



CLIMATE CHANGE, CONFLICT AND COOPERATION IN AFRICA

ADDIS ABABA, UN CONFERENCE CENTRE, 16 NOVEMBER 2012

Summary

African countries will be severely affected by climate change impacts. Among the overall key risks identified at continental level are scarcity of water, food, and energy, caused by climate-induced extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods and storms. Increasing migration movements are subsequently expected.

The Scoping Seminar on 16 November 2012 in Addis Ababa aimed at initiating a broader regional dialogue in order to identify options for intensifying regional cooperation and minimising threats to peace and stability as well as development. It brought together over 20 regional and international experts, including representatives of the University for Peace, the Ethiopian Meteorological Agency, the EU Delegation to the AU, the Institute for Security Studies, the German Federal Foreign Office, and other EU foreign policy experts. The Seminar was organised by the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) and adelphi, and supported by the German Federal Foreign Office.

The Seminar highlighted the crucial role of climate change as a development and livelihood issue for Africa. Efforts to place the issue on the agendas of intergovernmental organisations such as the African Union should be complemented by bottom-up education and awareness-raising measures in order to bridge the gap between the climate change impacts felt at the community level and the policies developed to respond to these challenges. As a follow-up to the Seminar and part of a broader regional dialogue planned for 2013, it is important to ensure a better understanding of local and regional conflict constellations in order to identifying potentials for cooperation. A systematic mapping of the local context would thus also need to involve regionally active organisations, such as IGAD, ECOWAS, SADC, and CEWARN.

CLIMATE CHANGE, CONFLICT AND COOPERATION IN AFRICA

Background

In light of the UN Security Council open debate on climate change and security that took place under the German Council Presidency in July 2011 and the Presidential Statement emphasising the importance of addressing the security risks of climate change, the German Federal Foreign Office actively promotes regional discussions with a broad range of African stakeholders.

At international level, the debate on the security implications of climate change has gained considerable momentum over the past few years. At the regional level, the African Union Commission has engaged in a discourse on this topic to help promote regional cooperation across Africa.

All African countries will be affected – to a greater or lesser extent – by climate change impacts. Potential risks include a significant reduction in agricultural productivity due to increased temperatures, sea-level rise, which is likely to affect stability in coastal areas, and erratic and low rainfall patterns, which are exacerbating already existing chronic challenges in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. Further continent-wide risks comprise scarcity of water, food, and energy, caused by climate-induced extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods and storms, as well as increasing migration.

In Africa, the majority of livelihoods depend heavily on often scarce natural resources. Undernourishment rates are high in various parts of Africa, and about 200 million people face water scarcity. Although violent conflict over limited goods is by no means inevitable, the absence of fair and effective conflict resolution mechanisms is a risk to peace and stability. In this sense, climate change can be a “threat multiplier” in regions where dire development needs meet natural stresses.

However, climate change policies also offer potential pathways for regional cooperation and benefit sharing. Policies can create new opportunities for economic and social development, e.g. through the implementation of sustainable solutions in the energy and water sectors and through joint strategies for a low carbon economy and climate resilient green economy strategies.

The Scoping Seminar in Addis Ababa followed up on the concerns raised by a number of publications and forums, including a 2009 United Nations report from UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon on the possible security implications of climate change, the UN Security Council Presidential Statement under the German Council presidency in July 2011, and renewed discussions brought up by the German Federal Foreign Office during the 2012 UN Week in New York.

During a 2011 regional dialogue event on *Climate Change, Conflict and Security in Southern Africa* held in Pretoria¹, it became evident that climate change still needs to be better integrated into regional cooperation approaches and conflict potential analysis within the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities.

Against this backdrop, the Scoping Seminar on 16 November 2012 aimed at discussing the following questions, among others:

- Do foreign policy and security policy institutions address climate change as a domestic or regional security issue?
- How can conflict constellations be transformed into opportunities for regional cooperation and common property rights,

¹ Documentation from this and similar Dialogues is available online at www.climate-diplomacy.org/, under Publications, Events, Initiative on Climate Change and International Security.

CLIMATE CHANGE, CONFLICT AND COOPERATION IN AFRICA

e.g. in the realm of water, food, and energy?

