



GENDER, CLIMATE & SECURITY

Sustaining inclusive peace on the frontlines
of climate change

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Foreword

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The world today is reeling from the devastating social and economic impacts of COVID-19. The pandemic has unmasked how inequality shapes not only the experience of crisis, but also prospects for resilience and recovery.

In fragile and conflict-affected countries, where populations are already suffering from multiple risks posed by climate change, the pandemic is a “crisis layered on top of a crisis.” Livelihoods that depend on reliable access to markets are undermined by disrupted supply chains, restrained mobility or market closures. Populations displaced by climate-related security risks living in camps or settlements – where health facilities are already inadequate – are not afforded the luxury of social distancing.

In these contexts, political and economic instability undermine capacity to cope with health crises, as well as climate and environmental shocks. This traps communities in a negative downward spiral that can fuel further conflict and insecurity.

Recent research has improved our understanding of these climate-security traps. Too little attention, however, has been paid to the role of gender norms and power dynamics in shaping responses to these reinforcing crises.

From the Sahel and the Horn of Africa to South-East Asia and Central America, the report shows how factors of marginalization combine to leave women and girls with a disproportionate economic burden; how gendered expectations can lead men and women to resort to violence when traditional livelihoods fail; and how important socio-economic shifts can result from changes to patterns of migration.

The report also makes clear that there are important opportunities for action, even as the negative impacts of climate change on security become more visible every day. Its recommendations provide a clear way forward, encouraging us to recognize the interdependence of peace and security, human rights and development.

Finland has a storied tradition of supporting global peace. The risks posed by climate change only make working to fully integrate these issues into conflict prevention and peacebuilding more urgent. But we cannot afford to do so without recognizing the unique experiences, knowledge, and capacity of women, men, girls, and boys living on the frontlines.

Finland is deeply committed to gender equality and is a strong advocate of women’s roles in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. As support to climate action is more critical than ever, we look forward to continuing to support women and men in fragile contexts, as well as the global community, to build and sustain inclusive peace.

Special message

INGER ANDERSEN, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme

PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA, Executive Director, UN Women

OSCAR FERNANDEZ-TARANCO, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support

ACHIM STEINER, Administrator, UN Development Programme

Climate change is now impacting every corner of the globe. In many regions, severe droughts and rising temperatures are leading to food insecurity and loss of livelihoods – threatening to reverse hard-won development gains. In fragile and conflict-affected settings, limited governance, political instability and violence leave communities particularly ill-equipped to cope with a changing climate. This in turn can compound existing tensions and exacerbate the complex emergencies we are witnessing today in the Sahel, the Middle East and Central America.

As this report outlines, climate change is already resulting in risks for the security of many millions around the globe. These risks disproportionately affect women and girls, who are key providers of food, water and energy, but have fewer resources with which to adapt to changing conditions. However, in some regions, the impacts of climate change are also leading to important socio-economic shifts that are **transforming traditional gender norms** around economic activity, decision-making and leadership. The report argues that such changes have the potential to open-up new spaces for more inclusive peace and development processes.

These gender dynamics are still relatively poorly understood at the international level – and they are generally lacking in climate-security policymaking and practice to date. This report fills a gap-in-knowledge and offers a comprehensive, accessible framework to demonstrate how **gender, climate and security are inextricably linked**. It also highlights concrete ways to take advantage of these linkages to prevent conflict and foster lasting peace.

The United Nations (UN) is undertaking a range of actions to join the dots between climate change, gender equality and peace and security. This report stems from an initiative of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), UN Women, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) to address gender, the environment, peace and development as fundamentally interlinked issues. This *Joint Programme on Women, Natural Resources, Climate and Peace* recognizes that **interventions around natural resources, the environment and climate change provide significant opportunities to empower women politically and economically, and to strengthen their contributions to peace**.

As the UN System ramps up its efforts to better support countries and communities faced with the multi-faceted threats posed by our changing climate, partnerships such as these are needed more than ever. In this crucial Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals, **our experience shows that this inclusive approach is the only way to sustain peace on the frontlines of climate change**.

In his 2019 Report on *Women, Peace and Security*, the UN Secretary-General declared an *urgent need* for better analysis of the linkages between climate change and conflict from a gender perspective. **We believe that this report answers this call.**

Acronyms and abbreviations

AOGs	Armed Opposition Groups
APE	Association for the Protection of the Environment
BRACED	Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters
ccGAP	Climate Change Gender Action Plan
CIESIN	Center for International Earth Science Information Network
COP	Conference of Parties
FEDURP	Federation of Urban and Rural Poor
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIWPS	Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UN CCA	United Nations Common Country Assessment
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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