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Adaptation to climate change for peace and stability

Strengthening of approaches and instruments as well as promotion of processes to reduce the security risks posed by climate change in the context of climate change adaptation

Chapter 7:

Adaptation for Peace and Stability – a Memorandum for Action

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promotion of processes to reduce the security risks
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Kurzbeschreibung

Das Vorhaben „Entwicklung von Ansätzen und Instrumenten sowie Förderung von Prozessen zur Eindämmung der Sicherheitsrisiken des Klimawandels im Rahmen der Anpassung an den Klimawandel“ untersucht den möglichen Beitrag, den Maßnahmen zur Anpassung an den Klimawandel für Frieden und Stabilität leisten können. Kernanliegen des Vorhabens ist die Vermeidung von durch den Klimawandel erzeugten oder verstärkten Sicherheitsrisiken wie Wasserknappheit, Nahrungsmittelengpässe oder extreme Wetterereignisse. Wie die konzeptionelle Eingangsbetrachtung des Endberichts zeigt, können Anpassungsprozesse – auch in konfliktgeprägten Gebieten – einen friedensfördernden Beitrag leisten, allerdings bedarf es einer konflikt sensitiven Ausrichtung. Die systematische Betrachtung regionaler Anpassungserfordernisse und –prozesse verdeutlicht, dass auf dieser Ebene Anpassungspolitiken vielfach noch am Anfang stehen. Vor diesem Hintergrund werden drei Anpassungsroadmaps für die Andenregion, Süd- und Zentralasien entworfen, die auf der Auswertung entsprechender Politiken und Programmen sowie ausgewählten Konsultationen basieren. Um die auf diese Weise gewonnenen Erkenntnisse in nationale und internationale Politikprozess einzuspeisen und internationale Governance-Strukturen zur Förderung von Anpassungsprozessen zu unterstützen, schließt der Bericht mit einem Memorandum, das wesentliche Prinzipien für Anpassung und Frieden formuliert.

Abstract

The findings of the project "Strengthening of approaches and instruments as well as promotion of processes to reduce the security risks posed by climate change in the context of climate change adaptation" are summarized in this report. The main objective of the project is to outline the potential contribution of adaptation measures to avoid crisis and conflicts caused or exacerbated by water scarcity, food shortages or extreme weather events. As discussed in the conceptual chapter of the report, adaptation can contribute to peace and stability even in conflict-prone areas given that a conflict-sensitive approach is applied. On the basis of a comprehensive regional analysis, we show that adaptation is not yet a prominent element of regional cooperation. To address this gap, we design three regional adaptation roadmaps for the Andes region, Central and South Asia based on desk review of regional processes and programs as well as expert consultations. To ensure that the results of the projects can be considered in national and international policy processes and to strengthen international governance for adaptation we close with a Memorandum for action outlining major principles to support processes for adaptation and peace.

7. Adaptation for Peace and Stability – a Memorandum for Action

7.2 Climate Change as a Conflict Driver

An increasing number of research efforts are directed to the interrelationship between climate change and conflict on the one hand and adaptation as a means for peace and stability on the other. Based on a review of regional and national climate impacts assessments, conflict analysis approaches, and policies and practices for promoting adaptation to climate change, this Memorandum aims to provide guidance and support advocacy efforts regarding opportunities where action can be taken and to promote adaptation as a peaceful response to climate change.

By analysing the implications of current and future climate impacts on peace and stability in crisis and conflict prone areas, a number of challenges, but also potential starting points for further action can be identified. Of particular importance is the ability of governance structures and institutions to manage adaptation to climate changes, not as an isolated technical effort, but as a multi-level, holistic, long-term, and conflict-sensitive approach.

This memorandum is based on the results of key international discussion at the UN as well as the EU level:

- The United Nations Security Council meetings on climate change as a security threat in 2007 and 2011 and the presidential statement adopted as a result of the 2011 debate unanimously.
- The report of the United Nations Secretary General in 2009 “Climate Change and Its Possible Security Implications” outlining, among others, that adaptation to climate change may serve as a threat minimizer.
- The Joint Reflection Paper of the European External Action Service and Services of the European Commission in 2011 on “Towards a Renewed and Strengthened EU Climate Diplomacy”.
- Council conclusions of the European Union on Climate change and security. 2985th Foreign Affairs Council meeting Brussels, 8 December 2009.
- The joint report by the High Representative of the EU and the European Commission in 2008 to the European Council “Climate Change and International Security”.

