WHAT CAN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL DO ON CLIMATE AND SECURITY?

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the only body of the UN that can adopt binding coercive measures, has so far been reluctant to tackle climate change. But as the impacts of climate change on peace and security become ever more apparent, questions of whether the UNSC should and will address the security implications of climate change more directly in the future become increasingly pertinent.

Article 1(1) of the UN Charter assigns responsibility to the UN "to maintain international peace and security, and to that end, to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace". In reality though, the UNSC does little operative work on prevention and has focused predominantly on crisis management and hard security interventions.

Article 24 of the UN Charter, which gives the UNSC primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, better sets out the UNSC's more habitual domain – that of interstate armed conflict. But since the early 90s, the UNSC began to show a greater willingness to prescribe measures also in internal situations of humanitarian emergency, thereby articulating a broader approach to what constitutes a threat to international peace and security (clearly described in Presidential Statement S/23500, 31 January 1992). Since then, the Council has intervened in a range of internal settings, and has increasingly recognised the linkages between its peace and security agenda and issues more closely linked to development and human security. Its 2016 Sustaining Peace resolution in fact laid out a broad concept of conflict prevention, aimed at addressing root causes of conflict, recovery, reconstruction, and development.[1] The Council's growing willingness to consider non-conventional security risks, and its wide-ranging concept of conflict prevention, provide a promising basis for including climate change and security more directly in the Council's forward agenda.

Today's Council dynamics, however, are characterised by deepening divisions and a narrowing scope of collective activity.[2] In this context, the steps that the UNSC can or should take to address the peace and security implications of climate change need careful examination and justification. While recognising the limits of Council action, this non-paper serves as a backgrounder to examine how climate change and security risks trigger the UNSC's mandate for action, and what action the Council could and should be expected to take in response. It is structured around three questions:

1. What **operative measures** can the UN system take in case climate-related risk is identified as a threat?

2. What **precedents** for situation-appropriate action exist?

3. What **actions are available** within the respective **mandates** of other UN organs and Intergovernmental agencies?

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[1] S/RES/2282 (2016).
[2] See Gowan (2018).

WHAT OPERATIVE MEASURES CAN THE UN SYSTEM TAKE IF CLIMATE-RELATED RISKS TRIGGER THE MANDATE?

Taking the long view, UNSC interventions have arguably been most successful when drawing on a broad range of tools and using the effective mobilisation of the UN Secretary-General (UNSG), as well as by making best use of complementary approaches in other bodies, notably the UN General Assembly (UNGA).[3] The UNSC has had success when it has been able to serve the four functions that aid conflict prevention: political elevation of root causes, institution building and reform, coordination of the UN system, and mainstreaming into security operations.[4] In light of this, there are three ways in which the UNSC could address climate change.

First, the UNSC can address climate change as part of its general response to conflict situations, for example through inclusion in peacekeeping missions. Ongoing hostilities in Lake Chad, Mali, Somalia, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen and Syria are all affected by climate change-related weather events such as droughts, storms and extreme flooding, which contributed to existing political and economic stresses and instability. All of these conflicts are recurring items on the UNSC's agenda. In several of these – Lake Chad, Somalia, West Africa and the Sahel, Mali, and Darfur – the Council has explicitly stressed the need for assessments of climate change and its relationship to security risks.[5] These offer important precedents for a more expansive and systematic approach to climate by the Council.

Second, the UNSC can ensure that conflict prevention efforts, such as mediation, or peace negotiations address the links between climate and security or use climate as an entry point for negotiations and mediation. Recognising climate and environment as an important factor in peace processes, for example in resource sharing agreements, these arrangements can help foster more sustainable peace in the face of climate change.

Third, the UNSC can address the non-conflict security implications of climate change, but this would require the Council to determine a broader threat to international peace. Small Island Developing States (SIDS), whose very existence is threatened by sea-level rise, hurricanes and dwindling natural resources, could in principle generate risks to stability beyond their borders, or could descend into the kind of humanitarian catastrophe that has triggered Council action in the past. However, their remote geographical locations and small populations suggest that the situation in those states could gradually deteriorate without causing much conflict or international instability, making Council action very unlikely.

Of the three options above, the first is the most feasible in the current geopolitical context. Potential roles and opportunities of the UNSC and other UN entities and regional organisations are presented in Annex 1 of this paper.

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[3] Born (2017).
[4] Born (2017).
[5] See for example UNSC resolutions and presidential statements on Lake Chad: S/RES/2349 (2017); Somalia: S/RES/2408 (2018); West Africa and the Sahel: S/PRST/2018/16; Mali: S/RES/2423 (2018); Darfur: S/RES/2429 (2018).

