WEATHERING RISK

African Climate Security Risk Assessment

Executive Summary

adelphi

African Union

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Background

The effects of global warming in Africa are among the most serious threats to human security on the continent. Climate change impacts affect the security of African states and societies both directly and indirectly, by exacerbating existing political, peace and security, socio-economic and development challenges that especially affect vulnerable societal groups, such as women, young people, children, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, persons with disabilities and other minority groups.

While Africa is one of the lowest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, it is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to the intersection of different socio-economic, political, and environmental challenges. The climate crisis has already caused significant harm to biodiversity, water security, food production, life, health, and economic growth, and climate change impacts are projected to worsen significantly over the coming decades.

Given these challenges, the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), together with the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and African Group of Negotiators (AGN), agreed to advance Africa's priorities in ensuring effective and holistic responses to climate change at national, regional and continental levels. As part of these efforts, the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU-PSC), through multiple decisions, encouraged all Member States and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs) to further enhance their climate change resilience and mitigation capacities, and develop credible climate early warning systems, as well as integrated responses to climate-related security risks. This is to be done in addition to expediting the finalisation of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Study on the Nexus between Climate Change, Peace and Security on the continent.

The AU-PSC requested the AU Commission to conduct the study on the nexus through its Press Statement (PSC/PR/BR. (DCCLXXIV) of May 2018 on "The link between climate change and conflicts in Africa and addressing the security implications". It subsequently reiterated in the PSC Communiqué of the 1051st Meeting of 26 November 2021 to expedite the finalisation of a climate-related security risks assessment study, in consultation with Member States, and to define the varying security impacts of climate change on the African continent, while taking steps towards mobilising a Common African Position towards climate change and security.

Goal

The African Climate Security Risk Assessment (ACRA) serves these functions and analyses the interlinkages between climate, peace and security across the African continent. It provides the basis for the development of a chairperson report on the nexus between climate change, peace and security on the continent and the Common African Position on the topic.

The ACRA provides an in-depth analysis of key climate security risks from a continental perspective and emerging good practices to address them. This comparative analysis is based on regional assessments for Northern Africa, Western Africa, Central Africa, Eastern Africa, and Southern Africa that include the main climate security risk pathways for each region and regional responses and good practices. An additional focus is put on transregional geographies, in particular African island states, the Congo and Lake Chad Basin, transboundary waters, and the Sahel. The graphic below provides an overview of the outcomes of the different regional assessments which will be explored in the report. Lastly, the report includes a number of recommendations on how to better address climate-related security risks across the continent.

Key Climate Security Pathways

Northern Africa
· Water insecurity
· Food insecurity
· Fossil fuels and transition risks
· Changing human mobility

Eastern Africa
· Natural resource competition
· Livelihood and food insecurity
· Maritime security
· Changing human mobility
· Rise of armed groups

Western Africa
· Livelihood and food insecurity
· Rise of armed groups
· Changing human mobility
· Urban climate-security hotspots

Central Africa
· Livelihood and food insecurity
· Rise of armed groups
· Changing human mobility
· Environmental degradation

Southern Africa
· More frequent disasters
· Changing human mobility
· Land and water conflicts
· Weak natural resources governance

