

# Mediating Peace with Climate Change

INTEGRATING CLIMATE CHANGE  
CONSIDERATIONS INTO MEDIATION



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## ACRONYMS APPEARING IN THIS REPORT

CSM	Climate Security Mechanism
CSO	Civil society organization
DDPD	Doha Document for Peace in Darfur
DPPA	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAC	Energy attribute certificate
EPP	Energy Peace Partners
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
FA	Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable Lasting Peace (Colombia)
GHG	Greenhouse gasses
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFI	International Financial Institution
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ITMO	Internationally transferable mitigation outcome
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement (Sudan)
LTS	Long-term Strategy
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDNA	New Decade New Approach (Northern Ireland)
PDA	Peace and Development Advisor
PPA	Power Purchase Agreement
P-REC	Peace Renewable Energy Credit
RHI	Renewable Heat Incentive (Northern Ireland)
SLM	Sudan Liberation Movement
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Change USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNSCAP	United Nations Secretariat Climate Action Plan

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

### **Climate change is changing the world of peace mediation and preventive diplomacy.**

It is doing so in three important ways:

- 1) Climate change is a new leverage point for cooperation. In climate change, adversaries entrenched in conflict have a common problem. If they collaborate, they may avoid the worst consequences and enjoy the benefits of the low carbon investments and economy that are emerging around the world. If they choose to avoid addressing climate change, the severity of its impacts and costs will likely increase for all of them.
- 2) Climate change is a potential source of future instability and uncertainty. Peace agreements and efforts at preventive diplomacy that are not well informed by the potential impacts of climate change may be destined to fail.
- 3) Unintended side effects of mitigation and adaptation can exacerbate or even cause conflict. Mitigating climate change and adapting to impacts that cannot be avoided is challenging and fraught with uncertainty and risk, particularly for groups already suffering from inequality and exclusion. Even well-designed actions may generate unforeseen tensions and conflicts. These actions require conflict management components to peacefully navigate possible unanticipated outcomes.

This report builds on the recognition that climate change is a risk multiplier and potentially destabilizing force, particularly in the most vulnerable regions of the world and with disproportionate impact on women and marginalized groups. As climate change is progressing at an unpredictable pace, global leaders, including the United Nations Secretary-General, are calling for immediate and substantial action, notably in the report on “Our Common Agenda” the Secretary-General introduced to Member States on 10 September 2021. It is in this spirit that this report proposes a two-pronged approach to integrating climate change considerations and actions (“climate action”) into peace mediation and preventive diplomacy (“peace processes”):

- Strengthen the enabling environment for peace processes to address climate action.
- Integrate climate action into the assessment, process design, negotiation, and implementation phases of peace processes.

#### ***Summary of recommended actions for strengthening the enabling environment:***

- 1) Expand the mandates and strengthen the multi-agency leadership and coordination of organizations, including the Climate Security Mechanism at the United Nations, to provide leadership, high-level multi-dimensional analysis and support for the integration of climate change actions into peace processes.
- 2) Work with UN field missions to address the adverse impacts of climate change on the ability of missions to achieve their strategic objectives.
- 3) Expand capacity within the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs’ Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers to advise on climate change considerations in the context of inclusive mediation and preventive diplomacy efforts.
- 4) Engage global actors in developing a diverse coalition of support for the integration of climate change considerations into peace processes. This coalition can become a hub for creating networks,

galvanizing political support and creating potential economic and financing links in support of peace processes.

The windows of opportunity to integrate a climate lens into peace processes open and close, often unexpectedly, and timing can be an important determinant of success.

***Summary of actions required for the integration of climate change considerations into peace processes:***

Effective climate action involves the private sector, international financial institutions and civil society organizations in key roles while engaging new financial resources and markets. This may appear unconventional in the context of conventional peace processes. Effectively engaging these parties, financial resources and financial markets may be the most challenging shift that practitioners supporting peace processes need to facilitate in order to integrate climate action into the processes they support.

This requires:

- 1) Recognizing that solutions develop through track 1, 2 and 3 processes at multiple scales over time and that peace processes can be adapted or designed to facilitate positive synergy and reinforcement between these processes.
- 2) Assessments that identify the relevant climate impact pathways, the mitigation options and the adaptation potential, building upon the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the National Adaptation Plans (NAP) that are likely under development within the countries involved.
- 3) Innovations in process design that enable effective engagement of these unconventional actors and financial resources and markets.
- 4) Negotiation of mitigation strategies and adaptation plans that are effectively linked to the resolution of broader peace and stability issues and the agreements to resolve and peacefully manage them.
- 5) Implementing mechanisms designed to anticipate and address unexpected conflict arising from mitigation and adaptation measures.

## **PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

Recognizing climate change as a risk multiplier and potential source of future insecurity, this report provides practical suggestions for integrating climate change considerations into peace mediation and preventive diplomacy efforts to enhance the prospects for cooperation and peace. This report is a contribution to ongoing efforts in the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) to address the impact of climate change on mediation and preventive diplomacy and strengthen synergies with climate adaptation and mitigation actions.

The potential adverse effects of climate change on the emergence and escalation of conflict are well-recognized among policy makers, as evidenced by recent Security Council debates and outcomes.<sup>1</sup> However, much less is understood about how to address climate change in the context of peace mediation and preventive diplomacy.

# Climate Change, Peace and Security

The United Nations is facing a growing danger to global peace and security. Climate change is no longer an abstract concern or a scenario far off in the future. It is a real and present danger to the lives and livelihoods of millions of people today and to everyone on the planet in the near future.

The impacts of climate change are escalating and already contributing to conflict dynamics. These impacts pale in comparison with what to expect if global efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change are unsuccessful. The UN and other international and domestic actors dedicated to peace and security are fully engaged in managing the current slate of conflicts, and the growing impacts of climate change will add significantly to that burden.

Mediating peace and preventing conflict is more challenging when the environmental and natural resource context changes dramatically. To prevent conflict escalation and sustain peace, climate change needs to be addressed in peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts. It cannot be an afterthought.

This report contributes to ongoing work in DPPA to climate-proof mediation and preventive diplomacy efforts by analyzing existing practice in this regard and providing a framework for integrating climate change actions and considerations into peace processes.

## 1.1 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

The impacts of climate change are magnifying everywhere. Weather events such as heat-waves and violent storms are becoming more frequent and extreme. Sea levels are steadily rising, fed by melting ice in both hemispheres. Ocean acidification due to increasing CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations hampers species growth, development, calcification and survival throughout the marine ecosystem.<sup>2</sup>

Deserts are becoming uninhabitable as heat and aridity increase. Permafrost is thawing and releasing more greenhouse gases, transforming arctic ecosystems in the process. Accompanying these changes are biodiversity losses, species translocations, and pest infiltrations.

Impacts such as above on natural systems are triggering escalating harm to human systems.<sup>3</sup> Loss of forests, grasslands and wildlife, depleted fish stocks, water shortages, desertification, crop failure, increased risk of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever, destruction and degradation of infrastructure and other economic, social and cultural assets—all these have consequences for people's livelihoods and well-being.

While there is no deterministic relationship between climate change and insecurity, evidence from around the world testifies that the adverse effects of climate change on livelihoods and well-being increase the risk of insecurity and conflict. These impacts do not affect people equally and are particularly destabilizing in already fragile and disadvantaged regions and communities, such as least developed countries, small island developing states and dryland regions. Communities dependent on agriculture and coastal livelihoods are disproportionately affected, and some indigenous communities also face higher risk when the natural world that underpins local livelihoods deteriorates.<sup>4</sup> In the face of both climate and conflict risks, existing gender inequalities as well as social, cultural, and

power relations tend to become more pronounced. Women – who are the primary providers of food and water in many societies – can play a key role in mobilizing pressure to address environmental issues as well as mitigating and adapting to climate related security risks. However, they also face particular risks due to exclusion from decision-making, limited access to resources (including natural resources and land rights), and sexual and gender based violence (including around climate-related migration and forced displacement). Meanwhile, climate change impacts not only compound economic inequality between countries or regions, they can also deepen social, economic, gender and other inequalities that contribute to root causes of persisting conflicts. Insufficient capacity of states and regions to adapt to the effects of climate change undermines stability.<sup>5</sup> and conflict and instability further impair the capacity of states and communities to cope and adapt to climate change.<sup>6</sup> The resulting feedback loop holds dire consequences since about 70 per cent of the most climate-vulnerable countries also belong to the most fragile quartile of countries and another 27 per cent fall within the second most fragile quartile.<sup>7</sup> The gravity of the risk facing such countries was noted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2018: “Without increased and urgent mitigation ambition in the coming years, leading to a sharp decline in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, global warming will surpass 1.5 degrees Celsius in the following decades, leading to irreversible loss of the most fragile ecosystems, and crisis after crisis for the most vulnerable people and societies”.<sup>8</sup>

## 1.2 MEDIATION IN A CLIMATE-CHANGING WORLD

In February 2021, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the Security Council that climate change is a “crisis multiplier and amplifier” with profound implications for international peace and stability. The effects hit hardest in regions where natural resources are scarce, and poorly managed, governance systems are weak or absent, livelihood alternatives are limited, and communities suffer recurrent and escalating climate pressures and shocks.<sup>9</sup>

Climate change is becoming a persistent force that may exacerbate instability in many conflict-affected and vulnerable countries and regions. As noted by Miroslav Jenča, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas:

*“The failure to consider the growing impacts of climate change will undermine our efforts at conflict prevention, peacemaking and sustaining peace, and risk trapping vulnerable countries in a vicious cycle of climate disaster and conflict”.*<sup>10</sup>

Even relatively stable and prosperous countries are increasingly experiencing impacts that can contribute to volatility and insecurity. The numbers of people displaced by climate change in the future will eclipse that of recent events such as refugee displacement from the Syrian crisis.<sup>11</sup> Recent research from the Norwegian Refugee Council’s Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) states that the number of people displaced due to climate change has overtaken those displaced by conflict.

