Climate-related security risks and sustaining peace: An analytical lens

Strategic advantages for the Country Common Analysis

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Summary

The Common Country Analysis (CCA) is the UN system's key tool for collective analysis. Building on Tunisia's experience, this paper argues that embedding a climate-related security risk analysis in the CCA would both strengthen the understanding of development challenges and opportunities and provide the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) four strategic advantages as it works towards the transformational change required to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

1. Climate risk

Every country in the world is experiencing the drastic effects of climate change first-hand. Indeed, climate change is forcing one person from his or her home every two seconds.[1] In the Arab region, temperatures are rising faster than the global average and droughts are already more frequent and severe. Agricultural output may decrease by 20 percent in value by 2080 and renewable water may be reduced by 20 percent by 2030.[2] The Arab States already constitute the world's most water-scarce, food-import dependent region and will experience a further dramatic decline in food and water productivity. Prolonged heat waves, desertification and sea level rise will make parts of the region uninhabitable, leading to the potential climate-induced displacement of millions of people. These circumstances increase the likelihood of violent competition for diminishing resources and decreasing quality of livelihoods, possibly reversing or even wiping out the development gains made.

Forecast studies warn that Tunisia will be significantly affected by resource stress and climate change, including extreme climate events (floods and droughts).

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1 https://reliefweb.int/report/world/forced-home-climate-fuelled-displacement
2 https://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-13-climate-action.html

The country is considered among the most exposed in the Mediterranean, with risks of a high temperature increase.[3] These conditions would have significant impacts on the country's economy, population (especially in marginalized regions) and ecosystems. Sea level rise will also lead to the salinization of coastal aquifers and degradation of water quality. In the agricultural sector, this trend includes loss of tree areas and cereal yields, due to declining soil fertility and arable land, thus increasing Tunisia's dependence on crop imports.

Tunisia's vulnerability: Key figures[4]

Water resources

- Around 50% decrease in groundwater resources by 2050;

- 30% loss, by salinization of the coastal aquifers, of groundwater potential by 2050.

Agriculture

- Loss of 800,000 ha of non-irrigated arboriculture (nearly 50% of current area);

- Around 30% reduction of cereal-growing area by 2030.

Coastline

- Sea level rise will make 3,000 ha of urban areas vulnerable to submersion. More than half of the potentially submersible lands are residential urban areas located mainly in the cities of Tunis and Sfax. The vulnerable zones also include 781 ha of industrial zones (mainly in Sfax, Gabes and Tunis) and 560 ha of tourist zones (largely located on the island of Djerba);

- Sea level rise could lead to the loss of 220 Mm3 of water resources, i.e. about 30% of total groundwater potential and 75% of the groundwater resources;

- Current GDP could fall by 0.5%, due to the indirect impacts of sea level rise on tourism and agriculture. Resulting job losses would total 36,000.

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2. Conflict around renewable natural resources

In Tunisia, the unsustainable use of natural resources and environmental degradation, exacerbated by climate risks, affects livelihoods and increases vulnerabilities and social inequality. Thirty water-related social movements were registered in the governorate of Kairouan in summer 2019 alone and violent conflicts have occurred in recent years. For example, in June 2012, protesters clashed with police demanding a solution to the drying-up of water supplies in Tozeur; in 2016, one person died in the city of Fernana when residents threatened to cut off the water delivered by a pumping station to the capital, and at least nine governorates experienced water shortages; a violent confrontation with police occurred in 2017; and, most recently, in May 2020, a water distribution company official died following an assault, apparently during a dispute with farmers over the use of water resources.[5]

Land and natural resource disputes also give rise to episodic conflicts between tribal factions or with authorities. They include protests and clashes in Gafsa (2012), Kebili governorate (2014), in the Jemna oasis (2016) and in northwest Tunisia over the use of forest areas, and protests in Kairouan (2011-2019) over polluted lands. Intercommunal clashes erupted in June 2017 between residents of two communities in Kebili, related to a dispute dating back to 1956, which left 78 people wounded.[6] That incident was related to the land tenure governance system and tribal competition over expanding the social base of local notables (community elites) regarding development projects.

3   COP 25, Madrid 2019, Political note, *La Tunisie en Action: Pour Un Développement Bas Carbone et Résilient à l'Horizon 2050*, Ministère des Affaires Locales et de l'Environnement and UNDP: The increase varies by region, with the lowest increase (RCP 4.5) estimated at between 1°C-1.8°C by 2050 and between 2°C-3°C by the end of the century. In the worst case (RCP 8.5), the increase could reach 4.1°C- 5.2°C by the end of the century.

