sustainability of livelihoods and providing alternative forms of livelihoods can be an effective way of addressing the important economic drivers of conflict, as well as provide the basis for conflict- and climate-resilient development.

The PBF has started to address climate change as a cross-cutting issue. During the implementation period of the PBF Strategic Plan 2017-2019, the number of PBF-funded projects with a climate-security component has increased significantly: By the beginning of 2020, there were 31 projects being implemented by or in the pipeline of the PBF that have a climate-security component.³ A large majority of these projects focus on natural resource management and a smaller number on climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods more broadly. To some extent, these projects make a direct connection between peacebuilding activities (such as the improvement of relationships between conflicting groups) and increasing resilience against climate change, thus showing that the abovementioned lessons learned are beginning to be adopted into PBF-funded projects. At the same time, the PBF has started to work together with the UN Climate Security Mechanism to further strengthen its engagement on the topic. Part of this effort is to improve capacities on the ground, for example, of Resident Coordinator's offices, peacebuilding secretariats, peace and development advisors and focal points of UN agencies, funds and programs.

These activities are likely to continue as climate-security is recognised as a key issue in the PBF's next strategic plan 2020-2024. The PBF expects increased demand and attention to address climate-security risks especially with regard to its support for cross-border and regional approaches. Looking at the overall portfolio and strength of the PBF, two particular entry points for addressing climate-fragility risks stand out: First, the PBF's ability to bring together different UN agencies and thus allowing for projects that cross thematic silos and sectors. And second, its ability to develop and implement regional and cross-border projects. These entry points could be continued to further develop the portfolio of the PBF to address climate-fragility risks.

In the work of the PBC climate change has also started to play an increasing role: in November 2018, the PBC had a joint session with ECOSOC on the "Linkages between Climate Change and Challenges to Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in the Sahel" to discuss climate-fragility risks and how to develop effective measures and enhance the coherence of the UN system to address them. In addition, climate change has been increasingly brought up as a topic in other regional and thematic discussion - for example, in December 2019, in another joint session with ECOSOC that focused on the "Impact of cross-border transhumance on sustainable peace and development in West Africa and the Sahel" and underlined climate change as a risk multiplier for herder-farmer conflicts.

These developments highlight the role the PBC can play in advancing the topic of climate-fragility risks within the UN system: the PBC brings together a range of actors that cover development, humanitarian, peace and security topics. One of its main roles is to ensure a more coherent, coordinated and integrated approach to international peacebuilding efforts. It not only regularly informs and exchanges with other key parts of the UN system such as the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the World Bank, but also engages with UN member states on peace and security issues. These engagements and discussions also often focus on cross-border and regional issues. The PBC is thus uniquely placed to ensure better linkages between peacebuilding and climate change adaptation, to foster intergovernmental discussions and coherence, to work across pillars and interact with other parts of the UN system (and beyond) on the topic.

³ List of projects shared by PBF.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to strengthen the UN's responses to climate-fragility risks, the PBC and PBF are key. Both institutions have started to address climate change and its security implications and should further strengthen their engagement on the topic. Their leadership is an important step forward to ensure that the UN system as a whole addresses climate change and its knock-on effects. The PBC and PBF can act as important transmission mechanisms for advancing the topic of climate change and security and ensuring that all parts of the UN system understands the gravity of the security risks that climate change poses. They can also help ensure that UN peacebuilding efforts are climate-sensitive and that combined programmatic responses to address climate-fragility risks are financed and implemented. The following recommendations outline a number of concrete entry points that could be used to further strengthen the PBC's and PBF's roles in addressing climate-fragility risks:

Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)

The PBC can use its unique position and role within the UN peacebuilding architecture and system to advance the topic by making climate change and its security implications - and the role that climate-sensitive peacebuilding can play in addressing climate-fragility risks - a regular topic in its discussions, meetings and exchanges:

