



EUROPEAN
INSTITUTE
OF PEACE



MAKING PEACE WITH THE CLIMATE

Conflict resolution in a
climate-changing world



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The European Institute of Peace is a Brussels-based independent conflict resolution organisation that designs and delivers sustainable peace processes and agreements. It was founded in 2014 by Foreign Ministers of European states who provide strategic, political and technical support to the Institute.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European Institute of Peace (EIP) has undertaken a series of structured interviews with more than a dozen leading conflict resolution professionals to draw out lessons on climate change and conflict. The findings provide ideas on how mediators might address climate change in their conflict resolution efforts.

KEY FINDINGS

- Climate change should **matter to conflict resolution practitioners because it matters to conflict**. Climate change *affects underlying drivers of violent conflict*, reduces the availability of scarce resources such as fresh water and fertile land, forces people from their homes, and complicates differences over political issues. Crucially, climate change *exacerbates underlying inequalities* in societies, increasing the burden on those who are already marginalised and contributing to a sense of injustice among those who are less fortunate.
- Climate change poses **challenges and opportunities for peacemaking**. Climate change may ‘shrink the pie’ with which to build agreements. But creative practitioners may also be able to shift the narrative by using climate change action as a confidence-building measure and *finding new avenues for dialogue* to unblock seemingly intractable disputes. Even though climate change presents new problems at an alarmingly different scale, *we are not starting from scratch*: many conflict resolution practitioners have encountered similar challenges in their work on environmental and natural resource disputes.
- Conflict resolution practitioners – be they envoys, heads of missions, mediators, NGO representatives or local peacebuilders – will **need to help parties address the security impacts of climate change** by laying the foundation for sustainable peace in peace agreements, and in the finance mechanisms and political structures needed to implement those agreements. Conflict resolution practitioners do not need to be climate change experts themselves but they do need to ensure that **technical and scientific knowledge** is *appropriate to the context and introduced in a timely manner*. Practitioners need advice on how climate expertise can be leveraged in specific contexts, particularly how agreements can be supported by climate investments that allow former belligerents to work together.
- Climate change should be addressed in the **wider peace process and reconstruction phase**. It is the responsibility of the practitioners in charge of peace processes to ensure that, when climate change issues are relevant, they are not ignored.

NEXT STEPS

1. **Ensure that climate change is mainstreamed in conflict analysis and peace process design:** Conflict resolution practitioners should ensure that climate change considerations are taken into account in the scoping of conflict prevention, as well as in resolution and peacebuilding tasks. This will require more effective ways to bridge silos and share lessons across communities of practice.
2. **Ensure that inclusion and justice are at the centre of climate security analyses and response:** To achieve credible peace processes and sustainable agreements, conflict resolution practitioners should ensure a 'bottom up' and genuinely inclusive approach to address the fragility posed by climate change.
3. **Create and strengthen mechanisms that support practitioners in the field:** Conflict resolution practitioners in charge of peace processes need to ensure they have sufficient and timely technical support to tackle the relevant climate change challenges.
4. **Sustain political attention on the security challenges posed by climate change:** Addressing climate change in conflict settings is an inherently political task. If conflict resolution is to account for climate change, political leaders need to provide sustained political and financial support. There is a need now to kick off a conversation with public and private investors to identify ways to ensure such support.



1. BACKGROUND

Between May and June 2020, the European Institute of Peace conducted a series of structured interviews with more than a dozen senior envoys, peace process facilitators and conflict resolution experts from the EU, UN, governments, and civil society (see Annex 1). The interviews explored how and why climate insecurity matters to conflict and conflict resolution practitioners, what lessons have emerged from their experience and what should be prioritised in the future. In July, the Institute hosted a virtual meeting, attended by more than 60 practitioners and experts, to discuss these issues.

These discussions broached many important questions: When should you push to include climate and environmental issues in peace processes? How can the lived experience of people suffering from climate change and environmental degradation be made relevant to peace processes? What knowledge and skills do practitioners and peace process facilitators need in order to play an optimal role in this area? What should organisations such as the EU, UN and other regional bodies be doing to support field practitioners in this area?

This paper is the result of those interviews and that meeting. It presents a cross-section of experience, lessons learned and expectations about what the future holds for practitioners in trying to bring peace in a climate-changed world. It is illustrated, wherever possible, by direct quotes from the practitioners and experts who are addressing these issues in their work. The paper begins by identifying some of the ways in which climate change is altering the context in which conflict resolution practitioners are operating. It then presents a series of lessons that have been learned so far on the links between climate change, peace process facilitation, consensus-building, and mediation. It closes with some next steps for practitioners, the wider conflict resolution community and policymakers on how to more effectively address conflicts exacerbated by climate change.