Cross-regional geographies
Sahel | Transboundary water | Lake Chad | Congo Basin | African Island States
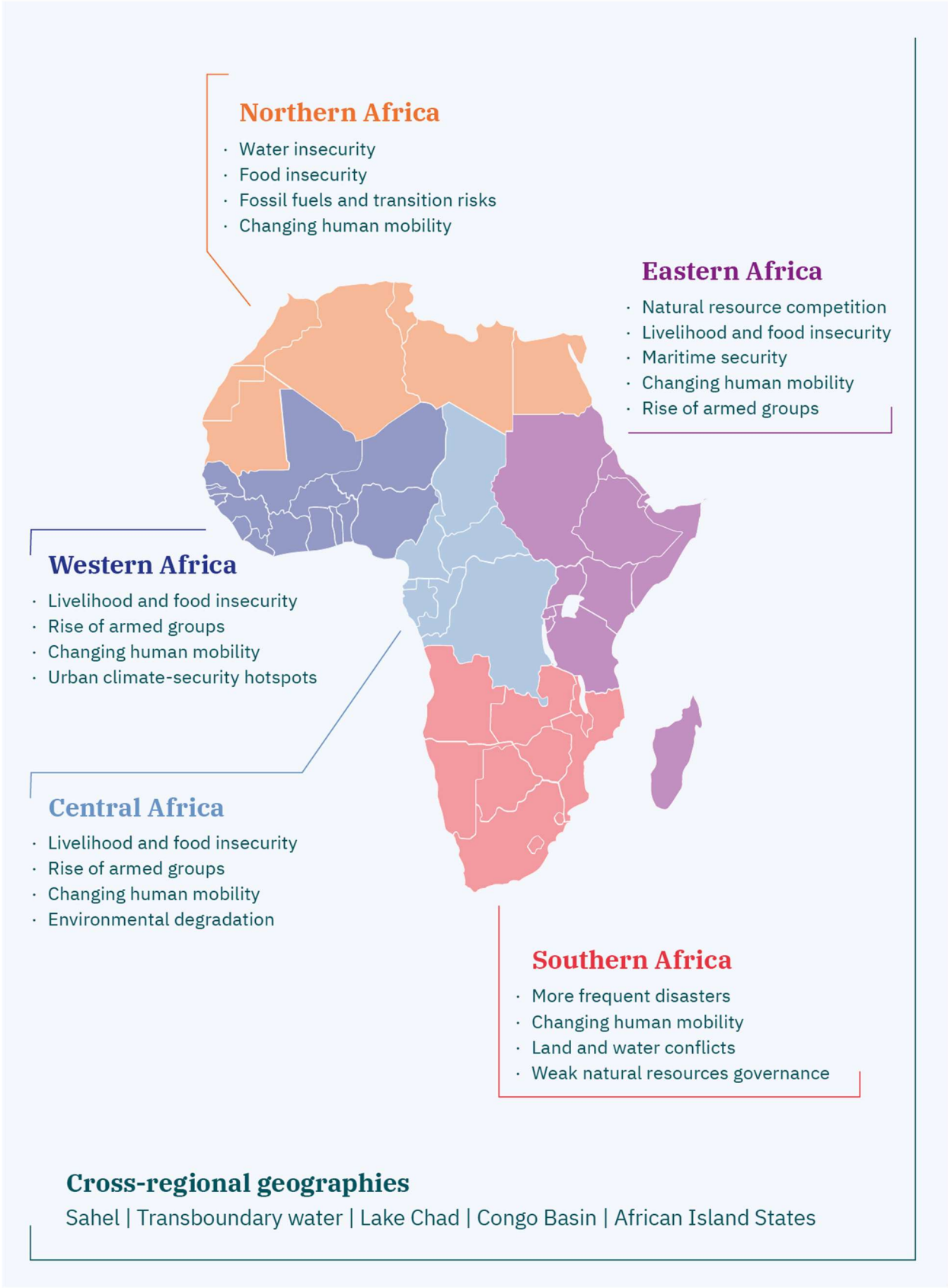
Figure 1: Overview of regional climate security pathways and cross-regional geographies

11 insights on climate change, peace and security in Africa

The understanding of the links between climate change, peace and security has increased significantly over the past decades and Africa is one of the best researched regions in the world on this topic. At the same time, a lot of the action to address climate-related security risks has also been focused on Africa, providing a good basis to distil emerging responses and good practices. The following chapter summarises the main results of the ACRA structured along 11 insights on climate, peace and security. The first six insights focus on how and what kind of climate-related security risks Africa is facing. They are followed by five insights on responses and good practices to address the security risks arising from climate change.

1. Natural resource management conflicts are an increasing and complex challenge

Increasing competition over natural resources is a key climate security challenge across the African continent, especially because many Africans are directly dependent on natural resources for food and livelihood security. Climate impacts are compounding other pressures on natural resources such as land, water and forests, and are changing the access to and availability of resources. The impacts of climate change on natural resources are manifold and vary across the continent. Where small arms are readily available, histories of conflict or social and ethnic cleavages exist, groups are marginalised, and natural resource management and conflict management institutions are dysfunctional, this competition can turn into violent conflict.

Key findings:

- While farmer-herder conflicts are well-evidenced, research shows that the reality of natural resource conflicts is much more complex and involves different groups, resources and sectors, such as fisheries, mining and conservation. Tensions and conflicts over water, fisheries, forests and land are increasing in all African regions.

- The potential for violence in natural resource conflicts is higher where political and social instability already exist. Exclusion and marginalisation often play an important role, as do existing societal cleavages (Raleigh 2010; Dutta Gupta et al. 2021). Governance is an important mediating factor. If it is functional, inclusive and legitimate, it can help to prevent conflicts and manage increasing pressures peacefully. Poor governance multiplies risks.

- Most natural resource conflicts are sub-national and local. As such, their dynamics are strongly influenced by the specific local context and differ between localities (Ide et al. 2014; Nhamirre et al. 2023). For example, in parts of Eastern Africa, the most prevalent form of pastoralist conflict is not conflict between farmers and pastoralists, but rather cattle raiding (Intergovernmental Authority on Development 2022).

- Competition between states over natural resources is also increasing, in particular over transboundary water resources from the Nile to the Juba-Shabelle and Zambezi River Basin (Climate Diplomacy n.d.b; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations - Somalia Water and Land Information Management n.d.; Petersen-Perlman 2016). Existing political tensions between states risk escalating with increasing and converging pressures of economic development, population growth and climate impacts and when upstream states take unilateral decisions that affect downstream users.