4   COP 25, Madrid 2019, Political note and Tunisia's Third National Communication as part of the UNFCCC, 2019.

5   FTDES reports, including in the Revue de la Justice Environnementale, mars 2019 – mars 2020, Département Justice Environnementale du FTEDS, mars 2020: http://ftdes.net/rapports/Revue-JE-FR-final.pdf ; http://www.worldwater.org/conflict/map/

6   UNDP, *Note de synthèse : Morcellement du foncier et conflits tribaux*, Tunisia, 2017.

Given the dynamics described above, one must understand the impact of climate change and human-induced drivers to grasp the root causes of conflicts with potential risks for development, social cohesion and the full exercise of rights.

3. CCA in the reform process: A multidimensional and inter-disciplinary analysis

The CCA is the UN system's independent, impartial and collective assessment and analysis (that is, description of causes and their implications) of a country's situation and is used internally to develop the Cooperation Framework. It examines progress, gaps, opportunities and bottlenecks vis-à-vis a country's commitment to achieving 2030 Agenda, UN norms and standards, and the principles of the UN Charter, as reflected in the Companion Paper to the Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles.[7]

To that end, the UN development system reform introduced improvements in implementation of this analytic process. The CCA is no longer a one-off event, but a core analytical function carried out by the UN development system, informing the UN's work on an ongoing basis.

CCA main features[8]

The new CCA is multidisciplinary in nature. It seeks to foster integrated, cross-pillar systems thinking, summarizing: the interlinkages and integrated nature of the SDGs; multidimensional factors spanning the development, humanitarian, peacebuilding and human rights spectrum; relevant regional, subregional and cross-border dynamics; the country's legal, institutional, policy and financial landscape as it pertains to the 2030 Agenda; and, the root causes of crises in order to prioritize UN prevention support.

In other words, the CCA should both reflect and support the ambitious and transformational change called for in the 2030 Agenda.

The CCA thus requires an inter-disciplinary approach suited to the multidimensional nature of the 2030 Agenda and should shed light on the persistence of intractable and complex development challenges. It can help to clarify why certain groups of people/places are left behind or are at risk of being left behind (the "Leave no one behind" (LNOB) principle).

The CCA guidelines (the Companion Paper) provide a risk matrix for the multidimensional analysis around 12 dimensions of the SDG-based Risk Framework (democratic space; displacement and migration; economic stability; environment and climate; food security, agriculture and land; internal security; infrastructure and access to social services; justice and rule of law; political stability; public health; regional and global influences; and social cohesion, equality and non-discrimination). Based on a political economy analysis and a macro-economic assessment, also foreseen in the guidelines, the CCA will consider the impact of the country's trajectory on the environment and vice versa.

4. CCA process in Tunisia

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Tunisia is preparing to draft its 2021-2025 Development Plan. As cooperation with the UN is aligned with this national planning, the Government of Tunisia and the UN will start working on the next UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (or the "Cooperation Framework") in 2020; the Framework also covers the period 2021-2025.

The current CCA[9] explores challenges and sources of vulnerability and resilience and highlights priorities for the 2021-2025 strategic planning. The exercise includes a risk assessment across the above-mentioned 12 dimensions. In terms of methodology, the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) held 12 LNOB-informed conversations with partners and UN agencies, with participation from 250 experts. These one-day sessions were organized around thematic notes prepared by UN agencies. The initiative helped to identify, for each dimension, the underlying risks, manifestations and root causes; the people left behind and factors that may aggravate their exclusion; trends and forecasts; and, resilience capacities (including institutional, socio-economic and political). The CCA benefitted

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7   UNDCO, UN CCA. *Companion Paper to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Guidance*, April 2019

8   Ibid.

9   It was drafted between November 2019 and February 2020 and is currently in the publication process.

from various collaborations, including with the UN Regional Economic Commissions for Africa and West Asia (respectively, ECA and ESCWA), and a partnership with the Institute for Security Studies. The latter modelled Tunisia's development trajectory out to 2040, using the International Futures forecasting system. This process helped to identify and analyse over 30 risks. Starting there, the UNCT came together and reached consensus around five main risks, which were refined after discussions with Tunisian authorities, civil society and the business sector. The current outcomes of the Cooperation Framework should be geared towards preventing and responding to the identified risks, which would make the Framework a risk-informed and prevention-oriented document.[10]

