

# The UN Security Council and Climate Change: Tracking the Agenda after the 2021 Veto



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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

On 13 December 2021, the Security Council voted on a draft resolution on the security implications of climate change, proposed by Ireland and Niger. The draft emphasised the need for “a comprehensive, whole of UN approach to address climate change and its effects”. It requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Council within two years a report “on the security implications of the adverse effects of climate change in

relevant country or region-specific contexts on the Council’s agenda as well as recommendations on how climate-related security risks can be addressed”. And it encouraged relevant UN peacekeeping operations and special political missions to deploy dedicated capacity, as appropriate, on climate security.<sup>2</sup>

The Irish-Nigerien initiative represented the first time a thematic resolution on climate change

<sup>1</sup> For more information about the UN Security Council’s engagement on climate change and security, see Security Council Report. 2021. “The UN Security Council and Climate Change”. June 21. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/climate\\_security\\_2021.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/climate_security_2021.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> United Nations. 2021. Security Council Draft Resolution S/2021/990. December 13. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2021\\_990.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2021_990.pdf).

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and security had been tabled for a vote in the Council.<sup>3</sup> But the idea for such a resolution was years in the making. Germany had proposed a similar, albeit more ambitious, draft in July 2020, but ultimately aborted the effort because the US, which was in the final year of the Trump presidency, informed Germany that it would block any thematic outcome on climate change and security.

The Irish-Nigerien draft resolution had the support of 12 Council members and was co-sponsored by 113 member states, but China, India, and Russia expressed strong reservations from the outset of the negotiations. After the co-penholders placed the draft under silence procedure on 29 November 2021, these three members broke the silence and disseminated nearly identical letters to Council members objecting to the initiative. In their letters, they argued that there is “no clear scientific background for equating climate change with security concerns” and that a Security Council resolution on climate change and security would encroach on the work of the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC). They noted that unlike the Security Council’s efforts, the UNFCCC process represents “global action...decided by all Member States and by consensus”.

Nonetheless, neither China nor Russia, two veto-wielding members, publicly revealed how they would vote, although it seems that Russia indicated behind the scenes that it would use its veto. With the outcome uncertain, there was considerable suspense in the chamber on 13 December 2021, the day of the vote. Ireland and Russia both took the floor before the vote. Irish Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason said, “Time is not on our side...We cannot afford to delay in addressing the ways in which climate-related security risks are undermining international peace and security. Doing so would leave the Council weakened in its ability to deal with the issue.”<sup>4</sup> Russian Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia retorted, “We oppose creating a new area

in the Council’s work that would establish a generic, automatic connection between climate change and international security, turning a scientific and socioeconomic issue into a politicized question”. He then directed his remarks at Niger, which was serving as Council president that month: “We call on you not to sow discord within the Security Council on such an important issue. It is the presidency’s responsibility to push towards effective decisions instead of sowing discord.”<sup>5</sup>

While 12 members voted in favour of the draft resolution, Russia vetoed it. India also voted against the draft, while China abstained. The Russian veto was well-publicised. Less known outside the Council is that Russia, with the support of China and India, had circulated a draft presidential statement on the Sahel region on 9 December 2021 as an alternative to the draft resolution on climate security. The Russian draft presidential statement was largely based on agreed language from previous Council products, including resolution 2349 of 31 March 2017 on the Lake Chad Basin, and referenced “the adverse effects of environmental deterioration, including climate change on the stability of the [Sahel]”.

While some Council members thought the text merited consideration, many did not. A number of this latter group viewed the Russian initiative as a ploy to divert attention from the Irish-Nigerien draft. The Sahel draft never gained traction, and by the end of 2021, the Council had abandoned efforts to negotiate it.

The December 2021 veto prompted fresh questions about the Council’s role on climate change and security in the coming year. Would proponents of the Council’s work on climate and security place the issue in maintenance mode in 2022? How assiduous would efforts be to expand climate and security language in country- and region-specific outcomes? How strongly would such expansion be resisted? Given the opposition to the issue from some members, how frequently would Council

3 The Council has, however, adopted a presidential statement on climate change and security, although it was modest in substance. Adopted in July 2011, that statement reaffirmed that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change “is the key instrument for addressing climate change”. It expressed concern that possible adverse effects of climate change may, in the long run, aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security. And it noted the importance of including conflict analysis and contextual information on the possible security implications of climate change in the Secretary-General’s reports, “when such issues are drivers of conflict, represent a challenge to the implementation of Council mandates or endanger the process of consolidation of peace” See United Nations. 2011. Statement by the President of the Security Council. July 20. <https://undocs.org/S/PRST/2011/15>.

4 United Nations. 2021. Security Council 8926th meeting. December 13. <https://undocs.org/S/PV.8926>, p. 3.

5 Ibid, p. 3-5.



# Introduction

presidents continue to feature climate change and security in discretionary events of their monthly Council presidencies, as the UK, Ireland, and Niger had done in February, September, and December 2021, respectively? Another question was how the dynamics of the Council, especially with the five new members entering in 2022 (Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana, and the UAE), would affect its approach to the issue of climate.

This report seeks to address these questions by analysing how the Council has engaged with the climate change, peace and security dossier in 2022. In the process, it examines the thematic meetings that the Council has convened on climate change, peace and security, its efforts to integrate climate change language into country- and region-specific outcomes, and the work of the Council members' Informal Expert Group on Climate and Security. The report also provides an update on the activities of two entities—the Group of Friends on Climate and Security and the UN Climate-Security Mechanism—whose efforts support and complement the work of the Council on this file. The main section of the report ends with an analysis of potential Council dynamics on climate change, peace and security in 2023. A brief conclusion offers some overarching observations on the Council's involvement on this issue.

The report makes the following observations:

- 2022 was marked by ongoing divisions in the Council's work on climate change and security. While most of the Council supported the organ's work on this issue, there was strong resistance from a minority of members. As in past years, the divisions continued to be between members who emphasise that climate change is a threat to international peace and security warranting the Council's consistent attention, and members who underscore that climate change is fundamentally a sustainable

development issue and believe that the Council is encroaching on the work of the UNFCCC.

- These divisions notwithstanding, proponents of Council engagement on climate change, peace and security can point to some encouraging developments in 2022. Climate change references by and large remained intact in peace operation mandates, albeit with variations in the extent to which language has been added or deleted in specific cases. As well, the Council's work on climate change, peace and security has been accompanied by complementary activities with the UN system, including the ongoing expansion of the Group of Friends on Climate and Security and the increasing scope of the Climate Security Mechanism's (CSM) work.
- A heightened focus on climate adaptation and resilience—and the importance of supporting such activities through climate financing and peacebuilding—has coloured Council discussions in 2022. While several Council members have emphasised this perspective, it has been especially prevalent in the statements of the African members. Ongoing concerns that climate change is a “risk multiplier” that can exacerbate insecurity have also continued to be a feature of the Council's deliberations.
- Strong resistance to climate change language from a small number of members has blocked several presidential statements from being adopted in 2022.
- The Council environment may be more favourable for proponents of climate change, peace and security in 2023—India, which had significant reservations, finishes its term at the end of 2022 while many of the incoming members (Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, and Switzerland) have voiced strong support for Council involvement. Differences of view will nonetheless remain.