2. Livelihoods and food, water and energy security are under pressure

Livelihoods and food, water and energy security are under pressure across the continent. Climate impacts are increasingly aggravating other challenges around food, water and energy security. Already today, 1.34 billion Africans are water insecure, 20% are affected by hunger, and access to cheap and reliable energy is often missing (FAO et al. 2023). In particular in already unstable situations, livelihood and food, water and energy insecurity can drive a number of security-relevant challenges.

Key findings:

- When the provision of food, water and energy is interrupted or when rapid price increases occur, this can feed into pre-existing grievances and act as triggers for political instability and protests (Raleigh et al. 2015). During the last two global food price crises, protests linked to food prices occurred in countries in all African regions (Zaki 2008; Johnstone and Mazo 2011; Alshammari and Willoughby 2017; Soffiantini 2020).

- Weather-induced disasters are increasing across the continent. They put livelihoods under further pressure and exacerbate risks of instability, especially when responses to disasters are perceived as unfair or insufficient (Ide et al. 2020; Owusu-Sekyere et al. 2021). For example, protests occurred in Mozambique and Zimbabwe after Cyclone Idai in 2019 when affected populations were left without adequate food, energy and water (Madurga Lopez et al. 2021). The increased occurrence and costs of natural hazard-induced disasters also hinder the ability of governments to provide basic services and support development, which in turn can further undermine the legitimacy of governments and strengthen anti-state sentiments.

- Livelihood insecurity sometimes drives harmful coping mechanisms and maladaptation, for example deforestation, poaching, illegal fishing or mining (Foong et al. 2020; Scales and Friess 2019). Some of these activities are also used by armed groups to finance themselves. For example, Al Shabaab wields over taxes and revenues from charcoal production in Somalia, and in Sudan, artisanal gold mining has become an important source of revenue for the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) (Bolognesi et al. 2015; Climate Diplomacy n.d.a; Waal 2019).

3. Climate-induced human mobility creates opportunities and risks

Human mobility has been an integral part of the way of life for many communities across Africa for centuries. It remains an important part of livelihood activities and coping and adapting to change. Climate impacts are increasingly playing a role in these dynamics and are accelerating a number of mobility trends. Especially when movements are forced, sudden, at a larger scale, irregular and/or unplanned, the risks for both migrants and host communities increase. Mobility-related demographic pressures can turn into tensions and conflicts. However, if migration is well-managed and coordinated, it is and remains an important driver of economic development and resilience.

Key findings:

- By far the largest migration trend that is impacted by climate risks is migration within countries, in particular from rural areas to cities. By putting rural livelihoods under pressure, climate impacts are accelerating rural-urban migration and are projected to result in an estimated 87.5 million internal migrants by 2050 (Amakrane et al. 2023). When cities cannot cope with the rapid inflow of new migrants and offer access to services and livelihoods, tensions between population groups can emerge and grievances rise (Cilliers 2018). Against this background, rapidly growing cities are emerging as climate security hotspots across the continent.

- The frequency and severity of weather-induced disasters is increasing, and with it, the risks of displacement (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2023). Vulnerable groups such as IDPs and refugees, women, children, people with disabilities, and minority groups face particularly high risks (Laëtitia 2022; Siegfried 2022). At the same time, challenges often arise in receiving areas, including water, energy and food insecurity, as well as conflicts over access to natural resources, public services and jobs (International Organization for Migration 2020).

- Cross-border migrants largely stay within the same region (Africa Center for Strategic Studies 2023). While this migration is often described as being driven by economic reasons, climate risks are increasingly also affecting these movements through their impacts on livelihoods. Regional migrants tend to move to cities in neighbouring countries, further contributing to increasing pressures and challenges in urban areas. Tensions and risks particularly grow when xenophobia increases and politicians use migrants as scapegoats for economic, social and political problems, as can for example be seen in North and Southern Africa (Le Roux 2021; Cordall 2023).

- International migration from the African continent to other continents is smaller compared to mobility within the continent, but growing securitisation of borders in countries both within and outside of Africa means that international migrants have limited legal channels to move and have to resort to more dangerous routes that put them at higher risk of exposure to smugglers and traffickers (Mbiozo 2019; International Organization for Migration 2020). Migrants who move internationally also face significant risks in terms of abuse. In particular, women and children are at a heightened risk (Sultan and Mlowezi 2019).

4. Non-state armed groups are actively exploiting climate security risks and governance issues

Climate-related security risks are providing a fertile breeding ground for non-state armed groups such as militias, terrorist and criminal groups in Africa. Climate impacts are also affecting their tactics. In particular where state institutions are weak and corrupt, these groups can use the gaps left by the state to provide services and governance. Climate impacts, through their effects on livelihoods, are also contributing to the ability of these groups to recruit new members, and are making the use of natural resources as weapons more viable.