While climate change undoubtedly magnifies risks, addressing its consequences can also create new opportunities for the prevention and resolution of conflict. As climate change issues become more acute and pervasive, shifting the focus from political debate to technical inquiry and encouraging a narrative of shared challenges can create an entry point for parties in conflict to become partners in finding solutions to common problems. New relationships fostered by cooperation unlock the potential to create practical interdependencies and mutual benefits; as confidence builds over time, so can stability and peace.

Addressing climate change in preventive diplomacy and peace mediation efforts can produce mutually reinforcing benefits:

- A healthy natural environment improves the chances for sustainable and lasting peace. In many circumstances, mitigating and adapting to climate change will be instrumental to addressing the root causes of conflicts and ensuring the sustainability of diplomatic efforts and peace agreements.
- At the same time, the resolution of conflict stabilizes governance systems, in turn facilitating the activation of climate mitigation and adaptation actions that allow states and communities to build resilience.
- Successfully mitigating and adapting to climate change requires unprecedented levels of cooperation among diverse stakeholders to support more peaceful and just relationships among communities and nations.
- The systematic inclusion of women and civil society can generate more holistic priorities and wider national ownership towards more lasting peace.

### 1.3 THE GLOBAL DIRECTIVE TO COOPERATE ON COMBATTING CLIMATE CHANGE

The 2015 Paris Agreement is unprecedented in committing nations around the world to a common cause and multilateral process in their shared effort to combat climate change and adapt to its impacts. The parent treaty, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), has near universal membership among UN Member States. The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty with the aim of keeping the global average temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Given the linkages between climate change, peace and security, the Paris Agreement may come to be seen as a significant conflict prevention agreement.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that by 2050 the world must achieve net-zero emissions (“carbon neutrality”) and accelerate reduction in concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere in order to stabilize global temperatures over time. Achieving this target requires a drastic rethinking and redesign of our energy, food and infrastructure systems. Net-zero commitments are being made around the world by both state and commercial actors.

For signatory countries to the Paris Agreement, climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies involve implementation of binding commitments articulated in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Although ongoing updates are being made, the sum of the current NDCs is not sufficient to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius. The world is on track for warming by about 2.7 to 3.1 degrees Celsius,<sup>12</sup> with irreversible and disastrous consequences to ecological systems and humankind. In light of that reality, the United Nations Secretary-General has warned that “an existential climate crisis has profound implications for peace and security.”<sup>13</sup>

# The Imperative and the Opportunity

## 2.1 THE IMPERATIVE: ADDRESSING CLIMATE RISKS TO PEACE AND SECURITY

The scope and scale of climate-related security risks are unprecedented and difficult to comprehend given the complexity and challenges in identifying the ways climate change contributes to conflict and insecurity in an interconnected world. Climate-related security risks are already visible and, significant as they are at present, are likely to grow in the future.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and global mean temperatures continue to rise. Many impacts from historic emissions have not yet materialized but will inevitably occur, as the world will warm for several decades to come due to GHGs already accumulated in the atmosphere.<sup>14</sup> The resulting effects are not experienced immediately and are difficult to predict. It may be some time before the systems that are affected – whether food, energy, institutional, social, financial, etc. – contribute to fragility and conflict.

In light of the accelerating effects of climate change on peace and security, the UN and other actors are increasingly recognizing the need to address climate change in their conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts, including through the use of good offices and mediation. Failure to apply a climate change lens in many situations may undermine the sustainability of peace in the medium to long term.

### TRANSHUMANCE IN WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

Historically, the relationship between transhumant herders and sedentary farmers in the Sahel has been largely symbiotic.<sup>15</sup> Herders and their animals would move to pasture lands in the south after farmers had harvested their crops, consuming leftover vegetative matter and fertilizing the land, a practice welcomed by farmers.

Now climate change is altering the distance, routes and timing of the herders' movements, exacerbating tensions and threatening this mutually beneficial relationship. According to an analysis by the Peace and Development Advisor in Chad, transhumance movements towards southern sub-tropical regions of Chad during the dry season have shifted 200 kilometers south and often occur before farmers have harvested their crops. Climate change is forcing herders to spend more time overall in these southern regions, which are more densely populated by sedentary farmers, increasing the likelihood of tensions between occupational groups.

As human populations in the region increase, more arable land is likely to be converted to food crops. As the climate continues to warm, herders will need to continue to change their seasonal migration routes, which may increase competition over scarce water and land resources; , and the potential for violent clashes will grow. There are other compounding factors: farmers have been settling in areas designated as pastureland; the proliferation of small arms has made clashes more deadly; and livestock has attracted significant investments from elites, which has led to larger herds, higher stakes, and more armament. Arms trafficking is fueled by both herders and farmers, especially across borders, exacerbating sexual and gender- based violence and further undermining the authority of governments as well as traditional leaders. Inter-ethnic tensions constitute another compounding factor. Clearly

demarcating watering holes, travel corridors and pastureland as well as designing and enforcing pastoral codes<sup>16</sup> and land use measures can be effective adaptation measures in an increasingly resource constrained regions.

Recognition of climate change as one among other factors in transhumance-related conflicts is growing. Peacemaking in the context of transhumance must integrate a climate change lens, in particular in regions significantly affected by the impacts of climate change such as West Africa and the Sahel.

### **2.1.1 CLOSING THE GAP: “CLIMATE CHANGE IS MOVING FASTER THAN WE ARE” — SECRETARY-GENERAL GUTERRES**

The pace at which the impacts of climate change are effectively addressed in peace processes needs to accelerate significantly.

Despite the mounting evidence of the magnitude of climate- change risks and the imperative to take them into account when negotiating peace agreements, only six known peace agreements explicitly reference climate change (see Part 3 for summaries and analysis). Implicitly, climate change related issues (water shortages, natural resource scarcity, etc.) are more commonly addressed,<sup>19</sup> but perhaps not to their full extent. These deficiencies may have implications for the sustainability of peace agreements and efforts to address climate change post-conflict.

To address these shortcomings, mediators need to overcome a variety of challenges:

- The experiences and challenges of climate change in peace mediation and preventive diplomacy are relatively new. As a result, demands an approach based in innovative thinking is required. It cannot be expected that there will be an abundance of lessons learned to rely upon or draw from.
- Climate security is cross-cutting and therefore has implications for virtually every UN agency. There are emerging inter-agency mechanisms, most obviously the Climate Security Mechanism (CSM) – a joint initiative by DPPA, UNDP and UNEP aimed at strengthening the capacity of the UN system at addressing climate-related security risks – which is developing a common UN framework for assessing climate-related security risks. Yet a shared conceptual understanding of the topic across and beyond the UN remains elusive.
- In many cases, climate change impacts constrain or degrade natural resources reducing their quality and quantity. The end result (e.g., water shortages, reductions in arable land) may be interpreted as a “decrease in the size of the pie” with which to build agreement. Leveraging these challenges for shared problem-solving creates space for cooperation and confidence-building that can lead to “win-win” outcomes.
- Mediators have a specific set of skills and therefore climate change may seem out of scope., but having a basic understanding will allow mediators to do one of the things they do best – finding novel opportunities for dialogue and solutions to unblock seemingly intractable disputes.
- The ability to locate and deploy technical expertise to advise mediators may not be readily available within the UN system. The CSM could be drawn upon in this regard but would require more resources to support mediators on a consistent basis. In UN field missions, there is currently only one environmental security advisor, deployed in at the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM). Women peacebuilders and environmental defenders can also be key stakeholders in pushing for inclusion of environmental issues to be addressed.
- The priority of UN field missions is to prevent conflict, mitigate crises, and help create conditions for lasting peace. Given the protracted nature of modern conflicts and the fact that short-term

missions usually end up remaining for more than a decade<sup>21</sup> looking to the future prerequisites for sustained peace requires an understanding of climate impacts.