- How can IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), for instance, help in identifying the entry points and the transformation opportunities mentioned above?

Setting the Stage: Climate Change as Foreign and Security Policy

German **Ambassador Lieselore Cyrus** opened the Seminar by outlining the challenges of climate change impacts as threat multipliers. Taking a holistic approach is essential, but this should be complemented by regional and local experiences and knowledge. Ambassador Cyrus welcomed the participants to the expert discussion and expressed her hopes that this event would act as a springboard for a broader dialogue exploring challenges and solutions with other regionally active institutions.

Representing the hosting institution, **Dr Fatima Denton**, director of the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), began the discussion by unpacking the "heavy concept" of security, including its links with human security.

"Climate change challenges the very core of what human security stands for."

Dr Denton addressed the challenges most felt in Africa – water, food, energy security, and migration. Conflicts and security threats are increasingly likely in a world continuously divided into "haves and have nots", but while climate change poses new threats, it also drives us to develop new opportunities. One of the main points often avoided in discussions is in fact governance: institutions frame the way

in which society plans for and adapts to climate change impacts. Governance can also be part of the solution, however, and sharing successful examples can help, especially in cooperation partnerships addressing climate change, conflict, and security aspects.

Following up on the aspect of adaptation, **Dr Hinrich Thölken**, Head of the Climate and Environmental Foreign Policy, Sustainable Economy Division at the Federal Foreign Office, addressed the political changes needed to address the new threats posed by climate change impacts. Dr Thölken pointed out that Germany's interest is to foster peace and stability. This underlines the view that climate change is not only a monumental development issue but also very much central to foreign policy, bringing with it geopolitical and geo-strategic questions as countries respond to the challenge with low-carbon-economy models.

Climate Change, Conflict and Cooperation: Global and Regional Perspectives

The Seminar's first session, chaired by **Alexander Carius**, Executive Director at adelphi, focused on three guiding questions.

- ▶ To what extent are migration, and water, food, and energy insecurity perceived as climate change issues (or conflicts) in Africa?

This question sparked a rich discussion regarding the amount of existing **evidence**, especially on the relationships between climate change, conflict, and security. Scale complicates the issue: local insecurity may be triggered or exacerbated by climate changes, but larger-scale challenges, such as migration, may be more difficult to link directly to climate change impacts.

CLIMATE CHANGE, CONFLICT AND COOPERATION IN AFRICA

Some participants felt that more data are needed in order to make sure policies are evidence-based; some, however, felt that while certain governments may not clearly attribute challenges such as severe weather events to climate change impacts, it is clear that these are affecting livelihoods and must be addressed.

“We have enough empirical and anecdotal evidence of climate change impacts to know where we should take action.”

There is significant disconnect between climate policies and the local communities suffering daily from climate change impacts. Underlining this view, participants addressed two different approaches that need to be taken in parallel: **top-down** efforts focused on providing a high-level policy framework by putting climate change and security on the agenda of intergovernmental organisations such as the African Union should be complemented by **bottom-up** approaches aimed at increasing public and local awareness of climate change science and impacts, communicating potential risks and uncertainties, and promoting community involvement in decision-making processes. Here, too, it is crucial to learn about ways of adapting to impacts directly from affected communities and to share the lessons learned. Such **systematic sharing** mechanisms are, however, currently lacking.

► Is vulnerability the main trigger for perceiving climate change as a security issue – where are the hot spots in Africa for this topic?

Several **hot spots** were mentioned, including a recent conflict in Kenya between pastoralists and existing communities due to natural resource scarcity. Long-term adaptation measures are needed, such as resettlement. However, the government cannot yet provide the required infrastructure and conflicts ensue

between the migrating pastoralists and established communities.

A critical point was brought up about producing more detailed analysis on **vulnerability**: while African countries may be among the most vulnerable to climate change, it is much more useful to identify which countries and regions are vulnerable, and in which ways.

► What are the links of the governance structure with regard to climate change, security and development in Africa?

The question of governance resonated most with the Seminar participants, in particular due to the perception that **mismanagement** of natural resources causes much of the scarcity affecting communities and engendering conflicts. In fact, the Scoping Seminar itself was seen as an example of how the international community could support the democratisation process in Africa, by helping to make climate change a foreign policy issue and directly supporting African countries. Generally, countries with **pluralistic structures** and democratic systems were viewed as having a more open and constructive debate on climate policy.