Key findings:

- Climate impacts are increasing pressures on state institutions. Where they are too weak or corrupt to provide governance and services, non-state armed groups can further undermine state institutions and build their own legitimacy and strength. These dynamics can be seen across the continent, for example in Somalia, where Al Shabaab is providing cash and disaster relief in the aftermath of droughts (Maystadt and Ecker 2014), and in Central Mali, where armed groups are providing conflict resolution around natural resources (Ursu 2018). In marginalised regions of northern Mozambique, the extremist group Ahlu Sunnah wa-I-Jama'ah (ASWJ) has attempted in the past to gain legitimacy by offering their own religious education and proselytization (Hamming 2021; Pirio et al. 2019).

- Climate impacts compound the multiple and complex factors that drive armed group recruitment, such as livelihood insecurity and lack of social and economic perspectives, and the economic incentives armed groups provide. This trend is evident in all regions of the African continent: in the Lake Chad region, many young people, particularly those displaced or who have lost their livelihoods, view armed groups as a means to escape hardship (Moaveni 2019; Vivekananda et al. 2019). Similar instances are also observed for young pastoralists in Eastern Africa, particularly those facing high levels of political exclusion and injustice (Intergovernmental Authority on Development - Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism 2023), as well as in Central Africa, where youth in rural communities have been lured into joining armed groups as they can ensure more socio-economic opportunities and assist in protecting livelihoods such as cattle and farmland (de Brier et al. 2020; Semba 2021).

- Armed groups often also exacerbate environmental challenges. Illegal resource extraction and environmental crimes, such as poaching and illegal logging and mining, are often important revenue sources for these groups. This is happening across the continent, but the Congo Basin is a particular hotspot where these activities threaten one of the last major net carbon sinks of the world (Hillert 2023; Vinke et al. 2023). The DRC, for example, has an estimated rate of 0.83% deforestation per year, ranking just behind Brazil and ahead of Indonesia in terms of net forest loss for the period 2010-2020 (FAO 2020).

- Climate impacts are also increasingly influencing the tactical considerations of armed groups and their decisions on when, where and how to operate, for example through weaponisation of natural resources, such as attacking water infrastructure. For example, in Libya, militant groups have systematically attacked water pipes for sabotage, which incentivised communities to drill private wells that in turn exacerbated water scarcity (Gatenby 2017). At the same time, climate-related hazards can also impede the operation of militaries and peacekeeping operations, in particular if they do not anticipate extreme weather events. For example, in South Sudan, floods have hindered aid delivery and civilian protection efforts, forcing the peace mission to build up its capacities and adapt its operations to anticipate extreme weather events (Mandoreba 2023).

5. Climate-related security risks in Africa have a geopolitical dimension

Climate-related security risks in Africa are highly dependent and influenced by a number of external factors. Geopolitics and policies in other parts of the world, especially with regard to food systems, extractive industries, energy, trade, and migration, shape climate insecurity drivers and Africa's ability to adapt to climate shocks.

Key findings

- The high dependence on imports and global markets makes African food systems vulnerable, especially as domestic production of key foodstuffs and the uptake of climate-smart agriculture remain relatively low. Global food price crises can lead to supply shocks (Detges et al. 2020).

- International fishing limits the climate resilience of coastal communities as it can negatively impact local livelihoods, indirectly driving security-related issues such as trafficking and piracy. For example, in Somalia, a combination of droughts and an increase in foreign industrial fishing has contributed to a rise in piracy (Belhabib et al. 2019).

- Multinational companies can play an important role in offering socioeconomic opportunities, but also in exacerbating climate security risks, especially when they engage in corruption and rent-seeking practices that drive environmental degradation (Sonno 2023). They can be involved as conflict actors, such as in highly sensitive topics like water and land management and mining. For example, in Liberia, private logging companies have been linked to political elites and multinationals and the activities and revenues have contributed to violence and conflicts in the past (Global Witness 2017).

- Africa holds an estimated 30% of the world's mineral reserves, which are crucial for the green transition and, as demand rises, bring opportunities as well as risks for the continent (South African Institute of International Affairs 2022). In most countries, the mining sector still faces challenges in terms of its social and environmental impacts and mainly generates revenue for selected elites, without creating sustainable development or adding enough value locally. For example, despite its importance for international trade, the mining sector in many Central African economies is poorly regulated and remains one of the key drivers of conflict and human rights violations and abuses (World Wide Fund for Nature 2023).

- Migration policies in many countries outside of Africa remain largely driven by efforts to curb migration instead of allowing for legal pathways. These policies increase risks for those who wish or need to move, and indirectly support criminal networks that profit from irregular migration, which in turn exacerbates the vulnerabilities that migrants face (Molenaar and El Kamouni-Janssen 2017; Frouws and Horwood 2023).