## Thematic Meetings

In 2022, the Council's thematic engagement on climate and security matters declined slightly from 2021. In 2021, three open debates and one Arria-formula meetings were convened on the climate change, peace and security file, in addition to the unsuccessful effort to adopt a thematic resolution. In 2022, the Council held one formal meeting and two Arria-formula meetings on the topic. The formal meeting was the 12 October 2022 debate on “Climate and security in Africa”, convened during Gabon's Council presidency.<sup>6</sup> The two Arria-formula meetings in 2022 were held in March and November. On 9 March, the UAE convened a ministerial-level Arria-formula meeting on climate finance (that is, the local, national or transnational financing of initiatives aimed at addressing climate change and its effects) as a means to build and sustain peace in conflict, post-conflict and crisis situations.<sup>7</sup> On 29 November, there was an Arria-formula meeting on “Peace and Security: Opportunities for the UN Peace and Security Architecture”, focused on the interaction among climate change, security and peacebuilding. Council members Kenya and Norway co-convened

the meeting with eight other Council members (Albania, France, Gabon, Ghana, Ireland, the UAE, the UK and the US) together with incoming Council members Japan, Malta, Mozambique and Switzerland, as well as with Germany and Nauru (the co-chairs of the Group of Friends on Climate and Security).

Certain themes of past years' Council meetings were prominent in the 2022 discussions. Members continued to recognise the severity of the climate crisis and emphasise the need for global action to meet this crisis. While united in the need to combat climate change, members continued to be divided over what role the Security Council should play in addressing this threat, and under what circumstances. Some members lamented the failure to adopt a thematic resolution on climate change and security in late 2021 and continued to call for a more systematic approach to climate change and security by the Council. They continued to view the Council as one of many actors, both inside and outside the UN system, that should work together in a coherent and coordinated way to address the security implications of climate change. Others

6 United Nations. 2022. Security Council 9150th meeting. October 12. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S\\_PV\\_9150.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_PV_9150.pdf).

7 United Nations. 2022. Arria-formula meeting on “Climate Finance for Sustaining Peace and Security”. March 9. <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1r/k1rllpsm43>.

## Thematic Meetings

strongly cautioned against Council engagement on climate change and security, particularly at the thematic level, reiterating long-standing concerns about the “securitization” of what they view primarily as a sustainable development issue.

One consistent call throughout 2022, from both proponents and opponents of Council involvement on climate security, was for enhanced climate financing for developing states—as a result of commitments through the UNFCCC as well as other mechanisms—to help them adapt and build resilience to the adverse effects of climate change.

Climate financing, the topic of the UAE-initiated Arria-formula meeting, also featured in the other thematic discussions on climate change, peace and security in 2022. It has been emphasised by the African members and other developing countries for several years, along with technology transfers and capacity development. Some developed countries noted their pledges to step up their own climate financing efforts.<sup>8</sup> However, participants also noted that climate financing is often not directed to those developing countries most in need.<sup>9</sup> As Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh (UAE) observed at the 9 March 2022 Arria-formula meeting: “UNDP reports that just \$2.10 per person of climate finance is being made available for highly fragile countries and this compares to an already low \$162 per person in non-fragile developing countries – a striking implementation gap.”<sup>10</sup> A corollary to this observation is that allocating such finances more strategically could open up greater opportunities for strengthening climate adaptation and resilience and promoting peacebuilding efforts in cases where it is especially needed.

The discussion on climate financing in the Security Council has not been without controversy, as reflected by the statements of Brazil and India during the 9 March Arria-formula meeting. Brazil cautioned that scarce resources for climate financing could be diverted to Security Council climate mandates, resulting in diminished support for developing countries unaffected by conflict. Brazil further expressed concern that Council engagement on climate change could redirect “attention from instruments and mechanisms in place that can and should be mobilized to address climate change in an inclusive, transparent, and balanced manner”, an apparent reference to the UNFCCC and other international fora.<sup>11</sup> At the same meeting, India directly addressed the failure of developed countries to meet their commitments: “The reality is that the developed countries have fallen short of their promises not just on mitigation but also on providing access to climate finance and technology. Therefore any attempt to link climate with security obfuscates lack of progress on central issues on the UNFCCC.”<sup>12</sup>

Several members framed climate financing as a contribution to the so-called “peace continuum”, covering conflict prevention,

peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict development. This perspective was outlined in the concept note for the Arria-formula meeting of 29 November 2022, in which the meeting co-sponsors asserted that the effects of climate change “are critical variables that impact effective peacebuilding by national authorities, the UN, and the International Community. The effects of climate change influence success of all our peace efforts. From the prevention of conflict to transitions out of conflict, including the transitioning of UN peacekeeping and political missions”.<sup>13</sup>

The importance of promoting climate resilience and adaptation by aligning peacebuilding and development efforts, while an element of Council discussions in the past, appeared to gain momentum in 2022 and became a recurring theme of public Council sessions on climate change. Like the discussion of climate financing, this perspective helped to move the debate in the Council beyond viewing climate change as merely a “risk factor” to be managed. Increasingly, climate change was cast as an opportunity to promote and sustain peace, a view that has its roots in the Council’s long-standing emphasis on the interconnections among peace, security, and development. It also recalls the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, in which the world’s heads of state and government reaffirmed their “commitment to work towards a security consensus based on the recognition that many threats are interlinked, [and] that development, peace, security and human rights are mutually reinforcing”.<sup>14</sup>

Several Council members, and perhaps most notably the African members, played a major role in framing the Council discussion in ways that highlight climate adaptation and resilience as means to foster development and build sustainable peace. In the 12 October 2022 debate hosted by Gabon on “Climate and Security”, Gabon’s Foreign Minister, Michael Moussa-Adamo, presented a blueprint for addressing the climate crisis that emphasised: “developing and articulating the linkage between peacebuilding and development strategies and climate change adaptation; and linking international policy frameworks, in particular the range of different international approaches to the related issues of peacebuilding, development, adaptation and disaster management”.<sup>15</sup> At the same meeting, Ambassador Martin Kimani (Kenya) described climate adaptation as “the most peace-positive undertaking in such regions as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. It is critical that a surge in investments into these regions be made for the sake of sustained peace and security”.<sup>16</sup> As well, Kenya and Norway, joined by eight other Council members and four incoming members, co-sponsored the 29 November 2022 Arria-formula meeting which explored the relationship between climate change and peacebuilding, a meeting whose concept note affirmed that: “Adaptation can reduce the adverse impacts of climate change and contribute to building peace and preventing conflict.”<sup>17</sup>

8 United Nations. 2022. Security Council 9150th meeting. October 12. See statements by Norway and UK. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S\\_PV\\_9150.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_PV_9150.pdf), p. 9, 21-22.

9 United Nations. 2022. Security Council 9150th meeting. October 12. See statements by the UAE and Ghana. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S\\_PV\\_9150.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_PV_9150.pdf), p. 11-12, 13-14.

10 United Nations. 2022. Arria-formula meeting on “Climate Finance for Sustaining Peace and Security”. March 9. <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1r/k1rllpsm43>.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 United Nations. 2022. Concept Note for the Arria Formula Meeting on “Climate, Peace and Security: Opportunities for the UN Peace and Security Architecture”. November 29. [https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/upload.teamup.com/908040%2FSjDsk5m9QcCQxoWYSfGb\\_Concept%20Note%20Arria%20on%20Climate%20Peace%20and%20Security.pdf](https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/upload.teamup.com/908040%2FSjDsk5m9QcCQxoWYSfGb_Concept%20Note%20Arria%20on%20Climate%20Peace%20and%20Security.pdf)

14 United Nations. 2005. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 60/1. 2005 World Summit Outcome. September 16. [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_RES\\_60\\_1.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf).

15 United Nations. 2022. Security Council 9150th meeting. Statement by Gabon. October 12. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S\\_PV\\_9150.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_PV_9150.pdf), p. 9.

