"Rethinking Climate Change, Security and Migration: From Vicious to Virtuous Cycles"

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Introduction outline

➢ At UN Environment, we've been working on this topic since 1988 and during that time – we seen a massive evolution in how it is being addressed within the UN, by member states and the academic community. It has progressed in a number of distinct phases – and I would tend to argue we are now in phase 3. Transforming knowledge into practical action.

Some of the key international milestones:

➢ As with any new topic, the **starting point** was really a conceptual phase and building an evidence base. It is hard to pin point when this track emerged – as it is really an off shoot from the broader environmental security debate. But I think some of the key milestones were the following:

   o 1988 – First global conference co-hosted by WMO and UNEP in Toronto, Canada - the Changing atmosphere, implications for global security. 300 scientists from 46 countries. Unanticipated and unplanned climate change may well become the major non-military threat to international security and the future of the global economy.

   o 1992-1995 was really taken up by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

   o 2003 – UNEP held an expert meeting on Environment, Conflict and Cooperation where the issue of climate change was discussed as a security risk.

   o 2007 saw two important milestones. On 4 April, Working Group II of the 4th IPCC report – released its report on climate change impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. For the first time, it outlined the consequences of climate change for food, water and energy security. It even mentioned the potential for new conflicts between competing interest groups. Two weeks later on 17 April, the first ever UN Security Council debate on the topic occurred, with major references to the IPCC report.

   o In 2008, Jan Egeland, the UN Special Advisor on conflict prevention and resolution began touring the world – looking for evidence of climate change and conflict linkages. He declared the Sahel region as "ground zero" for climate change but said that the outcomes are not necessarily conflictual – they can also be cooperative.

   o In 2009, the UN General Assembly held a debate in June and requested a report on the topic by the Secretary General. The report was submitted in September to the General Assembly entitled "Climate Change and its Possible Security Implications" (A/64/350).

   o In 2011, UNEP, IOM, OCHA launched a joint report on Livelihood Security Climate Change, Migration and Conflict in the Sahel. We tried to take a big data approach

to this question – looking at climate change, and livelihoods, and migration and conflict. It was a difficult process – as the variables don't always speak to each other and the data is extremely patchy. But most importantly, it was extremely difficult to spatially measure governance and social capital in the analysis.

➢ Once an initial evidence-based was established over this twenty-two-year period, the **second phase** was really about building awareness and political will for action. In this regard, I'd like to highlight a few key milestones:

  o UN Security Council Debate of 2011 – which resulted in a Presidential Statement calling for more conflict analysis and contextual information on when climate change is acting as a threat to UN peace operations.

  o In 2014, the IPCC chapter on human security as part of the 5th assessment.

  o 2015 was a huge year for climate change and security. A New Climate for Peace report was launched together with the Planetary Security Initiative. The Sendai framework on disaster risk reduction was also adopted this year. Most importantly, the Paris agreement was adopted which emphasizes the need to reduce vulnerability.

  o 2017-2018 saw an important series of debates in the Security Council, calling for improved analysis, assessment and action to address climate-fragility risks. And we saw a shift in terms of willingness to include mission- and country-specific language for Somalia, Darfur, Iraq and Lake Chad.

  o 2018 also saw the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration, which requests us to "strengthen joint analysis and sharing of information to better map, understand, predict and address migration movements, such as those that may result from sudden-onset and slow onset natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation, as well as other precarious situations, while ensuring the effective respect, protection and fulfilment of the human rights of all migrants".

  o And finally, 2018 culminated in the adoption of the UN Climate Security Mechanism which aims to provide better analysis and early warning of climate change and security risks to the UN system.

➢ The end of 2018 marked the transition to **phase 3** – which is all about transforming knowledge into action on risk reduction and prevention. And this is where things get even more difficult.

➢ In this phase we need to achieve **three goals** –

  o A) assess risks and mobilize early action – understand interactions between climate, natural resources, livelihoods and governance over time and space

  o B) measure the impact of interventions

- o C) integrate knowledges and good practices across multiple communities of practice including peace and security / climate change adaptation / SDGs / gender
- ➤ To achieve these goals, some important projects are on-going:
  - o [EU-UN Partnership on Climate change and security](#)
  - o [Joint Programme on Women, Natural Resources, Climate and Peace](#)
  - o The UN Climate Security Mechanism, coordinating efforts through staff at UNDP, UN Environment and the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
  - o In addition to the work of ICRC, IOM and other key stakeholders on these issues, other important venues to address displacement and migration related to climate change includes the Platform on Disaster Displacement and the Global Migration Group, as well as the work to advance Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals more broadly.

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