It is important to state at the outset that those interviewed by no means represent the full diversity of conflict experts, nor does the analysis pretend to be comprehensive. However, we trust it may provide the beginnings of an experience-derived and evidence-based analysis of how climate change impacts can be understood and addressed by those endeavouring to enable effective and lasting conflict resolution.

This paper was written by Michael Keating, Julie Raasteen and Oli Brown. Michael Keating, in addition to authoring parts of the paper, was interviewed as one of the senior mediators in his capacity as the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Somalia.

2. WHY CLIMATE CHANGE MATTERS TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict resolution practitioners operate in an evolving context. Climate change is redrawing the map of the world: shifting rainfall, supercharging storms, and altering the extent of deserts and seas. It is one of several global megatrends (along with population growth, technological change, ecological collapse, and rapid urbanisation) that are shaping and reshaping relations between and within countries and communities.

The International Committee of the Red Cross says that out of the 20 countries most vulnerable to climate change, the majority are at war.¹ Climate change is exacerbating food and water insecurity, undermining livelihoods, and increasing the frequency and intensity of natural disasters. Such shocks are wreaking havoc on conflict-affected communities that are already struggling to cope and adapt. For example, in the Horn of Africa, drought is already causing water scarcity; erratic heavy rainfall is leading to floods that severely damage land and livestock. The 2018-2019 drought imperilled the food and water supplies of 15 million people.² The implications are huge in terms of livelihoods, humanitarian need, economic losses and aid budgets.

“There are so many people living and responding to climate change on the ground. What they experience is an overwhelming sense of insecurity.”

Tessa Terpstra - MENA Regional Envoy for Water and Energy Security, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Climate change is widely expected to impact the nature of violent conflict.³ Climate change may affect the likelihood of violence, for instance by increasing the likelihood of transboundary or community tensions over diminishing water supplies. Climate change may also affect the location of conflict, as the places that are facing climate change’s most dramatic impacts become increasingly fragile. Climate change will also affect the legacies of conflict, which may be even more acute in places that are highly vulnerable to climate change.

“Climate change is like an X-ray, exposing underlying dynamics in economies and societies, those that are well enough off to adapt and those that find themselves in a downwards spiral. Every situation is different, but too often it is the powerful not the poor, the men and not the women, and the educated rather than the illiterate who cope and in some cases are even able to take advantage of the situation.”

Michael Keating - Executive Director, EIP; former SRSO Somalia

In areas that are divided by tension and that lack resources and institutions to resolve conflicts peacefully, these forces can foster the types of violent conflict that may require the mediator’s attention. Limited rainfall, droughts, and lack of access to water often drive local conflict and inter- and intra-clan clashes, common across

¹ ICRC (2020) *When rain turns to dust*.

² Adelphi (2019) *Climate-Fragility Risk Factsheet - Ethiopia*, Climate Security Expert Network.

³ For example, see Rüttinger et al. (2015) *A New Climate For Peace: Taking action on climate and fragility risks*, adelphi, International Alert, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, European Union Institute for Security Studies.

the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. Disputes and negotiations over transboundary water resources in Central Asia are likely to be influenced by climate change in the coming years. In the same way, concerns over the impact of climate change on future flows of the Nile are driving some of the tensions surrounding the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). Likewise, water and energy insecurity are likely to cause increasing fragility in the Middle East. Armed groups are taking advantage of the fact that climate change is diminishing livelihoods and driving people from their homes. For example, in Somalia, the increasing number of droughts, floods and famines allows Al-Shabaab to act as a service provider; in recruitment efforts, the group targets internally displaced people as well as those whose livelihood options are diminishing.⁴

THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION TASK

Mediators will increasingly find themselves tasked with resolving conflicts in which climate change has contributed to the outbreak and/or continuation of violence. Likewise, they will have to determine how conflict resolution can address climate change in both conflict and peace agreements.

“Why would you want to address climate change and the environment in a peace agreement? Because the key concept of a peace agreement is the idea of non-repetition of the conflict. So you want to change the conditions so the conflict will not continue.”

Sergio Jaramillo Caro - Senior Adviser, EIP; former High Commissioner of Peace, Colombia

There is considerable experience to draw on: mediators have often had to address conflicts over natural resources. However, what is new is the speed and scale of the changes in some areas and a sense of uncertainty over the future availability of critical resources.