16 Ibid. Statement by Kenya, p. 17.

17 United Nations. 2022. Concept Note for the Arria Formula Meeting on “Climate, Peace and Security: Opportunities for the UN Peace and Security Architecture”. November 29. <https://>

## Thematic Meetings

The increasing resonance of this perspective – one that views the climate crisis as an opportunity to build resilience, promote adaptation and foster peace – is reflected by the fact that so many Council members (and incoming members) co-convened the meeting.

As in past years, several Council members have noted that women and children are disproportionately affected by climate change, while underscoring the importance of women and youth participation in generating solutions to its negative effects. These themes were also prevalent during the 12 October 2022 debate hosted by Gabon on “Climate and Security in Africa”.<sup>18</sup> Although the Council has yet to demonstrate much substantive engagement on the linkages between women and youth and climate change and security, the mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for the first time calls on the mission to carry out “gender-sensitive risk assessments on the adverse effects of climate change” as part of its efforts to create a conducive environment for delivering humanitarian aid.<sup>19</sup>

In 2022, the repercussions of the war in Ukraine were felt on many Council files, with the climate-security agenda no exception. Negotiating country- and region-specific climate-related outcomes was

difficult, as discussed further below, but it is not evident that the war made it more so. Members publicly expressed their concerns about the potentially damaging environmental consequences of the war, however, including that it would generate pressure for higher fossil fuel production, and in turn, increase the level of carbon emissions that contribute to global warming. During the 9 March 2022 Arria-formula meeting, two weeks after Russia’s 24 February invasion of Ukraine, US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry said that “now we’re seeing more and more people clamor for increased drilling and increased production in order to deal with the shortages that will occur because of this global conflict”, a reference to the war in Ukraine.<sup>20</sup> Several months later, at the 12 October 2022 debate, Ambassador Martin Kimani (Kenya) lamented that the “energy-supply gaps in Europe resulting from the war in Ukraine have led to a mass return to the exploitation of fossil fuels”. He went on to criticise “many European and Western governments” for objecting to the development of fossil fuels in Africa during COP 26 in Glasgow, while they remain “the heaviest consumers and are responsible for the overwhelming amount of greenhouse-gas emissions”.<sup>21</sup>

## Integration of Climate Change Language in Council Outcomes

Negotiating climate change references in Council outcomes was particularly difficult in 2022. Efforts to expand such references in peace operation mandates met fierce resistance. In several cases, presidential statements were not adopted due to disagreements over proposed climate change language. Such tensions, familiar from past years’ negotiations, were particularly intense on a wide variety of outcomes in 2022—with India expressing its concerns more assertively than in 2021, China and Russia maintaining their reservations, and new member Brazil adding an opposing voice.

In 2018, the Council began integrating climate change language in resolutions mandating peace operations. Since then, certain elements have tended to recur. Frequently these resolutions encourage the UN and the host government to pursue risk assessment and risk management strategies to address climate change and other ecological factors.<sup>22</sup> Some texts also reference the adverse effects of climate change on the stability of the host country.<sup>23</sup> In 2022, new text was added to some mandate renewals acknowledging the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, including for the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) and the UN Support Mission in Somalia (UNSOM).

<sup>24</sup>This appears to have been done to allay the concerns of members

wary of the Council’s work on climate, peace and security.

### Climate Change Language in Peace Operation Mandates: Tough Negotiations but not a Deal Breaker

Notwithstanding the opposition of some members, and with notable exceptions, penholders managed to maintain existing climate change language in most UN peace operation mandates. Climate change language likely remained largely intact in 2022 mandate renewals because permanent members are reluctant to veto resolutions renewing peace operations over inclusion of this issue, which is not perceived as fundamental to the overall mandate. This logic also appeared to prevail for elected members with reservations about the Council’s work on climate, peace and security, who often voted in favour of mandate resolutions that include language on climate change.

Brazil and India voted in favour of resolution 2640 (29 June 2022) renewing the MINUSMA mandate, for example, even though they found its language linking climate change to security objectionable. In its explanation of vote, Brazil said that “a direct cause-and-effect linkage between climate change and violent conflict...is

s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/upload.teamup.com/908040%2FSjDsk5m9QcCQxoWYSfGb\_Concept%20Note%20Arria%20on%20Climate%20Peace%20and%20Security.pdf.

18 United Nations. 2022. Security Council 9150th meeting. October 12. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S\\_PV\\_9150.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_PV_9150.pdf).

19 United Nations. 2022. Security Council Resolution 2625 (2022). March 15. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/N2228831.pdf>, op. 3bi.

20 United Nations. 2022. Arria-formula meeting on “Climate Finance for Sustaining Peace and Security”. March 9. <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1r/k1rllpsm43>.

21 United Nations. 2022. Security Council 9150th meeting. Statement by Kenya. October 12. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S\\_PV\\_9150.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_PV_9150.pdf), p. 16.

22 See, United Nations. 2022. Security Council Resolution 2625 (2022). March 15. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/s-res-2625.php>; United Nations. 2022. Security Council Resolution 2628 (2022). March 31. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/s-res-2628.php>; and United Nations. 2022. Security Council Resolution 2640 (2022). June 29. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/s-res-2640.php>.

23 See, United Nations. 2022. Security Council Resolution 2657 (2022). October 31. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/s-res-2657.php>; and United Nations. 2022. Security Council Resolution 2625 (2022). March 15. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/s-res-2625.php>.

24 Proponents of Council engagement on climate and security, like those members holding opposing views, recognise the primacy of the UNFCCC in global efforts to address the adverse effects climate change. The main difference is that, unlike those worried about encroachment, they view the Council’s work as complementary to that of the UNFCCC.

# Integration of Climate Change Language in Council Outcomes

inconsistent with the assessment of the concrete causes of the Malian conflict”.<sup>25</sup> In similar fashion, India maintained that: “No artificial link should be drawn between climate change and security-related issues without any firm scientific basis.”<sup>26</sup>

## Expanding the Climate Change Language in Resolution 2625 on UNMISS

The mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) saw a notable expansion of climate change language in 2022, in the face of strong opposition. Whereas a climate change reference was present only in the preambular part of resolution 2567 (the annual UNMISS mandate renewal in March 2021), resolution 2625 of 15 March 2022 refers to climate change in its preambular and operative sections. Resolution 2625 states that UNMISS should provide “gender-sensitive risk assessments on the adverse effects of climate change” in its efforts to create conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The expansion of climate change language in this resolution, which was adopted with 13 affirmative votes and two abstentions (China and Russia), came after very difficult negotiations. Proposed language calling on UNMISS to assist in developing mitigation measures against increasingly frequent and extreme weather that might exacerbate communal violence was removed at the request of Brazil, China, India and Russia. At least in part, it appears that these members opposed this language because they rejected the direct linking of climate change to security.