- The timeframe for addressing climate change issues is long term, requiring mediators to look decades ahead and not just at immediate security concerns. That reality, coupled with pressure to “get it done” (and the limitations on international community support and investment), places mediators at risk of cutting corners. Addressing the problem in addition to the symptoms will require the tools and time necessary to do the job well.
- Although climate change is a scientific reality, addressing its effects is inherently a political task.<sup>22</sup> Politicization of the issues is nothing new to mediators, but the dedication and analytical capacity needed to successfully navigate matters of political sensitivity are considerable obstacles.
- Strategies to manage climate change will not inherently yield positive results, and transitioning towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient future carries its own risks. It is important to consider and plan for unintended and unanticipated side effects by examining how climate adaptation and mitigation plans at regional, national or local level might affect conflict parties and other stakeholders. More pressure on natural resources, reducing local land access, and mismanagement of resources can all be a direct source of risk predicated on developmental interventions in mitigation and adaptation.<sup>23</sup> However, the opportunities for mutual benefits/positive externalities should also not be overlooked.
- Mitigation and adaptation imperatives and associated strategies can themselves become a source of conflict as the distribution of resources and environmental services shifts, creating winners and losers, new opportunities and lost livelihoods. These strategies need the support of conflict management and prevention expertise which addresses gendered, multi-dimensional risks.

#### **ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES<sup>20</sup>**

Well-planned and adequately resourced adaptation and mitigation strategies provide essential tools for speeding up lagging global efforts to address climate change impacts and reduce GHG emissions and sequester carbon.

Adaptation strategies include options for responding to changes in natural and managed ecosystems (e.g., ecosystem-based adaptation, ecosystem restoration and avoided degradation and deforestation, biodiversity management, sustainable aquaculture, and local knowledge and traditional knowledge), the risks of sea level rise (e.g., coastal defence and hardening, migration) and the risks to health, livelihoods, food, water and economic growth, especially in rural landscapes (e.g., efficient irrigation, social safety nets, disaster risk management, risk spreading and sharing, and community-based adaptation) and urban areas (e.g., resilient infrastructure, sustainable land use and planning and sustainable water management).

Mitigation strategies can reduce emissions across all of society’s main sectors including buildings, cities, industries, appliances, transport, energy and agriculture and other land use (e.g., by hashing out coal in the energy sector, increasing the amount of energy produced from renewable sources, electrifying transport and reducing the carbon footprint of the food we consume). It also reduces the amount of energy human society uses (e.g., by improving energy efficiency in buildings and reducing consumption of energy intensive and GHG intensive products through behavioural and lifestyle changes). They include reducing concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere by protecting and restoring ecosystems as carbon sinks and capturing CO<sub>2</sub> and converting it to useable products including hydrocarbons or storing it.

## 2.2 THE OPPORTUNITY: LEVERAGING CLIMATE ACTION FOR PEACE

Integrating climate risks into peace processes is not just an imperative; it also creates opportunities for sustainable peace. These opportunities can be wide-ranging in their scope and impact. Peace dividends from forward-looking and comprehensive arrangements can promote interdependencies and help achieve sustainable peace and just economies that reduce or eliminate conflict stressors.

### 2.2.1 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN CLIMATE CHANGE COOPERATION AND CONVENTIONAL DIPLOMACY

Cooperatively managing competing interests over scarce resources within and outside territorial borders is not a new experience. There is a long tradition of cooperative water management that reconciles various competing interests by employing constructive responses that integrate water and related resources such as energy.<sup>24</sup> In some contexts, upstream hydro-power dams can help control downstream flooding and stabilize waterflows to improve downstream hydropower, navigation or irrigation while also offering clean energy (demand for which is growing given climate commitments to renewable energy and growing populations). The alternative of building dams downstream is often not feasible or as efficient and may involve unnecessary losses of water to evaporation due to downstream climatic conditions.

There are significant opportunities to cooperatively managing shared water resources, and the process of shared management can help build trust among adversaries. Of the almost 2,000 water management challenges that manifested between 1990 and 2008 in over 280 transboundary river basins shared by two or more countries, twice as many were cooperatively resolved than were mired in conflict.<sup>25</sup> Transboundary water has seen more cooperation than conflict.<sup>26</sup>

These experiences and their capacity to create and strengthen interdependencies, thereby reducing the likelihood of conflict, remain relevant. In fact, even greater cooperation will be needed across transboundary river basins as climate change is expected to increase pressure on water quality and quantity and alter flow regimes as extreme events like droughts and floods become more frequent and severe, as sea levels rise and saltwater infiltrates coastal aquifers, or as toxins concentrate in drying rivers.<sup>27</sup> The Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace is reinforcing further water diplomacy and transboundary water cooperation and strengthening the capacity to leverage water for peace, stability and conflict prevention.<sup>28</sup> As part of this, more recognition needs to be given to the role of women, including as primary decision-makers with regard to water at the household level.

Central Asia is a case in point. In 2007, the UN established the UN Regional Centre for Preventative Diplomacy for Central Asia to assist and support the five countries of Central Asia in building their conflict prevention capacities through enhanced dialogue, confidence-building measures and genuine partnership. Water diplomacy is a significant area of work for the Centre, which has responded to requests for assistance by providing platforms for dialogue, facilitating negotiations on a potential regional convention, and engaging in collaborative work on early warning systems, deglaciation and other priority issues identified by the Central Asian states. This on-going collaboration, also supported by other partners such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), assists the Central Asian states in navigating through challenging issues and creating new modalities for cooperation.

## **2.0°C VS. 1.5°C: HALF A DEGREE OF WARMING MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE**

As noted in section 1.3 above, despite the goals of the Paris Agreement, the world is currently on track for warming of 2.7°C to 3.1°C above pre-industrial levels. Half of one degree of temperature may seem relatively minuscule, but the difference between 1.5 and 2.0°C is significant:

- Risks from droughts and precipitation deficits will be higher, as will risks from heavy precipitation events such as runoff and floods in several northern hemisphere high- latitude and/or high-elevation regions, eastern Asia and eastern North America.
- Global mean sea level rise will be 0.46 rather than 0.40 meters in 2100, exposing 79 million more people to flooding
- The global annual marine fisheries catch will be reduced by three million tons with a two-degree rise compared to 1.5 million tons with a 1.5 degree rise. Ocean temperature and acidity will also be higher, increasing the risks to marine biodiversity, fisheries and ecosystems.
- Net reductions in yields of maize, rice, wheat and other cereal crops will be 7% vs. 3%, resulting in greater food insecurity, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and Central America.
- The proportion of the world's population exposed to climate change-induced water stress will be considerably higher (varies by region).
- Global populations exposed to severe heat at least once every five years will be 37% vs. 14%.
- The number of sea-ice-free arctic summers will increase to once every 10 years vs. once every 100 years. This can increase the heat being absorbed, with concomitant consequences for winter weather in the northern hemisphere.

### **2.2.2 FINANCING A LOW CARBON ECONOMY OF PEACE: GLOBAL RESOURCES AND FINANCE MARKETS**

Given how critical water is to both environmental and economic well-being, the correlation to security risks is clear and the benefits for cooperation are straightforward. However, low-carbon development such as renewable energy projects that have economic and social advantages for people in marginalized positions is a more complex proposition requiring careful analysis. Low-carbon, resilient development requires key transitions in energy, transport, settlement and food systems. It also requires significant investment. These solutions are urgently needed in developing countries, where the investment gap is deepest, and people – particularly women and marginalized groups – are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis.<sup>29</sup>

The economics of peacebuilding and conflict prevention in the context of climate change are themselves an entry point for cooperation. Trillions of dollars (and growing) are available for investment in environmentally and socially responsible development.<sup>30</sup> The growing private sector interest in making an impact that benefits the environment and society (in addition to profit) creates an opportunity unmatched in history to bring financial resources into fragile situations. Despite challenges to de-risking climate adaptation and mitigation financing (particularly in fragile and crisis-affected countries), there are private sector actors willing to invest in the toughest places.<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, creating the links needed to achieve a resilient economy that increases citizens' well-being by creating meaningful enterprise also reduces many of the stressors that incite conflict. In peace processes, little thought or future planning typically goes into addressing climate change impacts

and/or environmental degradation or natural resource management. A healthy environment and access to natural resources, fair and equitable distribution of wealth and power, diverse involvement of all actors regardless of age, gender, status, ethnicity or religion are the foundations of a just and sustainable economy that creates lasting peace and resiliency.