6. Climate-related security risks are intersectional

There are a number of individual risk factors shaping climate-related security risks, including gender, age, disability and socio-economic status. Marginalisation, inequality and exclusion are experienced differently depending how these factors intersect.

Key findings:

- In general, the more vulnerable an individual, the more they are impacted by climate-related security risks. Societal groups that have historically been marginalised, such as women, young people, children, IDPs and refugees, persons with disabilities and other minorities tend to be more affected by the compounding impacts of climate change as they often lack access to resources, opportunities, or services necessary for coping and adapting (Mbiyozo 2022).

- Women are generally disproportionately more vulnerable to natural hazard-induced disasters, particularly in terms of personal safety and gender-based violence (GBV) (Awiti 2022). For example, due to prevailing patriarchal norms, women across the continent are often excluded from land rights and decision-making over resource management. Furthermore, due to the labour-intensive household roles that women traditionally occupy, they also face more hurdles in realising their full potential to diversify their livelihood options or strengthen their resilience to climate shocks.

- Intersectional vulnerabilities to climate change play out across different interrelated areas, in particular food and livelihood security, mental and physical health, human mobility, decision-making and governance, and criminality and armed group recruitment, among others (Thiede et al. 2022; Abebe 2014; Rodgers 2022; Haer 2018).

7. Early warning and early action systems are well developed, but key challenges remain to integrate the climate-conflict nexus

Early warning analysis to inform planning and action is a major component of addressing climate-related security risks. They are also at the heart of prevention strategies, both in terms of preparing for natural hazards as well as addressing violent conflict or other threats to human security. Even though many African actors at different levels have developed extensive early warning and early action systems, some key challenges in terms of mainstreaming the climate-conflict nexus remain.

Key findings:

- At the national level, many steps still need to be taken in terms of developing early warning systems. Only about 40% of African countries have functioning early warning systems, largely due to poor access to and availability of reliable data (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction 2022).

- Early warning systems that exist often face quality issues due to severe limitations in hydro-meteorological infrastructure and services as well as multi-hazard monitoring capacities.

- Existing early warning systems suffer from horizontal siloes and struggle to mainstream the climate-conflict nexus, mainly because they are institutionally divided between climate and weather-focused early warning on the one side, and conflict early warning on the other (Moyo and Phiri 2023; Nhamirre et al. 2023). Lack of harmonisation between both early warning pillars is evidenced in the poor integration of climate and conflict indicators in both systems.

- Early warning systems at the continental, regional, national and local levels also lack vertical integration. One key challenge remains the integration of local knowledge and data gathered through civil society networks into existing systems.

8. Nature-based solutions and integrated natural resource management approaches have proven effective to address climate-related security risks

Across the continent, nature-based solutions and integrated approaches that link livelihoods, natural resource management and peacebuilding have proven to be effective in addressing many climate-related security risks and building resilience. The lessons they provide can guide future programming and upscaling.

Key findings:

- Nature-based solutions and restoration activities such as the Great Green Wall can be an important response to address the different interlinked risks around climate change and conflict. They can help to prevent climate change by reducing carbon emissions and address environmental degradation.

- Environmental peacebuilding approaches have helped to address natural resource-based conflicts, (re)build relationships between groups and social cohesion, make the management of natural resources more sustainable, and improve livelihoods. For example, in countries like Nigeria, Mali and South Sudan, mediation support and conflict sensitivity training have proven to reduce conflict over natural resources between farmers and herders (Mercy Corps 2017; Mokgonyana 2023).

- If done in a conflict-sensitive, bottom-up, participatory and inclusive way, using local and traditional knowledge and practices and an intersectional approach, nature-based solutions and environmental peacebuilding can have broader stabilising impacts and build more resilient and sustainable livelihoods (Woroniecki et al. 2020; Trisos et al. 2022; Roz Price 2020). For example, integrated environmental peacebuilding projects at the border of Kenya and Uganda have resulted in enhanced access to water and pasture for pastoralists, as well as improved social cohesion between groups.

- Whilst some environmental challenges can be overcome with technical solutions, sustainable peace requires long-term trust-building and integrative approaches. Developing adequate institutional capacity for dialogue and negotiation is important to ensure long-term resilience in natural resource management that mitigates climate-related conflicts.

9. Local, traditional and indigenous knowledge and solutions are key success factors for addressing climate-related security risks

Local, traditional and indigenous practices, knowledge and institutions are often important success factors when it comes to sustainable natural resource management, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, and environmental protection. As such, they are also key success factors for addressing climate-related security risks.