The decision by the US—the penholder on South Sudan—to incorporate the new language in the draft text specifying UNMISS support for gender-sensitive risk assessments on the adverse effects of climate change apparently came over the objections of several members. The resolution elicited strong criticism in some of the explanations of vote, including those of China and India. China stated that assessing the humanitarian effects of climate change should be the responsibility of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) or the UN country team, and that it “does not appreciate the assignment of climate change-related mandates to peacekeeping missions without an in-depth analysis of the impacts of climate change and a clear understanding of climate change as a driver of security risks”. China also noted that no human resources or budget increase should be accorded to “that inappropriate mandate”. It is difficult to tell how much the climate change language contributed to China’s abstention on this resolution; there may have been other factors at play as well, as China also underscored its disagreement with human rights language in the resolution and its perception that the penholder handled the negotiations in a non-inclusive manner.<sup>27</sup> While supporting the text, India voiced concerns about “attempts to securitize climate change”. It added that while India “is second to none when it comes to climate action and climate justice...the Security Council is not the place to discuss either issue”. Russia, for its part, said that the resolution “did not properly reflect the positive developments” in South Sudan, and, like China, complained that the penholder chose to ignore input from several

delegations; however, it said nothing about climate change.<sup>28</sup>

## Resolution 2657 on UNSOM: A Slippage in Climate Change Language

The resolution renewing the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) in 2022 is a notable case in which language on climate change and security was altered in a way that disappointed some proponents of the Security Council’s involvement on this issue. Resolution 2657, which renewed UNSOM’s mandate for one year on 31 October 2022, omitted a request from the prior mandate renewal that the Secretary-General update the Council, as appropriate, on programmes in Somalia to address climate change, environment degradation, and ecological changes, among other factors. The omission reflected the difficulty of the negotiations, as climate change references contributed to the decision by China and Russia to break silence on the draft.

China, which abstained on the vote, was the only Council member not to support resolution 2657. It cited several issues “that still need[ed] improvement” in the resolution; climate change was one. Others included the protection of civilians, humanitarian access, and the protection of children.<sup>29</sup> It is also possible that, as some diplomats have suggested, Somalia’s decision to support a debate in the Human Rights Council in October 2022 on the human rights situation in Xinjiang province may have contributed to China’s abstention on this resolution.

## Finding Alternative Language

In some instances, new text was incorporated in peace operation mandates focusing on environmental concerns but not using the term “climate change”. This sometimes occurred when efforts to incorporate climate change language failed, and a compromise had to be found, as in resolution 2626 of 17 March 2022, which renewed the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for one year. The resolution does not mention climate change but decides that the mission should “monitor and report on political, security and economic developments, including the adverse effects of drought”.

Climate change has never been referenced in a UNAMA resolution, although there was a strong effort by Norway, as penholder, to incorporate such language into the text in 2022. The first draft of the resolution apparently included a provision instructing UNAMA to report on climate-related security risks. This proved divisive, drawing strong support from several Council members, and strong objections from others; subsequent iterations of the draft instead tasked UNAMA with reporting on the adverse impacts of climate change (rather than climate-related security risks). It appears that this language was still not acceptable to members that raised concerns, including Brazil and India, who ultimately broke silence over the issue. Resolving the impasse, the UAE suggested replacing the term “climate change” with the word “drought”.

25 United Nations. 2022. Security Council 9082nd meeting. Statement by Brazil. June 29. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S\\_PV\\_9082.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_PV_9082.pdf), p. 4.

26 Ibid. Statement by India, p.5.

27 United Nations. 2022. Security Council 8994th meeting. Statement by China. March 15. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/PRO/N22/287/59/PDF/N2228759.pdf?OpenElement>, p. 4.

28 Ibid. Statement by Russia, p. 3.

29 United Nations. 2022. Security Council 9177th meeting. Statement by China. October 31. <https://undocs.org/S/PV.9177> <https://undocs.org/S/PV.9177>, p. 3.



# Integration of Climate Change Language in Council Outcomes

## The Environmental Footprint of UN Peace Operations

There have long been concerns about the environmental footprint of the UN system in peace operations. In 2007, then-UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the “Greening of the Blue” initiative, calling on UN funds, programmes and agencies to reduce their carbon footprint. This has made progress over the years.<sup>30</sup> In 2016, the UN Department of Operational Support (UNDOS) initiated a multi-year strategy (2017-2023) aimed at deploying “responsible missions that achieve maximum efficiency in their use of natural resources and operate at minimum risk to people, societies and ecosystems; contributing to a positive impact on these wherever possible”.<sup>31</sup>

In the latter half of 2021, largely at the initiative of Norway and the UAE, the Council began to pay heightened attention to the energy efficiency of peace operations, an underlying goal of the UNDOS strategy. In August 2021, the Council adopted a presidential statement on the use of technology in peacekeeping, supporting efforts by the Secretary-General and troop- and police-contributing countries “to enable United Nations peacekeeping missions to increase the use of renewable energy technologies, which can enhance the safety and security of United Nations personnel, mission efficiency, and sustainability”.<sup>32</sup> In 2022, the Council also included language in the mandates of the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)<sup>33</sup> and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)<sup>34</sup> that identified “the goal of expanded renewable energy use in missions to enhance safety and security, save costs, offer efficiencies and benefit the mission mindful of the Secretary-General’s call for field operations to shift to renewable energy by 2030 to meet UNSCAP [United Nations Secretariat Climate Action Plan] goals”.<sup>35</sup>

## The Challenge of Incorporating Climate Change Language into Presidential Statements

In 2022, it was particularly difficult to incorporate climate change language into presidential statements. Only one presidential statement in 2022 included a reference to climate change, whereas four made such references in 2021. The reasons reflect both the differences between presidential statements and resolutions and the nature of current Council dynamics. A member may be much more willing to play the spoiler on a presidential statement, which is usually less immediately consequential on the ground than authorising or renewing the mandate of a peace operation. And, unlike resolutions, which require nine affirmative votes (and no vetoes) to be adopted, presidential statements require unanimity. The reservations of any single member to references to

climate change—or any other issue—can block a presidential statement.

In 2022, efforts to negotiate presidential statements on the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the UN Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and UN-AU cooperation failed primarily because they included language on climate change and security. The most recent UNOCA presidential statement was adopted in September 2019,<sup>36</sup> while two presidential statements on UNOWAS<sup>37</sup> and one presidential statement on AU-UN cooperation<sup>38</sup> were adopted in 2021; all four of these contained references to climate change. However, in 2022, one or more members refused to accept the proposed language on climate change in each of the draft presidential statements on these agenda items; similar language had not been blocked in 2021. Several members supportive of a Council role on this issue, in turn, were reluctant to forego language linking climate change to security and/or stability from previously agreed outcomes. The result was a stalemate.

In October 2022, during its Council presidency, Gabon could not obtain support from all Council members for a draft presidential statement it had initiated on AU-UN cooperation. The tortuous negotiations on this draft statement ultimately became linked to negotiations on a different presidential statement on counter-terrorism. The main stumbling block was draft language on the effects of climate change on the stability of a number of African countries. As a result, Gabon had to put its draft aside.

When India proposed a draft presidential statement on counter-terrorism during its December 2022 Council presidency, Gabon and Ireland requested that language linking climate change to security and terrorism be incorporated. Other members opposed this, including Brazil and Russia, and India did not incorporate it into various drafts of the text. The absence of climate language led Gabon, supported by other members, to break silence at least twice. Following bilateral negotiations between Gabon and India, it appears that India agreed to drop its opposition to Gabon’s October 2022 draft presidential statement on UN-AU cooperation, with Gabon in return withdrawing its request for climate language in India’s draft presidential statement on counter-terrorism, which was adopted on 15 December 2022.

Although India had dropped its opposition to the climate change language in Gabon’s draft presidential statement on AU-UN cooperation, Russia raised objections, causing the draft text to remain blocked. At the end of 2022, the future of this draft presidential statement remained unclear.

The sole 2022 presidential statement with climate change language was initiated by China during its August 2022 presidency,

30 United Nations Environment Programme. 2022. “Greening the Blue Report 2022: The UN System’s Environmental Footprint and Efforts to Reduce it”. December 14. <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/greening-blue-report-2022>.