Yet the economic links today are weak, and few projects address the climate security nexus. Peace and conflict actors are not only unfamiliar with climate finance pools but these resources are also ill suited to benefit climate and conflict fragile states. Addressing gender aspects of climate finance and strengthening women's participation in these discussions also requires continued prioritization. Creating access to climate change-focused and unconventional funding streams can generate more value for recipients and investors alike. To access the kinds of finance pools that dwarf those that exist in the conventional world of peacemaking, climate need to be proactively featured by mediators, and ways to adapt the finance mechanisms that support projects with broader mediation goals need to be identified. There is a significant for the UN to build these links globally.

In the words of John Kerry, United States Special Presidential Envoy on Climate: "Climate change is the biggest challenge ever faced, but there is the opportunity to take part in the largest market the world has ever seen [...] the challenges are clear, the opportunities are equally as clear – what needs to be summoned is the creativity to make it happen."<sup>32</sup>

### 2.3 PARTNERS IN MAKING PEACE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

The likelihood of peacemaking success depends in large part on developing successful partnerships with actors that possess particular expertise and have experience and credibility in a particular regional context. Transformative results are seldom immediate, and building an effective presence requires patience and persistence.<sup>33</sup>

Developing the political alignment and support needed to prevent climate change from escalating conflicts and to support vulnerable countries in building their resilience and prosperity requires unprecedented levels of collaboration within the international community. The UN is already working with other multilateral actors like the African Union to mobilize this political will. Nonetheless, the partnerships need to go well beyond multilateral agencies. They must include groups with substantial expertise and resources, as international financial institutions, civil society organizations (including women-led civil society and environmental defenders), academia and the private sector.

The purpose of a peace process is fundamentally to prevent or end violent conflict and create sustainable peace. The parties to the conflict need to own the outcomes and be accountable to them. UN entities can work with constituencies and act as a platform that establishes valuable links and galvanizes necessary relationships, helping to mobilize resources, build capacity and generate ideas. But UN entities are not permanent fixtures on the scene, whereas their regional partners often are.

As described in section 2.2.2 above, the private sector has significant resources to bear to finance climate change mitigation and adaptation. Mediators need to be aware of the opportunities as well as the challenges arising from the presence and participation of private sector actors within peace processes.

International financial institutions include the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank and others. The World Bank Group, which is already the largest multilateral provider of climate finance for developing countries, recently announced it will be aligning its financing flows with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The Group's new Climate

Change Action Plan will direct financing to support adaptation and resilience, a greater focus on greenhouse gas emissions reduction, the preparation and implementation of NDCs and Long-Term Strategies (LTSs), and support for transformative investments in key systems (food, energy, transport), among other things.<sup>34</sup> The World Bank Group Gender Strategy (2016-2023) also identifies developing gender-smart solutions to climate change as an emerging area of work, including through work on Climate Investment Funds. The Rockefeller Foundation, with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and other partners, will be investing \$1 billion in the next decade to end energy poverty guided by the principles of justice, equity and inclusion.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) advocate for diverse, marginalized communities, promote transparency and accountability on international and national commitments, and deliver services to fill in social protection gaps by the state. CSOs can often be more flexible and responsive than government institutions and may have the power to influence policymakers and businesses. Their presence and authority on the ground are frequently direct and tangible. In the Middle East, CSOs like EcoPeace have designed community-based programming that includes educational programming and research across borders to illustrate how a particular type of cooperation can mutually benefit long-standing conflict parties. The work of two CSOs is highlighted in Part 3 of this report as examples of efforts to address the linkages between peace and climate change.

At the local or regional level, it is vital to ensure peace processes are inclusive. Women and civil society are key stakeholders who are frequently leaders in advocating for more holistic priorities for peace, including regarding issues of climate and environmental protection. Women, particularly young and minority women, are affected in distinct ways and their engagement often opens new solution spaces and reveals sources of knowledge and implementation capacity that garner greater opportunities for addressing climate change effects and resilient outcomes. For example, women are often the main providers of food and play a key role in the preservation of resources and biodiversity.

Also noteworthy in this context, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat is an administrative body responsible for assisting countries in supporting the global response to the threat of climate change. The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of each country are a central element for implementing the Paris Agreement. NDCs communicate a country's contribution to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement.<sup>35</sup> The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process can help to identify priorities and translate them into action. NDCs and NAPs are complementary processes that should ideally be aligned with one another to strengthen national climate change adaptation. Numerous bodies and programmes operate under the UNFCCC to support adaptation-related activities, including providing technical support<sup>36</sup> The UNFCCC Gender Action Plan sets out priority areas to advance ensure gender-responsive climate action in the implementation of the UNFCCC as well as the meaningful participation of women in the UNFCCC process.

To play an effective role, mediators need to convene the parties and engage relevant actors to reach a sustainable agreement. The engagement of parties in a process they can trust is essential for an effective process design, as detailed in the following section. Innovation and inclusive partnerships to address climate change in peace processes may offer opportunities to avoid a negative spiral of conflict and climate risks.

# A Framework for Action

Integrating climate change considerations into mediation is clearly essential given the trajectory of climate change effects and their consequences for stability and peace. It is both an imperative and an opportunity for the UN and other actors to integrate climate change into their preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts where applicable.

The question is how to achieve this. The approach proposed integrates a climate change lens into different stages of support to peace processes and seeks to create a conducive environment by galvanizing the global network of actors that are able to expand the capacity of peace processes to address climate change.

## 3.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND THINKING ABOUT RECENT EXPERIENCE

Conceptually, a variety of dimensions and lenses can be considered in order to identify potential entry points for integrating climate change into peace processes while leveraging opportunities to stimulate and consolidate cooperation among real and potential adversaries. These dimensions and lenses may be summarized as follows:

### *DIMENSIONS*

**1 – Spatial scale:** conflict arises and can be prevented and resolved at regional, national, and local scales. It is at these same scales where most climate change impacts and mitigation and adaptation options manifest.

**2 – Type of intervention:** preventive diplomacy, peace mediation or peace implementation.

**3 – Process and institutional status:** tracks 1, 2 and 3.

- Track 1: formal processes engaging representatives of conflicting parties
- Track 2: informal processes engaging non-governmental, informal or unofficial contacts, often from civil society organizations, affected stakeholders and the private sector
- Track 3: informal processes driven by communities and non-state actors such as civil society organizations, private foundations and the private sector.

Each of these solution spaces can be examined through a variety of lenses.

### *LENSES*

**1 – Cooperation incentives.** Which climate issues are potential “triggers for conflict or cooperation”, i.e. most conducive to leveraging cooperation and engaging real or potential adversaries in a constructive manner?

**2 – Process interrelationships.** How do the processes to address climate adaptation and mitigation options in one track relate to or potentially influence opportunities or initiatives in another? For example,

a track 3 process led by civil society organizations may address options contemplated in a track 1 peace agreement, or a track 1 peace agreement may formalize solutions that have been explored and demonstrated in a track 2 or 3 process.

**3 – Emergence of solutions over time.** How are potential solutions developing through the different tracks over time? As illustrated below in the Sahel and Darfur example, solutions emerge over time through the processes and results in these different tracks. This evolution can be mapped in a way that enables practitioners to position peace processes to maximize the chances of productive results.

**4 – Inclusion of marginalized groups.** How are women, youth, minorities, elders and other stakeholders affected and involved or marginalized? How can the inclusion and participation of these often marginalized and victimized groups strengthen the peace and mobilize implementation actions on climate change adaptation and mitigation?

Examination of peace processes that address climate change issues in the same and different geographic locations reveals how practitioners can apply this conceptual framework to work with the parties to assess the context and design and implement peace processes successfully. The analysis provided in the case studies below is intended to stimulate thinking and consideration of the potential links and synergies between peace processes and their results in these different solution spaces.

The degree to which climate change is addressed in the results of the peace processes can also be assessed from a substantive perspective including:

- mandating action to address climate change
- defining strategic direction with respect to mitigation and/or adaptation, and
- establishing institutional arrangements with the mandate and resources to implement climate change mitigation or adaptation.

The results of these processes can also be analyzed in terms of whether they involve:

- mutual gain,
- reciprocal risk reduction, and
- other transactions that stimulate the parties to reach agreements and sustain them.

The following sections analyze agreements of peace mediation and preventive diplomacy to reveal how climate change has been addressed generally, and in some instances, how processes in different tracks have advanced the degree to which climate change is addressed over time.

The agreements and collaborative proposals described below address climate change to varying degrees, including by establishing a mandate to address climate change, creating institutional arrangements to mitigate and or adapt to climate change; or setting or proposing strategic direction for how to mitigate and or adapt to climate change. Some of them also include mutual benefit and/or reciprocal risk reduction.

### **3.1.1 THE SAHEL AND DARFUR: ADDRESSING HERDER-FARMER CONFLICT**

Examination of the agreements and related initiatives in track 1, 2 and 3 peace processes involving Darfur reveals a progression in the degree to which elements of climate change adaptation and mitigation are addressed through different tracks.