“Climate change affects all aspects of our work; recognising this reality is critical to ensure our efforts at conflict prevention and sustaining peace remain effective. There is an increasing appreciation for the complexity of climate risks, but we must also be ready to seize opportunities for peacemaking that may emerge.”

Teresa Whitfield - Director, Policy and Mediation Division, UN DPPA

Climate change is a scientific reality; human responses to it are highly political. Climate change creates winners and losers, exacerbates inequalities, and shifts power balances at local and national levels. Whether climate change triggers violence depends on how the societal pressures it brings about manifest themselves, and whether existing ‘infrastructures for peace’ are robust enough to prevent a recourse to violence. Such a politicised, charged and delicate context is exactly where an effective mediator is best suited to operate.

⁴ SIPRI (2019), Climate-related Security Risks and Peacebuilding in Somalia, No. 53 <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2019/climate-change-challenges-future-success-peacebuilding-shows-new-sipri-study-somalia>.

3. LESSONS LEARNED

The mediators and conflict resolution experts consulted in this study have many decades of collective experience of dealing with issues of power sharing, trust building and consensus building, often in the context of environmental and natural resource disputes. The next section presents four lessons derived from this experience:

LESSON 1: CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONFLICT ARE LINKED—BUT PATHWAYS AND RESPONSES ARE HARD TO PIN DOWN

Climate and environmental factors are often interwoven with or hidden by other factors such as poor governance, inequality, economic pressures, and a severe lack of trust and inclusion. For example, if increased food prices or decreased employment levels lead to tensions, it may not be immediately evident that the tensions trace back to droughts or floods caused by climate change. One important task, then, is to understand the pathways through which climate change affects wider environmental issues, natural resource challenges and conflict dynamics.

Another overarching challenge is to figure out how best to respond. For example, even though there is evidence that the 2007-2010 drought in Syria contributed, in an indirect way, to the conflict that broke out in 2011,⁵ it was (and still is) not evident how this information can or should be used for peacemaking. Conflict resolution practitioners need to move from the abstract to the concrete to determine how addressing climate change may improve the chances for lasting peace; how solving conflict may actively contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation; and how peace processes may tackle the reality that climate change is altering the realities around conflict, and consequently, conflict resolution.

“Climate change and conflict is a seductive idea, but we need to be more precise about it to avoid staying at a level of abstraction where it’s difficult to see what practical consequences can be drawn from it, and what practical actions might be taken.”

Sergio Jaramillo Caro - Senior Adviser, EIP; fm. High Commissioner of Peace, Colombia

Designing appropriate responses requires conflict analysis that account for climate change challenges in a structured manner. Partly, that task consists of disaggregating the pathways in context-specific conflict analysis

⁵ Kelley, C.P., Mohtadi, S., Cane, M.A., Seager, R. and Kushnir, Y. (2015) Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought, in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1421533112>.

through which climate change interlinks with the conflict. An initial conflict typology based on the experience of the consulted mediators may look like this:

- *Conflicts over natural resources that are exacerbated by climate change:* Disputes that centre on the ownership and use of a resource (such as water, land, and minerals) that climate change is making scarcer or otherwise less accessible.
- *Climate change as a factor that complicates conflicts that appear unrelated to environmental or climate-related issues:* Disputes over other issues, such as governance arrangements, control of security forces, legal systems, and responses to violent extremism, in which climate change is altering the surroundings and the underlying factors in society.
- *Geopolitical conflicts over the search for new resources:* Disputes over the sudden appearance of an abundance of resources, an occurrence which is expected to increase in some parts of the world due to climate change. Like the resource scarcity situations, such conflicts may centre on the ownership and use of those resources.
- *Impact of climate change adaptation and mitigation in conflict:* Disputes over how to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and the consequences of new investments and projects in conflict-affected contexts and/or in the potential to create new conflicts.
- *Recruitment of armed groups:* Climate change can facilitate armed groups' recruitment efforts by diminishing livelihoods and leaving people without alternative options, or by making membership in the armed group the most profitable option.

Many studies have analysed how climate change and wider environmental issues play out in conflict contexts; the challenge now is for practitioners to access relevant, usable expertise while they are already “incredibly busy and firefighting”.⁶ A central task, therefore, is to make such expertise available to mediators, envoys and heads of missions so they are able to use it with the right actors at the right point in a peace process. A key lesson is that environmental and climate change analysis should be an integral part of peacekeeping and peacebuilding mandates, missions, and teams. This is just beginning to be the case: the very first climate security adviser in a UN mission took up his role in June 2020 with UNSOM in Somalia.