31 United Nations. 2021. Department of Operational Support. “DOS Environment Strategy for Peace Operations”. March. [https://operationalsupport.un.org/sites/default/files/dos\\_environment\\_strategy\\_execsum\\_phase\\_two.pdf](https://operationalsupport.un.org/sites/default/files/dos_environment_strategy_execsum_phase_two.pdf), p. 1.

32 United Nations. 2021. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2021/17. August 18. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_prst\\_2021\\_17.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_prst_2021_17.pdf).

33 United Nations. 2022. Security Council Resolution 2628(2022). March 31. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S\\_RES\\_2628.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_RES_2628.pdf), op. 40.

34 United Nations. 2022. Security Council Resolution 2640(2022). June 29. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2640.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2640.pdf), op. 54.

35 United Nations. 2019. United Nations Secretariat Climate Action Plan 2020-2030. September. <https://www.un.org/management/sites/www.un.org.management/files/united-nations-secretariat-climate-action-plan.pdf>.

36 United Nations. 2019. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2019/10. September 12. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_prst\\_2019\\_10.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_prst_2019_10.pdf).

37 United Nations. 2021. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2021/3. February 3. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_prst\\_2021\\_3.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_prst_2021_3.pdf). See also, United Nations. 2021. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2021/16. August 17. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_prst\\_2021\\_16.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_prst_2021_16.pdf).

38 United Nations. 2021. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2021/21. October 28. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_prst\\_2021\\_21.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_prst_2021_21.pdf).

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## Integration of Climate Change Language in Council Outcomes

focusing on peace and security in Africa. China appears to have deferred to the wishes of the Council's African members that this issue be addressed in the presidential statement, which called for support to Africa in its efforts to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. The statement recognises the effects of climate change and other environmental factors on the stability of numerous African countries. During the negotiations, some members opposed a formulation linking climate change directly to the “security” of a number of African states. As a result, the presidential statement ultimately adopted refers to the effects of climate change and other

environmental factors on the “stability” of these states, and to “food security” rather than “security” more broadly. In addition, the presidential statement calls on the international community and the UN “to support regional and subregional dialogues, initiatives and cooperation on developing comprehensive risk assessments to take meaningful actions to adapt to or mitigate challenges posed by climate change and environment degradation, including as peacebuilding efforts”. This language, proposed by Norway during the negotiations, was supported by the African members of the Council.

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## The Informal Expert Group on Climate and Security

The Informal Expert Group of Members of the Security Council on Climate and Security (IEG), which was chaired by Kenya and Norway in 2022, met six times in 2022. In comparison, the IEG met three times in 2021, its first full year of operation. Since its inception, the IEG has held its meetings virtually, which in many cases enabled speakers from the field and experts in different parts of the world to participate remotely. The first of the meetings in 2022, convened in early February, was an introduction to the work of the IEG, during which its co-chairing was officially passed from Niger and Ireland (the 2021 chairs) to Kenya and Norway.

The IEG held a second meeting in February 2022 to provide Council members with ongoing research and evidence from different regions to enhance their knowledge of the Council's climate-security work. The meeting featured presentations with representatives from a regionally diverse group of organisations conducting research on the connections between climate change and security, including the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Adelphi, the Manipal Academy of Higher Education, the Shanghai Institute for International Studies, the International Relations Institute of Cameroon, and the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI). A representative of Security Council Report also briefed on the Council's engagement on climate change and security in recent years.

There were four IEG meetings in 2022 on country or region-specific files: Iraq (May), Mali (June), the DRC (October), and UNOWAS (December). These meetings were held approximately one month in advance of mandate renewals of peace operations, timed to help inform Council decision-making on climate-related security matters ahead of negotiations on the relevant file.<sup>39</sup>

At these meetings, senior UN officials discussed progress made and areas for improvement in addressing climate-related security risks. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, the UN Deputy Special Representative for UNAMI and Resident Coordinator for Iraq, briefed at the IEG meeting on Iraq. Alain Noudéhu, UN Deputy Special Representative of MINUSMA and Resident Coordinator in Mali, was the featured briefer in the IEG meeting on Mali. Bruno Lemarquis, the Deputy Special Representative for MONUSCO and Resident Coordinator in the DRC, briefed at the IEG meeting on DRC, and Giovane Biha, Deputy Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel (and acting Officer in Charge) briefed the IEG on UNOWAS.

The IEG co-chairs have invited all 15 Council members' climate/security and country experts to participate in these sessions; sometimes missions are represented by both experts. In 2022, while most Council members were represented at IEG meetings, Russia did not attend, and India only sporadically.

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## Other Key UN Entities focused on Climate Change and Security

Two key entities that support the Council's work on climate change, peace and security are the Group of Friends on Climate Change and Security and the Climate Security Mechanism.

### Group of Friends on Climate and Security

Germany and Nauru are the co-founders and co-chairs of the Group of Friends on Climate and Security (GoF), which was established on 1 August 2018. The goal of the Group is to inform policy, heighten public awareness, and strengthen the UN system's efforts to counter the security effects of climate change. Initially consisting of 27

UN member states, by the end of 2022, the Group had grown to 62 member states—representing all five UN regional groups (the African Group, the Asia-Pacific Group, the Eastern European Group, the Western European and Others Group, and the Latin American and Caribbean Group)—and the EU. The member states that joined the Group of Friends in 2022 are Gabon, Japan, and Slovenia. The ICRC and the CSM are permanent observers.

In 2022, the Group of Friends participated in the Council's sole formal meeting on climate change that year, the 12 October debate on “Climate and Security in Africa”. In his statement on behalf

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<sup>39</sup> Unlike the other cases mentioned here, UNOWAS has historically been renewed through an exchange of letters between the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General, rather than through a resolution. UNOWAS' current mandate expires on 31 January 2023.



## Other Key UN Entities focused on Climate Change and Security

of the Group of Friends, Frank Jarasch, a minister in the German mission in New York, welcomed the Council's "renewed attention to th[e] threat" of climate change. He underscored the important role that climate finance can play to help sustain peace and security if it is used effectively, echoing a point frequently made by Council members in 2022.<sup>40</sup>

The Group of Friends also made a statement at the 29 November 2022 Arria-formula meeting on "Climate, Peace and Security". Ambassador Margo Deije (Nauru), speaking on behalf of the Group, thanked the Council for recognising the adverse effects of climate change in a growing number of peace operation mandates and commended the work of the Informal Expert Group. She also emphasised the need for member states to redouble efforts to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases.

