

A photograph of a long, straight path lined with numerous United Nations member state flags on tall poles. The path leads towards a building with a sign that reads "UNITED NATIONS" and "NATIONS UNIES". The sky is blue with white clouds. A semi-transparent blue rectangle is overlaid on the middle of the image, containing text.

PRACTICE SIMULATION BACKGROUND GUIDE

Committee:
General Assembly

Topics:

1. The Impact of Climate Change on Peace and Security
2. Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought

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Credits:

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I. The Impact of Climate Change on Peace and Security

“Climate change is real, and it is accelerating in a dangerous manner. It not only exacerbates threats to international peace and security, it is a threat to international peace and security.”⁷⁹

Introduction

It is widely recognized that events caused by climate change can have global security implications, as they may have consequences that affected states and societies are unable to mitigate.⁸⁰ The United Nations (UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs recently included a warning in its 2017 *Sustainable Development Goals Report* about the profound global impact of climate change:

“Global temperatures continued to increase in 2016, setting a new record of about 1.1 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial period. The extent of global sea ice fell to 4.14 million square [kilometers] in 2016, the second lowest on record. Atmospheric CO₂ levels reached 400 parts per million. Drought conditions predominated across much of the globe.... In addition to rising sea levels and global temperatures, extreme weather events are becoming more common and natural habitats such as coral reefs are declining. These changes affect people everywhere, but disproportionately harm the poorest and the most vulnerable.”⁸¹

Since 2007, the UN Security Council has discussed the implications of climate change for peace and security on several occasions.⁸² Nevertheless, it has so far not come to definitive conclusions or decisions to respond directly to climate change as an independent threat to international security.⁸³ Instead, the Council has primarily assumed a position of a “non-response strategy,” meaning that it avoids a direct response to climate change, yet continues to decide upon related phenomena, such as civil war, desertification, or natural disasters.⁸⁴

This Background Guide will provide an overview of the origins and current state of the debate regarding the possibility of the UN Security Council assuming an active stance towards climate change. It will first shed light on the international framework for global climate policy by referring to key international documents and treaties. The next section will then show how key actors on the level of the international system are currently working to tackle the climate change-security nexus. This will include recent historical context on how the Security Council and its Member States have approached the problem. The actual scope of the problem of climate change and its potential implications for peace and security are at the focus of the next section. Finally, to guide delegates in their policy deliberations, there will be a discussion of the Security Council’s opportunities for action.

International and Regional Framework

The following paragraphs will provide background on key international documents and agreements that manifest the linkage of global climate policy with peace and security. The *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) does not make an explicit reference to the protection of the environment or global climate policy; it does, however, state as a fundamental purpose of the organization “to take collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace.”⁸⁵ The supreme organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, according to the Charter, is the Security Council.⁸⁶ The Council “may investigate any dispute, or any situation” that might pose a danger to international peace and security, and can add any traditional and non-traditional topics (including topics related to climate change, for example) to its agenda.⁸⁷ Chapters VI, VII, and VIII of the Charter determine several paths of action the Council may take, including investigation, diplomacy, sanctions, and even military action.⁸⁸

⁷⁹ UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in: UN Security Council, *Maintenance of international peace and security: Impact of climate change* (S/PV.6587), 2011, p. 2.

⁸⁰ Mobjörk et al., *Climate-Related Security Risks: Towards an Integrated Approach*, 2016, pp. 25-55.

⁸¹ UN DESA, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2017*, 2017, p. 44.

⁸² Mobjörk et al., *Climate-Related Security Risks: Towards an Integrated Approach*, 2016, pp. 28-29.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 28.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 1.

⁸⁶ Ibid., Art. 24.

⁸⁷ Ibid., Art. 34.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Chapters VI-VIII.

The Charter also served as foundation for the discussions at the groundbreaking 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, which sought to enhance international cooperation on global environmental and climate policy.⁸⁹ Principle two of the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (1992) confirms that, while states have the “sovereign right to exploit their own resources,” thanks to the Charter and the principles of international law, they must “ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.”⁹⁰ This no-harm principle, widely considered as the “foundation of international environmental law,” also guided the establishment of the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) as the primary international forum for global climate policy in 1992.⁹¹ The UNFCCC’s main objective is the “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.”⁹² Through mechanisms enshrined in the *Paris Agreement* (2015), which effectively succeeded the *Kyoto Protocol* (1997) and entered into force in November 2016, the parties to the UNFCCC have committed to nationally determined contributions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as to international financial and technological cooperation, to keep the global temperature rise from exceeding 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.⁹³

At the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the international community underlined in *The Future We Want* that climate change “is a cross-cutting and persistent crisis” that “threaten[s] the viability and survival of nations.”⁹⁴ Rising sea levels, in particular, pose a significant risk to small island developing states (SIDS) and “represent the gravest of threats to their survival and viability.”⁹⁵ When it adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the General Assembly reaffirmed in a similar statement that climate change “is one of the greatest challenges of our time” and that “the survival of many societies, and of the biological support systems of the planet, is at risk.”⁹⁶

It was also the General Assembly that prominently recognized climate change as a critical security issue in resolution 63/281 (2009), which invited the “relevant organs...to intensify their efforts in considering and addressing climate change, including its possible security implications.”⁹⁷ Subsequently and as requested in resolution 63/281, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued in 2009 a report on climate change and its possible security implications, which found that climate change acts as a “threat multiplier” for economic, social, and environmental problems, potentially aggravating already fragile situations.⁹⁸

Parallel to the previously listed elements of the international framework that focus on state-level security implications of climate change, there is also “a growing recognition...of the mutual interdependence between the security of individuals and communities and the security of nation States.”⁹⁹ This concept of human security is most influentially defined in the 1994 *Human Development Report* as “freedom from fear and freedom from want,” as well as “safety from such chronic acts as hunger, disease and repression and ... protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, jobs or communities.”¹⁰⁰ A number of international bodies have over recent years worked towards making global security policy considerations more human-centered, and in those approaches the negative effects of climate change on human security play a prominent role.¹⁰¹ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which serves as a scientific advisory body to the UNFCCC,

⁸⁹ Carlarne et al., *International Climate Change Law: Mapping the Field*, 2016, pp. 21-22.

