

Terms of reference for policy-supporting research

Climate and Security

Challenges and opportunities for the Belgian Development Cooperation

1. Context

General context

There is growing scientific evidence of the link between climate and security. A 2014 IPCC report states that **climate change is an important factor threatening human security** through (1) undermining livelihoods; (2) compromising culture and identity; (3) increasing migration that people would rather have avoided; and (4) challenging the ability of states to provide the conditions necessary for human security.ⁱ According to professors Burke and Hsiang from the University of Berkley, each additional 0.5 degree global warming increases the risks of armed conflicts on Earth by 10 to 20%.ⁱⁱ

In addition to that, evidence shows that damaging the environment, including biodiversity, constitutes another threat to security. Where communities are endangered by human activities like extractive industries, use of pesticides near housings, they tend to react in various ways. People could migrate to escape, they could also develop a sense of injustice leading to openness to radical discourses.

This once again shows the interlinkages between the Sustainable Development Goals of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development: climate, water, conflict, migration, food security, human wellbeing,...

The 2014 IPCC report further states that **some of the factors that increase the risk of violent conflict within states are sensitive to climate change**. Although there is little agreement about direct causality, low per capita incomes, economic contraction, and inconsistent state institutions are associated with the incidence of violence. These factors can be sensitive to climate change and climate variability. Poorly designed adaptation and mitigation strategies can increase the risk of violent conflict.

People living in places affected by violent conflict are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Evidence shows that large-scale violent conflict harms infrastructure, institutions, natural capital, social capital, and livelihood opportunities. Since these assets facilitate adaptation to climate change, there are grounds to infer that conflict strongly influences vulnerability to climate change impacts.

Climate change will lead to new challenges to states and will increasingly shape both conditions of security and national security policies. Physical aspects of climate change, such as sea level rise, extreme events, changing coast lines, changed river beddings, and hydrologic disruptions, pose major challenges to vital transport, water, and energy infrastructure. Some transboundary impacts of climate change, such as changes in sea ice, shared water resources, and the migration of fish stocks, have the

potential to increase rivalry among states. The presence of robust institutions can manage many of these rivalries such that human security is not severely eroded.

Climate change will have significant impacts on forms of migration that compromise human security.

Some migration flows are sensitive to changes in resource availability and ecosystem services. Major extreme weather events have in the past led to significant population displacement, and changes in the incidence of extreme events will amplify the challenges and risks of such displacement.

Although there is growing evidence that climate change is a root cause of an increasing number of conflicts, provoking for example water stress and food shortages, it is rarely seen as the ultimate cause, but rather as a **threat multiplier** for conflicts, which exacerbates existing trends, tensions and instability.

Belgian development cooperation

Belgian development cooperation is focused on the most vulnerable countries (most of the 14 partner countries of the Belgian governmental cooperation are African least developed countries). Working in **fragile context** requires specific strategies. In 2013 DGD developed the fragility strategy note.ⁱⁱⁱ A research team, commissioned by DGD, developed a guidance on fragility^{iv} to enhance understanding and ownership of a fragile-sensitive approach among (Belgian) development actors. Fragility is defined as “the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks”. Environment (including climate change) is recognized as one of the five main dimensions of fragility.^v Climate vulnerability is defined as the degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extreme weather events. Vulnerability is a function of the character, magnitude and rate of climate change, and the degree to which a system is exposed, along with its sensitivity and adaptive capacity.^{vi} Fragility and climate change vulnerability cannot be separated.

According to the Belgian law on development cooperation^{vii} the protection of the **environment** and natural resources, including the fight against **climate change**, drought and global deforestation, should be integrated transversally in all actions of Belgian development cooperation. DGD developed an environment strategy note and climate vision.^{viii} The KLIMOS research platform was asked to develop a **KLIMOS toolkit**. The toolkit provides information in support of environmental mainstreaming in development cooperation and can be used as a learning instrument or for assessment (ex-ante/ex-post (evaluation)).^{ix} The toolkit consists of two parts: (1) a database and; (2) two screening forms (a short quick scan and a screening guide).