For the first time in its short history, the Group of Friends made a statement to the Peacebuilding Commission at a meeting on "The impact of climate change on Peacebuilding in the Pacific Islands" on 31 May 2022. During this meeting, Ambassador Deije (Nauru) delivered the statement on behalf of the Group of Friends, highlighting the threat of climate-related disasters to the security, welfare and livelihoods of people in the Pacific region. She referred to previous calls made by the Group of Friends for the appointment of a Special Representative for Climate and Security, and training for relevant UN staff on the security and humanitarian effects of climate change.<sup>41</sup>

The Group meets periodically during the year, at the level either of experts or permanent representatives. Two expert-level meetings of the Group of Friends were convened in 2022, on 24 March and 27 June, both in virtual format, allowing for the participation of briefers from outside New York. During the 24 March 2022 meeting, participants received an update on the Security Council's work on climate change and security and on the activities of the Climate Security Mechanism. A presentation was also provided on the "Climate Security in the Pacific Project", followed by a discussion of this initiative. The "Climate Security in the Pacific Project" supports the efforts of Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Tuvalu to develop strategies to address climate-security risks. The project, which is funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund, is being conducted by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in collaboration with the governments of these three island nations.<sup>42</sup>

During the 27 June 2022 meeting, GoF members received two briefings: one from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on its report "Environment of Peace: Security in a New Era of Risk", which analyses the connections among climate change, environmental decline and insecurity; and a second by Christian Wegelein, Head of the Climate and Security Division of the German Federal Foreign Office, on the "Climate, Environment, Peace and Security Initiative", which the G7 foreign ministers and

the EU High Representative announced on 13 May 2022 under the German G7 presidency. According to a statement released by the G7, the "Climate, Environment, Peace and Security Initiative" is designed to "advocate for and undertake concrete and operational actions, approaches and solutions to help tackle climate change and environmental risks for peace and stability across the world".<sup>43</sup>

### Climate Security Mechanism (CSM)

In 2018, the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) jointly established the "Climate Security Mechanism" (CSM) to harness information and analysis on the linkages between climate change and security and to integrate this lens into the UN's prevention, peacebuilding, and adaptation efforts. In late 2021, the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) became the fourth entity to join the CSM, with the addition of a DPO staff person. The CSM—which is supported through voluntary contributions—consists of a small team from the four participating entities and works closely with several UN agencies, funds and programmes, UN peace operations, and partners outside of the UN system.

The CSM groups its work in four categories: "support to analysis and action in the field"; "advocacy, partnerships and convening"; "knowledge co-generation and management"; and "capacity-building".<sup>44</sup> Although the CSM faces considerable resource constraints, there have been notable developments during the past 12 months in several areas of its work.

At the start of 2022, the CSM was engaged in eight field projects; by the end of the year, there were 12 such projects. Through these projects, the CSM assists UN peace operations, UN Resident Coordinators' offices, and regional and sub-regional organisations in "supporting integrated climate-related security risk assessments and the development of forward-looking risk prevention and management strategies".<sup>45</sup> These projects, which are tailored to the needs and conditions of the particular context, are being conducted in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Middle East.

In some cases, the CSM has been able to support UN field missions with dedicated capacity to bolster efforts to address climate-related security risks in line with mandated tasks. At the time of writing, five missions (UNSOM, UNOCA, UNMISS, UNOWAS, Office of the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa) have such capacity, with UNAMI on track to follow in early 2023.

With support and advice from the CSM, missions aim to provide timely and continuous analysis of the connections between climate change and peace and security to UN leadership; lead coordination with other UN actors to mainstream climate-related security considerations into policy and programming; and assist the host government and other relevant stakeholders in addressing climate-related security challenges.

In 2022, as part of its knowledge generation and management

40 United Nations. 2022. Security Council 9150th meeting. October 12. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9999-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S\\_PV\\_9150.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9999-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_PV_9150.pdf).

41 United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. 2022. Meeting on "The impact of climate change on Peacebuilding in the Pacific Islands". May 31. <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k10/k10lz3x1yz>.

42 United Nations Development Programme. 2022. "Climate Security in the Pacific Project Brief". May 11. <https://www.undp.org/pacific/publications/climate-security-pacific-project-brief>.

43 G7 Foreign Ministers. 2022. "Statement on Climate, Environment, Peace and Security". May 13. <https://www.bundesregierung.de/resource/blob/998440/2039776/3e1b9f1e321313-e974909f5b67ae46a0/2022-05-13-g7-foreign-minister-statement-climate-security-en-data.pdf?download=1>.

44 United Nations. 2022. "Climate Security Mechanism Progress Report". May. [https://mptf.undp.org/sites/default/files/documents/220531%20CSM%20Progress%20Report%202022\\_Interim%20version.pdf](https://mptf.undp.org/sites/default/files/documents/220531%20CSM%20Progress%20Report%202022_Interim%20version.pdf), p.2.

45 Ibid. p.5.

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## Other Key UN Entities focused on Climate Change and Security

function, the CSM intensified efforts to enhance awareness of and knowledge about the connections between gender issues and climate, peace and security. In conjunction with DPPA, it organised a side event for the 66th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on 25 March 2022 titled “Inclusive, gender responsive and climate informed conflict prevention and peacebuilding opportunities and lessons from UN field presences in the Horn of Africa”. Deputy Special Representative of UNSOM Kiki Gbeho and Special Representative and Head of UNMISS Nicholas Haysom were among the panelists. In late November 2022, DPPA, with support from the CSM, also published a “practice note” that explores the connections among climate change, gender, and peace and security.<sup>46</sup> Another key area in 2022 was the emerging work on

the impact of climate change on mediation and peace processes. A consultation and knowledge-sharing event at the Stockholm Forum in May was followed by the public launch of a new guidance note on this topic in September.<sup>47</sup>

In early 2023, the CSM will roll out a two-year training programme on climate, peace and security for UN peace operations operating in highly climate-exposed regions, in particular where the Security Council has recognised the adverse effects of climate change in its formal outcomes. These trainings will be tailored to the specific needs of each mission, and combine online elements with in-person workshops. In addition to civilian and uniformed peace operations staff, some members of the UN Country Teams will be invited to participate in the trainings as well.

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## Potential Council Dynamics on Climate Change and Security in 2023

Security Council dynamics on climate change, peace and security issues may be less contentious in 2023 than in 2022. Most of the incoming members—Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, and Switzerland—strongly support the Council’s engagement on this issue, and none oppose some role for the Council. Japan—which favours Council involvement on climate change, peace and security—is assuming the Asia-Pacific seat held by India, which had strong concerns about Council involvement on this issue during its 2021–2022 Council term, particularly in 2022. It also appears that Malta is planning to hold a signature event on sea-level rise during its February 2023 Council presidency. In October 2022, Brazil elected Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva as president, replacing Jair Bolsonaro. Lula, who takes office on 1 January 2023, has promised that Brazil will pursue more climate-friendly policies than his predecessor. However, it is unclear whether Brazil, which was critical of the Council’s work on climate change matters in 2022, will be more amenable to a Council role on this issue during the second year of its 2022–2023 term.

Incoming members Mozambique and Switzerland will join the UAE, a continuing member, in jointly co-chairing the IEG in 2023. At the 29 November Arria-formula meeting, all three highlighted the linkages between climate change and peace and security. Mozambique called climate change “a clear and present danger” that poses “serious security threats, particularly in Africa”. Switzerland said that the capacity of UN staff in peace operations to address the effects of climate change needed to be strengthened. And the UAE, which will be hosting the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 28) in late November–early December 2023, maintained that “security implications of climate change need to be featured prominently in the [UN

Secretary-General’s] New Agenda for Peace” for the governance of global security to be “up to task in the 21st century”.<sup>48</sup>

The views of the permanent members are unlikely to change in the coming year. France, the US, and the UK will be supportive of the Security Council’s climate, peace and security agenda, while Russia is likely to continue to raise the same objections as in the past. China’s position on the Council’s role on climate change has evolved in recent years: it abstained on the thematic climate-security resolution in late 2021, rather than casting a veto like Russia. It has expressed disagreement with climate change language in some texts, but has not blocked outcomes over this issue, as some members did on draft presidential statements on UNOWAS, UNOCA, and AU-UN cooperation in 2022. It also demonstrated flexibility on this issue, when it led negotiations on a presidential statement on capacity-building in Africa in August 2022; as penholder, it accommodated a request from the African members of the Council (Gabon, Ghana, and Kenya) to incorporate references to the need for the international community, including developed countries, to support Africa in its efforts to adapt to and mitigate the challenges posed by climate change.