⁹⁰ UN Conference on Environment and Development, *The Rio Declaration (A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. I))*, 1992, principle 2.

⁹¹ Voigt, *Security in a “Warming World”: Competences of the UN Security Council for Preventing Dangerous Climate Change*, 2009, p. 302.

⁹² *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992, art. 2.

⁹³ Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, *Paris Agreement (FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1)*, 2015, art. 2.

⁹⁴ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, para 25.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, paras. 25, 187.

⁹⁶ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 5.

⁹⁷ UN General Assembly, *Climate change and its possible security implications (A/RES/63/281)*, 2009, p. 2.

⁹⁸ UN General Assembly, *Climate change and its possible security implications: Report of the Secretary-General (A/64/350)*, 2009.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 6.

¹⁰⁰ UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994*, 1994, p. 23.

¹⁰¹ Mason, *Climate change and human security: the international governance architectures, policies and instruments*, 2015.

also bases its risk assessment on the paradigm of human security.¹⁰² In its latest *Fifth Assessment Report* (2014), the IPCC cites evidence that “human security will be progressively threatened as the climate changes.”¹⁰³

Although they do not directly approach climate change as a threat for international peace and security, there are several other noteworthy international agreements. The 1982 *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS) provides a “fairly comprehensive regime for the protection and preservation of the marine environment and the prevention, reduction, and control of marine pollution damage to other States.”¹⁰⁴ Its provisions, though subject to varying legal interpretations, may become of increasing relevance for small island states and states with low-lying coastal areas as sea level rise and damage to marine ecosystems are direct threats caused by climate change.¹⁰⁵ The *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (2015) must also be considered as a relevant document.¹⁰⁶ Adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, on March 18, 2015, it serves as an international accord to reduce risks stemming from disasters, “some of which have increased in intensity and have been exacerbated by climate change.”¹⁰⁷ The framework avoids linkages to peace and security, and rather focuses on adaptation and resilience-building.¹⁰⁸

Role of the International System

Despite periodic consideration of the issue, the UN Security Council has yet to make any formal decisions on its role in addressing climate change or to adopt any resolutions that respond directly to climate change as a discrete threat to international peace and security.¹⁰⁹ The topic of climate change was first discussed during a debate convened in 2007 by the United Kingdom.¹¹⁰ At the end of another debate in 2011, initiated by Germany, the Security Council unanimously adopted presidential statement 2011/15, which reaffirmed that the UNFCCC is the key instrument to address climate change, while also expressing the Council’s concern “that possible adverse effects of climate change may, in the long run, aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security.”¹¹¹ Subsequent briefings, debates, and informal meetings on the topic took place in 2011, 2013, 2015, 2016, and 2017; however, they did not result in any formal Council decisions, and “the future of the Council’s engagement with climate change [remains] uncertain.”¹¹²

The Security Council’s lack of action can be attributed to differing policies and standpoints regarding the securitization of climate policy.¹¹³ SIDS argue that a stronger role for the Security Council is both within its mandate and necessary to address the problem.¹¹⁴ Many SIDS face existential and security threats due to rising sea levels, which makes them, for example in the form of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), one of the loudest voices to call for global action against climate change, including in the Security Council.¹¹⁵

Many SIDS are also members of the Group of 77 (G77) coalition of developing countries, which is customarily supported by China.¹¹⁶ In 2007, when the topic was first on Security Council’s agenda, the G77 opposed a formal

¹⁰² Adger et al., *Human security*, 2014.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 758.

¹⁰⁴ *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, 1982; Boyle & Ghaleigh, *Climate Change and International Law beyond the UNFCCC*, 2016, p. 46.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 46-49.

¹⁰⁶ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁰⁸ Rüttinger et al., *A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks*, 2015, p. xii.

¹⁰⁹ Carlarne et al., *International Climate Change Law: Mapping the Field*, 2016, p. 21.

¹¹⁰ UN Security Council, *Letter dated 5 April 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2007/186)*, 2007; UN Security Council, *Climate change (S/PV.5663)*, 2007.

¹¹¹ UN Security Council, *Maintenance of international peace and security (S/PRST/2011/15)*, 2011.

¹¹² For an overview, see Born, *A resolution for a peaceful climate*, 2017, p. 5; Bhatiya, Ukraine, Germany, Sweden Urge UN Security Council to Address Climate Change Threat, *The Center for Climate and Security*, 2017; Security Council Report, *In Hindsight: The Security Council and Climate Change – An Ambivalent Relationship*, 2017.

¹¹³ Born, *A resolution for a peaceful climate*, 2017, pp. 5-7.

¹¹⁴ Warren, *Climate Change and International Peace and Security*, 2015, pp. 2-5.

¹¹⁵ de Agueda Corneloup & Mol, *Small island developing states and international climate change negotiations*, 2014.

¹¹⁶ Möbjörk et al., *Climate-Related Security Risks: Towards an Integrated Approach*, 2016, pp. 28-29.

consideration of climate change by the body to avoid encroachment on the work and mandate of other UN bodies.¹¹⁷ Since then, the position of the G77 has seemed to lose unanimity, as more and more countries and blocs acknowledged the direct linkage of climate change with peace and security, and declared their willingness to consider a stronger role for the Security Council.¹¹⁸

The European Union and its Member States are typically in favor of an increased role for the Security Council.¹¹⁹ It is no coincidence that the topic was first added to the agenda by the United Kingdom and that the only formal position of the Security Council, presidential statement 2011/15, was reached under the German presidency.¹²⁰ While the United States assumed a neutral position in 2007, it became one of the loudest proponents of securitization in the 2011 debate, when its delegate stated that it “is past time for the Security Council to come into the 21st century and assume our core responsibilities.”¹²¹ The recent decision by the United States government to withdraw from the UNFCCC’s *Paris Agreement*, however, makes a continuation of this position doubtful.¹²²

China and Russia, both veto powers, remain strong opponents to Security Council action confronting climate change.¹²³ Although they ratified the *Paris Agreement* and, especially in the case of China, seem to embrace a low-carbon transformation of their economies, they see no added value in involving the Security Council.¹²⁴ Russia fears “a further politicization of the issue and increased disagreements among countries,” while China, regarding climate change as “fundamentally a sustainable development issue,” points out that the Security Council lacks “universal representation” as well as the necessary expertise and capabilities, and therefore should not replace the UNFCCC.¹²⁵