As described in Part 2 of this report and documented in numerous studies, the effects of climate change

put additional pressure on relationships between herders and farmers in the Sahel region by forcing both communities to alter their patterns. Shifts in pastoral movements and agricultural land use practices interact with other factors such as extremist groups, organized crime, corruption, and the proliferation of small arms to increase the risk of conflicts and violence, including sexual and gender based violence.

Since the early 1980s, the rains in southern Sudan have declined by 40 per cent.<sup>37</sup> This has had significant consequences for smallholder farmers relying on rain-fed production as well as for nomadic pastoralists. Desertification and drought have eroded the availability of natural resources to support livelihoods and undermined the peaceful coexistence of these two groups in the region.<sup>52</sup> Pastoral groups were forced to migrate further south to find food and water, encroaching on the cropland of farmers. These trends increasingly contributed to hostilities and in 2003 became intermingled with rebel groups' struggle against the economic and political marginalization of Darfur.

Given the role of climate change effects for the conflict dynamics, the situation in Darfur is considered by some researchers to be "the first climate change conflict".<sup>38</sup> As noted by *Climate Diplomacy*, "The Darfur case is illustrative of how conflicts may develop when societies are unable to adapt to the consequences of climatic changes with peaceful means."<sup>39</sup> The Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) was finalized at the All Darfur Stakeholders Conference in May 2011, in Doha, Qatar. A protocol agreement was agreed and became the framework for the comprehensive peace process in Darfur.<sup>40</sup> An analysis of the agreement shows that climate change considerations were virtually non-existent.

After the establishment of the civilian-led transitional Government in Sudan, a new peace process – mediated in Juba by the Government of South Sudan – culminated in an agreement being reached between the transitional Government and a number of armed groups in 2020.

This Juba Peace Agreement paved the way for representatives of armed groups in Sudan to join the transitional Government, expanding representation of the country's peripheries during the interim period before elections.

The Juba Peace Agreement is highly complex. It is a compendium of individual agreements (the 10 "Titles") reached in August 2020 that were brought together and signed as a single agreement in October 2020.

Climate change is included in Title 1 (Agreement on National Issues), Title 2 (Chapter 6 – Development of the Nomads and Herders Sector in the Darfur Region Protocol) and Title 3 (Chapter 3 – Political Issues Agreement, Environmental Issues). The signatories to Title 1 are the transitional Government of Sudan and the signatory parties to the Juba Agreement. The signatories to Title 2 are the transitional Government of Sudan and the Darfur Parties to Peace. The signatories to Title 3 are the transitional Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North / Sudan Revolutionary Front.

Under Title 1 the parties establish a mandate to address climate change as one of many environmental issues requiring attention. Under Title 2, Chapter 6 directly deals with the Darfur conflict between nomads and herders through a protocol for the development of the nomads and herders sector in the Darfur region. The parties agreed to establish a commission for the development of the nomads and herders sector, work with local authorities and civil administrations to organize the movement of nomads and open routes between farmers and herders. Under Title 3, Chapter 3, the Environmental Issues sub-section addresses environmental degradation and the impacts of climate change. The parties agreed to establish policies and implementation mechanisms to care for the environment and remedy the impact of past policies that led to environmental degradation and climate change. They agreed to improve

infrastructure and developmental structures and secure funding and modern technology to overcome the impacts of climate change. Finally, they agreed to take environment and climate change issues into consideration in all policies, plans, programs, and projects necessary for implementation in the final peace processes and building sustainable peace.

Looking backwards at the various previous agreements in Sudan and track 1, 2 and 3 peace processes related to them, there is a progressive shift in the degree to which climate change mitigation and adaptation have been addressed. The Juba Agreement provides a mandate, institutional arrangements and strategic direction for climate change adaptation in Darfur based on reciprocal risk reduction and mutual gain. Meanwhile, nine years earlier, the DDPD did not even mention climate change, even though the conflict it addressed had been referred to as the first climate change conflict. Mediation teams can scan the full range of concurrent and past track 1, 2 and 3 processes to identify the steps being taken to make these shifts happen and position the parties to contribute to the progression in a manner that is relevant to their particular context.

### **3.1.2 THE SAHEL AND NIGERIA: ADDRESSING HERDER-FARMER CONFLICT**

Conflicts between grazers (herders) and farmers have also transpired into Nigeria's north and central States. In the State of Kaduna in northern Nigeria, conflict prevention and peace mediation efforts facilitated by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue culminated on March 23, 2016 in the Nigeria Kafanchan Peace Declaration between Grazers and Farmers.<sup>41</sup>

While tensions between sedentary farmers and herders in Nigeria have existed for decades, in recent years violent conflict in the north has increasingly escalated<sup>42</sup> and is spreading to other parts of the country. Environmental changes have been identified as one of the main drivers of the violence, since climate change and the drying of northern Nigeria are forcing the herders to move southwards, into lush but more densely populated tropical forest lands.<sup>43</sup> Environmental and climate change issues figured heavily during the peace processes and were used as an entry point for the negotiations.

Recognizing that competition over and access to water is a potentially destabilizing force, the Kafanchan Peace Declaration recommended the development of a land-use plan that strategically identifies and places water points for livestock. This was intended to promote shared resource management, mark livestock corridors and routes, identify areas under ownership of grazers and farmers, and create cattle resting areas and grazing reserves. Its signatories also agreed to improve the representation of women, youth and persons with disability in efforts to address inter communal conflict and to commit to ensure gender inclusion elements across all activities in their implementation plans. The parties concluded that "a clear land-use plan decreases potential for conflicts by placing water points away from sensitive zones and enabling risk-free movement for grazers."<sup>44</sup>

The Declaration agreement provided a mandate to address climate adaptation as a cornerstone of peace and future conflict prevention and the strategy for achieving this outcome, but it did not pay close attention to the institutional relationships needed to make this happen.

### **3.1.3 COLOMBIA: THE FINAL AGREEMENT TO END THE ARMED CONFLICT AND BUILD A STABLE AND LASTING PEACE**

The Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace (FA) in Colombia was signed in November 2016 between the Federal Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP, a non-state actor that had been engaged in armed conflict with the government since the mid-1960s.<sup>45</sup> Within

the context of an equity-based approach that ensures socio-environmental sustainability, the FA includes a reference to climate change adaptation measures as a criterion for a National Irrigation and Drainage Plan. This commitment created a mandate for government staff to include climate change adaptation measures as a component in the Plan which was released in April 2020.<sup>46</sup>

Two important lessons for climate-sensitive mediation may be drawn from this case study. The first lesson is that *even brief, seemingly high-level commitments in peace agreements to adapt to the effects of climate change can serve as valuable stepping stones towards more tangible measures*. These tangible measures include direct implementation efforts (such as the Irrigation and Drainage Plan) as well as contributions by third parties, such as foreign investors and development banks. For instance, the execution of the FA facilitates support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to Colombia to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Among other initiatives, USAID is working with Colombians to reduce deforestation and protect biodiversity (by way of the generation and sale of carbon credits in return for forest conservation) and to improve the availability of affordable renewable energy (by reducing renewable energy costs to power schools and clinics across rural Colombia).<sup>47</sup>

While USAID was involved in Colombia prior to the FA, its post-FA efforts illustrate the deep and intricate symbiosis between climate change adaptation and mitigation and peacebuilding. When these activities are linked to peace agreements, the peace dividends that result in turn encourage global entities to participate in and contribute to adaptation and mitigation projects. While robust, detailed adaptation commitments are obviously preferable to those that merely create a mandate for the development of detailed commitments, the Colombian example illustrates that even mandate creation by way of a peace agreement can be instrumental to the eventual manifestation of adaptation and mitigation projects.<sup>48</sup>

The second lesson that may be drawn from this case study is that *peace agreements can function as powerful tools for providing strategic direction for adaptation or mitigation initiatives*. In Colombia, the FA's focus on adaptation in the context of rural and agricultural development pointed the way for Colombia's civil service to include adaptation as a key component of the National Irrigation and Drainage Plan. Without the FA serving as a compass in this manner, the Plan may not have included adaptation measures, or at least not included them as prominently.

The aspects of the Irrigation and Drainage Plan related to climate change adaptation focus on irrigation and water conservation measures in anticipation of more frequent and prolonged periods of drought. The climate change adaptation objectives entail:

- Promoting and implementing alternative irrigation solutions to prevent and reduce the effects of drought and frost, as well as more efficiently consume water and reduce emissions
- Four technological solutions to enhance family farming irrigation:
  - sourcing subterranean water, primarily in areas that have high potential for solar or wind energy and have a regulated surface or underground water source
  - water harvesting (collecting and storing rainwater)
  - hydraulic infrastructure to pump water from harvested resources to the development site.

The Plan also defines the governmental processes to be used to manage the design and facilitate the financing of these irrigation solutions. The inclusion of these measures in the Plan fulfills the commitment of the FA, but it is still too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan's implementation.