“Conflict should become impossible for those involved in peace and security. If governance is part of the problem, it can also be part of the solution.”

Underlining the gap identified between climate policies and impacts felt at the local level, intermediate parties were called upon to “translate” data between the research and policy communities. Thus, **capacity building** is not only needed to bring the science and awareness of climate change to local communities, but also to help policy-makers take informed decisions. An example from Uganda highlighted that working with advocacy

CLIMATE CHANGE, CONFLICT AND COOPERATION IN AFRICA

organisations can serve as a bridge to the policy community and helps provide critical environmental information.

Another main issue discussed involved recent **climate financing** opportunities. It is a positive development that funding is becoming increasingly available, especially for large-scale adaptation projects in Africa.



Climate Change, Conflict and Cooperation: Pathways for Cooperation and Security

The second session focused on three further guiding questions and was chaired by **Dr Yacob Mulugetta**, Senior Energy & Climate Specialist, ACPC.

- ▶ To what extent do foreign policy and security policy institutions address climate change as a domestic or regional security issue?

Participants agreed that in many regional organisations climate change has not been perceived as a security issue. Impacts have rather been attributed to governance gaps, political issues, and natural resources scarcity. Participants pointed out that when trying to reach the AU, both a top-down and a bottom-up approach is needed. In addition, further regional organisations – such as IGAD, ECOWAS, and SADC – should be involved in **jointly mapping the local context**.

“We cannot attribute everything to climate change; a lot is due to dysfunctional policies.”

Furthermore, participants underlined that while the AU is a crucial intergovernmental organisation, it is still dependent on member states for the direction of its policy. **Bilateral consultations** would be especially fruitful with member states that already implement relevant policies, and could also help formulate climate policies where they are not in place. In due course, such consultations may inform policy priorities at the AU.

Another critical issue discussed addressed **foreign direct investment (FDI)**, often driven by natural resources scarcity in other parts of the world, e.g. China. This type of investment however, often does not take into account all implications, including interactions with climate change impacts. While local governments benefit from such FDI, ownership needs to occur at both national and local levels. The consequences at the local level also need to be taken into account by giving communities a voice in decision-making.

- ▶ How can potential conflict constellations (e.g. in the water, food and energy nexus) be transformed into opportunities for regional cooperation and the establishment of common property rights?

The dual approach was mentioned once again as a way to map conflict constellations. This includes identifying those who are most affected by climate change and their needs, on the one hand, and **building trust** between them and the decision-makers developing policies and response strategies, on the other hand.

An interesting parallel was drawn between the beginnings of the European Union, which was formed to make war a practical impossibility.

CLIMATE CHANGE, CONFLICT AND COOPERATION IN AFRICA

Similarly, supporting **regional integration** and working with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) aims to make conflict impossible at a more macro level.

In addition, **successful examples** need to be shared and promoted. The disarmament agreements with pastoralists in Kenya and Uganda are an example, but this can be improved by adopting a more holistic approach and taking into account how droughts caused by climate change are exacerbating the conflict. Regional cooperation must include issues of **transboundary water resources** – for agriculture and energy – which hold both potential for conflict but also for cooperation.

► How can early warning and response mechanisms help in identifying entry points and transformation opportunities?

Regional organisations working on early warning, such as CEWARN, were seen as key participants in finding synergies between activities, research, and analysis. The **Regional Economic Communities** are perceived as having links to academia and to practitioners at all levels from regional to local. This makes RECs an ideal entry point for framing and discussing climate change impacts.

Early warning systems are central to collecting much-needed information for analysis but they are currently lacking some necessary synergies between the databases and vulnerability platforms of different organisations. This data should be shared with local communities in order to help them understand how changes will affect them and to develop appropriate response measures together.

The benefits from early warning, monitoring, and analysis can be increased through a mechanism for **sharing best practices** that

helps collect successful examples of adaptation responses. Community Service Organisations (CSOs) play a large role here, as they are best positioned to act as a bridge between policy-makers and communities.

“We should focus more attention not only on how to prevent security risks, but on how communities recover from them.”