Key findings:

- Indigenous and local knowledge strongly influence climate adaptation responses across Africa. Many communities deeply understand their local ecosystems and have developed farming and water management practices adapted to their specific environments that can be effective in helping communities cope with the impacts of climate change (Zvobgo et al. 2022). Some of these traditional practices are already climate-smart, such as terracing, intercropping, using drought-resistant crops, irrigation techniques and rainwater harvesting (Al-Zu'bi et al. 2022; Gibson and Anderson 2023; Awuah-Nyamekye 2019).

- Traditional institutions and practices are also key for preventing and resolving conflicts peacefully. In many customary practices, reconciliation is prioritised over litigation. For example, traditional leaders such as clan elders have historically played an important role in managing and mediating cattle rustling activities (Idris 2018).

- Indigenous and traditional practices and institutions are instrumental in maintaining the health and integrity of natural landscapes and thereby in conserving natural resources such as forests (Bennett et al. 2022). Environmental defenders that include indigenous communities, ethnic groups and young people in particular are actively working across the continent to safeguard, in a peaceful manner, human rights relating to the environment, including water, air, land, flora and fauna (Kumar 2019). Unfortunately, there has been a rise in the criminalisation of, as well as violence against, land and environmental rights defenders across the continent (Business and Human Rights Resource Centre 2021).

- At the same time, with increasing climate pressures, certain traditional and customary practices are no longer effective or viable (Filho et al. 2023; Ayal et al. 2015). In some cases, they can also hinder climate adaptation, for example if they reinforce gender inequalities. Thus, it is important to thoroughly assess and support existing practices and reconcile them with science-based approaches.

10. Africa is leading in institutional innovations and cross-sectoral cooperation to address climate-related security risks

Recent years have seen an impressive increase in the creation of dedicated institutions and cross-sectoral cooperation mechanisms to address climate-related security risks. Globally, Africa is a leader when it comes to innovation in this area.

Key findings:

- In particular in Western and Eastern Africa, regional organisations have been at the forefront of institutional innovations: ECOWAS and UNOWAS are engaged in a major collaborative effort through the Regional Working Group on Climate Change, Environment, Security and Development (CCESD) to address the impact of climate change on peace and security in Western Africa (United Nations Office for West African States 2022). In Eastern Africa, several UN actors (such as UNMISS, UNSOM and UNSE-HoA) have their own dedicated environmental and climate security advisers, and IGAD is leading the way in mobilising regional political will and facilitating cooperation to address climate security risks, including through a Regional Climate Security Mechanism (IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Center n.d.).

- In Northern Africa, the League of Arab States (LAS), encompassing both Northern Africa as well as the Middle East, hosts the 'Climate Security Initiative'. Together with the Arab Water Council (AWC), the LAS also runs the 'Regional Climate Security Network' to coordinate responses to climate security challenges and to integrate a security perspective into climate action between states in the Arab region including Northern Africa (Arab Water Council 2022).

- In Central Africa, the thematic lens of transhumance is used to address climate-related insecurity. For example, since 2019, the region has hosted two international conferences on transboundary transhumance where clear linkages between climate change, international mobility, and peace and security were drawn. Similarly, Central Africa is increasingly engaged in linking environmental protection and conservation with human security, including by hosting the One Forest Summit in 2023. The 'Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace' initiative launched by the Egyptian COP27 presidency is a continental effort to facilitate African knowledge sharing and capacity building, with a focus on climate adaptation and peacebuilding, climate-resilient food systems, climate-induced displacement, and climate finance.

- Initiatives targeted specifically at vulnerable groups including women and youth amplify the voices of groups that need to be better represented. A first youth dialogue titled 'Empowering African Youth Voices for a Peaceful and Climate-Resilient Future', hosted by the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development in 2022, gathered recommendations for how to advance integrated climate change and security responses, the outcomes of which were later presented at COP27.

- The Africa Climate Mobility Initiative (ACMI) was created in 2021 and aims to generate political momentum and a common policy agenda on climate mobility in Africa, and to support implementation capacity and partnerships on the continent.

11. The responses are lagging behind the risks

While there has been a lot of progress in addressing climate-related security risks, the responses are still lagging far behind the scale of the risks Africa is facing.

Key findings:

- Financing for both climate action and peacebuilding and conflict prevention have increased significantly over the past decades, but the financing gap remains enormous. The current flow of funds for adaptation in Africa is insufficient and falls billions of dollars short of the estimated minimum cost. The African Development Bank has stated that Africa will require $2.7 trillion by 2030 to address its climate change needs (African Development Bank Group (AfDB) 2023). In particular, climate financing does not always go to those contexts and countries that are the most vulnerable, especially those that are affected by fragility, conflict and violence.

- African island states face particular hurdles in accessing climate financing as they often face limited human and technical capacities. Despite high vulnerability to climate risks, island states classified as middle or high-income countries are not eligible for necessary funding (UN OHRLLS 2022).

