

Policy Brief

Climate, Peace and Security: Exploring UNFCCC Entry Points

The climate crisis is one of the greatest threats of our time. Against a backdrop of global uncertainty and intensifying geopolitical rivalries, it is a risk multiplier with far-reaching implications for peace and security. Extreme weather events are claiming lives, destroying livelihoods and exacerbating food insecurity, damaging critical infrastructure, and disrupting global supply chains.



Today, 25 per cent of the world's population live in fragile or conflict-affected contexts.¹ These countries face a double, mutually reinforcing burden: they are both highly vulnerable to climate impacts and constrained by limited institutional and financial capacities needed to respond effectively. This can intensify social tensions and violent conflicts – particularly in these contexts.

Despite these heightened vulnerabilities, only around 10 per cent of international climate finance (including public, private, bilateral and multilateral sources) flows to fragile and conflict-affected settings. This covers only about a quarter of their actual needs². Yet conflict-sensitive and peace-positive projects in the areas of mitigation, adaptation, and Loss and Damage (L&D) can make a significant contribution to stabilisation, reduce conflict risks, and strengthen peace processes.

On the international level, the global race for green technologies, critical raw materials, and energy security is shifting the balance of power and creating new lines of geopolitical conflict. Dependency on energy and raw materials is increasingly being used as a geopolitical weapon, as seen in the Iran war, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Those examples illustrate: **We can no longer afford to view security, peace and climate change as separate issues.** At the same time, there is still a lot of potential to anchor peace and security considerations much stronger in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as the key process on international climate policy.

¹ OECD (2025): States of Fragility 2025. OECD Publishing, Paris.
https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/02/states-of-fragility-2025_c9080496/full-report/the-state-of-fragility-in-2025_7cb5662b.html

² Cao, Y (2025): Small change? Our projections for the conflict blind spot in climate finance by 2030. ODI Insight.
<https://odi.org/en/insights/small-change-conflict-blind-spot>

The objective of this policy brief is to explore how the climate–peace–security nexus can be better integrated into discussions and negotiations under the UNFCCC. The brief therefore identifies entry points within negotiations on **adaptation, L&D, mitigation and just transition and transitioning away from fossil fuels**, and offers recommendations for **COP31 and beyond**. The entry points presented in this paper are based on two expert roundtables that brought together experts on climate policy and the UNFCCC process as well as on peace and security from civil society, academia, and government. This publication is intended for UNFCCC negotiators, Conference of the Parties (COP) Presidencies, policymakers, and experts from civil society and academia.

Status Quo of Climate, Peace and Security under UNFCCC

Within the climate negotiations, the climate–peace–security nexus was first firmly embedded within the UNFCCC with the **COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace**, which formally linked climate action with peacebuilding, conflict sensitivity, and humanitarian response. It recognizes that conflict-affected and fragile countries are among the most climate-vulnerable, yet receive the least climate finance, and called for increased support, stronger partnerships, better coordination, and the scaling up of good practices. **COP29** built on this momentum through the endorsement of the **Common Principles for Effective Climate Finance and Action for Relief, Recovery and Peace** by governments, international organizations, NGOs, and climate funds. These principles aim to ensure climate finance is peace-positive and conflict-sensitive, while guiding implementation of the COP28 Declaration. COP29 also launched the **Baku Call on Climate Action for Peace, Relief, and Recovery** and the related **Baku Action Hub**. The Baku Call highlighted persistent underfunding in fragile and conflict-affected contexts and key risks such as water scarcity and food insecurity, while the Baku Action Hub is intended to strengthen coordination across national, regional, and international initiatives.