WHAT PRECEDENTS FOR SITUATION-APPROPRIATE ACTION EXIST?

The UNSC debates on climate and security

The UNSC held its first ever debate about the security impacts of climate change just 12 years ago, in 2007. In a session led by the United Kingdom's Presidency of the Council, Papua New Guinea, speaking on behalf of the Pacific SIDS, said that the "*impact of climate change on small islands was no less threatening than the dangers guns and bombs posed to large nations*". The then British Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett referred to climate change as "*exacerbating many threats, including conflict*" and underlined that the UNSC needed to "*build a shared understanding of the relationship between energy, security and climate*".

Other countries expressed doubts over whether the UNSC was the appropriate body to discuss climate change. The Chinese representative said that climate change "could have certain security implications, but, generally speaking, it was, in essence, an issue of sustainable development". Pakistan, speaking for the "Group of 77", a broad coalition of developing countries, also suggested that the UNSC was not the right forum. Tellingly, Russia stated that the "Council should only deal with issues under its mandate".

It took another four years for the UNSC to return to the topic of climate change and security, this time in an open debate initiated by Germany in 2011. For the Pacific SIDS, the security implications of climate change again fell squarely within the Council's mandate. The President of Nauru described climate change as being as serious a threat as nuclear proliferation and terrorism and urged the Council to coordinate the requisite international response. Under the Obama administration, tackling climate change had become a core part of the United States' foreign policy, and the United States was increasingly advocating for the Council to tackle new and non-traditional security threats. But Russia and China still saw climate change as predominately a development issue, outside the purview of the UNSC. In sum, the debate only showed incremental change towards accepting a greater role for the UNSC.

The UNSC did agree to a Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2011/15), but it contained concessions to those opposed to a more engaged UNSC. After protracted negotiations, the UNSC could only agree to the much weaker than hoped for language, that "the *possible* adverse effects of climate change *may*, in the *long run,* aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security" (emphasis added). The statement was silent about potential measures by the UNSC to mitigate the security effects caused by climate change, and its legacy is one of limited follow-up action.

Climate change and conflict in the UNSC's recent work

More recently, several resolutions by the Council on regions and countries where the UNSC is already active have acknowledged the role of climate and ecological change on stability. The first, Resolution 2349 on Lake Chad in 2017, specifically cited climate change and its effects in fostering 'water scarcity, drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity', and linked these factors to the rise of violent extremism.[6] This was followed by a number of similarly worded resolutions on Somalia (Resolution 2408 (2018)), Mali (Resolution 2423 (2018)), and Darfur (Resolution 2429 (2018)). In addition, there has been a presidential statement on West Africa and the Sahel in 2018[7] that referenced the role of climate change, as well as references to the impact of climate change on stability in Africa in Resolution 2457 'Silencing the Guns'. These are the first explicit recognitions by the Council that there is a correlation between the effects of climate change and regional and national stability.

Importantly, these resolutions request adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies from governments and the UN. More than that, they confirm the willingness and competence of the UNSC to deal with the issue and, for the first time, encourage governments to take action to manage the effects of climate change. However, their significance should not be overstated. They are not an indication that the Council will turn its resources towards tackling climate change, nor has the Council determined any specific threat to international peace caused by climate change directly. The resolutions are limited to managing the effects of climate change rather than climate change itself. Furthermore, they are very much framed in terms of the existing business of the UNSC given that both the Sahel region and Somalia are areas with ongoing conflict. For the likes of the SIDS, they will likely have little relevance.[8]

Environmental security precedents

Whilst the politics around climate change may prove problematic, the UNSC is more attuned to, responsive to and active on environmental security than is often realised. This suggests that, while its current approach is fragmented, the elements for a more comprehensive approach to environmental issues do exist. The Council expressed its concern during the 1990 Gulf War when Iraq deliberately set fire to Kuwaiti oil wells and spilled oil into the Persian Gulf. UNSC Resolution 687 (1991) named Iraq as 'liable under international law for any direct loss, damage – including environmental damage and depletion of natural resources – or injury to foreign governments, nationals and corporations as a result of its unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait.'[9]

Additionally, the importance, or at least increasing awareness, of the role of natural resources in conflicts since the 1990s, including in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone, led to the UNSC taking a more activist role in addressing them as part of their interventions. It has used a variety of tools to this end, including sanctions and the appointment of expert panels to monitor sanctions as well as undertake conflict analyses and provide advice on conflict resources. These efforts have had their shortcomings. For example, the monitoring and reporting component on natural resource exploitation have not yet been mainstreamed into peacekeeping missions. However, they do indicate a willingness on the side of the UNSC to address environmental issues. On the conflict prevention side, Resolution 1625 (2005) on conflict prevention in Africa reaffirmed the Council's 'determination to take action against illegal exploitation and trafficking of natural resources and high-value commodities in areas where it contributes to the outbreak, escalation or continuation of armed conflict.'

