



SRMUN CHARLOTTE 2021

Unity: Coming Together to Address a Changing World

March 26 - 28, 2021

sc_charlotte@srmun.org

Security Council Update No. 2

The Impact of Climate-Related Disasters on Peace and Security

Introduction

Climate change has become a highly discussed topic over the past decade amongst the Security Council (SC) as the repercussions of climate-related challenges become more of a prevalent issue encountered by Member States. Climate influences the availability of resources and alters population dynamics. This can affect socioeconomic and political stability of a Member State. The General Assembly first recognized the possible security implications of climate change in 2009 in Resolution 63/281.¹ The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, has pushed to address climate change prevention as a key agenda point and called the climate emergency a “danger to peace.”²

Climate Change and the Security Council

The SC has held six open debates specifically to discuss threats to security related to climate change.³ The first debate was held in 2007, organized by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in which Member States representing the SC agreed that climate change had been affecting peace stability in developing Member States.⁴ The 2018 debate addressed climate-related security risks caused by climate change with a focus on the region surrounding Lake Chad.⁵ In 2019, it was suggested during formal debate that the SC formally acknowledge climate change as a threat to peace and security in the region and initiate field missions that focused on youth and possibilities of sustainability and resilience against climate change.⁶

Miroslav Jenča, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, briefed the SC on behalf of the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs on July 24th, 2020, urging the SC to view climate change as a “threat multiplier.”⁷ At this briefing, examples were provided of the effects of climate change hitting the population the hardest and of the threat of political instability being at its highest point—specifically in Member States across Asia, the Pacific, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America.⁸ Some of the highlighted issues included food insecurity, mass migration, and political unrest—all of which have threatened

¹ UN, “S/RES/2242 (2015),” October 2015. http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2242.pdf

² UN. “Climate Security Mechanism: Briefing Note.” UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, 2020. https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/csm_toolbox-1-briefing_note.pdf

³ Dröge, Susanne. “Addressing the Risks of Climate Change.” SWP. German Institute for International and Security Affairs, June 6, 2020. <https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2020RP06/#hd-d21321e732>.

⁴ UN. S/PV.5663 - E - S/PV.5663 -Desktop, April 2007. <https://undocs.org/S/PV.5663>.

⁵ UN. “S/PV.8307.” United Nations Security Council, July 2018. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_pv_8307.pdf

⁶ UN. “S/2019/113.” United Nations Security Council, February 2019. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2019_113.pdf

⁷ UN. “Climate Change Exacerbates Existing Conflict Risks, Likely to Create New Ones, Assistant Secretary-General Warns Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.” United Nations. United Nations, July 2020. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sc14260.doc.htm>

⁸ UN. “Climate Change Exacerbates Existing Conflict Risks, Likely to Create New Ones, Assistant Secretary-General Warns Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.”

peace and security in different regions.⁹ Data from the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa illustrates that the adversities caused by climate change have significantly increased conflict and allowed for extremist organizations in the area to flourish.¹⁰ At the July 24th, 2020 briefing, Heiko Maas, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany and Council President [stated to the SC]:

“Sooner rather than later, climate change will be a catalyst in almost every conflict that we are dealing with” [and] proposed three immediate steps: First, the Council should improve its information on climate-related security risks, including with early warning indicators. Second, the Secretary-General should appoint a Special Representative on Climate and Security as soon as possible, and third, the United Nations should include climate-related risks in all its mandates and conflict prevention strategies.”¹¹

Tensions High in the Lake Chad Region

In the rural Lake Chad region, climate change and environmental degradation are making it harder for the farmers, fishers, and livestock herders.¹² Lake Chad borders the Member States of Chad, Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon, with the basin of the lake also reaching Algeria, the Central African Republic, Sudan, and Libya.¹³ The area provides food and water to an estimated 50 million people.¹⁴ Recurrent droughts and various other weather-related hazards have stunted the region's ability to adapt and has led to mass migration due to lack of food and water security.¹⁵ The lack of resources along with widespread inequality and political marginalization in the region increases dissatisfaction between people and the government, thus increasing tensions in the region.¹⁶