- Some donors such as the UN Peacebuilding Fund and some financing instruments of the EU have priorities to fund projects that specifically address climate-related security risks. However, specific larger scale funding instruments for climate-related security are practically non-existent.

- While there have been significant improvements in terms of strengthening capacities to assess and address climate-related security risks, there are still significant gaps across Africa. In particular on the local and national level, these capacities are still mostly lacking.

- While there are more and more regional strategies addressing climate-related security risks, similar strategies on the national level often do not exist or existing frameworks have not mainstreamed a climate security lens (Office of the Special Adviser on Africa 2018).

- Implementation of policies is hampered by a lack of clarity regarding ownership and coordination, as well as lack of harmonisation between the peace and security architecture on the one hand and the climate and development pillar on the other hand. This is visible at national levels, but also in multilateral organisations such as the AU and the RECs/RMs.

Recommendations

Climate-related security risks are increasing across the African continent, in particular around natural resource competition, access to food, water and energy, migration and displacement, and armed groups. At the same time, insecurity and conflict are further driving environmental degradation and hindering climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.

In order to break this vicious cycle of increasing climate change, environmental degradation, insecurity and instability, ambitious action is needed. This includes, first and foremost, ambitious mitigation action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and keep warming at a minimum following the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. At the same time, efforts to adapt to climate change and directly address climate-related security risks must be massively upscaled. Addressing the links between climate change, peace and security is a key building block for development more broadly and a stable, peaceful and prosperous continent. The following six recommendations outline key areas that can help to better address climate-related security risks in Africa.

African challenges need African solutions

While there are important commonalities in terms of the climate-related security risks that African states and societies are facing, the specific ways they play out and their dynamics are always highly localised and specific. Histories of conflict, marginalisation, identity, the behaviour of political, traditional and business leaders, the underlying political economy and power structures, and governance structures and institutions are all decisive in translating climate risks into security and conflict risks. These factors are highly contextual and change from region to region, country to country and community to community. This means that in order to address climate-related security risks, the following areas should receive particular attention:

- **Strengthen analysis, research and data collection**: To inform appropriate solutions, African analysis, research and data collection capacities have to be improved to provide more contextualised analysis of how climate-related security risks play out.

- **Use local and traditional knowledge and institutions**: Using local, traditional and indigenous knowledge and institutions are important success factors for climate security interventions and should be a key part of an integrated approach.

- **Seize the strength of the young generation**: If given the right tools, it can be a source of rapid development and innovation. For this to become a reality, education and jobs will be foundational.

- **Do not leave African island states behind**: They need specifically designed solutions, access to finance, and capacity building, including enhancing maritime awareness and enforcement capacities, investing in early warning and DRR, developing an integrated approach to water, food and energy security, and regular dialogues and knowledge-sharing platforms.

Financing climate security actions

In order to address climate-related security risks in their whole breadth and to build more resilient and sustainable economies, societies and states in Africa, access to finance will be key. There are a number of specific areas that need urgent action:

- **Close the climate financing gap**: In order to avoid the worst risks, there is an urgent need to invest more in risk prevention and resilience building. This includes better and easier access to adaptation finance as well as investments in absorption capacities. Additionally, operationalising an international mechanism to address loss and damage is necessary to compensate for destruction already caused by climate change.

- **Reach the most vulnerable, conflict-affected and fragile contexts**: Financing for these contexts must be ramped up and easier accessible, while capacities to manage these funds need to be strengthened, especially on the country level.

- **Strengthen African financing facilities**: Access to the African Risk Facility needs to be improved and the African Peace Fund could play a pivotal role in addressing climate security risks on the continent, but it needs to be urgently operationalised and scaled up.

- **Provide integrated financing to upscale climate security actions**: With substantive dedicated climate security funding schemes, the existing first experiences on addressing climate-related security risks and the emerging good practices documented in this report should be further upscaled and developed.

Institutions, cooperation and capacities for preventive action and resilience building

Climate-related security risks will increase significantly over the coming years and decades. In order to prevent the worst impacts, there is a need to move away from a reactive, responsive approach to a more proactive, anticipatory approach that focuses on prevention and resilience building and supports sustainable development more broadly. In order for this to happen, the following areas could serve as important entry points:

- **Mainstreaming climate security into strategies and policies:** Climate, peace and security should be fully mainstreamed in all relevant strategic and policy frameworks, including national adaptation plans, nationally determined contributions, climate change action plans, peace plans, interventions and architectures, defence strategies, stabilisation frameworks, and sectoral policies such as water, agriculture and energy.

- **Continue to strengthen the climate-conflict nexus in early warning and early action**: It is important that such systems draw clear linkages to indirect, cascading risks related to climate change and environmental stress by incorporating a clear set of climate security indicators, and that they link to and build upon local institutions, indigenous knowledge and civil society.