- **Address climate change in regional and national engagement:** Climate change impacts and the short- to medium-term climate-fragility risks could be integrated into the PBC's regional engagement as well as its engagement with specific countries that receive peacebuilding support. This includes visits and missions that members of the PBC are currently undertaking, where they can collect first-hand information on climate-fragility risks and how to address them. Its focus on cross-border and regional issues gives the PBC a unique entry point for addressing the cross-border dimensions of climate-fragility risks - for example, river basins with competing water uses, or displacement and migration movements. It can bring concerned countries, UN actors, regional and sub-regional organisations, and international financial institutions together to foster climate-sensitive peacebuilding. The integration of climate change considerations will help to ensure the sustainability of PBC engagement in the face of climate change.
- **Organise thematic meetings on climate-fragility risks and how to address them:** Specific thematic meetings can also be an effective way of moving the conversation forward through the sensitisation and exchanging of experiences. For example, in the follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General 'Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace', the PBC organised a series of thematic meetings at the ambassadorial and expert levels, to advance, explore and consider the recommendations of the report. A similar series of thematic meetings could be organised on climate change and security. This could be done in cooperation with the 'Group of Friends on Climate Change and Security' and the Climate Security Mechanism of the UN. The meetings could focus on specific countries or regions, or on exchanging experiences across regional contexts - for example, by collecting and disseminating lessons learned on how to better use synergies between peacebuilding and climate change adaptation.
- **Use its advisory and bridging role to foster action across the UN system on climate-fragility risks:** As part of its advisory and bridging role with respect to the General Assembly, the Security Council and ECOSOC, the PBC can work with the UN Climate Security Mechanism to highlight climate change and its security implications - for example as part of its formal and informal dialogues and briefings - and make sure that these kind of exchanges and collaborations are targeted and impactful. Strengthening partnerships and collaborations with the World Bank and other regional organisations could be another effective way to foster action on climate-fragility risks. This could for example include collaborations with the World Bank's Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group as well as the Green Climate Fund.

Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)

The increasing number of PBF projects that address climate-fragility risks are a sign that things are moving in the right direction, but there is potential to address the topic more comprehensively and further develop the portfolio of projects that address climate-fragility risks:

- **Anchor climate-sensitive peacebuilding and climate-fragility risks** in the strategic planning of the PBF: The fact that a majority of the countries that receive PBF funding are also highly vulnerable to climate change, and that climate change is making peacebuilding more urgent and complex, has started to be reflected in the strategic planning of the PBF. It will be important to track if the new strategic framework will lead to more projects being funded and implemented that address climate-fragility risks. Anchoring climate change as a cross-cutting issue or a dedicated priority window of the PBF would fit well with the PBF's increased focus on addressing the root causes of conflict.
- **Support climate-fragility assessments:** Addressing the risks that climate change poses for peacebuilding begins with a thorough understanding of climate change and its interactions with conflict drivers and dynamics. This means ensuring that climate risks are part of conflict analyses and are underpinned in project designs, as well as in joint assessments (such as the Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments) that are conducted in collaboration with the World Bank and EU. The PBF has started providing funding for comprehensive climate-fragility assessments. This should be continued and expanded.
- **Reflect climate-fragility risks in project design and implementation:** Based on this kind of integrated analysis, climate-fragility risks need to be reflected during the project development and implementation cycle. Activities that create synergies between peacebuilding and climate change adaptation should be prioritised, and gender- and age-disaggregated indicators that measure progress towards increased resilience against climate change should be included in monitoring and evaluation (M&E). While linking climate change adaptation and peacebuilding is a relatively new field, there are emerging lessons learned⁴ and guidance materials⁵ that can be used. In order to improve project design and implementation, the PBF should also actively engage with actors beyond the UN, in particular academia and think tanks.
- **Pilot and learn from new approaches to address climate-fragility risks:** In order to improve learning, the PBF should continue to work and partner with other actors such as the Climate Security Mechanism to develop capacities within the UN, model projects and their own programmatic guidance notes on climate-sensitive peacebuilding. Inclusive and improved natural resource management and supporting sustainable and alternative livelihoods can be first entry points to build resilience against conflict and climate risks. They can reduce competition over resources, provide economic opportunities, improve the inclusion of marginalised groups, address patterns of discrimination and violence, including gender-based violence, and proactively improve relationships between conflicting groups as well as between communities and the government.

⁴ For an overview of lessons learned see Mosello, B., Rüttinger, L. (2019): Linking Adaptation and Peacebuilding: Lessons Learned and the Way Forward, available at https://climate-security-expert-network.org/sites/climate-security-expert-network.com/files/documents/csen_research_paper_-_linking_adaptation_and_peacebuilding_lessons_learned_and_the_way_forward.pdf.

⁵ For example, UNEP's Climate Change and Security Project provides a suit of guidance materials to support assessing climate fragility risks and develop and implement projects that link climate change adaptation and peacebuilding. For more information see <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/toolkits-manuals-and-guides/addressing-climate-fragility-risks>.

- **Use the catalytic role of the PBF to foster collaboration between UN agencies and cross-border projects:** Climate-fragility risks need multidimensional responses. The PBF can play out some of its strengths to provide such responses, in particular its ability to foster collaborative multi-agency projects. Climate and conflict risks do not stop at borders, the PBF has the comparative advantage in being able to address climate-fragility risks that cross borders, for example around transboundary natural resources or human mobility.

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