Another lesson about how to respond in a timely and adequate manner is to have functional early warning information that effectively feeds into local first responses, policymaking, and conflict resolution on the ground.

“Very often the issues combine—drought, grazing lands, cyclones—and what we need to do is get ahead of the shocks by anticipating them and creating resilience.”

Nancy Lindborg - President, Packard Foundation; former President, USIP

⁶ Michael Keating, Executive Director, EIP; former SRSG, Somalia.



There has been increasing focus on incorporating preventative data about where climate hotspots (i.e. places where climate or environmental changes could create or exacerbate the conditions for conflict) may arise in conflict resolution processes. But these mechanisms have not adequately informed mediation and conflict resolution on the ground. Some point to an inadequate capacity and accuracy of the predictive modelling, and others to the need for a better connection between the warning tools and the political will to address climate insecurity in conflict resolution processes.

LESSON 2: CLIMATE CHANGE CREATES CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEACEMAKING

Climate change creates challenges for peacemaking. A first lesson is that actors central to peace processes often perceive the problems as lying elsewhere. Some are at the international level—resistance to the climate security agenda, for example, and concerns that despite commitment to the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change will harden geopolitical fault lines including between richer countries and the global south. Politicians, power brokers and even empowered envoys can be dismissive of the relevance of climate and environment to the resolution of hardcore political and power-sharing issues.

“Mediators need to have the confidence to raise these issues with actors who don’t normally talk about them.”

Michael Keating, Executive Director, EIP; former SRSG, Somalia

Another important lesson is that when climate pressures diminish the availability of resources, it can be harder to imagine and achieve consensus. Climate change decreases the size of the 'pie' or generally makes the situation tenser. As one mediator put it: "Consensus becomes more difficult with severe climate pressure in the picture, because solutions are complex, maybe harder to see and there is less to share."⁷ This observation applies to both mediators and protagonists. For example, it can lead parties to a conflict to expect that resources will keep shrinking or degrading as a result of climate change. The vision of a safe, shared future may seem further away. Environmental change often alters natural landscape while a peace process is taking place, which changes the premise for peacemaking efforts:

"Mediating a border demarcation is extremely tricky in general; it is even more complicated because of environmental factors. Borders are often delineated by rivers. But over the years and decades, rivers keep moving due to climate changes."

Said Djinnit - Special Adviser, ACCORD and EIP; former SRSB Great Lakes Region

Therefore, it often requires constant surveillance of the natural environment to mediate a conflict over or affected by the environment. Environmental circumstances have always presented negotiations with rapid change, what is new is the increasing unpredictability introduced by climate change.

Climate change may also provide opportunities for peacemaking. For example, the mediator may be able to shift the narrative by emphasising the interdependence between the parties, and the need for shared solutions.

"That's both the challenge and the potential – the issues are becoming more visible and acute and are rising on the national agenda. This means there can be a potential for joint problem framing. For example, when your coast disappears, it's not just the communities who are suffering. The state is actually losing land!"

Michele Ferenz - Senior Mediator, Consensus Building Institute (CBI)

Creative mediators may be able to harness the shared challenges to human security posed by climate change to encourage closer cooperation among groups. With technical solutions and expanding knowledge, mediators and their teams might be able to use that energy to turn the climate threat into tangible peace dividends for people and economies, and develop solutions that create new communities of interest that transcend existing fault lines.

"When conflict resolution and mediation professionals arrive, they bring their imagination and creativity to communities that are otherwise stuck in their lived experiences, relations and contexts. If conflict

⁷ Interview with a senior mediation adviser.

resolution and mediation professionals do not have the knowledge to imagine climate issues, they will have a difficult time helping communities envisage solutions to that end.”

Nicholas Haysom - USG and Special Adviser on Sudan

Another lesson is that to effectively address the fragility posed by climate change and wider environmental issues, processes must be genuinely *inclusive, account for underlying socio-economic inequalities and address gender issues.*

“Let us use climate as a means to talk about human rights, a better life and better daily circumstances.”

Tessa Terpstra - MENA Regional Envoy for Water and Energy Security, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Climate and environmental issues expose underlying societal problems such as inequality, poor governance and a lack of inclusion. This unveils a need to talk about basic rights and circumstances. Processes must include not only the people who are directly affected by the issues; they must be informed by their lived experiences and the realities in specific contexts. This involves processes that overcome significant gaps between state, private and community actors that are cognisant of the power differentials at the table. Inclusivity cannot be a box-tick or an add-on but should be integrated from the beginning to have genuine impact. Practitioners need not try to create something new; instead, they can consider drawing on existing frameworks such as the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, Women, Peace and Security Agenda (UNSCR 2242 references climate change); the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women; and intersections with UNSCR 2417 on conflict induced food insecurity. The lesson from these frameworks – particularly the Women, Peace and Security Agenda – is that climate conflict should not be a rhetorical tool, but rather that the concept should spur a focus on implementation (including budgeting) from the outset.

A central consideration is that women and youth are not an homogenous group and different populations can face multiple discriminations at the same time: For example, a woman who is an environmental peacebuilder can face discrimination, not only for her role in working for the environment but also in her identity as a woman. When considering the multiple gender identities that people may have, this can also connect to the environment. Thinking about these multi-faceted issues and impacts on the ground is important for mediators to understand the implications on people’s lives and to take a do-no-harm approach in mediating climate-related issues in conflict.

Sometimes it is not relevant or beneficial for practitioners to address climate change in a peace process. Despite the urgency of responding to climate change, mediators need to be careful about how and when to address it in peace processes. If climate change is not contributing to the conflict, it is not a given that addressing it will enhance prospects for peace.

“While inherently an important issue, the environment does not necessarily need to be central to every peace process. The mediator should make an assessment as to how important it is to the conflict dynamics and to the parties—and guide, rather than impose. In situations where it is indeed relevant, the mediator needs the awareness and expertise to make it a meaningful topic of discussion.”

Paul Działkowiec - Programme Manager, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

The often highly political and environmentally complex contexts in which mediators operate call first and foremost for conflict analysis and a deep understanding of the context, stakeholders and local knowledge, so mediators can gain a better understanding of what avenues exist. The first-order question for practitioners is whether natural resource scarcity and environmental degradation have indeed been conflict drivers. Often, the climate and environment will have figured as a backdrop to the wider conflict context. If climate change has been or is an important conflict driver, knowledge about climate trends must be integrated into the peacemaking framework to ensure the solutions respond to the specific climate-related issues at stake. However, even if the climate has not been a causal or driving force in the conflict, it might be relevant to consider whether it may become one in the future.

LESSON 3: TECHNICAL EXPERTISE CAN BENEFIT PEACE PROCESSES

“Mediation in general requires bringing in technical expertise. This is no new thing. Hydrologists, geologists, geographers, oil specialists and so on. When faced with technical issues, the mediator must always ask for the support of experts.”

Said Djinnit - Special Adviser, ACCORD and EIP; former SRSR, Great Lakes Region

Technical expertise and scientific knowledge are needed to envision effective technical solutions to a variety of issues in peace processes. Climate change is such an issue. Often, it can be used as reliable and trusted information to bring the issue to the fore and tell a convincing and relatable story about the impact of a more technical issue. It is the task of conflict resolution practitioners to ensure that it is context appropriate and employed in a timely manner.

“A mediator should set up a process that can bring in and draw on that expertise. But he/she needs to know the climate and environmental field well enough to know and understand the opportunities and needs of the process. It is about creating political space, time and finding expertise and funding that are in line with the needs of these processes.”

Michele Ferenz - Senior Mediator, CBI

Bringing in technical expertise will require that practitioners identify relevant and credible technical experts from the conflict resolution and climate science domains. They will also need to translate between the

technological and scientific expertise on one hand and the political talking points on the other. Finally, practitioners will need to work to build constituencies within society that are willing to acknowledge climate and environmental issues related to conflict and act upon them. One experience included a dialogue with both a technical/scientific and a dialogue/political chair.

In some instances, the technical aspects may be politicised, which damages the value of the technical and scientific information as well as the prospects for building consensus over its use.

“There can be discrepancies between the technical or scientific understanding of environmental issues and the way they are presented or understood through a political lens. Unfortunately, every issue can be politicised, which then leads to finger pointing and can distract from a common recognition of the problem, however factually valid, and from the pursuit of mutually beneficial responses.”

Paul Dziatkowiec - Programme Manager, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

For example, a technical expert might be accused of aligning with one party to a conflict, and the subsequent loss of trust could mean that every small detail is called into question. The technical aspect of any peace process must account for the conflict context, and the mediator may take a variety of steps to ensure that technical and scientific knowledge is credible and trusted throughout the process:

1. Analyse the climate and environmental issues to back up the need to address these as part of the political solution. A joint fact-finding mission may be used as a mediation approach in which parties jointly identify questions and agree on experts who will be involved in searching for answers.
2. Ensure that experts are perceived as neutral, so they cannot easily be accused of political bias.
3. Validate studies from the outset and as you go along, for example through local experts or community acknowledgement. One way to achieve community acknowledgement is to conduct joint fact-finding missions.
4. Be able to tell a convincing and understandable story about how this is affecting or will affect people. Sometimes local leaders can help voice these concerns.

LESSON 4: CLIMATE CHANGE NEEDS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE WIDER PEACE AND RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS

Climate change must be addressed in the wider design of peace processes. At many stages of a process, there will be limited opportunity for the mediator to address climate change as well as wider environmental issues. It is a common lesson that there is limited space to address climate mitigation adaptation in the wider process, for

example in fragile dialogues and agreements for ceasefires. However, without the necessary understanding of the problem, mediators themselves may be dismissive of the relevance of climate and environment to the resolution of hardcore political and power-sharing issues. Therefore, to avoid climate change and wider environmental issues being downplayed in favour of seemingly more imminent problems, central actors must have access to appropriate technical support on a running basis. Here, a climate and environmental adviser close to the mediator, facilitator or negotiation teams may ensure that insightful analysis and up-to-date data feed into peacemaking options.

“Mediators often have many things on their table. It would be helpful to have climate experts around you who understand the conflict dynamics and political people around you who understand the climate aspects.”

Bert Koenders - Special Envoy on Fragility, World Bank; former Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs

An option in the wider process, as a couple of mediators have experienced, is for climate change to be addressed at a separate table or in a parallel dialogue. Another option is to create consultative mechanisms comprising technical environmental experts that feed into the dialogues.

It is important that peace agreements lay the groundwork for addressing climate change in the reconstruction and peacebuilding phase by including aspects of climate mitigation or adaptation and a green economy that may lead to peace dividends as well as opportunities to restore land or boost renewable energy. Only five written peace agreements since 1990 explicitly mention ‘climate change’.⁸ While some peace agreements implicitly address climate change-related issues, the lack of explicit language on climate change in peace agreements poses challenges to addressing climate change in post-conflict settings.

“You make sure you have a placeholder in the high-level document or the negotiation programme for the years after to be elaborated on.”

Tessa Terpstra - MENA Regional Envoy for Water and Energy Security, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

This creates a mandate to address climate change and provide opportunities for post-conflict peacebuilding. For example, in the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement, climate change is mentioned⁹ explicitly. In combination with a comprehensive approach to land reform, environmental protection and regeneration, this mention provides a legal foundation for the issues to be addressed.

⁸ Epple, Tim, (n.d.), "Peace agreements, climate change, and the environment", Manuscript in preparation, Political Settlements Research Programme, University of Edinburgh. (The Colombian final peace agreement (2016), the related Colombian rural reform agreement (2014), a Nigerian local peace agreement between pastoralists and agriculturalists (2016), the Northern Ireland New Decade, New Approach Agreement (2020), and the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (2011))

⁹ *Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace*, 24 November 2016: Towards a New Colombian Countryside: Comprehensive Rural Reform, 1.3.1.2. Irrigation infrastructure: ... “Preparatory measures to mitigate the risks of climate change”, Page 25, 1.

However, the implementation of peace agreements comes with its own set of difficulties. One of these is ensuring that major investors are behind key aspects of a successful dialogue. Peace agreements are more sustainable if they are backed by investment plans, not only to yield dividends for the population as a whole, but also to address the needs of particular groups, such as victims, demobilised combatants and other members of armed groups. Mobilising investment in peace agreements is not easy, not least given fiscal and ODA contractions in light of COVID-19; indeed, there can be dangerous lags between the signing of agreements and the availability of development funding.

“A challenge facing mediators sometimes arises as a result of successful dialogue when, for example, parties agree that it is in their common interest to invest in water or land regeneration or access to energy. Such agreements risk being meaningless or even damaging if there is no real prospect of investing in these activities. But mediators can’t instruct investors.”

Michael Keating - Executive Director, EIP; former SRSG, Somalia



4. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

“For the past five years or so, we have been moving from the question of how climate risk intersects with conflict to asking: What can we do about it? How can we overcome silos between conflict management, disaster risk management and climate adaptation? How can adaptation become a contributor to peacebuilding and going beyond no harm?”

Michele Ferenz - Senior Mediator, CBI

This paper has sought to outline some of the ways in which conflict resolution practitioners can address the impacts of climate change on conflict. As the impacts of climate change gather pace, practitioners in the field—and the institutions that are supporting them—will increasingly need to understand the risks related to climate insecurity in order to prevent and resolve conflict.

Based on the lessons learned of the senior practitioners and experts interviewed for this paper, the Institute has identified the following ways forward:

- 1. Ensure that climate change is mainstreamed into conflict analysis and peace process design:** Practitioners, including envoys, heads of mission and mediators should seek and receive support to ensure that climate change considerations are taken into account in the scoping of conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding tasks and opportunities. This will require analysis as to how climate unpredictability, environmental degradation and competition for resources are contributing to, or even shaping, political interests and violence. To enable the practitioner to use this knowledge appropriately, it must be easily accessible and available. Finally, ensuring meaningful mainstreaming of climate change will require more effective ways to share lessons across communities of practice and bridging silos by bringing together different kinds of expertise in (e.g. climate change experts and conflict resolution experts).
- 2. Ensure that inclusion and justice are at the centre of climate change analyses and response:** To address the fragility posed by climate change and wider environmental issues, a ‘bottom-up’ perspective must be included if processes are to be effective and credible, and agreements sustainable. Processes must not only *include* the people who are directly affected by the issues; they must be *informed* by their lived experiences and the specific contexts in which they live. In other words, the rights, needs and expectations of those affected by climate change and conflict should genuinely inform peacemaking options, a task that involves extensive consultations, providing spaces for dialogues on solutions, and bringing these needs to bear on international policymaking. Instead of creating something new, practitioners can draw on existing frameworks such as the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, Women, Peace and Security Agenda (UNSCR 2242 references climate change); the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against

Women; and intersections with UNSCR 2417 on conflict-induced food insecurity. One lesson from these frameworks, particularly the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, is that any effort to address climate insecurity needs to have a focus on implementation from the outset.

3. **Create and strengthen mechanisms that support practitioners in the field:** Practitioners, including envoys, heads of mission, NGO representatives and local peacebuilders need to ensure they have sufficient and timely technical support to tackle the relevant climate and environmental challenges. This can be done by adding technical expertise to their own team, drawing upon knowledge elsewhere in their own institutions, or working in partnership with others that have the credentials and capacity to support them. While the mediator can request technical support based on the needs identified in the field, it is first and foremost an institutional task to ensure that the field-based practitioner is sufficiently prepared to deal with the central tasks around a given conflict.

4. **Keep the security impacts of climate change high on the political agenda:** Addressing the security impacts of climate change is an inherently political task and is closely linked to the geopolitical fault lines in addressing climate change. Conflict resolution must take into consideration the climate change dimension, and this cannot be accomplished without sustained political and financial support. While there has been resistance to the climate security agenda, many states, particularly European nations, are continuing to advance the agenda at the highest political levels. Peacemakers invested in bearing changes to climate change in conflict, should continue supporting and partnering with political actors that are well positioned in central international fora, such as the UN, the AU, and the EU. There is great scope and an urgent need to kick off a conversation with public and private investors to identify ways to ensure sustainable financial support, most notably to secure the implementation plans for climate adaptation and mitigation measures in a given peace agreement. By continuously raising the issue of how to address climate change in conflict resolution with new actors – whether open, dismissive, or hostile – peacemakers might be able to push for change at the political level that can influence conflict resolution practices.

ANNEX 1 – LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

We are thankful to the distinguished individuals who contributed to this endeavour to understand how conflict resolution and mediation professionals understand climate and environmental issues, and how they address them in their work:

Said Djinnit has been a Senior Advisor with the European Institute of Peace since June 2019. Throughout his career, he spearheaded multilateral efforts to support peace processes across Africa. From 2014 to 2019 he served as the UNSG's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes in the context of which he initiated and facilitated the Inter-Burundi dialogue and supported the dialogue process in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Prior to that, he served as the UNSG's Special Representative for West Africa (2008-2014), the International Facilitator of the Guinean Dialogue (2013), and the High Representative for Nigeria (2014). Before joining the UN, he was the African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security (2003-2008) and worked on the development of the African peace and security agenda and architecture in various roles at AU and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

Paul Dziatkowiec manages the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue's (HD Centre) work on Ukraine. Previously he was Australia's Deputy High Commissioner in Nairobi and, as Deputy and Acting Ambassador, covered a range of countries including Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. At the same time, he was Australia's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Nairobi. As a diplomat, he has also worked in the Australian Embassy in Tel Aviv and acted periodically as Australian's Representative to the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah. He has also represented the International Service for Human Rights in Geneva, worked as a Human Rights Officer in the Australian Foreign Service, and as a Peace Monitor in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea.