The Lake Chad region is considered one of the most unstable regions in the world according to the 2020 Global Terrorism Index report.¹⁷ Armed opposition groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province have only added to these tensions by destroying or seizing essential resources and controlling access to the lake.¹⁸ This has led to a large displacement of people and weak social cohesion between groups in the region. There is also a fear that these climate-initiated issues will carry over to neighboring Cameroon and Nigeria as armed militant groups gain more control over the area surrounding Lake Chad.¹⁹

Leaders in the region have addressed the growing concern of climate change with the international body. Most recently, the President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, spoke to the United Nation's General Assembly in September of 2019 stating, “Lake Chad is shrinking while the population is exploding. It is a challenging situation. With less land, less rainfall, these are unique problems for the country.”²⁰ The African Union (AU) has also

⁹ UN. “Climate Change Exacerbates Existing Conflict Risks, Likely to Create New Ones, Assistant Secretary-General Warns Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.”

¹⁰ UN. “Climate Change Exacerbates Existing Conflict Risks, Likely to Create New Ones, Assistant Secretary-General Warns Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.”

¹¹ UN. “Climate Change Exacerbates Existing Conflict Risks, Likely to Create New Ones, Assistant Secretary-General Warns Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.”

¹² UN. “Climate Security Mechanism: Briefing Note.” UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

¹³ Usigbe, Leon. “Drying Lake Chad Basin Gives Rise to Crisis | Africa Renewal.” United Nations. United Nations. Accessed January 10, 2021. <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2019-march-2020/drying-lake-chad-basin-gives-rise-crisis>.

¹⁴ Pham-Duc, Binh, Florence Sylvestre, Fabrice Papa, Frédéric Frappart, Camille Bouchez, and Jean-Francois Crétaux. The Lake Chad hydrology under current climate change. Nature Publishing Group, March 26, 2020. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-62417-w>.

¹⁵ Pham-Duc, Binh, Florence Sylvestre, Fabrice Papa, Frédéric Frappart, Camille Bouchez, and Jean-Francois Crétaux. The Lake Chad hydrology under current climate change. Nature Publishing Group,

¹⁶ UN. “Climate Security Mechanism: Briefing Note.” UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

¹⁷ Institute for Economics & Peace. Global Peace Index 2020: Measuring Peace in a Complex World, Sydney, June 2020. Accessed January 9, 2021. <http://visionofhumanity.org/reports>.

¹⁸ UN. “Climate Security Mechanism: Briefing Note.” UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

¹⁹ UN. “Climate Security Mechanism: Briefing Note.” UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

²⁰ Usigbe, Leon. “Drying Lake Chad Basin Gives Rise to Crisis | Africa Renewal.” United Nations. United Nations.

recognized and addressed the problems associated with climate change stating at the 2014 AU Strategy on Climate Change that, “the existing pressures on natural resources that are becoming scarce in the face of climate change and growing population could lead to insecurity and conflicts undermining peace in Africa.”²¹

Peru’s Climate Crisis

Due to Peru’s diverse landscapes, the Member State is faced with multiple issues that have been incited by climate change in recent years.²² Peru meets “seven of the nine vulnerability characteristics recognized in the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: low coastal zones; arid and semi-arid areas; exposure to floods, droughts, and desertification; zones prone to natural disasters; areas of high urban pollution; fragile mountain ecosystems; and significant economic dependence on the production and export of fossil fuels.”²³ These vulnerabilities have contributed to heightened tensions between ethnic groups and threats against fresh availability and quality.²⁴

An estimated 95 percent of Peru’s population uses water resources that originate in the mountain regions (glaciers).²⁵ The agriculture sector uses 80 percent of all water resources in the Pacific coast region, and the large mining sector remains a huge consumer of water throughout the Member State.²⁶ Climate change and land degradation has directly affected Peru’s water regulating ecosystem, thus decreasing water availability and increasing the risk of extreme droughts, erosion and landslides across all regions.²⁷ Conflict surrounding water has also escalated conflict between neighboring regions and ethnic groups.²⁸ An example of this can be seen on the border between the neighboring Arequipa and Cuzco where the debate over the use of water for irrigation projects has turned violent.²⁹