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[6] S/RES/2349 (2017).
[7] S/PRST/2018/16.
[8] Kravik (2018).
[9] Elliott (2003), p. 53.

The UNSC also expressed concern through Resolution 2195 (2014) that terrorists can benefit from transnational organised crime and from the illicit trade in natural resources such as gold and other precious metals and stones, minerals, wildlife, charcoal and oil.[10] What this demonstrates is that there is a space, and even a need, for a peace and security element as a critical part of sustainable development.[11]

Table 1: UNSC actions on climate or environment-related security issues since 2007.

Date	Subject	Type of Meeting	Main Instigator
April 2007	Energy, Security and Climate	Open Debate	The United Kingdom
June 2007	Natural Resources and Conflict	Open Debate	Belgium
July 2011	Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Impact of Climate Change	Open Debate	Germany
February 2013	Security Dimensions of Climate Change	Arria Formula	The United Kingdom/Pakistan
June 2013	Conflict Prevention and Natural Resources	Open Debate	The United Kingdom
June 2015	Climate Change as a Threat Multiplier	Arria Formula	Spain/Malaysia
July 2015	Peace and Security Challenges Facing Small Island Developing States	Arria Formula	New Zealand
November 2015	Illicit Arms Transfers and Poaching in Africa	Arria Formula	Angola/Lithuania
April 2016	Water, Peace and Security	Arria Formula	Senegal
May 2016	The Sahel: Impact of Climate Change and Desertification	Briefing	Spain/Egypt
November 2016	Water, Peace and Security	Open Debate	Senegal
June 2017	Preventive Diplomacy and Transboundary Waters	Briefing	Bolivia
December 2017	Climate Change	Arria Formula	France, Italy, Japan, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Peru, Germany, the Maldives, and Morocco
December 2017	Addressing Complex Contemporary Challenges to International Peace and Security	Open Debate	Japan
July 2018	Climate Related Security Risks	Open Debate	Sweden
October 2018	The Role of Natural Resources as a Root Cause of Conflict	Briefing	Bolivia
October 2018	Water, Peace and Security	Arria Formula	Bolivia, Ivory Coast, the Netherlands, Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia, and Italy
November 2018	Protection of the Environment during Armed Conflict	Arria Formula	Kuwait
January 2019	The Impacts of Climate-Related Disasters on International Peace and Security	Open	The Dominican Republic
April 2020	Climate and Security Risks: The latest Data	Arria Formula	Belgium, France, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, and Viet Nam

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[10] Conca (2015), pp. 159-166; see for example UNSC resolution on the Democratic Republic of the Congo: S/RES/1856 (2008).
[11] Conca (2015), p. 166.

Other precedents: addressing climate change and other non-conventional security threats outside of conflict

Where there is no impending conflict, the UNSC has so far been reluctant to call on states to enact climate measures. However, the Council's handling of other non-conventional security threats indicates at least a historical precedent for some room to manoeuvre. Below are some examples of particular salience.

In 2011, United States Ambassador Richard Holbrooke somewhat controversially persuaded the UNSC to pass a Resolution 1983, on the impact of **HIV/AIDS on international peace and security.** The Council recognised that HIV was "one of the most formidable challenges" to the development, progress and stability of societies and required an "exceptional and comprehensive" global response. The Council welcomed and encouraged cooperation among Member States to achieve sustainable HIV and AIDS prevention. But after the resolution, there was no plan or action for implementation.

In 2014, in response to a lethal **Ebola** outbreak in Africa, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2177, characterising the epidemic as a threat to international peace and security. The Council highlighted the "stability of the most affected countries concerned [that], unless contained, may lead to further instances of civil unrest, social tensions and a deterioration of the political and security climate…". In a chain of operative paragraphs, the Council called on the international community to provide various kinds of assistance and resources to support the affected countries.

Following the **2010 earthquake in Haiti**, with estimates of death tolls as high as 300,000, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1908. The resolution expanded the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) "to support the immediate recovery, reconstruction and stability efforts undertaken by the Government of Haiti". The ceiling of the military component of MINUSTAH was raised from 6,940 to 8,940 troops, while the limits of the police component was increased from 2,211 to 3,711 personnel. Although MINUSTAH was initially dispatched to restore security in Haiti following widespread violence and civil unrest, the Council's expansion of military and police personnel was in response to the earthquake.

In light of the global **COVID-19 pandemic**, on 1 July 2020 the UNSC adopted Resolution 2532, calling for a global ceasefire. The resolution recognises the potential aggravating impacts of conflict on the pandemic, as well as the possible setbacks for peacebuilding and development in post-conflict contexts linked to the outbreak. The Council "requests the Secretary-General to instruct peace-keeping operations to provide support…to host country authorities in their efforts to contain the pandemic…" and asks to provide peacekeepers with training on containing the disease.

These resolutions represent a significant development in the scope of UNSC action. By addressing HIV, Ebola, a particularly deadly earthquake and, most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic as issues of international peace and security, the Council expanded its traditional area of competence beyond the limited sphere of armed conflict.

WHAT ACTIONS ARE AVAILABLE WITHIN THE RESPECTIVE MANDATES OF OTHER UN ORGANS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES?

Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement adopted in 2015, and the Sustaining Peace Resolution jointly approved by the UNSC and the UNGA in 2016 heralded a new future for the UN peace and security architecture, with each charting growing support for preventive action. Under UN Secretary-General António Guterres' UN reforms, these agreements are expected to filter through all the UN's operating entities and strengthen the UN. The UNSC itself is required to look more holistically at the drivers of conflict, and mobilise the UN system to support preventive action to attain peace and security.

Other UN bodies have essential roles in addressing the risks and vulnerabilities impacted by climate change, which may be complemented by UNSC engagement. For example, the UNGA recognised the possible security implications of climate change in 2009 in Resolution 63/281. The resolution also noted the respective responsibilities of the principal organs of the UN, including that of the UNSC for peace and security, and of the UNGA and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for sustainable development issues, including climate change.

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has long advocated for a more expansive environmental approach to peacebuilding and peacekeeping. Being a relatively small agency with limited institutional power, UNEP has conducted several post-conflict assessments and brought attention to the wider implications of environmental security across the entire life-cycle of conflict. A landmark report in 2009 found that the exploitation of natural resources (from 'high-value' resources such as timber, diamonds, coal and oil to 'scarce resources' such as land and water) and associated environmental stresses can contribute to all stages of the conflict cycle, from the outbreak to the perpetuation and even a relapse into conflict.[12]

Further reports have followed in recent years, often in conjunction with other agencies to look at the interaction of the environment and natural resources with peacekeeping, women

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[12] UNEP (2009).

and transnational crimes[13]. Their recommendations often mirror and complement those that have been proposed to deal with climate-related security risks. They include the enforcement of sanctions regimes, the collection, analysis and sharing of information across sectors, support for the work of expert panels on conflict resources, and assistance for governments to establish or re-establish authority or prevent illegal resource exploitation by ex-combatants.

Beyond UNEP, a number of other processes in the UN system demonstrate the growing awareness and environmental challenges emanating conflict. In May 2018, the UNSG's report on the protection of individuals in armed conflict included a section on the environmental impact of conflict for the first time. This follows on from the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics who, in 2016, brought attention to the consequences of the toxic remnants of war for children.[14]

The UN Environmental Assembly, in its fourth meeting in 2019, did not adopt a resolution on the environment and conflict but it did adopt language on conflict debris, minerals and farmer-herder conflicts. On top of that, states agreed to improve their data collection capacity on environmental risks from conflicts, and environment-related security risks appeared in several resolutions.[15] The head of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Maurer, has also drawn attention to the relevance of the environment, stating that "the environmental consequences of conflict are often overlooked. International humanitarian law protects the natural environment as a civilian object. This includes vital natural resources which, if damaged can have implications not only for the survival of civilian populations but also for environmental risks."[16]

In addition, the International Law Commission (ILC) too has provisionally adopted the draft principles on "Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflicts which is applicable to states, occupying powers and peace operations.[17]

UN University, an independent UN entity established via a UNGA resolution, has also directly taken on the issue of climate-security. Recent reports by UN University's Centre for Policy Research, for example, have explored the links between climate change and insecurity in country-specific settings.[18]

The new Climate Security Mechanism, a joint initiative on climate and security by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and UNEP, is an effort to develop the capacity necessary to respond to the UNSC's requests to include analysis on how climate-related risks affect conflict, and to better integrate response mechanisms. Other initiatives include the establishment of a Group of Friends on climate and security.

For a full elaboration of potential actions in line with institutional mandates of key institutions, see Annex 1 below.

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[13] Defined as 'illegal activities harming the environment and aimed at benefitting individuals or groups or companies from the exploitation of, damage to, trade or theft of natural resources, including serious crimes and transnational organised crime.'
[14] A/HRC/33/41 (2016); Zwijnenburg (2019).
[15] Weir (2019).
[16] Zwijnenburg (2019).
[17] A/CN.4/L.937 (2019).
[18] Day and Caus (2020).