7.1.1 Key Impacts of Climate Change for Peace and Security

Climate change will affect key areas that are crucial for peace and stability; the water-food- energy nexus, among others, is of prominent concern in many regions:

- Climate change will cause important changes in the quality, quantity and availability of water resources already under pressure from population growth, economic development, and inefficient water use.
- Rising sea levels will lead to salt intrusion into coastal fresh water sources and thus threaten water availability in densely-populated areas and those areas crucial for
- agricultural productivity.
- Reduced water availability for agricultural development will affect productivity levels, particularly for crops highly dependent on irrigation. Allocation problems and conflicts will be aggravated, meaning adverse consequences for food security and exports.

- Decreasing river water levels will reduce the potential for hydropower generation, bringing about negative consequences for the economy and societies in many regions alike.
- Vector-borne diseases and certain plagues and diseases which negatively affect crops will impact agricultural productivity as well as health through the resulting risk of malnutrition.
- Increases in economic damage due to the greater intensity and frequency of hurricanes and tropical storms may cause a loss of infrastructure, mainly in the energy industries located in coastal areas, but also a disruption of economic activity in general.
- The melting of glaciers will affect the water cycles in many regions of the world.
- Initially, an increase in water flow will bring high risks of glacier lake outburst floods and landslides. In the long-term, however, the runoff is likely to shrink and water availability will likely be seriously endangered.

These climate change impacts may exacerbate or even cause instability, tensions or even violent conflicts, at different levels:

- Climate change can lead to a greater impoverishment of the rural population due to the negative effects on their sources of income. Thus, climate change may also lead to increased unemployment. As a result, inequality as well as social disparities can become more entrenched. A reduction in agricultural productivity will affect the most vulnerable sectors of the population, which can lead, e.g., to social tensions as a result of higher prices. The so called “bread riots” of 2008 can serve as an example in this regard.
- Increased water scarcity due to climate change will not only threaten the livelihoods of many local communities or different water user groups but will also affect water politics in transboundary river basins. As is the case with many transboundary rivers worldwide, countries have the potential to cooperate closely in sharing water resources but it can also be an element of discord between some of the riparian states due to plans of an upper riparian to build a dam which sparks protests on the part of lower riparians.
- Glacier melting in South Asia or South America will seriously affect the livelihoods of large populations. It may not only increase the pressure to migrate within a country, but also across borders with unclear consequences for the areas receiving these population flows. Extreme events such as the massive floods also illustrate how coping capacities of fragile countries and regions may be overstretched and lead to social discord.

Accordingly, climate change is considered to be a threat multiplier. Its adverse consequences will hit nations with low adaptation capacities hardest in the decades to come and decisive action is needed to prevent social tensions and conflicts.

7.1.2 Adaptation and Peace

- Adaptation is defined by the UNFCCC as an “adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities”. Adaptation is, hence, more than a merely technical challenge: It requires empowering people, building their resilience and securing livelihoods.
- By ensuring effective local action, national coordination, and international cooperation, peaceful processes of transformation can be fostered. These multi-level processes need to be supported by the long-term engagement and financial support of the international community.

In addition, the scope of adaptation action depends on the context in which it is operating: many countries and regions are already today prone to crisis and conflict which requires due consideration when planning and implementing programmes and projects.

- Accordingly, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon stressed in his 2009 report on climate change and security to the UN General Assembly that “many developing countries would stand to benefit from a comprehensive programme of institutional capacity- building for climate change adaptation including institutions for prevention, mediation and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.”

Seen in this light, adaptation can

1. *...serve as a peace builder being a catalyst for dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution*

Public authorities and user groups may be able to use non-violent conflict resolution techniques to help implement necessary, but unpopular adaptation measures, such as population resettlement and the negotiation of appropriate compensation packages. By increasing their ability to adapt to climate change, stakeholders are also likely to increase their social resilience and thus improve their capacity to achieve peaceful conflict resolution and conflict transformation in other areas of society.

Adaptation has the potential to empower countries to better withstand various social and economic stressors, while avoiding the destabilization of their governing institutions and societal structures. If adaptation processes are participatory, they can ideally give marginalized groups a voice to integrate their concerns in building resilient communities.

2. *...be a potential cause of or contributing factor to conflict through - among other to processes of 'maladaptation'.*

Adaptation measures may generate friction or resistance, predominantly from those who profit from the status quo or are interested in diverting adaptation-related funding for other purposes. In a worst case scenario, adaptation measures may also potentially be a direct cause of conflict. When two or more states or regions share the waters of a river, for example, climate change adaptation measures may increase the likelihood of confrontation between upper and lower riparian populations.

