

# : Programme

## Potsdam Spring Dialogues 2022 Climate change and conflicts – preventive strategies of African regional organisations

### Online

29/31 March and 5/7 April 2022, 10:00 - 12:30 hrs (CEST)

### Conference language

English

### Cooperating partner



german  
cooperation

DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



#Potsdam22

---

## BACKGROUND

The African Union has long been aware of the potential links between climate change and conflict. In November 2021, its Peace and Security Council (PSC) re-emphasised the “wide-ranging risks of climate change, as a threat multiplier, to the peace and security landscape” in Africa at its 1051st meeting. It pointed out that these risks were jeopardising the economic and development goals set forth in Agenda 2063, as well as the security goals of the “Silencing the Guns” campaign. Accordingly, the African Union (AU), Regional Economic Committees (RECs) and other organisations have made various political commitments to tackle the mutually reinforcing risks of environmental change and conflict.

This is also a reflection of the considerable academic attention which the climate change, peace and security nexus has received globally in the past decade. Some researchers suggest that conflicts in Africa are exacerbated by climate change, while violence, in turn, can increase a society’s vulnerability to the effects of climate change and hinder adaptation processes. Other researchers point out that there seems to be no direct causal link between climate change and conflict; rather, climate change is a contributory factor in a complex interaction with other causes of conflict. It is in this area of tension that regional and international organisations must implement preventive strategies to mitigate the effects of both climate change and violent conflict.

In contrast to the United Nations (UN), where a resolution on climate security was vetoed in December 2021, the AU’s Peace and Security Council has held three meetings on climate security in 2021 alone, and adopted ambitious resolutions on the topic. Proposals range from establishing a climate fund and enhancing early warning and disaster risk reduction capacities, to appointing a Special Envoy and improving cross-sectoral and intra-African cooperation on the nexus between climate, peace and security.

To tackle these challenges, governments and international organisations should cooperate with scientists, civil society and other national and international non-state actors. What experience have the AU and RECs made in this regard? Which steps can be taken to support the implementation of the ambitious policies of the AU and other African regional organisations? How is the progress assessed by civil society organisations (CSOs)? And what role and responsibility do external actors such as the European Union and its member states or the United Nations have? These are some of the questions to be addressed at the Potsdam Spring Dialogues 2022.

### **Format and session topics**

The Dialogues will take place online on four days spread over two weeks, with each day focusing on one of the following key aspects: 1) Conflict-sensitive disaster risk reduction, 2) Environmental peacebuilding, 3) Climate change-induced migration within Africa, and 4) Cooperation between the AU and the EU. African and European climate and security experts from politics, academia and civil society will come together to discuss interactively and identify workable solutions.

### **The Potsdam Spring Dialogues Series**

The Potsdam Spring Dialogues have become established as a major forum on regional cooperation in Africa in the past decade. Since 2010, they have been organised by the Development and Peace Foundation (sef:) in cooperation with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

### DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CONFLICT PREVENTION: AN OBVIOUS DUO?

Climate change increases the risk of extreme weather events and disasters worldwide. To reduce the severity of their effects, efficient disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures are crucial. In October 2021, the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) urged member states to include DRR measures in all development projects. However, in conflict-prone environments, their implementation is more difficult. What concrete steps are African regional organisations taking to overcome this challenge, and what are the remaining obstacles?

