

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 9 September 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the pleasure to inform you that Ireland, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of September 2021, will hold a high-level open debate on the theme “Climate and security”, under the item entitled “Maintenance of international peace and security”. The open debate will take place on Thursday, 23 September, at 8.00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

In order to guide the discussions on this topic, Ireland has prepared a concept note. The concept note is contained in the annex to the present letter.

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Geraldine **Byrne Nason**
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 9 September 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on the theme “Maintenance of international peace and security: climate and security”, to be held on Thursday, 23 September 2021

I. Objective of the session

1. This high-level open debate will deepen substantive awareness of how climate security risks are relevant to the work of the Security Council, and explore what tangible actions can be taken. The session will illustrate how climate change is affecting peace and security and discuss practical actions the Security Council can take to address climate-related security risks.

II. Background

Impact of climate change on peace and security

2. Climate change is not the only, or even the main, driver of conflict. Nonetheless, there is increasing evidence that climate change is a vector which increases the risk of violent conflict in many contexts. This is in addition to the societal strains which climate events and change are imposing, notably in fragile settings where Governments have limited resources to manage overlapping crises while also helping populations adapt to climate change.

3. If climate change is not integral to our peacebuilding work we risk impairing our efforts to improve local, national and, ultimately, international security. The evidence is growing that integrating climate action into our peace efforts can have a positive impact. The Peacebuilding Commission has demonstrated that addressing environmental and climate-related challenges in country-specific or regional contexts such as Lake Chad, the Sahel and Pacific island States can contribute to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

4. In recognition of climate-related security risks, there is growing multilateral support to address climate change as part of efforts to promote peace and stability. Regional organizations including the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union and the Pacific Islands Forum have recognized the implications of climate-related security risks.

5. The Pacific Islands Forum’s 2018 Boe Declaration unequivocally identifies climate change as “the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific”. Its call for an enhanced understanding of security risks chimes with the Security Council’s recent discussion on maritime security.

6. Globally, in 2019, weather-related hazards triggered some 24.9 million displacements in 140 countries around the world. As climate change becomes an ever stronger and more destructive force, we must address its impacts on international peace and security.

The Security Council addressing climate-related security risks

7. The Security Council is the United Nations organ with primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. This responsibility extends beyond

managing conflict and its aftermath; the mandate of the Charter of the United Nations clearly includes preventing conflict and sustaining peace.

8. In this context, through [S/PRST/2011/15](#), the Security Council noted that:

In matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security under its consideration, conflict analysis and contextual information on, inter alia, possible security implications of climate change is important, when such issues are drivers of conflict, represent a challenge to the implementation of Council mandates or endanger the process of consolidation of peace. In this regard, the Council requests the Secretary-General to ensure that his reporting to the Council contains such contextual information.

9. The Security Council has, on a number of occasions, emphasized the importance of addressing climate and ecological changes, among other factors, in United Nations and host government risk assessments and risk management strategies, including in its resolutions on the Lake Chad basin, Somalia, Mali, the Sudan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq and Cyprus. An informal expert group of members of the Security Council has convened since 2020 to support the Council's work in this respect, while the broader United Nations family can draw on the work of the inter-agency climate security mechanism as well as the Group of Friends on Climate and Security, which unites 59 members from around the world.

10. Climate change does not affect everyone equally. Climate-related security risks have differential and gendered repercussions, impacting resilience and increasing vulnerabilities to climate and conflict shocks. The Security Council has already recognized the women and peace and security agenda as a cross-cutting subject in this regard.

11. Whereas the past four years have seen the Security Council engage more strongly and consistently on climate-related security risks, the Council has the scope and tools to address these risks more effectively and systematically. To this end, the Council could seek to integrate climate-related security risks in the following areas:

(a) Peacekeeping, including extending the practice of systematically mandating United Nations peacekeeping operations to assess climate-related security risks and potential responses; building stronger United Nations capacity to analyse and synthesize both risks and response opportunities; and providing training for United Nations and Member State staff on climate security risk assessment and management;

(b) Conflict mediation, including ensuring that a climate perspective is integrated into special political missions, mediation efforts and peace negotiations to climate-proof political settlements. This is particularly relevant when it comes to the allocation of natural resources to conflicting parties, but should also extend to alternative livelihoods and access to public services, particularly to vulnerable groups and those disproportionately affected by climate change. Conflict mediation could be further supported by requesting the Secretary-General to enhance the requisite knowledge and capacity within the Mediation Unit of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs;

(c) Conflict prevention, including requesting that the Secretary-General systematically consider climate-related risks and opportunities across United Nations early warning, assessment and planning processes as well as conflict prevention tools, stabilization plans and regional strategies and actions; and improving the United Nations system's institutional capacity to assess and address climate-related security risks, for example by reviewing and synthesizing available tools and approaches for addressing climate fragility risks and disseminating good practices.

III. Guiding questions

12. In considering the objective of the debate and the above considerations, the following questions may help guide interventions by Member States:

- How can peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities most appropriately prepare for and address climate-related security risks?
- How can the theme of climate and security relate to peace and mediation efforts?
- How can climate and security considerations be incorporated into conflict prevention strategies?
- What concrete actions can the Security Council take on this issue?

IV. Format

13. The meeting will be held in the format of an open debate at the level of Heads of State and Government.

14. The meeting will be chaired by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland, Micheál Martin T.D.

Briefers

- The Secretary-General of the United Nations
- A civil society briefer

15. With reference to the Security Council's open debate on "Maintenance of international peace and security: climate and security" on 23 September 2021, delegations may submit written statements through the eSpeakers module of e-deleGATE.

16. Member States wishing to do so should transmit their statements in Microsoft Word format with a cover letter duly signed by the Permanent Representative or Chargé d'affaires and addressed to the President of the Security Council no later than the date of the meeting, 23 September 2021. These statements will be published as part of an official compilation document containing the interventions submitted in connection with this open debate.

17. Delegates are invited to contact their Mission's access focal points to be granted access to the eSpeakers module on the e-deleGATE platform. Delegates can submit written statements by clicking on the eSpeakers sub-item in the Security Council menu item.

18. For technical support related to user logins and passwords, please contact the Office of Information and Communications Technology help desk at 212 963 3333 or by email at missions-support@un.int. For other questions related to the open debate, please contact the Security Council Affairs Division at dppa-scsb3@un.org.