Multilateral climate funds have also begun to recognize the challenges of operating in fragile and conflict-affected settings, though peace- and security-related risks are not yet systematically integrated into funding approaches. At **COP30**, the **Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD)** pledged simplified access modalities for fragile and conflict-affected countries. Earlier, in 2024, the **Green Climate Fund (GCF)** approved a USD 95 million project in Somalia, marking the first sizable climate finance package for a conflict-affected fragile country. Affected countries themselves are increasingly raising concerns about the structural barriers that prevent fragile and conflict-affected countries from accessing climate finance. The **Network of Climate Vulnerable Countries Affected by Conflicts or High Levels of Humanitarian Needs**, established in late 2024, drew attention to the structural barriers that prevent fragile and conflict-affected countries from accessing climate finance, often forcing them to shoulder climate costs alone. **Despite these advances, climate, peace and security considerations remain largely peripheral to formal UNFCCC negotiations.**

Towards peace-positive climate action

The success of climate action is inherently shaped by political and social dynamics. Poorly designed interventions risk reinforcing historic inequalities, deepening existing grievances, or fueling disputes over resources or the distribution of aid and climate finance. In such cases, climate action can unintentionally worsen conflict dynamics. For example, building a dam may alleviate immediate water scarcity, but it can also disrupt downstream ecosystems, negatively affect local communities and add to already existing conflict dynamics.

However, climate action also holds significant potential to support development and human security and contribute to peace. Realizing these benefits depends on participatory decision-making processes, transparent communication, systematic context and conflict analyses, addressing grievances and continuous monitoring.

When climate action is peace-positive, it can even move beyond merely avoiding harm or mitigating the unintended consequences of climate action.

Somalia: Climate action builds trust

Climate action can actively build trust, strengthen institutions, and foster cooperation between groups. In Somalia for example, community-based climate initiatives have helped shift relationships from competition to cooperation. When drought was framed as a shared survival challenge, elders, youth, and local leaders became more willing to adjust grazing patterns and resource use.³

Adaptation

The focus of UNFCCC negotiations increasingly shifts towards implementation and national level integration, thus making consideration of the climate peace and security nexus even more relevant. However, climate action remains unevenly distributed, with primary emphasis traditionally placed on mitigation efforts. With more frequent and stronger climate impacts in a faster warming world, adaptation and addressing L&D should not be underfunded and marginalized, a gap that is particularly pronounced in fragile and conflict-affected settings where climate risks intersect with existing social, political, and institutional vulnerabilities. Mitigation and adaptation need to go hand in hand. The just transition efforts hold an opportunity here when energy transitions are meant to also build resilient regions and communities. **Addressing the gap of climate finance for adaptation and L&D is crucial, not only for climate resilience but also for leveraging adaptation as a pathway to peace.**

³ Berghof Foundation (2025): Celebrating ten years of peacebuilding and conflict transformation in Somalia, Feature. <https://berghof-foundation.org/news/celebrating-ten-years-of-peacebuilding-in-somalia>

Entry points for the nexus within the UNFCCC and beyond

Upcoming negotiations and policy processes under the UNFCCC offer several opportunities to embed conflict-sensitive and peace-positive approaches in adaptation policy and finance. Key entry points include:

Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA)

At COP30 in Belém, the initial set of more than 100 proposed indicators under the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) was streamlined and consolidated into 59 Belém Adaptation Indicators. While this represents a significant step toward operationalizing the GGA, the two-year Belém-Addis Vision allows for further work on the indicators. Several entry points remain to better integrate climate, peace, and security considerations:

- Parties should recognize that the adopted indicators do not explicitly reflect a conflict-sensitive dimension.
- During the testing phase until COP32, Parties and experts should identify the gaps and elaborate how conflict sensitivity can be reflected in the monitoring of the GGA indicators. The subsequent review of the GGA and preparations for the second global stocktake provide an opportunity to integrate conflict-sensitive elements.
- As the UNFCCC's technical bodies develop methodologies and implementation guidance, they need to include conflict sensitivity to identify and assess the social and political implications of adaptation actions, avoid unintended harm, and strengthen human security, with a view toward peace-positive outcomes, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable communities.