- 10.00 hrs      Welcome by the chair  
**Angelika Spelten**  
Former Senior Researcher, Institute for Development and Peace (INEF), University of Duisburg-Essen
- 10:05 hrs      Introduction to the Potsdam Spring Dialogues 2022  
**Martin Gorholt**  
Former State Secretary, Potsdam  
Deputy Chair of the Executive Committee, Development and Peace Foundation (sef), Bonn
- 10.10 hrs      **BREAKOUT ROOMS - SHORT ICEBREAKING SESSION**  
Get to know your fellow participants: What are your personal expectations of the event/this session?
- 10.15 hrs      **PART ONE: CONFLICT-SENSITIVE DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**  
In many regions, a high risk of disasters such as droughts, floods or cyclones coincides with a preponderance of conflict. This poses specific challenges to the implementation of disaster risk reduction measures. Politicians and researchers alike have called for DRR to become conflict-sensitive, but conflict prevention also needs to become climate-sensitive. How can this be achieved? In what respects do disasters and conflict have similar impacts, and where is there potential for synergies in the response to them? What contribution can regional and international actors make?  
**Dr Philip Attuquayefio**  
Coordinator, AU Support for the Lake Chad Basin Regional Stabilization Strategy, Political Affairs Peace and Security Department, African Union Commission, Addis Ababa  
**Lukas Rüttinger**  
Senior Advisor, Adelphi, Berlin
- Followed by      Interactive discussion with the audience
- 11.15 hrs      Break and opportunity for informal networking
- 11.30 hrs      **PART TWO: LOCAL STRATEGIES IN CONFLICT-PRONE AREAS – THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK IN AFRICA**  
The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 provides a global plan to prevent and mitigate disaster risks. One of the first objectives of the 2017 Programme of Action (PoA) for its implementation in Africa is to “strengthen coherence and integration between disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation, [and] conflict and fragility”. What steps have been taken to achieve this? What frameworks and strategies have been put into place by African regional organisations? What are the main challenges on the way to their implementation?  
**Amjad Abbashar**  
Chief, Regional Office for Africa, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Nairobi  
**Perrine Piton**  
Chief of Party, Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCiS)
- Followed by      Interactive discussion with the audience
- 12:30 hrs      Farewell and outlook on the next session

**COMMON CHALLENGES, COMMON SOLUTIONS?  
ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEBUILDING**

Besides their role as conflict drivers, environmental changes may offer new opportunities and entry points for cross-communal or international cooperation. In the face of large-scale disasters or long-term climate-related challenges, groups of former adversaries may find themselves confronted with common threats. Some researchers suggest that in these situations, new pathways may open up for cooperation and peacebuilding. Peace operations are increasingly considering the effects of climate change and related security risks in their mission planning as well.

- 10.00 hrs      Welcome by the chair  
**Angelika Spelten**  
Former Senior Researcher, Institute for Development and Peace (INEF), University of Duisburg-Essen
- 10.05 hrs      **BREAKOUT ROOMS - SHORT ICEBREAKING SESSION**  
Get to know your fellow participants: What are your personal expectations of the event/this session?
- 10.10 hrs      **PART ONE: OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA**  
If environmental problems caused or reinforced by climate change are seen as common challenges, conflicting groups might be incentivised to cooperate. But some researchers suggest that environmental peacebuilding might only have short-term effects, or even lead to a de-politisation of conflicts, their temporary suppression, or new discrimination, e.g. against indigenous groups. What are the opportunities and risks of environmental peacebuilding in Africa? What frameworks and strategies should the AU and other actors put into place? How can long-term cooperation between former adversaries be encouraged?  
**Ilwad Elman**  
Chief Operating Officer, Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre in Somalia  
**Dr Linda Ogallo**  
Climate Change Adaptation Expert, IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Nairobi
- Followed by      Interactive discussion with the audience
- 11.10 hrs      Break and opportunity for informal networking
- 11.30 hrs      **PART TWO: INTEGRATING ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEBUILDING INTO PEACE OPERATIONS**  
Most large-scale peace operations are deployed in countries where climate-related security risks are prevalent. How do peace operations react to that? Researchers recommend better coordination with development and humanitarian experts, local organisations and civil society in the host country, and with international organisations such as the AU and IGAD. In Somalia, a dedicated climate security adviser has been deployed for the first time, and there are demands for this in other places as well. What are the lessons learnt from this deployment? What are the remaining challenges? And which further innovative approaches can peace operations use to tackle climate-related security risks?  
**Christophe Hodder**  
UN Climate Security and Environmental Advisor to Somalia  
**Dr Florian Krampe**  
Programme Director, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)
- Followed by      Interactive discussion with the audience
- 12:30 hrs      Farewell and outlook on the next session

**A CONTINENT ON THE MOVE -  
MANAGING CLIMATE CHANGE-INDUCED MIGRATION WITHIN AFRICA**

The World Bank estimated in 2021 that climate change might cause 86 million Africans to migrate within their own countries or regions by 2050. This may increase competition for resources or economic opportunities in host communities and amplify the risks of tension. To tackle these challenges, new tools and methods are being developed to predict and manage climate-induced migration flows. At the same time, the African Union and other African regional organisations are adapting their strategies, while also attempting to harness the opportunities of climate migration. What could be the future of cooperation for a continent on the move?