Outside the Security Council, many institutions and organizations have subscribed to the idea that climate change has implications for peace and security. The Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, Patricia Espinosa, has recently emphasized that it is “key [to frame] climate change as a security story” and that “[climate] action reduces risk and increases stability.”¹²⁶ The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) recently published a joint strategic report with the International Police Organization (INTERPOL) entitled *Environment, Peace and Security: A Convergence of Threats* (2016), which focuses on environmental crime (which it finds worth up to \$258 billion) and its negative consequences for peace, security, and stability.¹²⁷ In cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the UN University, and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), UNEP also investigated the implications of climate change for livelihoods, conflict, and migration in the Sahel region.¹²⁸ UNEP furthermore contributed to the 2011 UN Security Council’s debate that resulted in presidential statement 2011/15 and provided substantial contributions to the UN Secretary-General’s 2009 report on climate change and its possible security implications.¹²⁹

The G7 group of industrialized countries has recognized that “climate change poses a serious threat to global security” and continues to formulate common climate policies, based on research such as its influential report *A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks* (2015).¹³⁰ The Secretary General of the military alliance North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Jens Stoltenberg, affirmed that “[climate] change is also a security threat” – a statement that is flanked by NATO’s growing concern about the topic.¹³¹ Similarly, many states

¹¹⁷ Warren, *Climate Change and International Peace and Security*, 2015, p. 2.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-5.

¹¹⁹ Warren & Utterback, United Nations Security Council Holds Special Meeting on Climate Change, *Climate Law Blog*, 2015.

¹²⁰ Warren, *Climate Change and International Peace and Security*, 2015, pp. 2-5.

¹²¹ UN Security Council, *Maintenance of international peace and security: Impact of climate change (S/PV.6587)*, 2011, p. 7.

¹²² The White House, *President Trump Announces U.S. Withdrawal From the Paris Climate Accord*, 2017.

¹²³ Warren, *Climate Change and International Peace and Security*, 2015, pp. 2-5.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ UN Security Council, *Maintenance of international peace and security: Impact of climate change (S/PV.6587)*, 2011, pp. 13, 9.

¹²⁶ UNFCCC, *The Climate Change Story is a Security Story. Address at Munich Security Conference by Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa*, 2017.

¹²⁷ INTERPOL & UNEP, *Strategic Report: Environment, Peace and Security – A Convergence of Threats*, 2016.

¹²⁸ UNEP, *Livelihood Security: Climate Change, Migration and Conflict in the Sahel*, 2011.

¹²⁹ UNEP, *Climate change and Security Risks*.

¹³⁰ Rüttinger et al., *A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks*, 2015.

¹³¹ Fetzek, *The Alliance in a Changing Climate*, 2017.

include the security implications of climate change in their national security strategies (or equivalent documents), including, for example, Russia and the United States.¹³²

Representatives from civil society and academia contribute to the debate about the security implications of climate change through direct contact with decision-makers, advisory contributions for international organizations and policy forums, public campaigns, and scientific and policy assessments.¹³³ This includes, for example, the publication of the international climate change think tank E3G named *United we stand: Reforming the UN to reduce climate risk*, which argues for an active UN Security Council role in global climate policy.¹³⁴ The Think20 dialogue process, an effort of international think tanks to inform the participants of the G20 Summit in July 2017, produced as a key policy brief *Building Global Governance for 'Climate Refugees'*, which focused on migration and displacement as direct consequences of climate change.¹³⁵ More generally, academic and research institutions, such as the Center for Climate and Security (CCS) and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), work as well-informed focal points for researchers, policymakers, and citizens who are interested in the debate.¹³⁶

Adverse Consequences of Climate Change for International Peace and Security

Climate change is advancing rapidly. It is expected that by the year 2100, there will be an increase in global temperature of 2 to 7 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, which will “cause more frequent and more severe extreme weather events such as heavy rains, drought, heatwaves and storms.”¹³⁷ Simultaneously, as the extent of global sea ice is receding due to global warming, sea levels will continue to rise, with estimates ranging from 0.36 to 0.58 meters by the year 2100.¹³⁸ Environmental stress caused by climate change will lead to declining agricultural yields in many regions of the world, with adverse effects including food insecurity, poverty, and competition over natural resources.¹³⁹ Droughts will become more common and reduce access to clean drinking water.¹⁴⁰ These negative effects of climate change will be most problematic in regions that are already weak and fragile, further jeopardizing the livelihoods of their inhabitants and increasing “migration that people would rather have avoided.”¹⁴¹

Classification of Security-Related Consequences of Climate Change

Scientific literature and political documents name several key direct and indirect adverse consequences of climate change on international peace and security. An informative summary is provided by the G7-commissioned report *A New Climate for Peace* (2015):

1. “Local resource competition: As the pressure on natural resources increases, competition can lead to instability and even violent conflict in the absence of effective dispute resolution.
2. Livelihood insecurity and migration: Climate [change] will increase the human insecurity of people who depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, which could push them to migrate or turn to illegal sources of income.
3. Extreme weather events and disasters: Extreme weather events and disasters will exacerbate fragility challenges and can increase people’s vulnerability and grievances, especially in conflict-affected situations.
4. Volatile food prices and provision: Climate change is highly likely to disrupt food production in many regions, increasing prices and market volatility, and heightening the risk of protests, rioting, and civil conflict.
5. Transboundary water management: Transboundary waters are frequently a source of tension; as demand grows and climate impacts affect availability and quality, competition over water use will likely increase the pressure on existing governance structures.

¹³² Born, *A resolution for a peaceful climate*, 2017, p. 6; UNFCCC, *The Climate Change Story is a Security Story. Address at Munich Security Conference by Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa*, 2017.

¹³³ Carlarne et al., *International Climate Change Law: Mapping the Field*, 2016, pp. 21-22.

¹³⁴ Born & Mabey, *United we Stand: Reforming the United Nations to Reduce Climate Risk*, 2016.

¹³⁵ Kraemer et al., *Forced Migration: Building Global Governance for 'Climate Refugees'*, 2017.