National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)

National Adaptation Plans provide a critical entry point for operationalizing the climate–peace nexus at the national level:

- Integration of context analysis into NAPs through the systematic use of conflict analyses to identify potential sources of tension, exclusion, or grievance related to adaptation interventions, helps Parties to mitigate conflict risks.
- Ensuring inclusive and participatory processes by embedding mechanisms for the meaningful involvement of affected stakeholders, in particular marginalized groups and Indigenous Peoples, throughout the planning, implementation, and monitoring of adaptation actions, helps Parties to increase identification of risks and can increase acceptance.
- Parties should include fragile and conflict-affected contexts in their NAPs by planning measures to address limited institutional capacity, ongoing instability, and heightened climate-related security risks.
- Aligning adaptation and development plans with peacebuilding, can be a way for parties to recognize the need to support social cohesion alongside efforts to enhance climate resilience.

Adaptation Fund

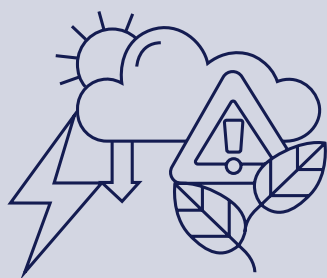
Adaptation finance is a means to enhance resilience for fragile and conflict-affected settings. The Adaptation Fund with its direct access modalities is already of value for local actors and hence can provide access for fragile and conflict-affected settings, but the Fund could improve its performance in this regard.

- Aligning with the [Common Principles for Effective Climate Finance and Action for Relief, Recovery, and Peace](https://www.ecosystemforpeace.org/principles)⁴ and fostering their application, can play an important role for the Board of the Fund to improve access to funding for fragile and conflict-affected countries.

Mitigation, Just Transition and Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels (TAFF)

As the 2025 Emission Gap Report highlights, current mitigation efforts remain insufficient to keep the 1.5°C target within reach, making a rapid transition away from fossil fuels imperative. Beyond reducing greenhouse gas emissions, effective mitigation can also contribute to peace and security by reducing dependence on fossil fuels and the geopolitical vulnerabilities associated with fossil fuel resources and energy supply routes. The recent war of the United States and Israel against Iran illustrates how reliance on fossil fuels and energy supply routes can create strategic rivalries, economic coercion and security risks beyond a region.

At the same time, mitigation measures can create new conflict risks if they are not designed in a conflict-sensitive and rights-based manner. Large-scale renewable energy projects, critical mineral extraction or land-intensive climate interventions can exacerbate grievances and trigger conflict or intensify competition over natural resources and violate the rights of affected communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples and local communities.



A conflict-sensitive transition towards domestically produced renewable energy and resilient grid infrastructure can strengthen energy security, prevent unintended negative side effects and conflicts, and reduce exposure to volatile fossil fuel markets. It can also contribute to greater economic stability, for example by reducing the impact of fossil fuel price fluctuations on food prices. In addition, decentralised renewable energy systems can enhance resilience at the local level.

⁴ Community of Practice on Environment, Climate, Conflict, and Peace: Common Principles for Effective Climate Finance and Action for Relief, Recovery, and Peace. <https://www.ecosystemforpeace.org/principles>

The Philippines: Climate action as a pathway to peacebuilding

The Philippines provide an important example of how mitigation efforts can support peacebuilding. Within its Just Transition process, the interlinkages between climate action and conflict dynamics were explicitly addressed. Civil society actors played a key role in facilitating national dialogues that brought together government representatives, energy companies, and local communities to jointly develop an industrial strategy. Progress was achieved both at the national level – for example through measures related to nickel extraction and battery production – and at the local level, where household energy grids and community-based renewable energy supply systems became part of broader security and economic diversification strategies. The peace-building outcome here was improved state-community-private sector relations, more trust in institutions, as local grievances were accepted and followed-up and led to mutual agreements. The economic diversification also benefited the local communities across social divides.⁵

Entry points for the nexus within the UNFCCC COP31 and beyond

Just Transition Mechanism

One entry point for the climate, peace and security nexus is the Just Transition Mechanism, which aims to enhance international cooperation, technical assistance, and capacity-building for equitable, inclusive net-zero transitions.