At the local level, there are examples of tension in the course of addressing competing demands for available water supplies. This was the case in different local contexts, where efforts to provide communities with additional water taps also stirred tensions; as an initial effort, taps were located sparsely, benefiting the selected communities, but angering neighbouring communities without taps. With the increasing availability of funds for adaptation purposes, the overall questions of how to distribute assistance equally among affected communities and how to avoid risks of elite capture, corruption and organised crime need to be addressed.

3. *...be hindered by sudden or long-lasting conflicts.*

Analysis of international support for adaptation suggests that not all fragile or conflict prone countries benefit to the same degree from support given to establish adaptation frameworks. To avoid a situation in which climate change further increases the risk of destabilization or violent conflict, conflict-sensitive adaptation needs to be ensured – especially during processes of peacebuilding and consolidation.

The enormous challenges for adaptation processes in this context becomes obvious most recently in the case of countries affected by violence, where as a result of the most recent conflict, on-going and planned adaptation projects have been frozen with no clear indication as to when and how activities to diversify the country's agricultural production will continue.

7.1.3 Political Entry Points

- There are a number of processes that can help to address the peace potential of adaptation. On the one hand, the international climate change negotiations have been active in establishing international guidance for adaptation activities. On the other, different activities at the UN or EU level illustrate that climate change adaptation has already entered decision making agendas in other policy domains such as foreign and security policies.
- The UN has called attention to the need for adaptation in the context of global security, particularly in a UN Secretary General report on climate change and security published in 2009. However, these summons to action have remained somewhat vague about how adaptation policies might be designed and implemented, thus preventing countries from taking concrete action. One reason for this situation may be that most security policy discussions and deliberations over adaptation take place in separate political arenas, with minimal exchange between the two fields.
- As part of the international climate change process, there are several starting points to promote mainstreaming of adaptation into other policy areas and to acknowledge co-benefits of adaptation for peace and stability – especially in countries and regions affected by tensions and conflicts:
 - NAPAs and NAPs: 21 of the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) for least developed countries submitted to the UNFCCC were developed in countries considered to be states at high risk of destabilization. The next step is to move to more comprehensive national adaptation plans (NAPs) which should facilitate the coherent integration of climate change adaptation into relevant new and existing policies, programmes and activities. The guidelines to develop NAPs by the Least Developing Countries Expert Group (LEG) recommend participatory approaches for national adaptation planning and also acknowledge the importance of regional adaptation processes.
 - Adaptation Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF): To design and implement concrete adaptation projects and programs in developing countries, the Adaptation Fund will likely offer incentives to institutionalise national processes to increase adaptive capacities. The same is true with respect to the Green Climate Fund which is currently established. National or Regional Implementing Entities (NIE/RIE) can facilitate direct access to these funds based on the provision of good financial governance.

- Loss and Damage: Most recently, the international climate negotiations have also started to deal with negative effects of climate change that people have not been able to cope with or adapt to, despite efforts to take best practice adaptation measures. Although concrete provisions are still subject to negotiation most vulnerable countries can expect support to become more resilient.
- Other donor initiatives: More substantial funding to promote adaptation and to build resilience is available from other donors such as the World Bank.

7.2 Adaptation as Peace-Builder

In order to support the contribution of adaptation to peace and stability, we suggest that decision makers from national governments and international donor agencies consider six main principles for adaptation for peace that can be translated and implemented in three main focus areas:

6 Principles for “Adaptation and Peace”

1. Establish peace and conflict assessments for adaptation programmes and projects going beyond a pure technical understanding of adaptation;
2. Mainstream climate change adaptation in conflict-prone contexts applying conflict sensitive approaches;
3. Ensure participatory processes to design and implement adaptation measures in an inclusive manner;
4. Build robust governance structures linking local, national, and regional levels – also in order to foster transparent and accountable spending;
5. Use training/capacity building approaches to understand and address current and future conflicts;
6. Ensure coherence of climate change adaptation and development processes nationally and internationally.

7.2.1 Focus 1: Establish Conflict-sensitive Adaptation Practices

Target Groups: Practitioners, Policy Planners, Donor Agencies, Governments

Activity level: local/national/transnational

- Conflict-sensitive adaptation should allow decision makers to address vulnerabilities to climate change as well as development priorities, while aiming to ensure long term sustainability and peace through a basic understanding of the consequences of political decisions under climate change conditions.
- Specifically, conflict sensitivity means the ability a) to analyse and to understand the context in which one is operating, working and intervening; b) to understand and to anticipate the interaction between one’s own intervention and the context, and c) to build the capacity to act upon this understanding, in other words, to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive

ones. Hence, climate change adaptation is “to do no harm”, but “to do good”, and to understand the context in which one operates.