While China and Russia have in the past challenged climate change references in peace operation mandates—and sought in some cases to weaken them—they have not used their veto to block mandate renewals that include such references, and there is no particular indication that they would do so in 2023. Another effort to pursue a thematic resolution would be a tall order, however, as Russia is expected to continue opposing the broad and systematic integration of climate-related security concerns into the Council work.

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46 United Nations. 2022. DPPA Policy and Mediation Division. “Weathering Two Storms: Gender and Climate in Peace and Security”. November 23. <https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/Weathering%20Two%20Storms%20-%20Gender%20and%20Climate%20in%20Peace%20and%20Security.pdf>.

47 United Nations. 2022. DPPA Policy and Mediation Division. “The Implications of Climate Change for Mediation and Peace Processes”. September 23. <https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/DPPAPracticeNote-TheImplicationsofClimateChangeforMediationandPeaceProcesses.pdf>.

48 United Nations. 2022. Arria Formula Meeting on “Climate, Peace and Security: Opportunities for the UN Peace and Security Architecture”. November 29. <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k13/k13i83wzan>.

## Conclusion

All Council members recognise that climate change poses a threat to human existence. Where they disagree is on what role, if any, the Council should play. While most members believe the Council should engage on this issue, they continue to grapple with how best to frame the approach. In 2022, proponents of the climate, peace and security agenda in the Council continued to underscore that climate change is “risk-multiplier” whose security implications need to be managed; however, there was an enhanced focus on climate adaptation and resilience as avenues to build and sustain peace. This was reflected in the language of the concept note for the 29 November 2022 Arria-formula meeting organised by eight Council members and four incoming members, among others: “Until now, the Climate and Security discourse in the Security Council has focused on how the effects of climate change exacerbate international peace and security...Broadening the Security Council’s awareness of how climate, security and peacebuilding interact would offer a basis for it to embrace additional tools and entry points to better achieve its mandate.”<sup>49</sup> Tools and entry points in this regard could include supporting mediation efforts that employ a climate-sensitive lens, encouraging the enhanced involvement of women and youth in peace processes with a climate dimension, and urging enhanced engagement by the UN Peacebuilding Architecture in supporting projects that promote climate resilience and adaptation in conflict-affected states.<sup>50</sup> Such an approach could offer enhanced opportunities for engagement with host governments and regional and sub-regional organisations—supported by the UN and other partners—to strengthen their resilience and adapt to climate-related security risks in ways that help to build and sustain peace.

On the other hand, as climate financing is required to enhance adaptation efforts, critics are likely to call for developed countries to fulfil their financial commitments through the UNFCCC, rather than discussing climate financing in a less representative body such as the Security Council. Even developing countries that support Council engagement on climate change express frustration that the commitments made in Copenhagen in 2009 to provide \$100 billion per year in climate financing have yet to be fulfilled.

This point is not lost on many in the developed world, who recognise that such financing is needed not just to promote adaptation and resilience in vulnerable states but also to encourage cooperation with the developed world. Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason (Ireland), speaking at the 9 March 2022 Arria-formula meeting, said that not meeting the \$100 billion commitment had placed “vulnerable countries...at even greater risk” and “eroded trust between developed and developing countries”.<sup>51</sup>

Notwithstanding the divisions in the Council on climate change and security matters, it is remarkable how much this issue has advanced in the Council in recent years, including in 2022. This is because several members have made climate change a priority, seeking to integrate climate considerations into Council outcomes, holding signature events on the issue, and highlighting the relationship between climate change, security and peacebuilding in Council discussions.

Historically, while France, the UK, and the US (except during the Trump administration) have supported Council engagement on this issue, it is the elected members that have played a key role in promoting the climate change, peace and security agenda in the Council, often in the face of strong political headwinds. Rather than merely supporting Council engagement, countries such as the Dominican Republic, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Ireland, Kenya, the Netherlands, Niger, Norway, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sweden, and others have worked assiduously over the years to make climate change an important focus of the Council’s work. In 2023, members who wish to maintain the Council’s momentum on this issue will again require proactive engagement.

The enhanced capacity of several UN peace operations in 2022 may help to generate heightened attention to the linkages among climate change, peacebuilding, and security, while addressing climate-related security risks in support of host governments, regional organisations, and other local actors.

Albeit outside the scope of this paper, another issue that members could consider further is how the Council could most effectively share best practices and coordinate its efforts with regional and sub-regional organisations on climate change, peace and security matters. In Our Common Agenda, the Secretary-General makes a proposal along these lines, when he notes that the UN could consider how to strengthen its support for regional capacities “by expanding into new areas such as the effects of climate change on security”.<sup>52</sup>

On 19 November 2022, at the conclusion of the COP 27 in Sharm El-Sheik, UN Secretary-General António Guterres asserted that “Climate chaos is a crisis of biblical proportions.”<sup>53</sup> Such apocalyptic pronouncements about climate change have become commonplace, but they are not hyperbolic. The climate crisis is likely to become more severe, given the current trajectory of global emissions. The devastating effects of climate change on human security—already abundantly apparent—are likely to worsen. Over time, the ways in which climate change is a risk-multiplier for conflict are likely to become clearer as well. While cogent arguments can be made about the encroachment of the Security Council on the prerogatives of other UN entities, it could also be argued that a Security Council that does not respond to such a fundamental threat to human survival is not fulfilling its responsibilities under the UN Charter.

49 United Nations. 2022. Concept Note for the Arria Formula Meeting on “Climate, Peace and Security: Opportunities for the UN Peace and Security Architecture”. November 29. [https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/upload.teamup.com/908040%2FSjDsk5m9QcCQxWYSfjb\\_Concept%20Note%20Arria%20on%20Climate%20Peace%20and%20Security.pdf](https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/upload.teamup.com/908040%2FSjDsk5m9QcCQxWYSfjb_Concept%20Note%20Arria%20on%20Climate%20Peace%20and%20Security.pdf).

50 See United Nations. 2022. DPPA Policy and Mediation Division. “The Implications of Climate Change for Mediation and Peace Processes”. September 23. <https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/DPPAPracticeNote-TheImplicationsOfClimateChangeForMediationandPeaceProcesses.pdf>. See also United Nations. 2022. DPPA Policy and Mediation Division. “Weathering Two Storms: Gender and Climate in Peace and Security”. November 23. <https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/Weathering%20Two%20Storms%20-%20Gender%20and%20Climate%20in%20Peace%20and%20Security.pdf>.

51 United Nations. 2022. Security Council Arria-formula meeting on “Climate Finance for Sustaining Peace and Security”. March 9. <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1r/k1rlpsm43>.

52 United Nations. 2021. Report of the Secretary-General “Our Common Agenda”. September 10. [https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common\\_Agenda\\_Report\\_English.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf), p. 61.

53 United Nations. 2022. Statement by the Secretary-General António Guterres. November 19. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2022-11-19/statement-the-secretary-general-the-conclusion-of-cop27%20A0-sharm-el-sheikh%20A0%20A0>.



