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#DCdays18



UNFCCC COP 24
Development and Climate Days
Katowice, Poland

Outcome Document

Conflict and Shocks:

How can we build resilience in the face of increasing fragility and vulnerability?

08 December 2018
11:30-13:00



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I. Background

Violent conflict has increased after decades of relative decline. Direct deaths in war, numbers of displaced populations, military spending, among others, have all surged since the beginning of the century (World Bank, 2018). Fragile and conflict affected states show the slowest progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (ODI, 2018), demonstrating that conflict could be one of the biggest hurdles in achieving our 2030 aspirations. More specifically, the recent increase in number of people suffering from acute food insecurity has been attributed to an increase in conflict and extreme weather events (FSIN, 2018).

It is therefore becoming urgent to increase our understanding of the drivers of political instability and conflict as well as our understanding of how to manage the added vulnerability of climate related shocks in conflict affected places. The role of climate change, and other environmental drivers, has been the subject of polarized debate, but are now widely accepted as important threat multipliers in a complex set of preconditions that could lead to states becoming more vulnerable to instability and conflict (Ayana et al., 2016; Brottem, 2016; Van Baalen & Möbjork, 2017). Similarly, there is increasing recognition that the people most vulnerable to climate shocks are often in conflict affected places, as evidenced by the recent impacts of climate and conflict in places like Yemen, Nigeria, South Sudan and Somalia. Other important threat multipliers and causes for increased vulnerability include the strength of governance mechanisms and key institutions, inequality, perceptions of exclusion, identity, grievances and ability to mobilise (World Bank, 2018). With predicted increases in climate volatility and extreme weather (IPCC SR15, 2018), increased environmental degradation and competition for natural resources (IPBES, 2018), these factors could become much more important drivers of States and people becoming more vulnerable to instability and conflict.

This session aims to move the dialogue from describing the relationship to understanding what we should be doing to build resilience in these fragile and conflict susceptible areas. The discussion will focus on:

- 1. What are the science and knowledge needs to act more effectively?*
- 2. What policies and institutions that we should be targeting, and to do what?*
- 3. What are some of the innovative solutions that are emerging in this area?*

II. Panelists:

- **Marine Braud**, Head of Green Diplomacy, WWF France
- **Karounga Keita**, Director of Sahel Region, Wetlands International
- **Katie Peters**, Senior Researcher, Overseas Development Agency (ODI)
- **Florian Krampe**, Researcher, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)
- **Alima Arbudu**, Associate Advisor, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- **Lieutenant-Colonel Cyril Arnaud**, Ecole de Guerre, France (attended and was interviewed afterwards, but was unable to participate in the actual panel due to military protocols)

Question 1: What are the science and knowledge needs to be able to act more effectively in these fragile and conflict susceptible areas?

- **Need to understand the ecological linkages and flow of benefits** to be able to understand who will be affected and how. This will allow us to engage in a more systemic and integrated manner. This is the approach taken by Wetlands International, in understanding the flow regimes of the Niger River in the Sahel, the importance of ecosystems (like wetlands) in regulating these flows and pulses, and who benefits from these regulating services and who is potentially disrupting these services.
- **Need to understand who is most vulnerable and why.** Need to challenge the dogma that 'disasters don't discriminate'. Different groups have vastly different exposure to these risks in different ways.
- **Need to understand political power dynamics** of conflict susceptible areas and work within these parameters. This can make humanitarian organisations uncomfortable, as much of these dynamics are intrastate and humanitarian organisations rely on strong relations with governments.
- **Need to develop an integrated risk assessment processes that incorporate climate change, resource management and ecological dimensions.** This will enable responses that are far more integrated and deliver long term stability.
- **Need Stress Tests for local regions under different climate change and resource management scenarios.** This will allow a more granular view of potential scenarios, risks and implications as well as potential responses/interventions. Examples include the work that WWF France has done with the French Ecole de Guerre for the Lake Chad region. Need to build on this.
- **Need to find out what tactics/approaches work in these contexts.** This means a strong knowledge-brokering role of surfacing what is currently being done, documenting these practices and being honest about what is working and what is not working.

Question 2: What are the policies, political processes and institutions that we should be targeting and what do we want them to do?

- **Resource Management Institutions, both National & Transboundary Commissions.** This includes Transboundary Water Management Organisations. Interestingly the Lake Chad stress test conducted by WWF France revealed that water withdrawals had a much greater impact than climate change on the future scenarios for potential conflict.
- **Build the capacity of sub-national actors to resolve local resource management disputes.** This is where local resource management disputes are resolved, before they escalate and become potential flare points. Need the umbrella of national governments, but need to focus on subnational structures such as local resource management structures and peace-committees (e.g. approach being undertaken by Wetlands International)
- **Regional structures (e.g. ECOWAS, IGAD, ASEAN etc) are also important and need to be strengthened to play a greater role.** Most of these structures have a clear mandate to work on these issues but lack the resources (and specifically – continuity of resources) to be effective. Example given of project with Climate Prediction Centre and



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- **Close the gap between ‘stabilization/peace-keeping forces’ and ‘development agencies’ in fragile areas.** In many cases these two groups are working according to very different agendas that may conflict with each other. Also important that we speak with different & unusual groups including the military (or peace-keeping forces)
- **Need to ensure these issues are reflected in National strategies (e.g. NDC’s and Adaptation Plans).** Perhaps need to review these strategies to compare how these issues are reflected in these plans.
- **UN Security Council should be seen to provide leadership on this issue.** Sweden played a key role in driving this agenda and this needs to be taken up by others (e.g. Germany). However, we need to be careful of the security discourse demonizing those that need help the most (e.g. refugees and migrants) as being the cause of conflicts.

Question 3: What are some of the most promising and important innovation areas? i.e. What are some of the creative solutions that are emerging that hold the greatest promise of progress in this area?

- Need to find innovative workaround solutions for **getting climate finance to where it is needed most.** Big discrepancy between where climate finance goes and where it is needed the most. Of the 30 countries rated as least likely to receive climate finance, 90% are fragile & conflict affected states. Cannot take a State-centric approach, need to find other ways to get finance where it is most needed.
- **Local Resource Management Tools** that reduce potential for disputes arising. E.g. Wetlands International working on prediction tools for water flows and inundation, that allow farmers and other resource users to plan activities to optimize benefits and reduce disputes
- **Local peace-building or resource dispute resolution committees.** Again Wetlands International are working on multi-stakeholder structures around wetlands and delta systems.
- **Natural Resource Management needs to be incorporated as a key driver and indicator of peace-building.** Lots of potential for work on this, including using restoration of natural ecosystems as a key peace-building process.
- **Gender and youth should be seen as innovators and agents of change.** Need to move away from the narrative of these groups being seen as victims. They can be important drivers of change.