¹³⁶ The Center for Climate & Security, *Exploring the Security Risks of Climate Change*.

¹³⁷ German Advisory Council on Global Change, *Climate Change as a Security Risk*, 2007, p. 15.

¹³⁸ Rüttinger et al., *A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks*, 2015, p. 12.

¹³⁹ German Advisory Council on Global Change, *Climate Change as a Security Risk*, 2007, p. 15.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Adger et al., *Human security*, 2014, p. 762.

6. Sea level rise and coastal degradation: Rising sea levels will threaten the viability of low-lying areas even before they are submerged, leading to social disruption, displacement, and migration, while disagreements over maritime boundaries and ocean resources may increase.
7. Unintended effects of climate policies: As climate adaptation and mitigation policies are more broadly implemented, the risks of unintended negative effects – particularly in fragile contexts – will also increase.”¹⁴²

These key findings are also echoed in the Secretary-General’s report on climate change and its possible security implications (2009), which identifies five channels through which security could be affected:

1. “Vulnerability: climate change threatens food security and human health, and increases human exposure to extreme events;
2. Development: if climate change results in slowing down or reversing the development process, this will exacerbate vulnerability and could undermine the capacity of [s]tates to maintain stability;
3. Coping and security: migration, competition over natural resources, and other coping responses of households and communities faced with climate-related threats could increase the risk of domestic conflict as well as have international repercussions;
4. Statelessness: there are implications for rights, security, and sovereignty [or] the loss of statehood because of the disappearance of territory;
5. International conflict: there may be implications for international cooperation from climate change’s impact on shared or undemarcated international resources.”¹⁴³ A significant example is the disappearance of the Arctic’s sea-ice and permafrost due to global warming, which brings new opportunities for more human presence and economic activities, such as shipping lanes, trade passages, and resource exploration.¹⁴⁴ As the strategic importance of the Arctic regions increases, there may be a higher potential for interstate conflict.¹⁴⁵

Case Study: Lake Chad

Insightful evidence of how climate change fuels conflict can be found in the Lake Chad region, which extends to the territories of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. In the last 50 years, Lake Chad has lost 90% of its original size of 25,000 square kilometers due to the changing climate, unsustainable use of resources, as well as population growth in the surrounding area (from 13 million in 1960 to around 50 million in 2015, with prospects for further rapid growth).¹⁴⁶ As a consequence, “water scarcity, health issues, food insecurity and poverty have increased dramatically” for populations both directly and indirectly dependent on the lake’s natural resources and economic opportunities.¹⁴⁷

The resulting competition over natural resources, territorial disputes, and migration have led to heightened tensions in the Lake Chad region, increased the occurrence of violent conflicts, and even become “a factor driving recruitment by the terrorist group Boko Haram,” which is very active in the region.¹⁴⁸ Mohammed Ibn Chambas, in his function as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel, reported to the Security Council in 2016 that 9.2 million people in the region were in need of humanitarian assistance and 2.4 million people (among them 1.5 million children) had been displaced due to violent conflict, with most of them finding refuge in the region.¹⁴⁹ Chambas concluded that the Lake Chad region is proof that climate change “affects security, development and stability [and] becomes a fundamental threat to human security.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴² Rüttinger et al., *A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks*, 2015.

¹⁴³ UN General Assembly, *Climate change and its possible security implications: Report of the Secretary-General (A/64/350)*, 2009.

¹⁴⁴ Rüttinger et al., *A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks*, 2015, p. 70.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

¹⁴⁶ UN Security Council, *Peace and security in Africa (S/PV.7699)*, 2016, p. 3; UNEP, *Livelihood Security: Climate Change, Migration and Conflict in the Sahel*, 2011, p. 61.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Bhatiya, *A Post-Paris Agenda for Climate Security at the UN*, 2016, p. 8; Warren & Utterback, United Nations Security Council Holds Special Meeting on Climate Change, *Climate Law Blog*, 2015.

¹⁴⁹ UN Security Council, *Peace and security in Africa (S/PV.7699)*, 2016, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

With resolution 2349 (2017), the Security Council condemned Boko Haram's activities in the Lake Chad region and encouraged enhanced regional military cooperation to fight against the terrorist organization.¹⁵¹ Moreover, the Council recognized "the adverse effects of climate change and ecological changes among other factors on the stability of the Region, including through water scarcity, drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity."¹⁵² The resolution thus reveals "a growing willingness in the Council to recognize the security implications of climate change," but it remains to be seen whether this will lead to direct action.¹⁵³

Potential Security Council Actions

With resolution 1625, adopted unanimously at the 2005 World Summit, the Security Council acknowledged "the need to adopt a broad strategy of conflict prevention, which addresses the root causes of armed conflict and political and social crises."¹⁵⁴ This exemplified the Council's intention to assume a more active and preventive stance towards global threats, as resolution 1625 opened the door to focus on non-traditional international peace and security aspects.¹⁵⁵ For this reason, resolution 1625 also represents an important precedent for proponents of an increased role for the Security Council in global climate policy.¹⁵⁶ The Council has moreover proved its capacity and willingness to assume *de facto* global lawmaking competence when it criminalized terrorism with resolution 1373 (2001) and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction with resolution 1540 (2004).¹⁵⁷ Following these precedents, and pursuant to its mandate in the Charter, the Security Council could add climate change to its work agenda and become actively involved.¹⁵⁸ In this case, the Council would have to determine its role in relation to the UNFCCC accords (for example, acting as an enforcement agency) or to establish its own set of norms, objectives, and procedures.¹⁵⁹

Based on the Charter, the Council may assume a role of soft compliance through investigating the issue (Article 34), calling for peaceful settlement of a conflict through arbitration (Article 33 (2)), and making recommendations to the involved conflict parties (Article 38).¹⁶⁰ It may also call upon states to comply with provisional measures to "prevent an aggravation of the situation" (Article 40), such as urging them to ratify certain treaties or conventions, simply resorting to adopting a public resolution condemning certain actions or lack of actions, or calling upon the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to issue (non-binding) advisory opinions on states' climate action.¹⁶¹

A hard compliance policy, in the sense of Chapter VII of the Charter, could become manifest in the form of economic and diplomatic sanctions (Article 41), which could even be directed at certain polluting industries or climate-endangering markets.¹⁶² Based on its quasi-lawmaking competence (resolutions 1373 and 1540), the Security Council could also empower itself to investigate, regulate, and impose compliance, or create subsidiary bodies to do so.¹⁶³ However, the use of military force (Article 42) is, even in this theoretical debate, by most commenters rejected on "practical and moral grounds."¹⁶⁴ These concerns also point towards the limitations associated with the Security Council's potential actions. Even if the Council were willing to act, it may be limited by its lack of universal and equal representation, and accordingly, a perceived deficit in legitimacy.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵¹ UN Security Council, *Peace and security in Africa (S/RES/2349 (2017))*, 2017.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ Security Council Report, *In Hindsight: The Security Council and Climate Change – An Ambivalent Relationship*, 2017.