CONCLUSION

The UN's approach to climate change to date has largely focused on mitigating temperature rises and helping Member States adapt to the impacts of environmental changes on their development trajectories. However, a growing recognition of the security impacts of climate change should be reflected in greater attention and action by the peace and security pillars of the UN, most importantly the UNSC.

While current polarised dynamics within the Council point to a limited scope for expansive action, this should not foreclose creative thinking on how it could engage on climate-security. The UN's broad concept of sustaining peace – explicitly endorsed by the Council – may offer an opportunity to provoke the UN to more systematically consider how climate change is affecting security risks globally. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include a range of climate goals and a call addressing the ways in which inequality may affect instability, also provide an opening for the climate-security agenda.

In fact, the trend lines point to a gradual but steady recognition by the Council that climate change has implications for international peace and security, calling on governments to take active measure to address their effects. This helpfully keeps climate change on the Council's agenda and specifically ties it to the body's conflict prevention role.

However, for those most immediately threatened by climate change, such as SIDS, the gradual move of the Council towards a climate-security lens is far from sufficient, and far too slow. They see their needs as existential, requiring more immediate and large-scale action. Here, the UN's past responses in the face of other catastrophic risks – Ebola outbreaks, HIV epidemics, earthquakes – indicate that the Council could take on settings that are not strictly in a conflict-prevention or management phase, especially if the risks to those countries become even more acute.

Past experience also demonstrates that well-designed, careful framing of climate-related issues can build towards consensus in the Council, pushing it to broader considerations than ever before. While we can expect opposition to more expansive coverage of climate change by the Council, this options paper provides several paths for gradually overcoming reluctance and intransigence, finding innovative ways to keep climate-security on the Council's agenda.

Ultimately, climate change poses an existential question for the Council itself: how can it exercise its primary responsibility for international security without addressing the ways in which climate change is driving global risks?

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ANNEX 1: POTENTIAL ROLES, OPPORTUNITIES AND PRECEDENTS FOR UN ENTITIES AND RELATED BODIES

UN-related body	Role/Functions/Mandate	Opportunities	Precedents	Challenges
African Union (AU)	- Peace and Security Council is the decision-making organ of AU on conflict prevention, management and resolution, also for state internal conflicts.	- AU Reform process can be an opportunity to integrate climate and security into policy framework, i.e. by appointing a Special Envoy on climate-security.	- AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) highlighted climate change and its effects on security as significant issues for its member states. - PSC requested to appoint an AU Special Envoy for climate change and security.	- AU lacks tangible policy framework that lays out specific actions on how to respond to climate-security. - Lack of resources. - Lack of political will of member states. - High dependence on external funding.
United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)	- Supports UNSG and UN political missions and peace initiatives. - Provides staff support to UNSC; Advisory role to UNSC. - Resulted from merger of Department of Political Affairs and UN Peacebuilding Support Office (see also below).	- Through its advisory role to peace missions, it could help bring in climate-security considerations into political conflict settlement. - Through its advisory role to UNSC, it could play an important role in tabling climate-security in UNSC.	- Part of Climate Security Mechanism. - Workshop on climate-security in Pacific Islands.	
United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)	- Principal body for economic, social and environmental issues, and for SDG implementation. - UNGA elects members (usually four of the five permanent members of UNSC who contribute most to ECOSOC budget). - Makes recommendations to UNGA, Member States and specialised agencies. - Prepares draft conventions for submission to the UNGA. - 54 members decide by simple majority vote.	- Largest budget of any UN subsidiary body. - Reforms over the last decade, particularly UNGA resolution 68/1, have strengthened ECOSOC's role. - Potential for preventive diplomacy beyond UNSC as four of five permanent members of UNSC are represented, and bottom-up consultations with variety of stakeholders could take place.	- Joint ECOSOC/PBC meeting on climate and conflict in the Sahel.	- Dependence on four of the five permanent members of UNSC which contribute most of ECOSOC's budget. - Largest and most complex subsidiary body due to wide array of consultative stakeholders and function as umbrella organisation. - So far no security dimension in the mandate.
Economic Community of West African States[19] (ECOWAS)	- 15-member regional group with a mandate of promoting economic integration in all fields of activity of the constituting countries.	- Transhumance violence are of particular interest to ECOWAS. - Institutional reforms are strengthening ECOWAS.	- ECOWAS recognises the connection between climate change and conflict, but focused in the past on the role of natural resources in conflicts.	- Lack of linking of natural resources and environmental change to climate change.

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[19] Krampe et al. (2018).