What is clear, however, is that the execution of the FA helped ensure that the Colombian government's climate change adaptation efforts included considerable attention to rural and agricultural contexts. The agreement by FA negotiators to specifically target rural areas and agricultural activities for climate change adaptation projects demonstrates the link between responding to climate change and building peaceful relations. Rural and agricultural communities were often settings for the violence that precipitated the FA, they are home to the people who will disproportionately experience the physical effects of climate change and may be at the greatest risk of suffering with conflict, including indigenous and Afro-Colombian women.

### **3.1.4 ISRAELI, JORDANIAN AND PALESTINIAN WATER & ENERGY NEXUS SOLUTIONS<sup>49</sup>**

The Eastern Mediterranean is predicted to be a hotspot in the climate crisis, with large parts of the Middle East potentially becoming unlivable for the summer period by the end of the century. In the Levant, it is expected that average temperatures in summer months will increase by 50 per cent while rainfall diminishes by up to 40 per cent by the end of the century. The Middle East is already the planet's most water-scarce region, where even basic domestic drinking water needs are often not met. Water sources are being continually overdrawn, threatening the sustainability of future water resources.

As one of the final status issues in the context of peace efforts in the Middle East, sustainable solutions to water management have been undermined by the political stalemate that has persisted for decades in the region. This is notwithstanding the progress reflected in the declaration of principles for cooperation among the core parties on water-related matters and new and additional water resources.<sup>50</sup> These principles set the stage for potential solutions that have not been cultivated in formal peace processes since the track 1 process broke down. However, progress has been made in track 3, creating new opportunities by design in track 1 and 2.

A "Green Blue Deal for the Middle East" developed by the NGO EcoPeace seeks to address the challenges posed by climate change that further threaten national security interests in the region. The threats include water, food and energy insecurity, migration, civil unrest, and uprisings. EcoPeace is proposing an approach that emphasizes the importance of water and water scarcity and promotes trust building and cooperation as a first step in a solution to advancing Israeli-Palestinian and broader Middle Eastpeace issues.<sup>51</sup>

Building on decades of community-based (track 3) programming in Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories, EcoPeace outlines that the water equity and allocation challenge in Israel and Palestine is not only urgent but the most solvable and the least controversial of final status issues. Its recommendations leverage the comparative advantages each country has. Bringing these parties together would result in sustainable regional interdependencies that offer benefits to all three sides (economic, environmental, and geopolitical) and the creation of incentives for continued cooperation. Israel and Palestine would produce desalinated water and sell it to Jordan, while Jordan sells Palestine and Israel renewable energy generated using the substantial solar power potential in Jordan.

In a pre-feasibility study also developed by EcoPeace, "Israel would meet its Paris climate commitments to increasing renewable energy capacity, at cheapest cost, and see regional cooperation strengthened; Jordan would achieve water security at cheapest cost through the purchase of Israeli and Palestinian desalinated water and become a major exporter of clean energy, to not only power Mediterranean desalination plants, but also sell enough solar energy to supply a substantial part of total regional energy consumption. In addition, Palestine would become a water exporter to Jordan and perhaps the Negev in Israel, and would become more independent from Israel to meet its water and

energy needs while shifting energy supply from diesel to solar”.<sup>52</sup>

Aspects of the Green Blue Deal are already being activated in track 1 because of efforts in tracks 2 and 3. Palestine’s Green New Deal initiative strives to mitigate climate-change-related impacts in the absence of a peace agreement with Israel. Advancing a track 2 dialogue has received assistance from large, internationally well-known figures and actors and aims to move forward the agenda of addressing climate change resilience in the vulnerable Middle East region, with water and energy receiving top priority. For the first time, the Israeli Ministry of Energy published a long-term strategic plan (track 1) that includes emission reduction targets and outlines the roadmap, milestones and constraints to achieve a low-carbon energy economy by 2050 in which most of the clean energy is solar.<sup>53</sup>

The practitioners at EcoPeace attest that the main ingredient needed to create top-down political will is a long-term investment in bottom-up community-based environment, climate education and public engagement programs.<sup>54</sup> In order to attract private sector investment, it is imperative that moving forward also makes economic sense. It needs to be recognized that the time it takes to resolve conflicts can be decades, in this sense, long-term planning and investments and commitments need to be aligned.

### **3.1.5 NORTHERN IRELAND: NEW DECADE, NEW APPROACH AGREEMENT**

The Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme (which launched in 2014 and ended in 2021) was a climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy that caused political conflict in Northern Ireland and contributed to the collapse of the Northern Ireland Executive<sup>55</sup> and the subsequent dissolution of the Northern Ireland Assembly.<sup>56</sup> The RHI was set up to encourage citizens and businesses in Northern Ireland to switch from fossil fuels to renewable sources but a lack of subsidy spending controls resulted in massive overspending of public finances. In January 2020, the New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) Agreement restored the Northern Ireland Executive after a three-year hiatus.

As a means of de-escalation over the issues surrounding the RHI, part of the NDNA agreement is a commitment to close the RHI scheme and bring forward an alternative. The development of the NDNA Agreement grew to address many important issues, such as investment and reform in public services, and both short- and long-term economic and social challenges. As well as committing to closing the RHI and replacing it with a scheme that effectively cuts carbon emissions, the NDNA tackles climate change head on with strategies to address its immediate and longer-term impacts. These include the development of climate change legislation, a new energy strategy, a transition to a low-carbon society, and a review of the government’s carbon emission reduction strategy.

### **3.1.6 BRIDGING TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

The private sector is increasingly concerned with the environmental, social and governance (ESG) implications of development. These concerns are often expressed through corporate ESG commitments that include investments in climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. Private sector interest in this area comes with significant resources and innovation capacity that can be leveraged to create synergies for peacemaking efforts, albeit with due regard to possible concerns about human rights accountability

Between 2009 and 2020, \$2.6 trillion was invested globally in renewable energy capacity alone—more than triple the amount invested in the previous decade.<sup>57</sup> However, the renewable energy revolution has not been equitable. There is a strong overlap between countries at risk of conflict and those with high climate-vulnerability and low levels of electrification and while renewable energy represents the lion’s share of global climate finance (more than \$300 billion annually), only a fraction of this reaches

poorly electrified, conflict-affected states. Risk and uncertainty in conflict-affected areas is a major reason for this inequitable distribution.

Through creative approaches, mediators can help leverage the potential role of the UN to de-risk investment in renewable energy in fragile environments and create sustainable peace dividends through electrification. For instance, UN peace operations and field missions are deployed in unstable settings that are often energy-poor, where the missions are among the largest power producers and consumers. The Powering Peace Initiative (a joint effort by Energy Peace Partners (EPP) and the Stimson Center) has demonstrated how investment in renewable energy by UN field missions would not only support achievement of the ambitious carbon emission targets under the UN Secretariat Climate Action Plan (UNSCAP) but also introduce clean energy into fragile, energy-poor settings that can create new entry points for peacebuilding and conflict resolution.<sup>58</sup> EPP separately also developed a scheme to produce clean energy through an off-grid solar plant in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was certified and sold on the carbon market to international corporations looking to make good on their ESG commitments. This new funding stream unlocked opportunities to invest in streetlights, which made neighborhoods safer at night.

The work of EPP provides an example of a new approach to thinking about climate change and conflict, and the opportunities for linking climate solutions with peacemaking. As the world's leading recipient of climate investment, renewable energy offers a practical entry point for peace and development. While the impacts of climate change on conflict-affected communities remain complex and context-specific, considering renewable energy through a conflict prevention and peace-building lens expands the toolkit that UN mediators have at their disposal.<sup>59</sup>

### 3.2 ENHANCING THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Though climate change is a global problem, mitigation and adaptation opportunities are often regional or country specific. Global actors have a strong interest in supporting successful development and implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions because it is the sum total of all of these efforts that can achieve the Paris Agreement goals.

As illustrated in the examples described above, peace agreements that link to adaptation or mitigation actions, or both, need to address the scale at which the impacts and opportunities manifest themselves and at which the directly affected parties are capable of devising and executing those strategies. This may be within a country or involve multiple countries or regions. Climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy development at these scales, whether in a conflict prevention or peace mediation context, will benefit from strong support from interested global political actors dedicated to climate action, including UN and other multilateral agencies like the African Union, individual states, international financial institutions, multinational corporations and commercial and civil society organizations and foundations. UN entities as well as other non-UN organizations are already playing a role in convening many of these actors to galvanize global action on climate change, and additional steps can be taken to engage this network in support of peace processes.

In addition to facilitating geopolitical alignment, these new and strengthened linkages and relationships can engage substantial and innovative climate financing resources and markets that could ensure success in peace processes.

