

**Environmental Peacebuilding – Experience Sharing Workshop at the  
Intersection of Policy, Practice and Capacity Development**  
4-5 July 2023 (Stadtschlaining, Austria)

*Summary Outcome Report*

Climate change, environmental degradation and the use and management of natural resources – hereinafter referred to as “environmental issues” - affect human security in diverse and intersecting ways. Environmental issues can be important drivers of conflict and humanitarian crises. In specific contexts they can generate, exacerbate, or entrench pre-existing inequalities, grievances, and hence lead to or amplify conflict. At the same time, the universal and shared threat of the consequences of climate change also offers opportunities, or entry points, for collective, inclusive, and lasting efforts towards peace.

Against this background, the ACP invited a diverse group of experts from Africa and Europe to a two-day workshop on environmental peacebuilding to share and discuss experiences, good practices, challenges, and commonalities from some of the most affected countries and regions. An intersectional, multi-level approach – ranging from community level initiatives, national and regional perspectives from civil society and government representatives, international peacebuilding and crisis management mission and policy perspectives – helped structure discussions and create a broader picture of the state of play of the workshop’s topic. Following the in-depth discussions around the shared insights and lessons learned, workshop participants distilled several recommendations for governments, multilateral organisations, peacebuilding actors, academia, and training providers that are aimed at improving our collective responses in addressing peace and security challenges related to climate change.

Perspectives from the following countries were shared, discussed, and analysed during the two-day event: Central African Republic, Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, The Gambia, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda. Discussions revealed that civil society perspectives and the views of governments and multilateral institutions were congruent in many ways – both on enablers and barriers to successfully mitigating the climate-conflict nexus.

From across all cases discussed several common patterns were observed. In all cases presented climate change has profound and life-threatening implications on water and food security. Clearly, by adopting the pathways methodology we were able to establish an immediate link between climate change implications and conflict. Owing to the gravity and magnitude of the climate crisis, traditional coping mechanisms, existing structures, and systems often do no longer offer sufficient solutions, leading to negative coping strategies (e.g. conflict). Protracted displacement, a frequent manifestation of the climate-conflict nexus, tends to become permanent leading to land ownership issues and disputes over resources. Other transboundary dynamics, including altered patterns of transhumance and illicit trafficking of natural resources, tend to come with profound security implications. Whilst climate and environment related policies have been formulated in most of the countries discussed, they tend to lack anchorage in a more cohesive and long-term strategic framework. Oftentimes they are not known to those actors at different levels of the state and society who should have a stake in their implementation. Unless matched with prudent, forward-looking political priority setting, sufficient funding, and effective communication channels, policies hardly reach the stage of implementation.

Following intense discussions on good practices, pitfalls, enablers and barriers to successful environmental peacebuilding a number of key messages and recommendations to specific actors have emerged from the workshop:

**For governments:**

- to integrate policies on environmental issues into long-term national strategies where attention is given to policy harmonization; likewise, climate and environment issues should be mainstreamed into existing policy frameworks.
- to include environmental and peace education in school curricula.

**For governments and multilateral organizations:**

- to ensure compliance with existing policies and commitments and take all necessary measures to close the gap between policy objectives and their implementation.
- To mainstream environmental considerations into all national, regional, and international policies on peace, security, and development.

**For peacebuilding actors, governments and multilateral organisations:**

- to pool available resources and develop integrated multi-stakeholder initiatives that are locally owned and inclusive of all segments of society (i.e. community elders, women, youth, religious and traditional leaders, minorities, displaced communities).
- to integrate an environmental peacebuilding approach into all mission mandates ensuring that missions can deliver by equipping them with the necessary skills, means and resources.
- to integrate environmental peacebuilding into pre-deployment and in-mission trainings, including through mobile training teams that can be dispatched to different field locations.
- to integrate a climate lens into all aspects of peacebuilding work
- to internalize an environmental Do-No-Harm approach
- to develop regional and transboundary environmental peacebuilding strategies, policies and initiatives.
- to facilitate the sharing of technology towards enhancing environmental protection and promoting climate and ecological transition.

**For peacebuilding actors, governments, multilateral organisations and academia:**

- to collect, analyse and share data on the complex interlinkages between climate, peace and security to inform conflict analysis, early warning, project and policy development

**For governments, national and international financing institutions**

- to remove bureaucratic barriers to access financing mechanisms for climate action for states, communities and the private sector, ensure that funding is in line with long-term strategies, continue to de-risk funding, and consider alternative solutions to climate financing like debt relief.

**For training providers**

- to offer tailor-made courses that bridge the gap between theory and practice and enable practitioners working in fragile environments to integrate climate/environmental considerations into all aspects of peacebuilding work, from conflict analysis, project management, operations, to procurement etc.
- to promote interdisciplinarity by developing and offering basic trainings on the implications of environmental issues to peacebuilders / peace and conflict experts; and on theory and practical methodologies on peace and conflict work to environmentalists / climate / natural

scientists. Such basic trainings may be followed by advanced curricula where they will be brought together to learn from one another.

- to develop and offer courses on environmental peacebuilding for different target groups, government representatives, peacebuilding practitioners, humanitarian aid and development workers, private sector representatives, community representatives, school children and students in support of multi-stakeholder approaches.
- to design courses that provide participants with an understanding of climate-related risks and threats to peace and security as well as how climate change can be an entry point for environmental peacebuilding.
- to offer tailor made trainings grounded in need assessments for local communities to build their resilience and capacities in finding peaceful solutions to climate-related conflicts.