¹⁵⁴ UN Security Council, *Threats to international peace and security (Security Council Summit 2005) (S/RES/1625 (2005))*, 2005.

¹⁵⁵ Warren, *Climate Change and International Peace and Security*, 2015, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ UN Security Council, *Peace and security – terrorist acts (S/RES/1373 (2001))*, 2001; UN Security Council, *Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (S/RES/1540 (2004))*, 2004.

¹⁵⁸ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 34.

¹⁵⁹ Warren & Utterback, *United Nations Security Council Holds Special Meeting on Climate Change*, 2015.

¹⁶⁰ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Chapter VI; Warren, *Climate Change and International Peace and Security*, 2015, p. 10.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁶⁵ Boyle & Ghaleigh, *Climate Change and International Law beyond the UNFCCC*, 2016, p. 40.

Conclusion

This Background Guide section has introduced the reader to the debate about climate change and its implications for international peace and security. It has shown that the topic receives great attention from a wide variety of international bodies, and that there are several manifest indicators of the adverse consequences of climate change in the realm of international peace and security. The Security Council has been debating the topic for ten years now; yet – besides a presidential statement – it has not assumed an active role or even been able to formulate a common position.¹⁶⁶ If the Council decides to become more involved in global climate policy, there is a wide range of potential steps it can take that range from soft compliance to hard compliance measures.¹⁶⁷

Further Research

To guide delegates in their research and policy formulations, there are several noteworthy questions to consider: Is there a window of opportunity for a common position among all Member States of the Security Council and, if so, what would it look like? If the Council decides to seize the matter, how would it work alongside relevant international institutions – including, most importantly, the UNFCCC? What potential tools and measures are most likely to succeed?

Annotated Bibliography

Bhatiya, N. (2017, May 2). Ukraine, Germany, Sweden Urge UN Security Council to Address Climate Change Threat. *The Center for Climate and Security*. Retrieved 6 June 2017 from: <https://climateandsecurity.org/2017/05/02/ukraine-and-germany-urge-un-security-council-to-address-climate-change-threat/>

The author is an eminent researcher in the field of climate change securitization. In this blog article, the author provides an update on the Security Council's latest informal debate on climate change and security, which was convened by Ukraine in April 2017. Since there was no formal resolution, the article introduces the debate and summarizes the statements of its participants and their diverging views. The source is valuable, as it highlights the most recent developments of the Council's ongoing consideration of climate change.

Born, C. (2017, January). *A resolution for a peaceful climate: Opportunities for the UN Security Council*. SIPRI Policy Brief. Retrieved 5 June 2017 from: <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Resolution-for-peaceful-climate.pdf>

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) is a government-sponsored research institute on global security based in Sweden. The author, an eminent climate policy analyst and advisor, provides a timely and precise overview of the Security Council's stance vis-à-vis climate change and outlines potential benefits of a more active role of the Council. The source is especially valuable for delegates, as it provides a current, comprehensive, and authoritative analysis of the topic.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-fourth session. (2009). *Climate change and its possible security implications: Report of the Secretary-General (A/64/350)*. Retrieved 5 June 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/64/350>

As requested by the UN General Assembly in its resolution 63/281 on "Climate change and its possible security implications" (2009), the Secretary-General presented this comprehensive report. The report outlines key channels how climate change, essentially a "threat multiplier," may affect security and desirable conditions or paths of action that would minimize risks for international peace and security. The report served and still serves as the most comprehensive and defining document produced on the level of the UN on this topic, which is why delegates should not miss it.

¹⁶⁶ Mobjörk et al., *Climate-Related Security Risks: Towards an Integrated Approach*, 2016, p. 28.

¹⁶⁷ Warren, *Climate Change and International Peace and Security*, 2015.

United Nations, Security Council, 6587th meeting. (2011). *Maintenance of international peace and security (S/PRST/2011/15)* [Presidential Statement]. Retrieved 5 June 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/S/PRST/2011/15>
The Security Council considered in its 6587th meeting the impact of climate change as part of its debate on “Maintenance of international peace and security.” It is the first time that the Council acknowledged possible security implications due to climate change and that this acknowledgment warrants further observation. Although the Council did not adopt a resolution, this presidential statement, made on behalf of the Council, represents the minimum consensus and is regarded a milestone in the securitization of climate change.

Warren, D. (2015). *Climate Change and International Peace and Security: Possible Roles for the U.N. Security Council in Addressing Climate Change*. Sabin Center for Climate Change Law / Columbia Law School. Retrieved 5 June 2017 from: https://web.law.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/microsites/climate-change/warren_-_cc_and_international_peace_and_security_-_roles_for_the_un_security_council.pdf

Columbia Law School’s Sabin Center for Climate Change is a private research institute with a distinguished reputation for its North American and international climate law and regulation analysis. The author of this paper presents a basic and introductory analysis of the Security Council’s actual and potential role in climate change, as well as an overview of relevant literature and sources. Delegates might consider this source as a first step to gaining a general idea of the topic and its implications.