10.00 hrs Welcome by the chair: **Angelika Spelten**

10.05 hrs **BREAKOUT ROOMS - SHORT ICEBREAKING SESSION** - Get to know your fellow participants

10.10 hrs **PART ONE: NEW METHODS TO ANTICIPATE AND MANAGE CLIMATE MOBILITY**

Innovative tools and methods are currently being developed to forecast climate-induced population movements. An example is the Africa Climate Mobility Initiative (ACMI), launched by the African Union Commission, the UN and the World Bank, with the aim of generating a data-based and people-centered narrative and agenda for action on climate mobility in Africa. What are the challenges and opportunities of such predictive methods? What are their implications for policy-making? And how can climate migration be harnessed for positive change in Africa?

**Aimée-Noël Mbiyozo**

Senior Researcher, Institute for Security Studies (ISS), Pretoria

**Sarah Rosengaertner**

Knowledge & Practice, Africa Climate Mobility Initiative (ACMI), New York City, USA

Followed by Interactive discussion with the audience

11.10 hrs Break and opportunity for informal networking

11.30 hrs **PART TWO: CONSIDERING CLIMATE CHANGE IN INTRA-AFRICAN MIGRATION MANAGEMENT**

The AU's Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030) identifies climate change as a "major push factor" of migration and mobility in Africa. However, the AU and regional organisations have focused on economic and development aspects of migration management, such as intra-African labour circulation and trade relations. Environmental and climate-related factors are often neglected. How can migration management be combined with climate protection measures? What are possible pathways to effective climate change adaptation? And how can organisations such as the EU or the UN provide support?

**Kamal Amakrane**

Managing Director, Africa Climate Mobility Initiative, New York City

**Kokebe Hailegabriel**

Team Leader „Strengthening IGAD Migration Policy Implementation“, GIZ, Djibouti

**Linda Adhiambo Oucho**

Executive Director, African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC), Nairobi

**Atle Solberg**

Head of the Secretariat, Platform on Disaster Displacement, Geneva

Followed by Interactive discussion with the audience

12:30 hrs Farewell and outlook on the next session

### **IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD: AU-EU COOPERATION IN THE CLIMATE-SECURITY NEXUS**

In their 2018 MoU on Peace, Security and Governance, the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) highlight their intention to “cooperate on climate-related security threats”, but provide little detail on how exactly this should take place. Similarly, the European Commission’s 2020 Joint Communication “Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa” acknowledges both climate change and security as major issues, but does not identify strategies for an integrated response to them. How can these policy gaps be filled so that the security risks of climate change are addressed in a coordinated way? What steps have already been taken? And which tangible progress has the recent EU-AU summit in February 2022 brought on questions of climate and security?

- 10.00 hrs      Welcome by the chair  
**Angelika Spelten**  
Former Senior Researcher, Institute for Development and Peace (INEF), University of Duisburg-Essen
- 10.05 hrs      **BREAKOUT ROOMS - SHORT ICEBREAKING SESSION**  
Get to know your fellow participants: What are your personal expectations of the event/this session?
- 10.10 hrs      **DISCUSSION ROUND**  
**Dr. Olumide Abimbola**  
Executive Director, APRI - Africa Policy Research Institute, Berlin  
**Amb. Fred Ngoga Gateretse**  
Ag. Head of Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Division, African Union Commission, Addis Ababa  
**Jorge Pereiro Piñón**  
Head of Sector: Peace & Security, Governance, Migration & Mobility; Directorate-General for International Partnerships, European Commission, Brussels
- Followed by      Interactive discussion with the audience

### **SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK**

- 11.25 hrs      Poll among participants: What are your take-aways from the conference?
- 11.30 hrs      **KEY FINDINGS OF THE POTSDAM SPRING DIALOGUES 2022**  
A succinct summary of the four conference days, highlighting some of the key messages and take-aways, and giving an outlook on potential future developments:  
**Ottília Anna Maunganidze**  
Head of Special Projects, Office of the Executive Director, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria
- 11:45 hrs      Farewell by the organizers | End of the Potsdam Spring Dialogues 2022