- Within the Just Transition Mechanism, we recommend assessing potential impacts before implementation and monitoring the effects of all activities, including technical assistance and capacity building, in fragile and conflict-affected settings. This is essential to ensuring that interventions are sustainable and contribute to more equitable and peaceful societies.
- Conflict impacts on country plans for mitigation and adaptation, e.g. on carbon sinks, should continuously be analysed and monitored by all stakeholders
- For national and regional regulations and laws: Conflict- and gender sensitivity for mitigation and Just Transition-measures helps to address social, cultural and economic risks and violation of human rights, especially rights of Indigenous People and local communities. A standardized and mandatory regulation would increase sustainability and peace-positive outcomes of all actions in transition processes.
- For political and practical guidelines, legal frameworks at local, national and regional level and practical measures for economic diversification and TAFF: Multisectoral approaches can help to prevent violent conflicts around scarce resources that are also affected by economic diversification and transition away from fossil fuels. Those approaches should include also social dialogue, trauma healing and responsible governance of natural resources like land, water, forests, and safeguards for Indigenous People and local communities' rights. This helps to identify pathways for a just transition, that centre human security and needs.

⁵ Champain, Phil (2020): Power, Peace, and Place: Why firms account for their actions, Multi-stakeholder voices and the Therna South. International. Alert Philippines. <https://conflictaalert.info/our-work/books/40/power-peace-and-place-why-firms-account-for-their-actions>

- A just transition that is conflict and gender-sensitive, inclusive, and grounded in human rights and human security especially for Indigenous People and local communities is therefore essential to ensure that mitigation contributes not only to decarbonisation, but also to more sustainable and equitable outcome.

Santa Marta and the Next TAFF Conference in 2027

With the TAFF Roadmap and the April 2026 conference in Colombia, global decarbonisation efforts are gaining renewed momentum. The next step is to ensure that peace and conflict considerations are systematically integrated into these processes in order to enable a conflict-sensitive and socially just transition.

- Countries committed to the TAFF agenda should showcase their successful examples of economic diversification on the pathway to net zero and share the challenges and key success points with others. In preparing their national TAFF roadmaps, countries should also highlight the links between climate action, peace, and security including, e.g. the adherence to human rights, especially Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights, and the contributions to more equitable and peaceful societies.
- Consideration of financial flows, trade of extractives and fossil fuel intensive sectors, e.g. the military sector, and its climate impact needs attention by all stakeholders.
- For the next COP-Presidencies (Turkey and Australia) and beyond: Perspectives from fragile and conflict-affected settings should be systematically integrated into the understanding of a Just Transition by parties through their national planning documents, such as TAFF roadmaps and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), as well as into the design and implementation of transition processes. The justice components need to be integrated early on in national planning documents and with a strong legal basis. For example, the impact of mineral resources, especially rare earth minerals for the socio-economic and conflict contexts needs to be taken into consideration. This can help identify and address risks and challenges at an early stage.
- The Turkish COP31 presidency places electrification at the centre of its action agenda. This is an important opportunity to advance the transition away from fossil fuels and a potential entry point for the climate, peace, and security nexus. Equitable access to clean, reliable energy can strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerabilities that can contribute to instability and conflict. However, without safeguards, electrification could increase reliance on unreliable non-renewable alternatives like fossil gas, intensify competition over critical minerals, and reinforce unequal supply chains. Linking electrification explicitly to renewable energy and just transition principles can help ensure it contributes to both decarbonisation and more resilient, equitable, and peaceful societies.