In 2020, the Peruvian Government reaffirmed its desire to alter the trajectory of the Member State in areas affected by climate change and committed to reducing the State’s greenhouse gas emission by 30 percent, and as a result the Member State’s vulnerability level, by 2030.³⁰ Most recently, Peru joined forces with Switzerland to sign a carbon offset deal under the Paris Agreement.³¹ This deal would aid Peru in funding sustainable development projects, while allowing Switzerland to count the decrease in emissions from Peru towards its own national sustainability targets.³² Peru’s environment minister, Kirla Echegarry, described the deal as “an example of how cooperation

²¹ African Union. “Draft African Union Strategy on Climate Change,” May 2014.

https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/cap_draft_aucclimatestrategy2015.pdf

²² Stark, Jeffrey. “Climate Change and Conflict in Africa And Latin America.” United States Agency for International Development, July 2013.

<https://www.climate-links.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/FESS%2520Preliminary%2520Synthesis%2520Paper%2520FINAL.pdf>

²³ Stark, Jeffrey. “Climate Change and Conflict in Africa And Latin America.” United States Agency for International Development

²⁴ Stark, Jeffrey. “Climate Change and Conflict in Africa And Latin America.” United States Agency for International Development

²⁵ Stark, Jeffrey. “Climate Change and Conflict in Africa And Latin America.” United States Agency for International Development

²⁶ Stark, Jeffrey. “Climate Change and Conflict in Africa And Latin America.” United States Agency for International Development

²⁷ “Climate Adaptation & Water Security: Peru.” U.S. Agency for International Development, September 4, 2019.

<https://www.usaid.gov/peru/our-work/climate-change-adaptation>

²⁸ Stark, Jeffrey. “Climate Change and Conflict in Africa And Latin America.” United States Agency for International Development

²⁹ Stark, Jeffrey. “Climate Change and Conflict in Africa And Latin America.” United States Agency for International Development

³⁰ “Peru Creates High Level Commission on Climate Change.” Peru creates High Level Commission on Climate Change - Internationale Klimaschutzinitiative (IKI). German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety, September 29, 2020. https://www.international-climate-initiative.com/en/news/article/peru_creates_high_level_commission_on_climate_change

³¹ “Peru and Switzerland Sign ‘World First’ Carbon Offset Deal under Paris Agreement.” Peru and Switzerland sign ‘world first’ carbon offset deal under Paris Agreement. European Council for An Energy Efficient Economy, October 2020. <https://www.eceee.org/all-news/news/peru-and-switzerland-sign-world-first-carbon-offset-deal-under-paris-agreement/>

³² “Peru and Switzerland Sign ‘World First’ Carbon Offset Deal under Paris Agreement.” Peru and Switzerland sign ‘world first’ carbon offset deal under Paris Agreement. European Council for An Energy Efficient Economy, October 2020.

between countries can facilitate the fulfillment of our climate goals and —at the same time— bring prosperity as well as well-being for our citizens.”³³

Conclusion

In accordance with projections by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, if warming continues at the current rate, “the earth is likely to get 1.5°C (2.7°F) hotter between 2030 and 2052.³⁴ Climate-related risks affecting livelihoods, human security, and economic growth will increase with this level of heating and could be catastrophic with an increase of 2°C (3.6°F).”³⁵ Effects of climate change have led to serious distress on vulnerable regions such as the areas surrounding Lake Chad and Peru. These effects have led to high numbers of displaced persons, resource scarcity, and violent conflict.³⁶ The troubling effects of climate change on human, national and international security touch every aspect of UN work and are pressing for the SC to discuss.³⁷

³³ “Peru and Switzerland Sign ‘World First’ Carbon Offset Deal under Paris Agreement.” Peru and Switzerland sign ‘world first’ carbon offset deal under Paris Agreement. European Council for An Energy Efficient Economy, October 2020.

³⁴ UN. “Climate Security Mechanism: Briefing Note.” UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

³⁵ UN. “Climate Security Mechanism: Briefing Note.” UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

³⁶ UN. “Climate Security Mechanism: Briefing Note.” UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

³⁷ UN. “Climate Security Mechanism: Briefing Note.” UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs