

Practical Note

# Catalysing Action on Climate, Peace and Security

Insights from the UN Strategic Dialogue on  
Climate, Peace and Security in Stockholm  
4-5 May 2024



**CLIMATE SECURITY MECHANISM**





The United Nations (UN) Climate Security Mechanism (CSM)<sup>1</sup>, the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) co-convened a Strategic Dialogue on Climate, Peace and Security in Stockholm, Sweden, on 4 and 5 May 2024. The first-of-its-kind dialogue provided a forum for experience sharing among senior UN mission leadership as well as Climate, Peace and Security Advisors. The dialogue yielded actionable ideas to advance climate, peace and security (CPS) in good offices, mediation and diplomacy; strengthen conflict resolution approaches and the prevention lens; advocate for climate finance for conflict-affected countries; and expand the inclusion of women and youth. This report captures key strategic insights and lessons learned from the Strategic Dialogue.

## Background

In recent years, many UN field missions have faced a deteriorating security and political environment exacerbated by the effects of climate change. As a consequence, there is an urgent need to understand how UN field missions can respond to these evolving realities that increasingly challenge their ability to implement their mandates. Out of the 25 countries ranked by the ND-Gain Index<sup>2</sup> as most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, 17 either host a UN field mission or are in a region with a UN regional office. Furthermore, 15 of the 30 countries ranked as most exposed to the impacts of climate change by the ND-Gain Index are also designated as “conflict-affected or fragile” by the World Bank.

The aim of the Strategic Dialogue on Climate, Peace and Security was to identify key lessons and harvest

emerging good practices related to integrating climate considerations into peace and security efforts, to inform the work of UN field missions in climate-vulnerable contexts. The initiative presented an opportunity for senior UN officials and climate, peace and security practitioners to explore how the UN can support and address the demands of climate-affected countries and regions. Discussions allowed mission leaders to reflect on what tools and partnerships the UN can offer and what missions need to continue to advance the UN agenda on climate, peace and security.

“ Climate chaos and environmental degradation are further crisis multipliers. With ever-worsening climate emergencies, record heat, and growing competition over dwindling resources, people are forced to move and vulnerabilities and insecurities skyrocket. Organized crime, violent extremist and terrorist groups find fertile ground in such environments – fraying the social fabric and further aggravating insecurities and corroding effective governance. ”

António Guterres,  
Secretary-General of the United Nations  
Remarks to the Security Council in  
November 2023 on Sustaining Peace  
through Common Development

Photo: UN Photo



<sup>1</sup> The United Nations Climate Security Mechanism (CSM) is a joint initiative between the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Department of Peace Operations (DPO).

<sup>2</sup> The ND-GAIN Index (Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative Index) is a global ranking system that measures a country's vulnerability to climate change and its readiness to improve resilience.

## Integrating CPS in conflict resolution, mediation and good offices in complex settings

A recurring theme throughout the discussions was the opportunities, emerging good practices and challenges of integrating climate, peace and security (CPS) into early warning, analysis, confidence-building, prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

The production of **joint analysis** of the impact of climate change on resources, livelihoods and community dynamics, including its differential impact on women and men, provides platforms for stakeholders to commit to action through an integrated approach along the peace, humanitarian and development nexus. Integrating forecasts of seasonal patterns, e.g. related to rainy season onset, and assessments of conflict risks can **support prevention and conflict management** and engage stakeholders in joint initiatives to address risks. Climate-informed analysis contributes to **evidence-based dialogue initiatives** and establishes a shared understanding and narrative of climate change, and its implications for peace and security, as a common concern. In the context of farmer – herder conflicts, integrating CPS considerations in dialogues with stakeholders helps to **promote peaceful coexistence**. The need for capacity development among stakeholders on CPS was raised, specifically around the provision of **support to local mediators** to integrate and utilize CPS in local conflict resolution mechanisms.

The CPS agenda is an **opportunity for inclusive processes** that bring together a broad range of local and national actors, including women and youth, civil society organisations, the private sector, and academia. Dialogues on water access, for

example, can promote the participation of women in governance issues that are not usually inclusive. Integrating CPS can support **nationally driven processes and ownership** and **foster cooperation** through problem-solving approaches.

Some **challenges** were raised concerning the **politicization of climate change**. There was agreement that a **better understanding of the impact of climate change on peace and security is needed to realize its potential for good offices**, including at regional level, within states institutions in host countries as well as within civil society organizations and local conflict resolution mechanisms. The **need to harmonize different perspectives on how climate affects peace and security** among field missions and UN Country Teams was also raised.