Loss and Damage (L&D)

As with adaptation, the links between L&D and peace and security are most visible in the context of human security. Climate impacts such as floods, droughts, storms, sea-level rise and desertification can result in both economic and non-economic losses, undermining livelihoods, health, social cohesion and economic development. Increasing climate impacts such as extreme weather events (floods, droughts or storms) and slow onset processes (sea level rise, temperature rise or desertification), exacerbate losses and damages. Those can be economic losses such as the loss of property as well as non-economic losses and damages such as the loss of culture which have a direct and indirect impact on peace and security. They can exacerbate existing tensions and stressors through, for example, unequal exposure to risks, disrupting social and public health systems, economic collapse or the intensification of climate induced displacement. Frequent and intense storms, for example, can lead to high reconstruction costs or loss of livestock, putting stress on communities and society, potentially exacerbating underlying tensions and fuelling inequality and distributional conflicts.

Entry points within and beyond the UNFCCC

L&D does not have a standing agenda item in UNFCCC negotiations; however, civil-society organisations and some climate vulnerable parties are underlining this gap. To make this a reality, L&D should have a separate standing agenda item at COPs. A potential agenda item could focus on how the L&D architecture, including the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD), the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage (SNLD) and the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for Loss and Damage, adequately address existing needs. It would need to take into account the findings of the to-be-developed L&D status quo report, including those on the financial needs and contributions. This would include discussions on how to fill the FRLD to the scale needed. Additional entry points include related UNFCCC negotiation streams on finance, adaptation, agriculture, and just transition, including the Global Goal of Adaptation (GGA), the United Arab Emirates Dialogue on implementing the Global Stocktake, and the Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on climate action on agriculture and food security (SJWA).

However, there are still considerable entry points to include the nexus between L&D and peace and security. The FRLD, the SNLD and the WIM all have, on the one hand, status reports at the sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies and COPs, and, on the other hand, their own processes where the nexus could be integrated.

Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD)

- Ensure adequate, conflict-sensitive financing for fragile and conflict-affected contexts through simplified, direct access modalities that do not reinforce existing inequalities. Building on its COP30 commitment, the Board of the Fund needs to implement simplified access procedures for fragile settings, align with the [Common Principles for Effective Climate Finance and Action for Relief, Recovery, and Peace](#), and foster their application, to reduce conflict risks and enable access for affected countries.

- Develop guidelines to strengthen its long-term resource mobilisation strategy, linking climate impacts, losses and damages, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding outcomes to underline co-benefits between climate and peace and stability efforts. Over time, this could support a shift from reactive conflict response to preventive action through L&D finance.
- Adopt a bottom-up approach that prioritizes context-specific evidence and locally-led responses by empowering local organizations and communities to identify needs, design interventions, and inform decision-making.

Santiago Network on Loss and Damage (SNLD)

- Provide conflict-sensitive technical assistance tailored to fragile and conflict-affected contexts, including support for conflict-sensitive needs assessments and the integration into national climate, development, and peacebuilding policies.
- To address persistent data gaps, support the development of common data platforms, indicators, and methodologies that capture the links between climate impacts, L&D, and peace and security outcomes, drawing on existing L&D indicators such as those developed by Panama⁶, and making them conflict-sensitive.
- The forthcoming L&D status quo report should assess existing financial and technical support for fragile and conflict-affected settings to identify gaps and inform future action.

Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM)

- Develop knowledge products and practical guidance for fragile and conflict-affected settings, including recommendations for conflict-sensitive programming and overcoming administrative barriers to finance. It should also support a common evidence base on the links between loss and damage, and peace and security. To strengthen coordination, an expert group or task force on the loss and damage-peace-security nexus could be established, or the nexus could be mainstreamed it into already existing groups.

Cross-cutting

As the UNFCCC increasingly shifts from negotiation towards implementation, there is a growing opportunity to systematically integrate climate, peace, and security considerations across its processes and institutions.

Parties should prioritise implementing and operationalizing existing initiatives, including those adopted at COP28 and COP29, through stronger follow-up mechanisms, broader endorsement, and integration into existing policy frameworks. At the same time, greater political visibility – including through the COP Action Agenda or dedicated high-level events and a Peace Day at COP – can help move the climate-peace-security nexus from isolated initiatives to showcasing the benefits of thinking the nexus together.

⁶ UNFCCC, Strengthening of the Monitoring and Evaluation System of Adaptation to Climate Change in Panama.
<https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Panama%20GGA6%20M%26E.pdf>

Beyond the UNFCCC, stronger cooperation across the three Rio Conventions – the UNFCCC, United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) – can further promote coherent, peace-positive environmental governance.

- **Locally-led approaches:** Mainstream locally-led and conflict-sensitive approaches across adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage. Meaningful participation of local communities, Indigenous Peoples, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers can help overcome structural barriers, ensure climate action reflects local realities, and foster resilient, equitable, and peace-positive outcomes.
- **National Policy Integration, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):** Mainstream conflict sensitivity across NDCs, NAPs, and other national climate strategies. Governments should strengthen cross-sectoral coordination beyond climate ministries to promote coherence across climate, disaster risk reduction, peacebuilding, and development policies. Somalia’s latest NDC provides a positive example of integrating conflict-sensitive approaches into national climate planning.⁷
- **Global Stocktake:** The second global stocktake⁸ at COP33 should strengthen the evidence base on climate, peace, and security by reflecting experiences from fragile and conflict-affected settings. Lessons on conflict-sensitive adaptation, mitigation, and just transition should be integrated into relevant submissions.
- **Green Climate Fund (GCF):** The GCF aims at enhancing its outreach to fragile and conflict-affected countries. It has already designed initiatives to improve accessibility to climate finance, such as the GCF’s Simplified Approval Process. These could also improve fragile countries’ access but would need to be adjusted in a direction to accept higher risk proposals to enable interventions in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. According to the GCF’s Executive Director, the GCF’s Integrated Results Management Framework already uses indicators for impacts on peace and security. These include links to early warning systems and improved food and water security.

Somalia: Towards more flexible climate finance

As a concrete example, in 2024 the GCF approved a project of around USD 95 million in Somalia (ranked 1st on the Fragile State Index 2024)⁹. This has been recognised as the ‘first sizable support’ for a conflict-affected country. The GCF’s reportedly is trying to rethink its approach to working with fragile and conflict affected countries, e.g. by introducing more flexibility to accommodate changes on the ground.

The experience in Somalia will provide valuable lessons for the GCF, including options on how to adjust their modalities. Aligning with the [Common Principles for Effective Climate Finance and Action for Relief, Recovery, and Peace](#) and applying them can be an important step towards improving access to climate finance for fragile and conflict-affected settings.

⁷ Böhle, Ann-Sophie & Tarik, Kheira (2025): Somalia’s New Climate Roadmap as a Blueprint for Peace. New Security Beat. <https://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2025/07/somalias-new-climate-roadmap-as-a-blueprint-for-peace>

⁸ UNCCC: The second global stocktake. <https://unfccc.int/topics/global-stocktake/about-the-global-stocktake/the-second-global-stocktake>

⁹ The Fund for Peace: Fragile State Index 2024. Global Data. <https://fragilestatesindex.org/global-data>

Call for Action

The recommendations outlined in this policy brief demonstrate that the UNFCCC already provides multiple entry points to operationalize the climate-peace-security nexus. What is needed now is political leadership to implement existing commitments, strengthen coordination across institutions, and ensure that climate finance reaches those most affected by both climate impacts and conflict.

Long-term geopolitical stability in times of increasing climate impact risks depends on rapid decarbonization, a just and conflict-sensitive transition, and people-centred approaches to climate adaptation and L&D. **COP31 should mark the transition from recognising the climate-peace-security nexus to embedding it across negotiations and implementation.**

Abbreviations

BAV	Belém-Addis Vision
COP	Conference of the Parties
FRLD	Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GGA	Global Goal on Adaptation
L&D	Loss and Damage
NAPs	National Adaptation Plans
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
SJWA	Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on climate action on agriculture and food security
TAFF	Transition Away from Fossil Fuel
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
WIM	Warsaw International Mechanism

Endorsed by



Thank you

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