- **Foster cross-sectoral cooperation**: The goal is to improve operational responses, in particular by making peacebuilding and conflict prevention climate-sensitive and climate action conflict-sensitive. Part of this effort is that institutions provide strong leadership and incentives to enable such cooperation.

- **Develop and strengthen climate security capacities and institutions**: Organisations need dedicated climate security specialists and vertical and horizontal cooperation and coordination structures. In addition, organisations and institutions on all levels should establish clear lines of responsibility and accountability. To foster these developments, there needs to be a strong effort on exchanges of experiences, training and capacity building in this area, for example through an AU-led training facility for climate security.

- **African cities as transformative forces**: African cities should therefore leverage their human capital, increase efforts to tackle rising inequality and exclusion, and provide an enabling environment for the green transition. A particular focus should be put on improving cross-sectoral cooperation to foster localised solutions that address social, economic, environmental and political challenges in an integrated manner, for example through inclusive urban planning and development initiatives.

A strong civil society is resilience

Civil society is at the forefront of addressing climate-related security risks. Civil society actors are advocates and catalysts for necessary change and an indispensable partner to build more resilient societies and states, in particular in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. In order to play an effective role in addressing climate-related security risks, the following areas are key:

- **Build capacities and awareness**: More climate security capacities for civil society will be pivotal to fill the action gap on these risks on the local level. To enable civil society action on climate-related security risks, it will be important to raise awareness, provide good practices, and finance training and capacity building.

- **Partner for implementation**: Harnessing the strengths of civil society in particular its experience on how to implement projects in challenging environments, networks and implementation structures to deliver results, and local context knowledge and analytical capacities, partnerships for implementation on climate-security risks should be upscaled to ensure delivery on the ground.

- **Protection for those on the frontlines of climate security risks**: Environmental defenders and human rights activists need more engagement, awareness and protection mechanisms. This includes prioritising investments in protection, agency and capacity of environmental defenders.

- **Engage the private sector**: In partnerships with the private sector, civil society can help to enable the private sector to play a positive role in addressing climate-related security risks, for example by ensuring that infrastructure developments are conflict- and climate-sensitive and that they have real benefits for local communities.

Intersectionality is key to addressing vulnerability

The most vulnerable are the most affected by climate-related security risks. Gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, age, disability, and sexual orientation combine and shape risks on an individual level. In order to ensure that the most vulnerable are reached, the following areas of action are key:

- **Understand differences**: It is imperative that when data is collected, that it is disaggregated by gender, age and other factors that shape risk and resilience. In addition, climate security assessments need to critically reflect these factors and use an intersectional research lens. Climate security action needs to be tailored to also include the most vulnerable.

- **Ensure broad inclusivity**: To effectively address climate-related security risks, it is important to broaden participation and ensure that the voices of the most marginalised are part of decision-making process from policies to projects on the ground. This includes programmes to empower and enable effective participation, developing leadership skills and creating inclusive platforms.

- **Focus on the most marginalised and vulnerable:** Climate security action needs to focus on the most marginalised and vulnerable. This means that actions should be targeted towards women, young people, children, IDPs and refugees, persons with disabilities and other minority groups to ensure that interventions are inclusive and specifically address the root causes of marginalisation.

- **Address gender-based violence**: Action on GBV needs to be integrated across climate security programming and upscaled in general. This includes in particular improving the legal, social and physical protection of women and girls on the move.

No justice, no peace

Addressing climate-related security risks is closely linked to ensuring climate justice. Africa is globally one of the worst-affected regions in terms of climate impacts, conflicts and their interlinkages, while being one of the least responsible regions in terms of causing climate change. This injustice

needs to be addressed. In terms of climate-related security risks, this includes the following:

- **Amplify and unify African voices**: While some African countries have used the international stage to underline the urgent need to act on climate-related security risks, Africa's collective voice has not yet reached the level it should. A common position on climate, peace and security could be one key step in this regard. In addition, joint African diplomatic initiatives and capacities to urgently address climate-related security risks should be developed.

- **Ensure a just transition:** African states and international partners need to ensure that there is sufficient investment into the green transition on the African continent and enabling equal opportunities for growth and development. This includes developing local value chains for green technologies to avoid that African states are simply providing the necessary raw materials for the rest of the world.

- **Foster environmental justice:** Climate-related security risks must be addressed through an environmental justice approach, which includes recognising the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, as well as promoting the realisation of environmental protection and restoration through a rights-based approach. This includes integrating conservation efforts with ecosystem services, local livelihoods, and conflict prevention and resolution.

- **Reduce external risks:** Climate-related security risks are shaped by policies that are devised by countries outside of the African continent. As such, non-African states have the responsibility to ensure that key policies on food, migration, corruption, mineral and development cooperation are climate security-sensitive and do not exacerbate risks on the African continent.

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