The capacity, legal and political limitations for engaging de facto authorities were raised as a challenge. Another challenge is **finding ways to work preventively**, e.g., with early adaptation to mitigate risks for conflict and foster cooperation before conflicts escalate. **Ensuring continuity and sustainability** was raised as a concern after successful conflict resolution and mediation initiatives, notably in the context of mission **transitions**. Mobilizing **resources to deliver** on outcomes of dialogues with a CPS perspective is a challenge for UN field missions and requires an integrated approach between the mission and the UN Country Team. Finally, a recurring challenge is to reconcile short- and long-term perspectives of climate change adaptation and peacebuilding and ensure **co-benefits for climate and peace**.





## Leveraging CPS within the UN system

Discussions highlighted the relevance of the CPS agenda to UN field missions and the broader UN system. The **Security Council** has acknowledged that climate change is having adverse effects on stability in about a dozen countries or regional contexts. In 2023, eleven Council Members signed a **joint pledge** to focus on CPS amongst their priorities as members of the Council.

Senior UN mission officials play an important role in this process by regularly briefing the **informal expert group of the members of the Security Council on CPS**, particularly before relevant mission mandate renewals or on themes such as the effects of climate change on the Protection of Civilians. This integration of CPS considerations into mandates provides added space for field missions to analyse the complex interplay between climate change and peace and security and integrate a climate-informed lens to their activities. Some senior leaders mentioned that it was only after the **deployment of a CPS Advisor** that the mission

began to address this area of their mission's mandate.

The **Group of Friends on Climate and Security** has grown to 70 Member States from all continents and has been moving from sharing information to conducting advocacy. The group embraced relevant recommendations in **A New Agenda for Peace** and issued calls for the inclusion of CPS in the **Summit of the Future**, as well as for the **regularization of CPS Advisor posts** into missions' budgets.

Leveraging a variety of UN bodies, in addition to the Security Council, such as the **Peacebuilding Commission**, **General Assembly**, as well as **regional organisations** and **Member State groupings** can further support the CPS agenda. By sharing good practices and lessons learned, these entities can help integrate CPS considerations into peacebuilding efforts. This collaborative approach can enhance the effectiveness of UN engagements and contribute to the development of robust, climate-resilient policies and processes at the country level.





## Regionalisation

Given the transboundary nature of climate change and conflict dynamics in many contexts, the regional dimension of work and engagement on CPS is key. CPS can serve as an **entry point to convene regional actors**, create space for dialogue and foster political consensus among regional organizations, governments, experts, civil society as well as UN offices, agencies, funds and programmes. Regional work on CPS has proven successful in **advancing regional cooperation**, supporting a common political understanding of shared challenges. Shared water resources are one promising entry point for fostering dialogue and regional approaches.

Advancing CPS at the regional level requires a **shared understanding of dependencies** to identify opportunities based on mutual interests. Here, CPS analysis can provide the evidence base, and create a shared understanding of climate change, peace and security at the regional level, particularly when produced jointly by UN and regional actors. Senior

UN representatives and Heads of States that take on the role of CPS champions, can persuade peers and create useful partnerships between the UN and regional bodies on CPS. Building capacity of Member States on CPS is crucial when **developing common regional positions on CPS**, designing **CPS strategies** and action plans at regional level and facilitating access to financing. Regional CPS working groups and south-south cooperation at regional level are some emerging good practices.

In some instances, working with CPS at the regional level has served as entry points when direct engagement at national level was not possible.

Some of the challenges concern the difficulties of attracting funding for CPS at the regional level. A risk with regionalization is the potential disconnect from the national levels, which, however, can be addressed by ensuring inclusive, participatory, and transparent processes.



# Climate finance and climate justice

Several themes emerged during the discussion on climate finance. First, the climate finance system is complex. Accessing funds is challenging, especially for heavily indebted countries, and the process is burdensome and expensive, particularly for conflict-affected countries. Most existing climate funds are not designed to be dynamic and are generally risk averse; they are slow-moving and designed to function like banks.

Second, climate finance and development finance provide **small sums of money relative to what a country needs for increasing resilience**. International financial institutions do not have the risk appetite to lend large sums of funding to conflict-affected countries. As a result, some larger donors, such as China, can provide funding but ultimately developing countries have to fund their development through their own resources, e.g., taxation. Moreover, climate finance in fragile and

in conflict-affected countries needs to be conflict-sensitive. Beyond providing funding for fragile states, there is a need to find ways to ensure that funding reaches and benefits fragile communities, including women and youth.

Third, although the climate finance system is complex, **small available funds can be used to make progress** and attract opportunities to obtain larger sums of funding. Cross country exchanges between UN missions, agencies, funds and programmes can be useful in sharing lessons learned from successful cases of supporting national actors in obtaining climate finance.