	- Peace and security are one of the key pillars of ECOWAS, including mutual support and defence agreements.	- More capacity for efficient regional response with regard to natural disasters and terrorism. - Early warning system allows ECOWAS to analyse human security issues and anticipate political crises, food shortages, health problems and disasters.		- Capability constraints and donor dependency. - Regional hegemon(s) might undermine capacities to act on climate-security. - Lack of cross-sectoral coordination within organisation.
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat	- UN entity tasked with supporting the global response to climate change. - Conference of the Parties (COP) to the three climate change agreements is the highest decision-making body and meets annually. - Global Environmental Facility (GEF) is one of the financial mechanisms to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition to a market economy in implementing the Convention. - Green Climate Fund (GCF) acts as a stand-alone multilateral financing entity to serve the Convention; aims to deliver equal amounts of funding to mitigation and adaptation.	- Potential for preventive diplomacy or early warning if countries severely/critically underperform on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). - Potential to add mechanisms on climate and human security. - Breaking of power imbalances within the UN system: developing countries are subject to less stringent reporting and other requirements than developed countries under the Convention, and the performance of developing country parties is expressly conditioned on the adequate provision of financial support and technology transfer from developed country parties. - Ensure GCF and GEF-funded projects are implemented in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (up to now only a minority of adaptation funding is spent in these contexts), and are conflict-sensitive.	- Official and side events at the COP on climate change and security.	- No binding decision-making power; no enforcement. - No security dimension in the mandate and already very complex negotiations.
United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)	- Main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. - Can discuss any questions relating to international peace and security and, except where a dispute or situation is currently being discussed by the UNSC, make recommendations on it. - May also take action in cases of a threat to peace, breach of peace or act of aggression, when the UNSC has failed to act owing to the negative vote of a permanent member. - Initiate studies and make recommendations to promote relevant topics.	- Reform proposals to strengthen role of UNGA and its president. - UNGA resolution. - "Uniting for Peace Resolution (UNGA Res 377A)": in case of deadlock by UNSC, UNGA would have responsibility to act on behalf of the UN.	- UNGA recognised the possible security implications of climate change in 2009 in Resolution 63/281.	- Reliance on consensus. - Lacks follow-up of resolution implementation. - No decisions on topics that UNSC is currently discussing. - Reflects/echoes power imbalance between stronger and weaker states in UNSC and UN system.
Intergovernmental Authority on	- One of its priority areas is peace and security, from early warning to post-conflict reconstruction.	- Development and harmonisation of regional sector policies and strategies.	- References to climate-related security risks in its policy documents.	- Lack of capacity for implementation.

Development[20] (IGAD)	- Regional Peace and Security Strategy are consistent and in alignment with the AU Peace and Security programme, guided by the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).	- Civil society and non-state actors will be given a bigger role to play. - Improve integration of the work of the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) and IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) into the organisation.	- IGAD work on pastoralist conflicts and early warning.	- Limited commitment of member states. - High reliance on donor funding. - Constrained by state sovereignty and the norm of non-intervention.
International Law Commission (ILC)	- ILC was established to "initiate studies and make recommendations for the purpose of encouraging the progressive development of international law and its codification". - Subsidiary organ of UNGA.		- The ILC has provisionally adopted the draft principles on the "protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts", which is applicable to states, occupying powers and peace operations.	
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	- Provides regular scientific assessments on climate change, and on adaptation and mitigation options. - Key global body providing governments and international climate change negotiations with most recent climate data, but does not conduct its own research.	- Potential to peer-review related studies to give credibility to "hot topics" without following the long process. - Accepted scientific consensus on climate science. - Reports are neutral, policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive.	- Leading and framing the discussion away from traditional security frameworks towards human security-based framework, e.g. fifth IPCC report (2014) found that 'human security will be progressively threatened as the climate changes'.	- No possibility to pick-up urgent topics due to lengthy and complex review process. - Only compiles state of the art peer-reviewed literature. - Communication and understanding between scientific research, policy makers and public are limited.
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	- Office of the UN Secretariat to bring together humanitarian actors; Implementation in the field through country and regional offices. - In its strategic plan, OCHA recognises climate change as a risk multiplier. OCHA's Strategic Objectives include: - Improved coordination between humanitarian and development actors. - More credible, comprehensive and evidence-based situational analysis. - An effective, innovative humanitarian financing system that meets the needs of crisis-affected people.	OCHA's strategic objectives provide an opportunity to: - Address the links between climate and security increasingly in their situation analysis. - Ensure actions are coordinated with development/ climate/ environment/ adaptation actors and do at least no harm to the environment, and are conflict-sensitive. - If finance mechanisms would request stronger integration of climate and security, this could be an entry point to address climate-related risks in humanitarian actions.	- Stresses importance of climate-conflict nexus for OCHA/ humanitarian actors but rarely operationalised, and if so with a focus on (depoliticised) disaster risk reduction and technical approaches. - OCHA programme on climate change impacts on pastoralism in Central and East Africa.	- Mandate of UN (impartiality, neutrality, sovereignty) and humanitarian principles hinder UN agencies/ humanitarian actors to address underlying governance issues in conflict-affected regions.
United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)	- Established to ensure the early availability of resources for launching critical peacebuilding activities before, during and after conflicts.	- Fund more projects addressing climate and security. - Earmarked funding for climate and conflict, particularly in affected regions, could ensure	- Projects on climate-security in the Sahel and water scarcity in Yemen.	- PBF funding responds to country-specific needs but has priority and focus areas, and is not earmarked for thematic areas.