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II. Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought

In 2019, Secretary-General António Guterres, on the occasion of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, stated that each year, 24 billion tons of fertile soil is lost due to erosion, and that land degradation disproportionately affects developing countries¹. Land degradation can be found in almost 2 million hectares of land around the world, on which 1.5 billion people live and depend². Globally, 74% of the poor are directly affected by land degradation³. Desertification and drought alone are responsible for the annual loss of 12 million hectares of land, which amounts to 23 hectares lost per minute⁴, and could have produced 20 million tons of grain⁵. To achieve land degradation neutrality (LDN), which is defined as “[a] state whereby the amount and quality of land resources, necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security, remains stable or increases within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems”⁶, over 10 million hectares of land would have to be restored in the Sahara region by 2030⁷. Drought, which is a naturally occurring phenomenon in many parts of the world, is known to have affected more people in the last 40 years than natural hazards and has been exacerbated in frequency, duration and severity in recent years due to climate change⁸. Desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) are issues that are closely linked, and can have lasting effects on living conditions, poverty, food security, and migration.

June 17th was named World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought⁹. The 2020 theme for this day was “Food. Feed. Fibre. The Links Between Consumption and Land”. The year 2020 marks the end of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification¹⁰, which was decided in General Assembly resolution 62/195¹¹ to promote the fight against desertification and the protection of drylands. Resolution 64/201, adopted by the GA in 2010, further clarified the objectives of the decade¹². December 5th was appointed as World Soil Day by the United Nations¹³. This year’s theme is “Keep Soil Alive, Protect Soil Biodiversity” and it seeks to “raise awareness of the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems

¹ “Secretary-General Urges Protecting, Restoring Degraded Land in Message for World Day to Combat Desertification | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases,” June 12, 2019, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sgsm19621.doc.htm>.

² “Desertification and Land Degradation | Action Against Desertification,” n.d., <http://www.fao.org/in-action/action-against-desertification/overview/desertification-and-land-degradation/en/>.

³ “Forests, Desertification and Biodiversity,” United Nations Sustainable Development, n.d., <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/biodiversity/>.

⁴ “Forests, Desertification and Biodiversity.”

⁵ “The United Nations Decade for Deserts (2010-2020) and the Fight against Desertification | UNCCD,” n.d., <https://www.unccd.int/actions/united-nations-decade-deserts-2010-2020-and-fight-against-desertification>.

⁶ “Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality | UNCCD,” n.d., <https://www.unccd.int/actions/achieving-land-degradation-neutrality>.

⁷ “Desertification and Land Degradation | Action Against Desertification.”

⁸ FAO, “Drought | Land & Water,” n.d., <http://www.fao.org/land-water/water/drought/en/>.

⁹ United Nations, “World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, 17 June,” United Nations (United Nations, n.d.), <https://www.un.org/en/observances/desertification-day/background>.

¹⁰ “2010–2020: UN Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification,” n.d., https://www.un.org/en/events/desertification_decade/background.shtml.

¹¹ Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-fourth session, A/RES/62/195, 2007, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/62/195>.

¹² United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010–2020), A/RES/64/201, 2010, <https://undocs.org/A/RES/64/201>.

¹³ United Nations, “World Soil Day,” n.d., <https://www.un.org/en/observances/world-soil-day>.

and human well-being by addressing the growing challenges in soil management, fighting soil biodiversity loss, increasing soil awareness and encouraging governments, organizations, communities and individuals around the world to commit to proactively improving soil health.”¹⁴

The definitions for desertification, land degradation and drought are provided in the first article of the *United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa* (UNCCD)¹⁵, which was established in 1994 and is the sole binding agreement concerning this topic. There are 197 parties to the UNCCD. As stated on the UNCCD website, “[t]he Convention’s 197 parties work together to improve the living conditions for people in drylands, to maintain and restore land and soil productivity, and to mitigate the effects of drought. The UNCCD is particularly committed to a bottom-up approach, encouraging the participation of local people in combating desertification and land degradation.”¹⁶

In addition to the Convention, in 2017, the *UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework* was adopted at the 13th UNCCD Conference of the Parties (UNCCD COP13) as an annex to the *Future Strategic Framework of the Convention*¹⁷. This document seeks to achieve land degradation neutrality and envisions “[a] future that avoids, minimizes, and reverses desertification/land degradation and mitigates the effects of drought in affected areas at all levels and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”¹⁸. It contains several strategic objectives which can provide inspiration for delegates¹⁹, and it also underlines the financial obligations of the parties of the UNCCD to deal with issues such as DLDD²⁰.

COP13 was also responsible for the implementation of the Drought Initiative, which focuses on drought preparedness systems, regional efforts, and the creation of a toolbox “to boost the resilience of people and ecosystems”²¹. The most recent resolution adopted by the General Assembly concerning the UNCCD is resolution 74/220: *Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa*²². It details some of the many measures that Member States can take to improve their tackling of DLDD. Resolution 74/220 is based on the Secretary-General note A/74/207: *Implementation of United Nations Environmental*

¹⁴ FAO, “World Soil Day,” n.d., <http://www.fao.org/world-soil-day/en/>.

¹⁵ “United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa” (United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 1954, p. 3, 1994), https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/relevant-links/2017-01/UNCCD_Convention_ENG_0.pdf [hereafter UNCCD].

¹⁶ “About the Convention | UNCCD,” n.d., <https://www.unccd.int/convention/about-convention>.

¹⁷ “The Future Strategic Framework of the Convention” (Decision 7/COP.13, 2017), https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/relevant-links/2018-08/cop21add1_SF_EN.pdf.

¹⁸ “The Future Strategic Framework of the Convention,” at par. 4.

¹⁹ “The Future Strategic Framework of the Convention,” at par. 5.

²⁰ “The Future Strategic Framework of the Convention,” at par. 9 (a)-(c).

²¹ “The Drought Initiative | UNCCD,” n.d., <https://www.unccd.int/actions/drought-initiative>.

²² Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, A/RES/74/220, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/74/220>.

*Conventions*²³. This report on the implementation of the UNCCD provides an update on the activities that have been undertaken recently to combat DLDD.