# Annex I: Security Council Resolutions and Presidential Statements Mentioning “Climate Change” in 2022

ISSUE	OUTCOME	LANGUAGE
UNFYCIP	S/RES/2618 (26 January 2022)	PP. Urging the sides to step up their efforts to promote intercommunal contacts, reconciliation and the active engagement of civil society, in particular women and youth, and recognising that regular, effective contact and communication between the sides enhances the prospects for settlement and is in the interests of all Cypriots, and helps to address island-wide matters, including migration, health, crime, environmental protection, and issues related to the adverse impacts of <a href="#">climate change</a>
UNMISS	S/RES/2625 (15 March 2022)	PP. Recognizing the adverse effects of <a href="#">climate change</a> , ecological changes, and natural disasters, among other factors, on the humanitarian situation and stability in South Sudan, emphasizing the need for comprehensive risk assessments and risk management strategies by the GoSS and the United Nations to inform programs relating to these factors, and acknowledging the United Nations Framework Convention on <a href="#">Climate Change</a> and the Paris Agreement  OP3. (b) Creating the conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance:  (i) To contribute, in close coordination with humanitarian actors, to the creation of security conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, so as to allow, in accordance with international law, including applicable international humanitarian law, all humanitarian personnel full, safe and unhindered access to all those in need in South Sudan and timely delivery of humanitarian assistance, including IDPs and refugees, consistent with United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, including humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence, including by providing gender-sensitive risk assessments on the adverse effects of <a href="#">climate change</a>
ATMIS	S/RES/2628 (31 March 2022)	PP. Emphasising the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies by the FGS and the United Nations, of <a href="#">climate change</a> , other ecological changes, natural disasters and other factors on the stability of Somalia
UNAMI	S/RES/2631 (26 May 2022)	PP. Recognizing that the adverse effects of <a href="#">climate change</a> , ecological changes, and natural disasters, among other factors, can contribute to desertification and drought, adversely impact the humanitarian situation, and aggravate any existing instability, emphasizing the need for comprehensive risk assessments by the Government of Iraq with the support of the United Nations, upon the request of the Government of Iraq, to take meaningful actions to adapt to or mitigate challenges posed by <a href="#">climate change</a> and ecological change, and acknowledging the United Nations Framework Convention on <a href="#">Climate Change</a> and the Paris Agreement  OP2. b (iv) the Government of Iraq on facilitating regional dialogue and cooperation, including on issues of border security, energy, trade, environment, water, adverse impacts of <a href="#">climate change</a> in particular those contributing to desertification and drought, resilience building, infrastructure, public health, and refugees
MINUSMA	S/RES/2640 (29 June 2022)	PP. Emphasizing the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies, by the Transition Government of Mali and the United Nations, of ecological changes, natural disasters, drought, desertification, land degradation, food insecurity, energy access, <a href="#">climate change</a> , among other factors, on the security and stability of Mali  OP54. Underscores that the sustainability of peace and security support is improved by the implementation of the United Nations Department of Operational Support's Environment Strategy (phase II), which emphasizes good stewardship of resources and a positive legacy of the mission, and identifies the goal of expanded renewable energy use in missions to enhance safety and security, save costs, offer efficiencies and benefit the mission
UNFYCIP	S/RES/2646 (28 July 2022)	PP. Urging the sides to step up their efforts to promote intercommunal contacts, intra-island trade, reconciliation and the active engagement of civil society, in particular women and youth, and recognising that regular, effective contact and communication between the sides enhances the prospects for settlement and is in the interests of all Cypriots, and helps to address island-wide matters, including health, crime, environmental protection, economic issues, issues related to the adverse impacts of <a href="#">climate change</a> , and challenges related to migration
Peace and Security in Africa	S/PRST/2022/6 (31 August 2022)	The Security Council recognizes that Africa is one of the regions that contribute the least to <a href="#">climate change</a> , yet is extremely vulnerable and exposed to the adverse effects of climate change, extreme weather patterns, manifesting as floods, droughts, heatwaves, forest fires, storms, cyclones, and slow-onset events such as the rise of sea levels and, changing and unpredictable rainfall patterns, as well as their impacts on food security, among other factors, on the stability of a number of African States, calls upon the international community, including developed countries, to continue to support Africa to address its adaptation needs through, inter alia, the development, voluntary transfer and deployment of technology on mutually agreed terms, capacity-building including on renewables-based energy transition, and energy efficiency and the provision and mobilization of adequate and predictable resources, in line with existing commitments and equally accessible for all, and further calls on the international community and United Nations to support regional and subregional dialogues, initiatives and cooperation on developing comprehensive risk assessments to take meaningful actions to adapt to or mitigate challenges posed by climate change and environment degradation, including as peacebuilding efforts

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ISSUE	OUTCOME	LANGUAGE
UNSOM	S/RES/2657 (31 October 2022)	<p>PP. Highlighting the importance of FGS and FMS coordination with OCHA to ensure a needs-based distribution of humanitarian aid, including in-kind food aid, and appropriate targeting of marginalised groups, which may face specific barriers in accessing assistance and protection, in support of the UN Famine Prevention Plan, and collaboration with the UN to develop an inter-ministerial strategy for enabling proper adaptation, reducing the risks and mitigating the impacts of <a href="#">climate change</a> in Somalia</p> <p>PP. Recognising the adverse effects of <a href="#">climate change</a>, environmental degradation, other ecological changes, natural disasters, among other factors on the stability of Somalia, including through floods, drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity and recalling its Presidential Statement S/PRST/2011/15, the United Nations Framework Convention on <a href="#">Climate Change</a> and the Paris Agreement</p> <p>OP14. Highlights the importance of the United Nations, the FGS and FMS considering the adverse implications of <a href="#">climate change</a>, environmental degradation, other ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, in their programmes in Somalia, including by undertaking comprehensive risk assessments and risk management strategies relating to these factors, acknowledging the United Nations Framework Convention on <a href="#">Climate Change</a> and the Paris Agreement</p>
MINUSCA	S/RES/2659 (14 November 2022)	<p>PP. Recognising the adverse effects of <a href="#">climate change</a>, ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of the Central African region, including through drought, desertification, land degradation, food insecurity, and energy access, and stressing the need for comprehensive risk assessment by the United Nations relating to these factors and for long-term strategies by governments of the Central African region and the United Nations to support stabilisation and build resilience</p>
MONUSCO	S/RES/2666 (20 December 2022)	<p>PP. Recognising the adverse effects of <a href="#">climate change</a>, ecological changes, natural disasters, and lack of energy access, among other factors, on the stability of the DRC, welcoming the leadership of the DRC in the development of national strategies to address these issues and in the preservation of the Congo basin forest, expressing concern regarding the activities of armed groups in protected areas that lead to environmental damage and acknowledging the United Nations Framework Convention on <a href="#">Climate Change</a> and the Paris Agreement</p>

## Annex II: Selected UN Documents on Climate Change, Peace and Security

### SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

[S/RES/2657](#) (31 October 2022) renewed the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) for one year.

[S/RES/2640](#) (29 June 2022) renewed the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for one year.

[S/RES/2628](#) (31 March 2022) endorsed the decision by the AU Peace and Security Council to reconfigure the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) into the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and authorised AU member states to deploy uniformed personnel in the country to carry out ATMIS' mandated tasks for one year.

[S/RES/2626](#) (17 March 2022) renewed the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for one year.

[S/RES/2625](#) (15 March 2022) renewed the mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan for one year.

### SECURITY COUNCIL PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENTS

[S/PRST/2022/6](#) (31 August 2022) was on peace and security in Africa.

[S/PRST/2011/15](#) (20 July 2011) was a presidential statement on climate change, the sole thematic outcome the Council has adopted on this issue.

### SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING RECORD

[S/PV.9150](#) (12 October 2022) was a debate hosted by Gabon on “Threats to international peace and security: Climate and Security in Africa”.

### OTHER

[S/2021/990](#) (13 December 2021) was the draft resolution on climate change and security that was vetoed by Russia.

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