[20] Krampe et al. (2018).

	- Managed by UNSG on behalf of Member States.	climate-security is addressed in peacebuilding, but this is currently not in line with procedures of PBF. - Include climate change in the next Strategic Plan for 2020-2024.		- Some members are reluctant to recognise climate as a security threat and therefore push back.
United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)	- Assists and supports the PBC with strategic advice and policy guidance. - Manages the PBF on behalf of the UNSG. - Supports the UNSG in coordinating UN agencies in peacebuilding efforts.	- Strengthening the capacity of PBSO on climate-security.		
United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)	- UN intergovernmental advisory body of UNGA and UNSC. - Unique role in advancing intergovernmental coherence through its cross-pillar mandate and membership. - The concerned country brings case to PBC. - PBC collects available resources and funds to support recovery projects and to draft long-term strategies for reconstruction, institution-building and sustainable development.	- "Bridge" function of PBC between UNGA, UNSC and ECOSOC might provide opportunity to reach out to and address climate and security in these organisations. - Through advisory role of PBC to UNSC, PBC might be able to bring focus of UNSC to climate-security. - Review of peacebuilding architecture in 2020 provides opportunity to include climate into review process.	- Joint ECOSOC/ PBC meeting on climate and conflict in the Sahel.	
United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG)	- Chief administrative officer. - Brings to the attention of the UNSC any matter which in her/ his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. - Report on the work of UN activities and priorities.	- Appointment of Special Representative on Climate and Security to gather information and coordinate response with vulnerable countries. - Key to mainstream the issue into the UN system. - UNSG reports to UNGA and UNSC. - UNSG travels to regions and countries. - Current UNSG has made crisis prevention and climate change two of his priorities. - Improve UNSGs reporting function on "contextual information" about climate-conflict links.	- The UNSG's report on "Climate Change and its Possible Security Implications" (A/64/350).	- Awareness-raising and creation of alliances among Member States and UNSC to support action.
United Nations Security Council (UNSC)	- Primary role to maintain international peace and security. - Dispatches political missions, peacekeeping forces and peacebuilding missions. - Appoints special envoys. - Undertakes investigation, mediation and sanctions.	- Includes China and the United States as two of the most important players in climate change responses. - Recent resolutions and Arria-formula debates increase visibility of climate change in conflicts. - Climate Security Mechanism provides integrated risk assessments to the UNSC,	- Past mandates including a reference to climate change: resolution 2349 (2017) on Lake Chad; 2408 (2018) on Somalia; 2423 (2018) on Mali; 2429 (2018) on Darfur. - Past mandates including a reference to natural resources, for example Liberia and Congo.	- Veto powers and their political will to show responsibility for international community (core mandate and beyond). - Lack of representation of affected countries. - Lack of tools, knowledge, expertise and legitimacy.

	- Mobilises collective military action.
	- Mandated on preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution, response to large-scale crises and post-conflict reconstruction.
	- Resolution 1674, 1706: responsibility to protect.
	- Resolution 2282: sustaining peace agenda.
		- Independent Expert Working Group on Climate-related Security Risks, and Group of Friends.
		- Success of these three initiatives mentioned above will rely on their ability to provide timely, accurate information to UNSC and influence its activities.
		- Climate change in ongoing peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions are increasingly recognised.
		- Regularly adjusted its tools in the past to deal with new threats to peace and security – current suggestions are[21]:
		   o to deal with the extinction of states like the Maldives and Tuvalu and related migration flows.
		   o to sanction non-compliance to NDC commitments.
		   o to establish a climate court.
		   o to create an international forum on prevention to consider addressing emerging threats to peace and security, while drawing from the pool of regional prevention and mediation efforts (peacekeeping review).
		   o to encourage medium-term (regional) initiatives supported by affected Member States.
			- Increasing activity and momentum in ongoing peacekeeping and peacebuilding mandates.
			- Actions on climate- and environment-related security threats and non-conventional security threats (see chapter 2).
				- Weak monitoring and follow-through, especially Chapter VI.
				- Lack of formal debates post-2015 on climate and security.
				- Lack of preventive diplomacy.
				- Limited perception of peacebuilding by military means, and focused on reaction to crises outbreak.
				- Concerned about 'securitisation' of climate change.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	- Key operational platform for UN agencies at country level.
	- Important implementation partner for funds.
	- Goals of UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 are to:
	   o Eradicate poverty.
	   o Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development, and apply multiplier effects across SDGs.
	   o Build resilience to crises and shocks.
		- UNDP aims to develop integrated responses to enhance national prevention and recovery capacities for resilient societies, through nationally led needs assessments, stabilisation, peacebuilding and recovery efforts. This opens scope for greater collaboration across the conflict prevention, governance, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation areas of work within UNDP.
		- Strategic plan recognises that climate-related events can exacerbate conflict at the local level.
		- Key areas of collaboration:
			- UNDP is part of the Climate Security Mechanism.
			- UNDP stresses importance of climate risks for their work in conflict-affected regions, but on an operational level, actions are often focusing on (depoliticised) disaster risk reduction and technical solutions.
				- UN Mandate and principles of impartiality, state sovereignty and neutrality often prevent UN agencies/ programmes from addressing underlying governance issues and/ or policies for implementation in conflict-affected countries.