It should be noted that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15: “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”²⁴, is directly linked to this topic. The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1)²⁵ details the goal and its 9 targets, which include a variety of issues such as reforestation, the halt of desertification, the achievement of a land degradation-neutral world, the reduction of the degradation of natural habitats, etc.²⁶

In its Decision 3/CP.23, the Conference of the Parties developed a Gender Action Plan (GAP) “to support the implementation of gender-related decisions and mandates in the UNFCCC process, which may include priority areas, key activities and indicators, timelines for implementation, responsible and key actors and indicative resource requirements for each activity, and to further elaborate its review and monitoring processes.”²⁷ The UNCCD recognizes that women are affected differently by issues of DLDD, and that their input and knowledge are essential to projects that aim to sustainably reduce land degradation²⁸. UN-Women, in collaboration with the UNCCD and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), published in 2019 *A Manual for Gender-Responsive Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes* to help Parties to the UNCCD integrate gender issues and promote gender equality in their efforts to achieve land degradation neutrality²⁹.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a major player in the fight against DLDD, given the obvious link between these issues and food security. For instance, the FAO is one of the driving forces behind the 2014 project Action Against Desertification, which supports governments and communities in several countries located mainly in Africa, and whose objective is to address the social, economic and environmental impacts of land degradation and desertification³⁰.

Many local initiatives have taken place around the world in relation to the UNCCD³¹. In Buenos Aires, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development has implemented the Information System and Early Warning of Droughts of the Southwest of Buenos Aires (SIAT), which addresses the issue of fragile soils

²³ Implementation of United Nations environmental conventions, A/74/207, 2019, <https://undocs.org/A/74/207>. The section on the UNCCD begins at page 7, in part II.

²⁴ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “Goal 15,” n.d., <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal15>.

²⁵ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>.

²⁶ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Goal 15.

²⁷ Gender Action Plan, annex, Decision 3/CP.23, 2017, <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2017/cop23/eng/11a01.pdf#page=13> at p. 15.

²⁸ “Gender Action Plan | UNCCD,” n.d., <https://www.unccd.int/actions/gender-action-plan>.

²⁹ UN-Women, UNCCD, and IUCN, “A Manual for Gender-Responsive Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes,” 2019, <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2019/manual-for-gender-responsive-land-degradation-neutrality-transformative-projects-en.pdf?la=en&vs=2328>.

³⁰ “Overview | Action Against Desertification | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,” n.d., <http://www.fao.org/in-action/action-against-desertification/overview/en/>.

³¹ “Actions around the World | UNCCD,” n.d., <https://www.unccd.int/actions/actions-around-world>.

and semi-arid regions of the country. The system, which functions thanks to meteorological stations in the region, issues alerts and warnings on natural hazards that could affect the environment. It also produces reports to share environmental knowledge with local producers. A conservation education program launched in 2016 in Azerbaijan successfully helped students acquire knowledge about rare vegetation and enhanced their pro-environment attitudes³². In Kenya, local women, with support from the Global Greengrants Fund, together with the Indigenous Information Network (IIN) and the Kenya Forest Working Group (KFWG), have contributed to the reforestation of the Mau Forest by taking care of tree “nurseries” and selling the tree seedlings to local farmers and the government. Over 10,000 hectares of forest have been restored thanks to this initiative, which improved food security and provided a source of income for women, among other things³³. The Great Green Wall, which is a Pan-African initiative dating back to 2005, seeks to “restore and sustainably manage land in the Sahel-Saharan region in order to address both land degradation and poverty.”³⁴ It has many objectives and has produced impressive results, notably in Ethiopia, where 15 million hectares of degraded land has been restored, in Senegal, where 11.4 million trees have been planted, in Nigeria, where 5 million hectares of degraded land has been restored, in Sudan, where 2,000 hectares of land has been restored, and in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, all of which have also seen improvements in land degradation³⁵. The benefits of projects like the Great Green Wall are often manifold and extend beyond achieving land degradation neutrality, as they can lead to improved living conditions for local communities.

Some Ideas for Research Perspectives

The role of youth³⁶: young people make up an important part of the population affected by DLDD, and will be required, in the next few years, to deal with the impacts of climate change more than any previous generation. The *Global Youth Initiative for Combating Desertification Declaration*, which was adopted in 2017, seeks to empower young people to act in the fight against desertification³⁷. The *Declaration of the Youth Forum* presented at COP14 in 2019 has similar goals³⁸. How can Member States contribute to this empowerment? How can youth in areas not affected by DLDD be made aware of these issues?

Food security: the FAO warns, in its 2015 report entitled *Status of the World’s Soil Resources*, that a loss of productivity in food production due to land degradation could significantly increase the gap between food supply and food demand³⁹, with potentially dire effects. How could these effects be mitigated by the

³² “Evaluating the Effectiveness of Long-Term Integrated Research and Conservation Education Program, Azerbaijan,” 2018, https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/Final%20Report_UNCCD_2018.pdf.

³³ Global Greengrants Fund, “Our Voices, Our Environment: The State of Funding for Women’s Environmental Action,” 2018, https://www.greengrants.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/GGF_Gender-Mapping-Report_HighRes-Singles.pdf.

³⁴ UNCCD, “The Great Green Wall: Implementation Status and Way Ahead to 2030,” 2020, 4, https://catalogue.unccd.int/1551_GGW_Report_ENG_Final_040920.pdf.

³⁵ “The Great Green Wall Initiative | UNCCD,” n.d., <https://www.unccd.int/actions/great-green-wall-initiative>.

³⁶ “Land and Youth | UNCCD,” n.d., <https://www.unccd.int/issues/land-and-youth>.

³⁷ The Global Youth Initiative for Combating Desertification Declaration, 2017, https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/Global%20Youth%20Initiative_Youth%20Declaration_220917-%20new%20format_final.pdf.

³⁸ Declaration of the Youth Forum, Annex III, ICCD/COP(14)/23, 2019, https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2019-12/ICCD_COP%2814%29_23-1918294E.pdf.

³⁹ FAO, “Status of the World’s Soil Resources,” 2015, 172, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5199e.pdf>.

international community? What measures could be put in place to prevent a serious threat to food security? How can developed countries provide assistance to developing countries who rely mainly on agriculture to thrive?

