THE IMPLICATIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE FOR MEDIATION AND PEACE PROCESSES

SUMMARY: UN DPPA PRACTICE NOTE

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Climate change affects every corner of the world. It can affect conflicts in different ways as a source of conflict, a multiplier of existing risks, or an opportunity for manipulation by conflict parties.

Building on DPPA's broader efforts to address the complex linkages between climate, peace and security, this note provides guidance to mediation practitioners operating in climate exposed and fragile contexts. It explores the opportunities and challenges of incorporating climate change considerations into peace processes and presents concrete measures to be taken.

Climate-informed approaches are not only necessary to address conflict risks linked to the effects of climate change, they also have the potential to serve as entry points for cooperation and offer opportunities for inclusion, leveraging the unique insights of women, as well as youth, elders, environmental activists, indigenous communities, and the private sector.

Yet wherever climate change considerations are integrated into the mediation strategy and process design, it is necessary to consider carefully when and how to address this technical set of issues as part of a political process, in order to avoid unintended consequences or be perceived as driving an external agenda.

Climate change: Entry points for mediators

Mediators can take a few different actions to reflect climate considerations in their analyses and engagements with the parties to promote dialogue that responds to climate change impacts, and to ensure peace processes are responsive to current and future climate risks.

Below is a summary of possible approaches and entry points throughout a mediation process. As appropriate, these entry points may be applied to mediation and other peace processes, including traditional and local conflict resolution mechanisms and local, national or regional dialogues.

Preparation

- Look for **indications that a climate lens is warranted** in the mediation process, such as known objectives of the conflict parties or conflict characteristics, including: contested laws and policies related to natural resources; conflict-related damage to ecosystems; vulnerability to extreme climate stressors; unsustainable critical natural resources; food insecurity; targeting of environmental civil society actors and significant displacement due to the effects of climate change.

- Assess the mediation team's **expertise and additional capacity requirements** with respect to the impacts of climate change. Additional expertise can take different forms, including short or long-term support, technical experts, and local climate defenders including women, as well as youth and indigenous environmental and human rights defenders.

- Undertake **climate-informed conflict analyses** to assess climate change effects at different spatial levels (local, national and transboundary) and temporal levels (in the short, medium

- and long term); whether and how the effects of climate change may exacerbate existing conflict dynamics or trigger new tensions; conflict parties' perceptions and political narratives of the effects of climate change; links between different environmental dimensions and their overlay with political and administrative boundaries; as well as the local political economy of climate change effects.

- Expand the typical circle of interlocutors to **include the unique views of women, and including youth, local or indigenous communities and environmental activists** to incorporate broader perspectives, including specific expertise, lived experiences and understanding of the differential impacts of climate change.

- Draw on available **local, national and regional climate adaptation and mitigation strategies** or action plans and consider how they could help to address conflict drivers associated with climate change.

- Assess the applicability of **locally rooted, tribal, indigenous or other customary or faith-based practices**, and identify relevant peace or community bodies.

Process design and negotiation

- Propose integrating climate considerations as **confidence-building measures or as entry points** for cooperation and pursue approaches that account for the indirect effects of climate change.

- Support parties in their efforts to appreciate the complexity of climate impacts, **engage with their practical implications** and develop a **shared understanding and language**.

- **Encourage and facilitate broader participation**, such as inclusion of women, as well as youth, environmental activists, indigenous and local communities and the private sector to facilitate creative responses and more sustainable problem-solving.

- **Design engagements** according to the context and the level at which dialogue or negotiations are taking place – local, national or regional – and seek linkages between different levels.

- Where useful, support parties' engagement in **parallel channels or separate spaces** to discuss and address climate-related issues.

- Consider ways for **creative sequencing and problem-solving** around climate-related issues to facilitate dialogue on and resolution of broader issues in a peace process.

- Use **international and regional platforms** to draw political support for climate-informed mediation processes.

Peace agreement

- Encourage the drafting of a **climate-adaptive agreement** that accounts for the current and future impacts of climate change.

- Integrate **international norms**, frameworks and good practices in the peace agreement.

- Propose **shared climate-related goals and initiatives** and their inclusion in the agreement to promote trust and cooperation.

- Encourage the establishment of inclusive **early-warning, dispute resolution and collective monitoring systems**, based on mutually accepted data sets.

- Explore opportunities that climate-related provisions in a peace agreement open for support from non-traditional actors and partnerships with development actors, international financial institutions, UN and regional organizations, including access to new **climate finance mechanisms**.

Image: Global warming stripes data range from 1850-2021 / Ed Hawkins / UK Met Office