As a risk-informed and LNOB-focused analysis, the CCA framed environment/climate change as a socio-economic justice/equality issue. As such, and because climate change impacts the most vulnerable first and exacerbates pre-existing divisions, Tunisia could experience growing risks of social disruption and conflict. This requires effective measures for managing natural resources sustainably and scaling up adaptive capacities. The RCO thus concluded that a more in-depth assessment was needed of the link between climate change and security risks and decided to launch a study that will be conducted in parallel with and, eventually, inform the Cooperation Framework. It will be co-led by UNDP and FAO, and in collaboration with other agencies (including UNEP, UN Women, IOM and WFP). The research aims to raise awareness of the link among climate change, natural resources management and conflict by providing evidence-based inputs for climate advocacy and conflict-sensitive policies and programming. Outcomes of this study may be added to the next version of the CCA (in 2021).

5. Advantages of a country-level climate-related security risk analysis

First, this paper does not address the need for a corporate agreement to mainstream climate-related security risks analysis in the CCA and the Cooperation Framework as part of their guidelines. Rather, it argues that, whether embedded in the CCA or conducted in a parallel and complementary exercise, a climate-related security risk analysis/lens can significantly strengthen the UNCT's analytic function.

Second, given an evolving context, the CCA provides the optimum baseline for programming and partnerships. However, the specifics of each country will guide the UNCT in determining how to integrate an analysis of climate-related security risks. That could take the form of: (i) a dimension in the multidimensional risk assessment anticipated by the Companion Paper; (ii) a lens applied to a conflict analysis or a specific analysis that would contribute, transversally, to the building blocks of the CCA (2030 Agenda analysis, LNOB analysis, risk analysis, capacity analysis and gap analysis) or, as a standalone document, to the CCA drafting process and/or to the Country Framework; and (iii) a lens or analysis that contributes to the UNCT's analytical function (the CCA is no longer a one-off event), even if it does not directly contribute to the CCA document at the start of the cycle.

Third, climate-related security risk analysis should be understood as calling for different approaches over time. Conflict-related analysis will benefit from and may be combined with different forecasting models and instruments. These may include:

- Long term: existing models designed to predict what will happen (and when) should combine modelled data with more conceptual work involving leadership and knowledge communities. Strategic foresight approaches identify possible scenarios and work backwards (back-casting) to identify the "must be true" conditions to ensure that we are building towards desirable sustainable and peaceful futures. Foresight could be part of the analytical function of the CCA and can be beneficial at the start of the Cooperation Framework cycle to inform medium-term analysis;

- Medium term: Country Frameworks should consider whether the strategic priorities and the UNCT portfolio considered future climate change scenarios and the related impact on livelihoods, local economies, natural resource governance and, consequently, on inequality, marginalization and vulnerability. The foresight exercise, together with portfolio sensemaking exercises, could help to assess whether the Framework supports policies to enhance resilience and prevent or mitigate the worst climate outcomes;

- Short term: the cooperation frameworks should consider metrics that are indicators of changes in the recent past to help forecast the near-term future.[11] While the direction of climate change is clear, it is still difficult to measure the severity of

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10   In the Tunisian context, prevention is defined as what can be done to avoid/reduce exclusion and inequalities, which are key roots causes of conflict. Therefore, prevention is not just a "discipline" per se, but is mainstreamed based on a social contract/equality focus. This allows the UNCT to link it to development, humanitarian and human rights work.

11   Economists use the term "nowcasting." It uses a variety of data sources, proxies and non-traditional techniques to perform timely, short- term/quarterly trends analyses in response to the need for greater agility, responsiveness and adaptability. As a caveat, long-term indicators of the past may not necessarily offer clear insights into the future. Complex calculations are required to project the future impacts of climate change.

the potential impact. Related indicators, such as natural resource scarcity, frequency of climate-related hazards, increased land tenure conflicts and rising local market prices for essential food staples, can be reviewed regularly in the new CCA horizon scanning function to pick up those weaker signals of increasing risk and insecurity.

Moreover, prevention efforts cannot be efficient in the medium-to-long term if the tools and analyses used do not allow the systematic creation of disaggregated data and the development of differentiated strategies. Ideally, the forecasting models' instruments would also include gender responsiveness.

Four strategic advantages of examining the link among climate change, security risks and sustaining peace have been identified: (1) promoting systems thinking for the transformational change called for in the 2030 Agenda; (2) enabling a strong conflict-related multidimensional perspective on the LNOB; (3) providing an opportunity to break down silos and affirm the comparative advantage of the UN, with the RC system and RCs' reinvigorated role and convening power as the coordinating body at the country level; (4) providing an entry point to endorse two key global policy priorities simultaneously at the country level.