- Conflict-sensitive adaptation will be especially crucial in areas where there is high dependence on natural resources and which are already known as conflict prone due, e.g. to an existing history of conflict. Therefore, analyses are needed to understand a variety of factors including the general context, based on e.g. peace and conflict assessments but also on improved methodologies to measure the impact of adaptation interventions.
- Adaptation measures should be better integrated into countries’ development initiatives and poverty-reduction campaigns. Embracing a systematic, integrated approach to creating National Adaptation Plans, e.g., can help to improve the conflict-sensitive design of these policy interventions.
- Capacity building support for conflict-sensitive adaptation policies is needed. Based on a more detailed picture of the overall context, support for capacity building is needed to avoid climate change-related conflicts at the local level. To this end, training can be organised and offered to relevant stakeholders, ranging from public sector representatives to those active in the field of natural resource management and members of country delegations in selected regions.

7.2.2 Focus 2: Promote Regional Adaptation Processes

Target Groups: International Organisations, Donor Agencies, Governments

Activity level: (mainly) transnational

- The international climate negotiations have so far primarily focused on the national support to design and implement policies and measures for adaptation. Climate change, however, takes place across national borders. Adverse impacts are of a transboundary nature, leading to similar climate-related risks in neighbouring countries. Thus, regional solutions need to be developed to cope with adverse regional impacts.
- Common vulnerabilities and similar adaptation needs seen by neighbouring countries offer vast potential for dialogue, coordination and cooperation. When dialogue and the exchange of experiences helps to build trust among neighbours, this can have stabilising effects on an entire region.
- A further step towards regional climate adaptation-related initiatives could potentially lead to the development of a common perspective towards adaptation, serve as a starting point for broader cooperation in the region, help, e.g., to prevent controversy on the use of transboundary water resources and may yield also positive results in other issue areas.
- Based on the identification of joint vulnerabilities and needs, regional initiatives and even regional adaptation roadmaps can be designed and implemented, e.g. to ensure water and food security. Such initiatives may likely not require the establishment of new institutions but can be built on already existing initiatives. The idea to establish Regional Implementing Entities to spur on adaptation can complement these approaches.
- Regional adaptation approaches could to a limited extent decouple the overall success of adaptation activities in a region from single national circumstances and developments – balancing individual country’s ambitions and capabilities for adaptation and taking the role of an “institutional memory” should adaptation processes in one country be interrupted.

- Early communication of national adaptation plans and projects with potential transboundary impacts can help to prevent maladaptation and tensions with neighbouring countries. Thus, supporting regional cooperation on adaptation should also follow criteria of conflict-sensitive adaptation.

7.2.3 Focus 3: Strengthening International Governance

Target Group: Negotiators, Donor Agencies, International Organisations

Activity level: local/national/transnational

- International climate negotiations have already established basic support and learning mechanisms to facilitate adaptation. Processes to develop NAPAs and NAPs put a strong emphasis on ensuring participatory processes to support an equal representation of stakeholders. In addition to the existing framework, the consideration of conflict-sensitive adaptation guidelines can be further strengthened, e.g. through a special report by the Least Developed Countries Expert Group.
- Building strong, supportive institutions for climate change adaptation is a key priority in crisis and conflict-prone areas. Institutions responsible for climate change adaptation – whether under the UN climate change framework, international financial institutions, development agencies, or peacebuilding organisations – need to ensure that their internal systems and structures promote adaptation even where there is no existing state fragility or conflict.
- In July 2011, the UN Security Council asked the UN to provide regular information on how climate change may endanger peacebuilding processes and, hence, the mandate of the UN Security Council. The international climate negotiations can, as part of the on-going mandate, work on a number of points such as: facilitating adaptation governance; addressing the risks of loss and damage; facilitate knowledge generation and sharing on how climate change may endanger processes to build peace; and report back to the UN Secretary General.
- Access to climate financing should be built on a strong framework for enabling good financial governance by enabling the direct access of national entities in order to support learning on climate change adaptation. Here, a special focus is needed on how to facilitate access to climate finance in conflict-prone countries and regions. In addition, it is important to ensure that funding for peacebuilding, development and climate change adaptation is organized along the lines of principles of the Paris Declaration.