Fourth, observations were made that global climate finance is directed by global climate governance and that in order to change the funding structure, the governance system would need to be changed.


## CSM map of UN CPS Advisors and experts


As of August 2024, the CSM supports **15 catalytic initiatives** on CPS


- UN Special Political Missions and Peacekeeping Operations  
Seven CPS advisors deployed


● Regional and sub-regional organizations  
Three experts deployed


● UN Country Teams, Resident Coordinator Offices, field offices of individual UN entities and other partners  
(Andean States, Northern Central America, Philippines, Somalia, Sudan)
-  UNSOM (pre-CSM)


 OSE Horn of Africa 2022



 UNMISS 2022


 UNOCA 2022


 UNOWAS 2022

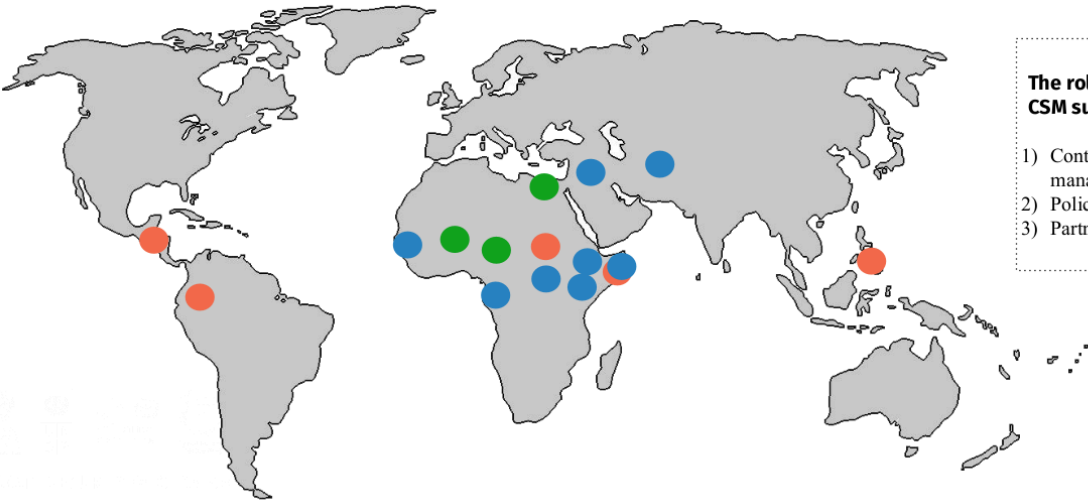
 UNAMI 2023

 UNAMA 2024

 UNOAU 2024 (upcoming)
-  Liptako Gourma Authority 2021-22 and 2023

 League of Arab States 2021

 Lake Chad Basin Commission 2023 and 2024 (upcoming)



### The role of CPS advisors and experts deployed with CSM support

- 1) Contributing to integrated risk assessment and risk management
- 2) Policy mainstreaming
- 3) Partnerships, cooperation and coordination



## Conclusion

Within the UN, momentum has been built on the CPS agenda including in the Secretary-General's A New Agenda for Peace and negotiations around the Summit of the Future. Regular briefings from senior UN officials help sustain this momentum.

Although the CPS agenda has greatly advanced within the UN system, needs remain. Sharing good

practices and lessons learned was a recurrent ask from participants to help further the issue at all levels, and this is part of the focus of the work of the CSM for 2024. In particular, needs for training and capacity building on CPS were identified, to create a common understanding of CPS within the UN system at the basis of well-informed joint analyses and an integrated approach to implementation.



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Climate Peace and Security Advisors,  
Specialist and Focal point





## Recommendations

### For Member States at Global, Regional and National Levels

- Focus on thematic and country-specific risks and impacts in Security Council debates and addressing shared challenges through other fora.
- Establish **stronger connections between the UNSC and the Peacebuilding Commission** so that climate action and peacebuilding reinforce each other.
- **Maintain CPS-related mandate language** in peace operations to support missions in moving forward their work on CPS.
- **Develop conflict-sensitive regional strategies on CPS** to advance cooperation and create buy-in at the national level, including on how to engage International Financial Institutions.
- **Invest time and capacity to build expertise on CPS**, with support from the UN, academic, think tanks and civil society.
- **Integrate CPS in national and local mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms**, with support from communities, civil society, women and youth.
- Recognise that a CPS agenda is relevant for all regions and develop corresponding **national and regional CPS-related strategies**.
- **Provide unearmarked funding for the CSM to support catalytic activities**. While the deployment of CPS Advisors is commendable, capacity of missions can continue to be enhanced and greater impact can be realized.