Michele Ferenz – is a New York-based Senior Mediator at the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) with more than 20 years of experience as a facilitator, mediator, and trainer helping senior managers in large public and private institutions resolve conflict and collaboratively address complex problems. She has deep expertise in peacebuilding and sustainable development, with a focus on natural resource management and essential service provision. Michele has worked extensively on the concrete applications of environmental and social safeguards of international financial institutions in the context of development projects that are the subject of community grievances, including in fragile states. In the past, Michele has served as Senior Advisor on Sub-Saharan Africa and Acting Country Director in Libya at UNICEF, was the founding director of the Food-Water-Energy Nexus program at the EastWest Institute, and spearheaded CBI's environmental mediation work in Israel and Palestine in the 1990s, including as director of the Joint Environmental Mediation Service, co-founded by CBI with the Israel/Palestine Centre for Research and Information (IPCRI).



Natalia Gherman was appointed Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Central Asia, the Head of the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) on 15 September 2017. Ms. Natalia Gherman has 25 years of experience in diplomacy and international affairs having held various high-level government positions. Most recently from 2013 until 2016, Ms. Gherman served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova, during which time she also served as the Deputy Prime Minister and as the Acting Prime Minister in 2015.

Nicholas Haysom serves as the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan. His previous positions include: Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan (2012-2016) Director for Political, Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Affairs in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (2007-2012); Head of the Office of Constitutional Support in the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (2005-2007); and Chief Legal Adviser throughout Nelson Mandela's presidency until 1999.

Sergio Jaramillo Caro is a Senior Advisor at the European Institute of Peace. Previously he served as High Commissioner for Peace (2012-2016) and National Security Advisor (2010-2012) to the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos. In that capacity he first led the secret negotiations with the FARC guerrillas, which ended with the signing of the General Agreement of 2012, and then together with Humberto de la Calle led the public negotiations that ended with the signing of the Final Agreement in November of 2016.

Michael Keating is Executive Director of the European Institute of Peace. Until September 2018, he was the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia. Until 2015, he was an Associate Director at Chatham House in London. Between 2010-15, he worked as an advisor to conflict mediation bodies, including Intermediate and Search for Common Ground. From 2008 – 10, he served as the Executive Director of the Africa Progress Panel, a policy group chaired by Kofi Annan. His UN career has included assignments in Kabul as deputy SRSG, in Lilongwe, Jerusalem/Gaza, New York, Geneva, Islamabad and Mogadishu.

Bert Koenders is Special Envoy for Fragility at the World Bank. Mr. Koenders served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands from 2014 to 2017. He was a member of the Dutch House of Representatives from 1997 to 2007 and served as Minister for Development Cooperation from 2007 until 2010. He later was the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Operation in the Ivory Coast (2011-2013), and Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (2013-2014).

Nancy Lindborg is President and CEO of The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, a position she assumed in August 2020. She previously served as the president and CEO of the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) from February 2015 through August 2020. Prior to joining USIP, Ms. Lindborg served as the assistant administrator for the



Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) at USAID. Prior to joining USAID, she was president of Mercy Corps.

Tessa Terpstra is based in Amman, where she serves as the first-ever MENA Regional Envoy for Water and Energy Security for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Over the past few years, she has been engaged in projects and policy dialogue on resource efficiency and climate change with governments, private sector, civil society and donors in the Arab region. Tessa works with Palestinian and Israeli interlocutors on energy security for Gaza. As part of the Planetary Security Initiative (PSI), Tessa works with the Clingendael Institute, Free Press Unlimited and stakeholders in Iraq on addressing water scarcity and conflict in Southern Iraq.

Teresa Whitfield is the Director of the Policy and Mediation Division, UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA). She is also a Non-Resident Fellow at New York University's Center on International Cooperation (CIC). Teresa has been senior advisor to the president of the International Crisis Group since January 2015. While a fellow at New York University's Center on International Cooperation from 2008 to 2014, she also served as a senior advisor to the Geneva-based Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. Previously, she was director of the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum at the Social Science Research Council and spent five years as an official of the UN's Department of Political Affairs.



ANNEX 2 – ACRONYMS

CBI	Consensus Building Institute
EIP	European Institute of Peace
DPPA	United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
SRSB	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
UNRCCA	United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia
USG	Under-Secretary-General
USIP	United States Institute of Peace





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