[21] Scott and Ku (2018).

o   Addressing climate change.
o   Contributing to peacebuilding and sustaining peace in conflict and post-conflict situations.
- Focus on stronger integration of climate and conflict into resilience building at the national level, and support national governments in this.
- Include climate fragility assessments as one tool for UNDP to achieve its strategic goals.
- UNDP measures, to be financed through climate funds, could be implemented with a stronger focus on climate and security/peacebuilding.

United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)	- Highest-level decision-making body on the environment at global level. - Meets biennially to set priorities for global environmental policies and develop international environmental law. Through its resolutions and calls to action, the Assembly provides leadership and catalyses intergovernmental action on the environment.	- UNEA could play a unique and critical role in raising awareness, in norm development, and in forcing states to confront, debate and develop positions on the environmental dimensions of conflicts. - Norway holds UNEA-5 presidency in 2021. This could provide opportunity to include environmental security into outcome document.	- UNEA in its fourth meeting in 2019, did not adopt a resolution on environment and conflict on the basis that the term "environmental security" was not defined by the UN; it did however adopt language on conflict debris, minerals and farmer-herder conflicts. States agreed to improve their data collection capacity on environmental risks from conflicts; environment-related security risks appeared in several resolutions.	- Conflict as to whether UNEA is just a governing council for UNEP, or an agenda-setting global "parliament for the environment": this has implications for efforts to address the environmental dimensions of conflicts. - A UNEA that "primarily looks inwards", focusing only on UNEP's programme of work, seems unlikely to drive the necessary change.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	- Strong advocate for more expansive environmental approach to peacebuilding and peacekeeping.	- Post-conflict and disaster management branch.
		- UNEP recommendations:
		  o Enforcement of sanctions regimes, collection, analysis and sharing of information across sectors, support for the work of expert panels on conflict resources, and assistance for governments to establish or re-establish authority or prevent illegal resource exploitation by ex-combatants.
		  o Promote the participation of women in decision-making structures and governance related to natural resource management in peacebuilding.
			- UNEP climate-security project.
			- Past projects on environmental peacebuilding and natural resources, for example in Sudan.
			- Conducted several post-conflict assessments and brought attention to the wider implications of environmental security across the entire life-cycle of conflict.
				- Relatively small agency with limited institutional power and on the ground implementation capacity.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)			

- Primarily mandated to provide international protection and humanitarian assistance, and to seek permanent solutions for refugees, stateless people and returnees.
- Recognises that climate impacts can drive migration. However, the 1951 Refugee Convention is limited to refugees fleeing persecution, and does not include climate change and environmental degradation.
	- Support development of tools to better address climate-security and climate-displacement in UNHCR's field operations.
	- Support UNHCR to develop international and regional norms, national legislation, and policy guidance.
	- Support UNHCR's work on policy coherence and mainstreaming of climate-security and climate-displacement.
	- Support research on the links between climate, conflict and displacement.
		- Four areas of work on disaster displacement:
		  o Field operations.
		  o Legal advice, guidance and normative development.
		  o Policy coherence.
		  o Research and knowledge production.
		- Initiated programmes to improve sustainable environmental management for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities.
			- Concerns regarding UNHCR's work in the context of climate change and displacement include:
			  o The 'sovereignty issue', and the apprehension that the UN and its partner organisations will interfere in the domestic affairs.
			  o The 'core mandate issue', that activities related to disaster displacement will detract from UNHCR's first responsibility to provide international protection for refugees forcibly displaced across borders.
			  o The related 'resources issue', which fears that funding will either not be forthcoming, or that it will be diverted from core activities.