## For the United Nations

- **Regularize CPS Advisor positions** to help institutionalise the agenda currently entirely funded by extra-budgetary resources.
- Ensure an **integrated approach on CPS** between peace missions and UN Country Teams to increase sustainability of actions, **especially in transition contexts**.
- Increase the production and sharing of **analysis, evidence and data** on the linkages between climate, peace and security to address the science-evidence-policy gap raised by Member States.
- **Strengthen reporting on CPS** and share lessons learned and good practices, notably as part of reports and briefings to the UN Security Council and to Member States.
- Increase staff **capacity to collect, utilize and analyze data** to inform assessments, programming and decision-making.
- Explore the potential of **CPS for improving collaboration, inclusivity and governance** in complex settings to support affected countries at national and regional levels.
- **Enhance the capacities of CPS Advisors in good offices, mediation skills and conflict management**, especially for those from a technical background.
- **Enhance communications on CPS**: increase awareness-raising, mobilising support, and engaging with affected communities.
- **Design and implement CPS-related Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)** for mediation and conflict resolution at the community level, focused on enhancing security for vulnerable populations, supporting sustainable recovery and building resilience.
- **Ensure a sharp focus on the peace and security link to climate change, particularly for CPS Advisors**, to refine the focus of their work and increase visibility of achievements and impact.

## For Financial Institutions/Investment Instruments

- Establish new funding windows for **more risk-tolerant climate finance investments in complex settings**, notably through regional development banks.
- Encourage and support the design of **cross border projects with a focus on CPS**, for instance with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund.
- **Commission studies to influence global climate finance and governance**. Knowledge products can help bridge gaps between reality and expectations, addressing trust issues and global divisions.



# Annex

## List of Participants

### UN Senior Leaders

Mr. Abdou ABARRY, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA)

Mr. Claudio CORDONE, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance (UNAMI)

Mr. Guang CONG, Deputy Representative of the Secretary-General (Political), United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Ms. Catriona LAING, Special Representative for Somalia and Head of United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)

Mr. Leonardo Santos SIMÃO, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)

Ms. Hanna TETTEH, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa (UN OSE-HoA)

### UN Climate, Peace and Security Advisors and focal points

Ms. Elizabeth CARABINE, Climate, Peace and Security Advisor, UN OSE-HoA

Ms. Andrea DEKROUT, Climate, Peace and Security Advisor, UNAMI

Mr. Mabaye DIA, Climate, Peace and Security Advisor, UNOCA

Mr. Serge NDJEKOUNEYOM, Regional Advisor for Africa – Climate Security, UNDP

Mr. Johnson NKEM, Climate, Peace and Security Advisor, UNMISS

Ms. Charity WATSON, Climate, Peace and Security Focal Point, UNAMA

Mr. Pascal YAKA, Programme Specialist – Climate and Security Risk, Liptako Gourma, UNDP

Mr. Galine YANON, Climate, Peace and Security Advisor, UNOWAS

### Co-organizers (CSM, SIPRI, FBA)

Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)

- Ms. Alexandra FONG, Chief, Policy and Guidance, Policy and Mediation Division
- Ms. Nicola LOVE, Associate Political Affairs Officer, Mediation Support Unit, Policy and Mediation Division
- Mr. Samuel MARTELL, Team Leader - Climate, Peace and Security Unit - Policy and Mediation Division
- Mr. Richard SMITH, Senior Mediation Adviser, Mediation Support Unit

Department of Peace Operations (DPO)

- Ms. Marion ARNAUD, Political Affairs Officer - Climate, Peace and Security
- Ms. Flaminia MINELLI, Chief of Service, Policy, and Best Practices

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

- Ms. Sagal ABSHIR, Head of Environment Security Unit

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

- Ms. Catherine WONG, Global Team Leader - Climate and Security Risk

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

- Dr. Farah HEGAZI, Researcher, Climate Change and Risk Programme
- Dr. Florian KRAMPE, Director, Climate Change and Risk Programme
- Mr. Dan SMITH, SIPRI Director

Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA)

- Mr. Christian ALTPETER, Climate, Peace and Security Specialist
- Ms. Agnes CRONHOLM, Desk Officer for Climate, Peace and Security
- Ms. Saba NOWZARI, Head of Sustainable Peacebuilding
- Mr. Pontus OHRSTEDT, Head of Support to Peace Processes
- Mr. Per OLSSON FRIDH, Director General
- Ms. Catalina PERDOMO, Senior Consultant for the Peace Building Unit





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**CLIMATE SECURITY MECHANISM**