### 3.3 GLOBAL SCALE/HEADQUARTERS ACTION PLAN

The UN headquarters and other multilateral organizations could strengthen the enabling environment for the integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation actions into peace processes in the following ways:

- 1) Expand the mandates and strengthen the multi-agency leadership and coordination of organizations, including the Climate Security Mechanism, to provide leadership and support for the integration of climate change considerations into peace processes. Key objectives would be to:
  - provide leadership and coordination support to bring UN agencies together to link support for peace agreements to climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies;
  - galvanize political and financial support from UN Member States that actively promote efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change;
  - engage and facilitate partnerships with global actors with resources to invest in climate solutions including IFIs, multinational corporations, relevant CSOs and foundations;
  - assess Security Council resolutions from a climate change perspective;
  - support the UN Special Representatives and Special Envoys of the Secretary-General to include, as appropriate, specific issues related to climate change in their reports to the Secretary-General and into their briefings to the Security Council;
  - deliver training for senior staff from UN missions and partner organizations to build capacity to deliver inclusive peace processes that link to climate change adaptation and mitigation;
  - undertake flagship projects that demonstrate how climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies can be relevant for peace processes where the associated mediation team, the parties, the responsible agencies and other relevant actors are supportive, and include in such projects the tasks of prevention of water disasters and experience gained from responses to past water disasters;
  - create cooperation frameworks with agencies that understand climate change effects to provide accessible climate information to mediation teams in peace processes;
  - support UN Country Teams in undertaking climate risk and vulnerability analyses, including analyses on the role of local non-state actors and civil society (including women-led civil society and environmental defenders) in the creation of conditions for climate mitigation and adaptation and for the strengthening of development and peace.
- 2) Work with UN field missions to address the adverse impacts of climate change on the ability of missions to achieve their strategic objectives.
- 3) Expand climate action capacity within the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs' Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers to advise on mediation and preventive diplomacy efforts.
- 4) Engage global actors in developing a coalition of support for the integration of climate change considerations into peace processes. This coalition can become a hub for creating networks and galvanizing political support as well as economic and financing links in support of peace processes.

### 3.4 REGIONAL/MISSION SCALE ACTION PLAN

Depending on the peacemaking context, different Member States, regional organizations, international financial institutions, multinational corporations and commercial and civil society organizations and foundations may have an interest or mandate to play an active role in helping to set the stage for success in the process. Responsible political officers or members of a mediation team who are endeavoring to initiate a peace process that could include climate change mitigation and adaptation actions need to consider the following questions and undertake some or all of the following actions:

- 1) Who are the Member States and regional organizations with influence in the region/country?
  - Engage the relevant representatives of these Member States and regional organizations to secure their support for advancing climate change mitigation and adaptation actions as part of peace processes.
- 2) What programs relevant to climate change mitigation and adaptation are IFIs implementing in this region/country?
  - Contact IFIs to determine their level of interest and capacity to support the process.
- 3) How can multinational corporations and international commercial organizations with an expressed interest in climate change mitigation and adaptation in this region be involved or support the process? What safeguards need to be taken to do no harm in such engagement?
  - Engage relevant multinational corporations and international commercial organizations to explore the potential modalities of their involvement where they can participate in commercial transactions and investments that reinforce the arrangements embedded in the peace agreement (e.g., investment in solar energy generation in Jordan to export to desalination facilities in Gaza, and investment in energy generation in Somalia and DRC).
- 4) What global or regional CSOs (including women CSOs and environmental defenders) and foundations with a climate change orientation are active in the region or country and how would/could they support the process?
  - Engage relevant CSOs and foundations to determine the extent of their support and to explore the potential modalities of their involvement, recognizing that the role and function of CSOs and foundations are very different and that, in some cases, foundations finance CSOs.
- 5) Consider hosting a climate change awareness workshop for representatives of the parties as well as external actors engaged in multi-track efforts or with an interest in supporting the process to raise awareness among the parties regarding the potential benefits and synergies associated with prioritizing climate change mitigation and adaptation within the process and to facilitate new relationships between state and nonstate actors that may be instrumental to success.

The actions listed above can be undertaken as part of the peace process preparation and assessment phase as set out below if implementing the process is already underway.

### 3.5 IMPLEMENTING PEACE PROCESSES WITH CLIMATE CHANGE IN SCOPE

A fundamental characteristic of peace processes is the requirement for potential parties to agree to come together and set their differences aside in favor of developing agreements based on common purpose, shared benefits and avoided costs. These parties may be adversaries, unlikely partners or friendly neighbors; collaboration and negotiation are still required to develop agreements.

In order to be effective, collaboration and negotiation processes normally progress through a sequential series of steps or stages including:

- assessing the circumstances as well as the potential and desirability of a negotiated outcome;
- designing the process;
- building an agreement;
- implementing, monitoring and adjusting the agreement.

Each stage in the process significantly benefits from impartial mediation, facilitation and technical support in order to progress towards agreements, sustained cooperation and mutually beneficial relationships and outcomes.

In peace processes, these new relationships and outcomes can include mitigating climate change while helping diverse communities adapt to the changing circumstances caused by climate change, increasing their resilience, and consolidating the peace between them. The UN and many other multilateral agencies and countries that have a track record for mediating peace agreements and preventing conflict are well positioned to provide mediation, facilitation and technical support to help inclusively integrate climate change considerations into peace processes where the parties are prepared to do so.

It must be recognized that the urgency of addressing human rights abuses including the rights of women and marginalized groups, crimes against humanity and cessation of armed conflict can eclipse the need to address climate change within peace mediation processes, notwithstanding the potential impact on precipitating and escalating further conflict. This points to the advantages of multitrack approaches and the need to consider all options in process design as highlighted below.

The process stages listed above provide a systematic framework for how to position parties to effectively engage on climate change issues during preventive diplomacy and peace mediation. Key tasks and steps that should be considered at each stage in the process are set out below. These points are oriented towards the organization that is convening and potentially facilitating or mediating the process. As the process unfolds, the parties themselves need to address these tasks and steps in order to ensure the process is designed and implemented in a manner that is conducive to reconciling their collective interests.

#### 3.5.1 PREPARATION AND ASSESSMENT

During the preparation and assessment phase, mediation teams and supporting organizations gather information relevant to the scope and design of the process including analysis of the conflict drivers and key issues that may need to be resolved and that may include effects of climate change.

The dynamic interrelationships between peace and the environment are comprehensively documented in the Sudan First State of Environment Outlook Report 2020: Environment and Sustainable Development, which illustrates how environmental changes and development patterns are contributing to conflict while documenting solution paths that prevent conflicts. The “Bending the Curve” scenario in the report offers a vision for development in Sudan that includes both climate change adaptation and mitigation with positive implications for achieving the sustainable development goals in Sudan in the foreseeable future. The strengthened peace provided by the Juba agreement may create the political and institutional platform that enables this scenario to be realized.

Some measures can be considered to include a climate lens in this process:

- a) Confirm the status of the Nationally Determined Contributions and the Nationally Adapted Plans. The information assembled in the NDCs and NAPs will likely inform, but should not limit, the opportunities for mitigation and adaptation. The stakeholders involved in NDCs and NAPs need to be integrated into larger peace efforts.
- b) Identify the agencies and organizations that are endeavoring to address impacts of climate change in all tracks currently and in the recent past. While these matters may not be framed as climate change issues by the agencies and organizations involved in managing them, they need to be included in the assessment and inform the peace process design. What mechanisms, protocols or strategies are the agencies or organizations utilizing or proposing to manage the associated conflicts? How well are they working? What processes are involved and how do the participants relate to the parties in addressing the broader peace-building challenges? The objectives and outputs of these related track 2 or track 3 initiatives may inform the negotiation of mandates, institutional arrangements and strategies. Identifying how the climate issues have been addressed in track 1, 2 and 3 processes over time (including by women peacebuilders and environmental defenders) enables the mediation team to map the progression of solutions and position the peace process within that evolution.
- c) Depending on the extent of information and analyses assembled in support of the NDCs and NAPs or through other initiatives such as State of the Environment reporting, the relevant information may need to be gathered either by a competent agency like UNEP or by contract with an appropriate technical consultant. The 2020 State of the Environment report for Sudan is a good example of the kind of information that may already be available. UN country teams as well as regional organizations (for example some UN missions currently supported by the CSM) may also have undertaken climate risk or vulnerability assessments, which provide relevant information.
- d) Review checklists and data sources provided by the CSM and the UNFCCC to ensure relevant information is considered if it exists.<sup>60</sup>

If relevant information is not already available, consider the following:

- Identify and assemble relevant background resource information regarding the state of the environment, key natural resources and associated issues – for example, the current state of forests in relation to historical forest cover and the associated implications for water availability.
- Assess how these resources and the state of the environment have already been affected

by climate change and how they are predicted to be further affected by climate change.

- Investigate and clarify the potential linkages between the state of the environment and resources, climate change, and the conflicts that are relevant to peacemaking. (What environmental priorities have been identified by civil society including women peacebuilders and environmental defenders?) In the transhumance circumstances in the Sahel and West Africa these links are relatively clear and well documented; they may be less obvious in other places.