1. Promoting systems thinking

The nature of the SDGs requires an interdisciplinary mindset. Given their transversal nature, climate-related security risks offer a good entry point to making this shift in dealing with sustainable development. By spanning the development, humanitarian, peacebuilding and human rights spectrum, climate-related security risk assessment establishes an effective baseline for addressing this nexus. Moreover, given the evolving patterns of climate change, this lens helps to project planning and programming into the future, allowing prevention opportunities to be identified in advance.

While the CCA guidelines' multidimensional risk assessment framework provides 12 risk dimensions, examining climate-related security risks would capture the link among them and allow for a more holistic analysis. According to SIPRI, in-depth analysis of the ways in which climate impacts interlink with conflict makes it possible to consider the interplay among risks, which requires integrated responses.[12] This approach is thus conducive to a cross-pillar response, which is necessary to achieve the SDGs.

2. Enabling a strong conflict-related multidimensional perspective

As the table below shows, climate change-related stressors or hazards interact with socio-economic systems and intensify the drivers of vulnerabilities and coping capacities. As a risk threat multiplier, climate change is a pitfall for development. Exacerbated by the degradation of natural resources, it compounds vulnerabilities, thereby widening the gap that leaves some behind. Climate change requires addressing issues of equity, justice, vulnerability and power relations, as well as the security of those affected.[13] Today's youth and future generations will bear the largest share of this burden; this poses an unquestionable moral question. Within that group, women are expected to experience the greatest impact of climate change[14] given unequal power relations and structures, discriminatory laws and customs, and unequal access to and control of resources. In addition to gender, the differential impact of climate change must also be understood in terms of intersectional factors, such as age, ethnicity, disability, poverty and socioeconomic status (UNFCCC, 2019).[15]
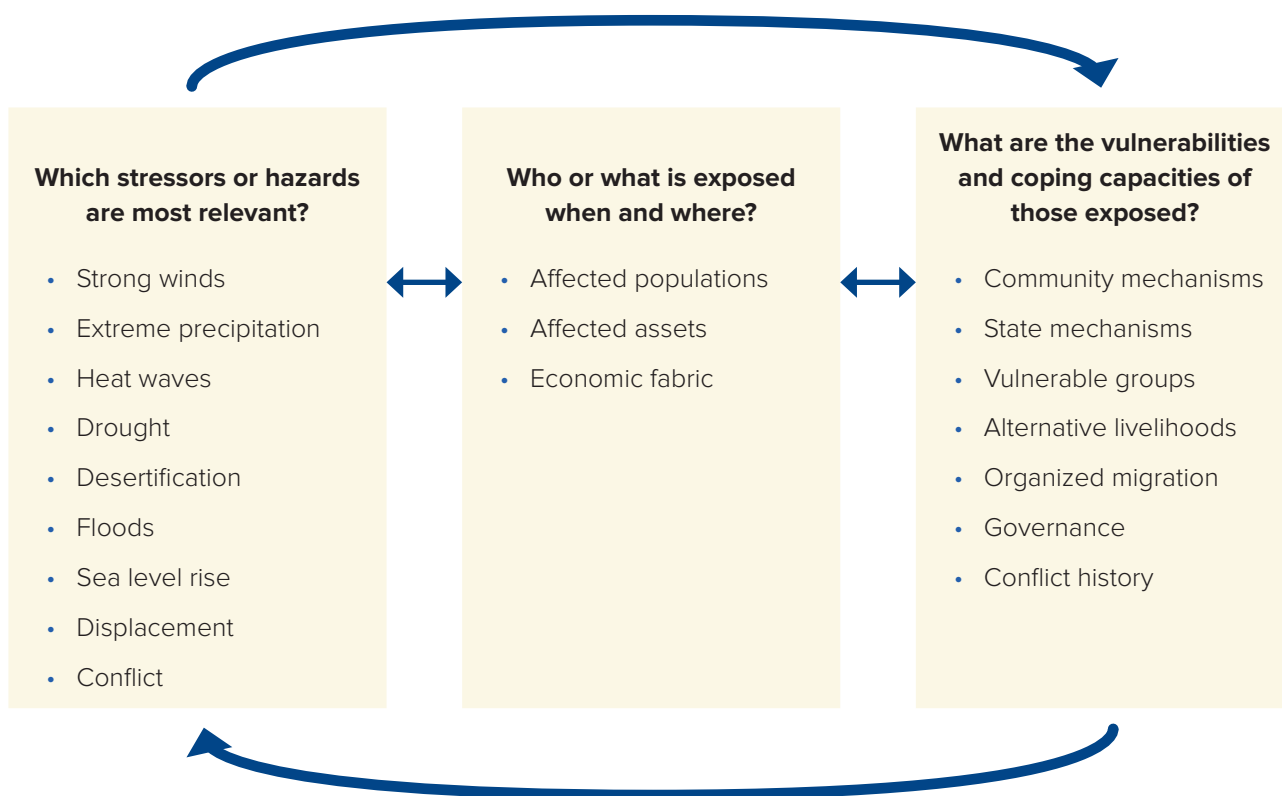
In this context, climate-related security risk analysis provides an additional basis from which to assess the intersectionality of vulnerabilities and the degrees of marginalization in a given context.