Reflections and Outlook

During the last session participants discussed possible entry points specifically for foreign policy. The main themes addressed can be summarised as follows:

- There was broad agreement on the potential for climate change to have **significant negative impacts** on the African continent, especially on the water-food-energy nexus and on livelihoods.
- In the African context, climate change impacts are seen as clearly constraining development, and much less perceived as a security issue. In order to address the interlinkages between climate change and security, the topic should be **mainstreamed** into particularly relevant sectors e.g. **food, water, and energy**, and into **existing discourses and policies** that aim to improve governance, alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development.
- Engaging with the AU on climate change and security requires a **constituency of regionally active institutions** that are addressing the nexus in diverse ways and are able to consult and interact with the AU on the topic.
- **Evidence-based knowledge** should be expanded to allow for better informed policy discourses.

In addition to these reflections, ideas for **longer term collaboration** with ACPC, the

CLIMATE CHANGE, CONFLICT AND COOPERATION IN AFRICA

Institute for Security Studies (ISS), and other regional organisations were outlined:

- ▶ A **joint mapping exercise** is the backbone of a thorough analysis of the regional landscape. This joint research, analysis, and publication process will take stock of current initiatives, institutions, and conflict hot spots. Other regionally active organisations, such as IGAD, ECOWAS, and CEWARN, are well placed to help map the existing and missing capacities for climate change and security in Africa.
- ▶ Strategies for structuring a **wider dialogue on climate, security, and development** should be jointly developed. This would include the **joint development of narratives** for policy discourses.
- ▶ A broader **regional dialogue** is envisioned for 2013, which may include: networking meetings with regional partners from East and Southern Africa; raising awareness of climate diplomacy through public outreach activities, such as exhibitions and policy-civil society discourses; networking events with the local media and universities in East Africa.

Starting in early 2013, adelphi and ACPC plan to approach additional regional partners to jointly develop the envisioned collaboration.



Programme

09.00 – 09.15 Welcome

Mrs Lieselore Cyrus, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany

09.15 – 09.45 Setting the Stage

Dr Fatima Denton, Director, African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Dr Hinrich Thölken, Head of Division, Climate and Environmental Foreign Policy, Sustainable Economy, Federal Foreign Office

09.45 – 11.00 Session I: Climate Change, Conflict and Cooperation: Global and Regional Perspectives

(Chair: **Alexander Carius**, Executive Director, adelphi)

- ▶ To what extent are migration, and water, food, and energy insecurity perceived as climate change issues (or conflicts) in Africa?
- ▶ Is vulnerability the main trigger for perceiving climate change as a security issue – where are the hot spots in Africa for this topic?
- ▶ What are the links of the governance structure with regard to climate change, security and development in Africa?

11.00 – 11.15 Coffee Break

11.15 – 12.30 Session II: Climate Change, Conflict and Cooperation: Pathways for Cooperation and Security

(Chair: **Dr Yacob Mulugetta**, Senior Energy & Climate Specialist, ACPC)

- ▶ To what extent do foreign policy and security policy institutions address climate change as a domestic or regional security issue?
- ▶ How can potential conflict constellations (e.g. in the water, food and energy nexus) be transformed into opportunities for regional cooperation and the establishment of common property rights?
- ▶ How can early warning and response mechanisms help in identifying entry points and transformation opportunities?

12.30 – 12.45 Reflections and Outlook

Dr Hinrich Thölken, Head of Division, Climate and Environmental Foreign Policy, Sustainable Economy, Federal Foreign Office

Dr Fatima Denton, Director, African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

12.45 – 13.45 Close of Seminar, Lunch

CLIMATE CHANGE, CONFLICT AND COOPERATION IN AFRICA



Published by

adelphi
Caspar-Theyß-Straße 14a
14193 Berlin
Germany
T: + 49 30 89 000 68-0
F: + 49 30 89 000 68-10
E: office@adelphi.de
I: www.adelphi.de

Authors:

Irina Comardicea, Dennis Taenzler, adelphi

Design: Gregor Grüttner, adelphi

*Photos: UN Conference Centre
Photographer Staff*

Berlin 2013

Climate Diplomacy online

Find out more about climate diplomacy and the related activities of the German Federal Foreign Office and adelphi at:

www.climate-diplomacy.org

www.ecc-platform.org