#### *Mitigation*

- Assess the emission profile of the region/countries and the options for reducing them.
- Assess the current energy systems in the region and the potential renewable energy resources. What trade agreements or relationships and infrastructure would be required for renewables to become more accessible?
- Assess the potential terrestrial and aquatic carbon sinks in the region and the capacity for carbon capture and storage. Do any of the relevant jurisdictions have regulated carbon markets? Who is participating in these markets and developing carbon projects? Consider involving these actors to finance adaptation and mitigation actions.

#### *Adaptation*

- Assess climate impact pathways and associated risks to communities such as increasing water scarcity, flooding and erosion, coastal erosion and sea level rise, extreme heat events, wildfires, desertification, ecosystem degradation and others as applicable. There will likely be initiatives underway to adapt to and manage these impacts that can be built upon or integrated into the process.
- Building on the foregoing assessments, undertake political analyses to assess the linkages between climate change and the issues in dispute and the vulnerability of the region to future instability as a result of climate change. In addition, consider the mitigation and adaptation processes that are underway and how these processes can be linked to or integrated with the peace process.

### **3.5.2 PROCESS DESIGN AND CONVENING**

During the process design and convening phase, mediation teams and supporting organizations usually enable parties to confirm the feasibility and desirability of negotiating agreements and to establish a suitable forum and process for negotiation and collaboration. Building on what has been assessed; the team and parties together need to consider:

- a) The strength of the links between climate change impacts and the priority issues for resolution, including the vulnerability of the affected communities to future impacts and instability arising from climate change.
- b) If ending violent conflict is a principal purpose of the peace process, then the mediation team may need to separate engagement of the parties on the associated issues – ceasefire, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration – from engagement of the parties on the broader

peacebuilding, adaptation and mitigation issues. The representatives of the parties may be different for these different streams of negotiations and there may be a need to create multiple streams bringing them together at the appropriate time. A key consideration is how to design the interrelated discussions such that the climate adaptation and mitigation discussion is not unduly constrained by the negotiation of military and related specific conflict issues, and vice versa.

- c) How will the peace process link to, build upon, or deliver the NDCs and NAPs? Existing processes may be underway to deliver the NDCs and NAPs, and consideration of these processes during the peace process will need to be addressed in the peace process design. The key actors involved in the NDCs, NAPs will likely have interests, and ideas regarding how these processes are linked or integrated, and those interests and ideas will need to be addressed.
- d) Engage relevant international and domestic climate change mitigation and adaptation actors in the process design phase in order to facilitate their support and participation in an appropriate manner. As outlined above, these actors include Member States, regional organizations, international financial institutions, multinational and national corporations and commercial and civil society organizations and foundations.
- e) Ensure that the full scope of potential adaptation and mitigation actions is considered. This potential may not be obvious or well understood by the primary actors particularly if the political context is highly conflicted. The principal actors in fragile and conflict-affected settings may be entirely focused on immediate conflict reduction issues. They may not be aware of the challenges and opportunities associated with climate change. Adaptation may not be a matter of choice but rather an imperative that, if not fully understood, can also limit opportunities— e.g., the benefits associated with engaging in carbon markets, and partnering with international organizations and multinational corporations that are prepared and mandated to make investments to support mitigation and adaptation. Given these uncertainties, it is advisable that the scope of potential mitigation and adaptation strategy consideration by the parties be broad – it may be useful to start with awareness building activities. It may also be useful to create an ideas-generating mechanism that is seen as legitimate but is unconstrained by the primary actors – such as a panel of experts and advocates mandated to develop mitigation and adaptation proposals for consideration by the parties.

### **3.5.3 BUILDING AGREEMENT**

Building agreement is the central focus of peace processes, and this is when substantive integration of climate change considerations can occur. Given the technical dimensions of climate change adaptation and mitigation actions, joint information gathering, analyses and awareness-building may require special attention in this phase, building on the work undertaken during the assessment and process design phases, and with due regard the gender dimensions of the proposed actions put forward. There may be a wide range of mitigation and adaptation actions worth considering by parties that may not be part of existing NDCs and NAPs. Therefore, having a robust technical support process that translates technical data into actionable information that all parties can digest may be instrumental to greater success in addressing climate change within the peace process. A clear understanding of climate change may also be helpful for the parties so they can better appreciate what they are facing collectively and how the inevitable impacts may influence their futures.

Potential mitigation actions (all of which can attract green financing and energy transition investments while potentially engaging carbon markets as sources of financing) to consider in peace processes may include:

- Fuel switching within the relevant energy systems from emission-intensive fuels to lower emission fuels and ultimately to renewables. This energy transition is at the core of the recent road map to 1.5 degrees published by the International Energy Agency (referenced in section 3.2 above).
- Investments in transportation infrastructure, buildings, industries and appliances to reduce emissions.
- Investment in nature-based solutions to restore ecosystems and absorb CO<sup>2</sup> from the atmosphere while creating a range of environmental services that support healthy communities and potentially reducing vulnerability to storms, desertification and other climate change related impacts. There are significant opportunities in avoided forest degradation, and there are progressive organizations dedicated to supporting mitigation of climate change through healthy forest ecosystems.<sup>61</sup> There are similar opportunities with respect to land use generally.<sup>62</sup>
- Sustainable climate-smart agricultural practices.
- Development of carbon capture and storage infrastructure for existing or new industrial developments.
- Direct sequestration of CO<sup>2</sup> for storage or manufacture of fuels and other carbon products.

Investment in these low carbon economies will create employment and economic development that may in turn create opportunities, including for youth as well as demobilized ex-combatants.

Potential adaptation actions may include:

- Improving water management technology and infrastructure to address climate impacts such as increasing the efficiency of water utilization infrastructure and standards and developing new sources of water through wastewater treatment and desalinization systems and treatment plants.
- Redesign or construction of infrastructure to protect livelihoods—flood control, coastal erosion and inundation.
- Establishing mechanisms such as land use plans to manage conflicts between groups that are known to exist and likely to escalate due to climate change impacts.
- Development of early warning systems that provide advance notice of potential conflict associated with climate-related impacts, e.g., drought forecasts and provision of alternative water sources.

These potential mitigation and adaptation actions can be packaged to both reduce risk to all parties and create opportunities for mutual gain, two of the main ingredients that sustain peaceful relationships. Within the context of these opportunities, mediators and conflict parties may be able to consider proposals that will further the inclusion of marginalized groups, including women, youth, minorities, elders, the displaced and other stakeholders in the design and implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions.

#### 3.5.4 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

There is a wide range of uncertainties and complexities associated with climate change mitigation and adaptation actions, whether they are part of a peace process or not. To a certain extent, these can be anticipated and proactively managed through an adaptive management framework that is agreed upon as part of the strategies. Adaptive management frameworks normally include:

- a) Objectives and indicators that reflect expected outcomes and how they can be measured.
- b) Monitoring protocols for gathering reliable information on the implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions and the effectiveness of those actions as well as unanticipated developments or results. The actions should be expected to have unintended and unanticipated impacts that need to be addressed.
- c) Processes for gathering new information relevant to the implementation of these actions (e.g., technological improvements that can enhance the effectiveness of the actions, reduce the costs or provide better alternatives).
- d) Governance arrangements that provide technical analyses and monitoring to feed into decision-making on strategies and implementation plans. These governance arrangements need to maintain the integrity of the overall agreement and be connected to, or be a part of, the overall governance arrangements if mitigation and adaptation actions are part of a broader agreement

## Conclusion

The imperative and the opportunity to address climate change in preventive diplomacy and peace processes is both challenging and increasingly urgent. The options for rising to this challenge outlined in this report are not intended to be exhaustive and only provide a starting point and suggestions for opportunities and strategies that may be applicable in any particular context. Accelerated action is required now to address the nexus of climate change and conflict while revealing these more refined approaches. This report is aimed at supporting these immediate actions.

Additional steps can be taken to enhance the capacity of peace processes to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation that build on the content of this report. These include:

- Strengthening engagement of peace mediators with climate change experts, scientists, women environmental defenders and leaders from all sectors in the development and dissemination of innovations to expand the capacity of actors engaged in peace processes as well as communities in fragile and conflict affected regions to seek co-benefits between peace and resilience to climate change.
- Documenting and communicating the ongoing effort to integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation actions into peace processes and learning from successes and failures.

## **CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS**

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Energy Peace Partners

European Institute of Peace

International Organization of Migration (IOM)

Radicle Balance

Stimson Center

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO)

UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)

UN Development Programme (UNDP)

UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

UN Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO)

UN Water Hub

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legislature – the Northern Ireland Assembly.

57 The Northern Ireland Assembly is the devolved legislature of Northern Ireland.

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