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12   *Climate-related Security Risks: Towards an Integrated Approach*, (https://www.sipri.org/publications/2016/climate-related-security-risks) SIPRI, 2016.

13   O'Brien, K., "Are we missing the point?', *Global Environmental Change*," Vol. 16 (2006).

14   R. Leila, *Le genre et le changement climatique, réalités sur le lien* (http://uest.ntua.gr/adapttoclimate/proceedings/full_paper/Rajhi.pdf), INAT 2012.

15   UNFCCC/SBI/2019/INF.8, 12 June 2019 (https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/FCCC/SBI/2019/INF.8).

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Which stressors or hazards are most relevant?

- Strong winds
- Extreme precipitation
- Heat waves
- Drought
- Desertification
- Floods
- Sea level rise
- Displacement
- Conflict

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Who or what is exposed when and where?

- Affected populations
- Affected assets
- Economic fabric

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What are the vulnerabilities and coping capacities of those exposed?

- Community mechanisms
- State mechanisms
- Vulnerable groups
- Alternative livelihoods
- Organized migration
- Governance
- Conflict history

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Source: Climate Security Mechanism, UN

Finally, a greater awareness of these trends would help strengthen climate and conflict sensitivity and the design of human rights-based approaches in the spheres of both adaptation and mitigation and of development and peacebuilding.

3. Providing an opportunity to break down silos

Adaptation and mitigation are both critical when examining climate change, as are symptoms and root causes when we look at conflict. This raises the question, which entity in the UN system is responsible to address these complex and interrelated issues? The likely answer is that every UN agency focuses on one aspect of the problem, but none addresses the problem as a whole. This suggests a role for the Resident Coordinator (RC) and the RC Office (RCO). The presence of a specialist in every country who would work alongside the political mission, the RC, the UNCT and the Peace and Development Advisor (PDA) would represent an investment in capacities and resources. It would also be critical in helping to identify opportunities and bring actors together around complex solutions, such as low-carbon pathways or effective water use.[16]

Under this approach, through its convening power, the UN would facilitate policy and coordination to connect practitioners from diverse disciplines (including environmental/climate change scientists and researchers, peacebuilding practitioners, environmental activists and policy-makers) and help address climate-related security risks and sustaining peace.

The CCA is a tool to generate such engagement. A platform that can help strengthen mutual understanding and collaboration across different disciplines is therefore essential to building a culture of sharing and learning. Other climate change monitoring mechanisms at the country level could also inform such a platform. This could be organized via a task force that brings together the UNCT and other actors, possibly under the auspices of the Resident Coordinator.

The UN in Tunisia gained experience in areas requiring cross- and inter-disciplinary approaches, such as prevention of violent extremism and gender-based violence. It developed coordination mechanisms, common analysis and joint frameworks to identify priorities, map partners' interventions, and assess agencies' comparative advantages and complementary roles. This led to inter-agency joint programmes and new partnerships.

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16   For example, the specialist could establish a carbon mitigation group at the country level. This group would review the country's carbon inventory and its current trends and future growth in population and food and energy needs and analyse how these are being met under current models. It would then identify opportunities to intervene and sustainably address the same needs by following low-carbon pathways. The specialist should work alongside the political mission, the RC and the PDA, who understand the country's politics and conflict issues, and how to access decision-making processes. Such an approach could support implementation of the NDCs and identify how UN programming could contribute to developing transformative low-carbon pathways, focusing on where the largest reductions can be made.