Pastoralism and other traditional methods: resolution 2/24 of the United Nations Environment Assembly in 2016 promotes the use of pastoralism, which it defined as “a historical practice that in many countries is very much linked to the distinct cultures, identities, traditional knowledge and way of life of indigenous peoples and local communities across the globe that have often contributed to enhancing and maintaining biodiversity, food security and sustainable management of rangelands”⁴⁰. Pastoralists provide significant improvements to drylands since their herds, when “[m]oving from place to place, [...] disperse seeds, fertilize soils with their dung, and maintain landscapes and biodiversity through trampling and grazing.”⁴¹ Initiatives such as the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub⁴² help raise awareness on more traditional methods of halting desertification and land degradation. How can Member States promote such methods within their own country and provide assistance to communities who have been using them? How can traditional methods be promoted and widely used, in an increasingly industrialized agricultural world?

Forced migration due to land degradation: the International Organization for Migration (IOM) published a report that explored the link between DLDD and migration in 2019: *Addressing the Land Degradation—Migration Nexus: The Role of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification*⁴³. This report explains that, as was required by the UNCCD, notably at article 11 (f)⁴⁴, Member States should take action to mitigate the impacts of DLDD, including the potential resulting migration. Its second part contains several examples of “Good Practices and Lessons Learned”⁴⁵ and its third part lists many recommendations that States can adopt⁴⁶. How can Member States prepare for what is to come? Can they prevent migration due to land degradation in the first place? If so, how?

Sand and dust storms: sand and dust storms (SDS) are potentially dangerous natural events that are closely linked to land and water management and can “have significant socio-economic impacts on human health, agriculture, industry, transportation, water and air quality.”⁴⁷ According to the UNCCD website, 77% of the Parties to the UNCCD are affected by SDS⁴⁸. These same Parties adopted in 2019 a decision on SDS to

⁴⁰ Combating desertification, land degradation and drought and promoting sustainable pastoralism and rangelands, UNEP/EA.2/Res.24, 2016, https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/11197/K1607149_UNEPEA2_RES24E.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y, preamble.

⁴¹ “Putting Sustainable Pastoralism on the Global Agenda,” UN Environment, December 7, 2017, <http://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/putting-sustainable-pastoralism-global-agenda>.

⁴² FAO, “Pastoralist Knowledge Hub,” n.d., <http://www.fao.org/pastoralist-knowledge-hub/en/>.

⁴³ IOM, “Addressing the Land Degradation – Migration Nexus: The Role of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,” 2019, <https://knowledge.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2019-08/IOM%20UNCCD%20Desertification%202019%20FINAL.pdf>.

⁴⁴ UNCCD, at art. 11(f).

⁴⁵ IOM, “Addressing the Land Degradation – Migration Nexus: The Role of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,” 15.

⁴⁶ IOM, 33.

⁴⁷ “Sand and Dust Storms | UNCCD,” n.d., <https://www.unccd.int/actions/sand-and-dust-storms>.

⁴⁸ “Sand and Dust Storms | UNCCD.”

highlight the necessity of acting proactively both regionally and globally⁴⁹. What role can Member States play in preventing SDS? What actions can be taken to mitigate their effects?

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2016). *Trees, Forests and Land Use in Drylands: The first global assessment*. Retrieved 22 August 2019 from: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5905e.pdf>

This FAO publication will show delegates the relationship between land productivity and the socio-economic status of local populations. It shows the importance of monitoring the land and soil health in dryland forests which are not often prioritized in climate action. It also shows the various international organizations that are working to restore drylands, and equip local communities with information on how to adapt to desertification. It contains information on the world's drylands and shows the intensity of desertification and drought in various parts of the world. Delegates will find this useful when conducting research on policy responses to desertification and drought.

Global Greengrants Fund. (2019). *Where Change Takes Root*. Retrieved 21 August 2019 from: <https://www.greengrants.org/who-we-are/>

In order to bridge the gap between policy and implementation, the GGF uses a grassroots approach in addressing environmental challenges. This method shows how policy has been implemented by directly engaging members of rural communities and ensuring their inclusion in policy making and implementation. The GGFs approach to local empowerment has been utilized for 25 years and employs volunteer experts for informed data collection and collation. The fund also promotes human empowerment by giving financial grants to local farmers who seek to adopt new or improved methods of agricultural production in order to ensure LDN.

Global Water Institute. (2013). *Future Water (In) security: Facts, Figures, and Predictions*. Retrieved August 23 2019 from: https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/27b53d18-6069-45f7-a1bd-d5a48bc80322/downloads/1c2meuvon_105010.pdf

This publication addresses water scarcity in different climatic regions and freshwater sources. It also highlights the relationships between water scarcity and socio-economic status, as well as the future of water security. This publication will help delegates to utilize in their initial research to get a broad view of the various problems of water on land such as water scarcity, drought, the status of women and children relating to collection of water in rural areas, as well as the how the use of water in cities affects the general availability of the resource.

⁴⁵¹ FAO, *Action Against Desertification: Land restoration*, 2019; FAO, *Action Against Desertification: Capacity development*, 2019.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ IISD, *Summary of the Second United Nations Environment Assembly of the UN Environment Programme*, 2016.

⁴⁹ Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Sand and dust storms, Decision 25/COP.14, 2019, <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2019-11/25-cop14.pdf>.

Great Green Wall. (2019). *Growing a World Wonder*. Retrieved 22 August 2019 from:

<https://www.greatgreenwall.org/about-great-green-wall>

This project is an ambitious solution to problems of desertification and drought in Africa. The project was kickstarted in the region of the world most affected by desertification and drought. Its objectives include a broad range of goals, including mitigating desertification directly, reducing forced migration, land restoration, and sustainable land use. With an unprecedented success rate, it has been recommended by the AU to other regions of the world affected by desertification as a tool for climate action. Delegates will find this to be an invaluable resource in their research because it consists of several objectives and goals of the SDGs and offers specific examples of how this project has aided in the mitigation of and adaptation to desertification and drought.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. (2019). *Reporting Process and the PRAIS*.

Retrieved on 22 August 2019 from: <https://www.unccd.int/convention/reporting-process-and-prais>

To provide an information platform that is accessible to all stakeholders, Article 26 of the UNCCD requires the submission of reports by all Member States. These reports are then collated by the Convention secretariat and also used to determine the progress of its mandate. It provides national governments and regional organizations with easily accessible data and information about use of science and technology by other Member States in furtherance of action against desertification and drought and other aspects of climate change. Delegates will find that this is a useful platform for information-sharing on development in technology and policies in various Member States.

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