Similarly, climate-related security risk is a multifaceted and cross-sectoral subject that no UN agency can address alone. By playing a convening role, the UN system would ensure that a climate change-related perspective is integrated in all work and that a prevention and early warning approach is adopted.

4. Providing an entry point for endorsing two key global policy priorities

The UN is the custodian of global policy frameworks on both climate change and sustaining peace. Assessing climate-related security risks is part of preparations for working on the nexus between the climate change portfolio and the prevention and sustaining peace agenda. It is an opportunity to link these two plans and promote them simultaneously.

Since Tunisia ratified the Paris Agreement (2015) and its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the country has been working to implement its commitments through a road map and, in a major pivot, by integrating climate challenges in its socio-economic development policy.[17] The UN, primarily through UNDP, supported the development of a strategic vision for COP25 and climate action projects under the NDC. With Resolution 2282 (2016) and given the Secretary-General's emphasis on conflict prevention, sustaining peace must be placed at the heart of UN action. By carrying out this collective responsibility, the UNCT has designed several initiatives that implement the Pathways for Peace recommendations, SDG16 and prevention programmes, including promoting youth inclusion and addressing the drivers of violent extremism. The ongoing collaboration between the authorities and the UN on both agendas provides a promising entry point for strategic partnerships, including with the World Bank and other international financial institutions.

6. Conclusion: The moral imperative to act on climate change through effective entry points

When examining the link between climate change and security risks, it is important to identify the most effective entry points. The UNDP-EU toolkit on conflict-sensitive natural resource management (2012)[18] underscores that the overexploitation of natural resources and related environmental stresses, which are exacerbated by climate change, have implications for all phases of the conflict cycle. Conversely, properly managed natural resources can contribute to maintaining stability, promoting development and ultimately sustaining peace. Given their interdependency, environmental degradation/preservation and natural resource governance can be operational entry points. Natural resources are a tangible value that can be assessed now, in the next five to 10 years, or in 50 years. This focus is sometimes more intuitive and engaging for a variety of stakeholders at the national and community level. On the other hand, a climate change agenda could be a suitable tool in certain situations if perceived as less politically sensitive, because it poses the question of future risks that need to be managed.

The philosopher Stephen M. Gardiner defines climate change as "a perfect moral storm." In his view, climate change is intergenerational, transgenerational and enveloped in scientific uncertainties, which makes it a highly demanding but crucial issue to address.[19] Indeed, climate change brings a strong moral dimension, intertwined with at least three fundamental concerns:

1. Younger generations will bear the consequences of decisions taken by older generations, who have failed to make changes in unsustainable lifestyles that are based on an economic and political system composed of polluting industries and powerful lobbies;

2. Climate change is a legacy for those who are not yet born. It will exacerbate all aspects of crises and worsen environmental conditions. The planet they receive will be less hospitable;

3. Climate change poses an existential threat to the planet itself, threatening human beings—who are only one of the planet's millions of species— with extinction.

Addressing climate-related security risks and sustaining peace offers an additional tool for navigating this complex phase of humanity. We cannot look backwards.

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17   According to the COP25 Political note (*op.cit.*), this includes the five-year development plans and long-term vision through development of a national low-carbon strategy and the process of preparing the national climate change adaptation plan.

18   https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/GN_Capacity_Consultation.pdf

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UNDP Oslo Governance Centre

The Oslo Governance Centre (OGC) is one of six UNDP Global Policy Centres, established in 2002. It works closely with its New York based Headquarters and other relevant UN and UNDP units strengthening the overall analytical and learning ability in the area of Governance and Peacebuilding. It supports policy development and applied research with an overarching focus on democratic governance and peacebuilding in crisis, conflict and transitional contexts.

www.undp.org/oslocentre

Joint UNDP-DPPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention

Since 2004, the United Nations Development Programme and the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) have partnered to strengthen support to the UN's work in building national capacities for conflict prevention. Often times, such support is extended through the deployment of Peace and Development Advisors (or PDAs), a growing cadre of UN staff who support Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams adapt and respond to complex political situations and to develop and implement strategic conflict prevention initiatives and programmes.

https://peaceinfrastructures.org/

Folke Bernadotte Academy

The Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) is the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development. As part of Sweden's international development aid, FBA promotes peace in conflict-affected countries by offering training, advice and conducts research in order to strengthen peacebuilding and statebuilding; as well as grant funds to civil society organizations working with peace and security. The agency is named after Count Folke Bernadotte, UN's first peace mediator.

https://fba.se/en/