The Belgian Government Agreement of 10 October 2014 and the Policy Statement on Development cooperation of 14 November 2014 identified **migration** as a new challenge for cooperation: “ [...] look beyond the fight against poverty, but also act on peace, security, climate, immigration and private sector development”^x. DGD is currently initiating a process to identify an updated migration vision as well as key strategic priorities for the Belgian development cooperation, in line with the country’s commitments following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. Agenda 2030 not only includes a central reference to migration in its target 10.7, migration and migrants are also directly relevant to the implementation of all SDGs and many of their

targets. DGD has financed in the past recent years several initiatives on migration implemented by various actors.

Climate diplomacy

Belgium is member of the UN security council for the years 2019-2020. According to the UN charter, maintaining peace and security is one of the mandates of the UN security council. One of Belgium's priorities as a non-permanent member of the security council is to emphasize the link between climate and security. Belgium is very active in the UN Group of Friends for Climate and Security. Belgian development cooperation could through actions on climate and security contribute to the mandate of the UN Security council.

A pilot Climate security mechanism has been established by the UN. This mechanism is a first step in a more comprehensive response to climate-related security risks. The mechanism is staffed by three UN organisations; the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and is tasked to provide integrated climate risk assessments to the UN Security Council and to other UN bodies.

Belgium will finance a Junior Professional Officer, based at UNEP in New York, tasked with the follow-up of climate and security.

2. Defining the problem and identifying fields of activity

Belgian development cooperation is confronted with insecurity and instability in certain regions. This causes problems and delays in the execution of development cooperation programmes.

- (1) We would like to assess to which extent the insecurity and instability problems are caused and/or exacerbated by climate change. It needs to be assessed for this region and/or sector whether and how future climate risks may critically influence existing conflict constellations, state fragility and migration patterns, and hence influence human security.
- (2) Second, how could Belgian development cooperation, with specific adaptation measures, contribute to a solution for these security related problems caused or aggravated by climate change. Special attention should also go to possible unwanted negative impacts of Belgian development cooperation on climate change and / or environmental degradation and how to address these.

3. Expected results of policy support for Belgian Development Cooperation

Policy support is expected on three different levels:

1. Policy support to define policy options for Belgian development cooperation
 - Mapping exercise of relevant actors / activities¹ in the thematic area of climate and security in a certain region and/or theme / sector (e.g. Sahel, Great Lakes region in Central Africa,

¹ Relevant actors / activities are those actors and activities specifically related to climate change, conflict, migration, and the interlinkages between these.

agriculture, extractive or health sector,...). The applicant can propose a region and/or sector; it should however be situated in partner countries and/or priority sector of the Belgian governmental development cooperation.

- Mapping exercise of Belgian development actors /activities in this region and / or sector and the possible (positive or negative) impact on climate and security.²
- Assessment / lessons learnt of activities in the chosen region / sector.
- Policy support to define policy options for Belgian development cooperation, with a comprehensive approach, could consist of following deliverables:
 - o In complement to the KLIMOS toolkit and guidance on fragility, develop guiding questions to assess the potential risk of climate change on the security situation / human security / fragility.
 - o How can Belgian development cooperation programmes reduce climate risks on human security?
 - o How can investments in adaptation / resilience be an opportunity for sustainable development (co-benefits)?
 - o How can Belgian development cooperation contribute to reduce the security risk (e.g. conflicts, human security) due to climate change? Identify climate-related adaptation strategies for fragile states that must go beyond climate variability to tackle potential climate-induced conflicts.
 - o The focus of this research is on climate change, but other environmental challenges should be taken into account: biodiversity, desertification, ocean's plastics, soil salinization, excess use of pesticides,...

2. Policy support to determine the positions of Belgian Development Cooperation in the international debate

With an agreed system of drawing rights, the research team can be asked to give input for discussions in:

- UN Security council
- UNFCCC negotiations
- OECD meetings
- Depending on the chosen region / sector: ad hoc meetings relevant to the chosen region and / or sector.
- ...

3. Capacity building to support Belgian Development Cooperation actors confronted with climate related security issues

- Information / awareness raising of link between climate, security, migration,... (e.g. policy briefs)
- Training on climate, security, migration,...

² This should not be limited to the specific niche of climate, security and migration. All activities should be mapped that are potentially related to climate and security.

Achtergrondlectuur:

<https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Climate-Change-and-Environment/Documents/Nexus.brief-FragilityandConflict-July%202018-en.pdf>

https://www.planetarysecurityinitiative.org/sites/default/files/2018-03/PSI_PB_Building_resilience_0.pdf

<https://www.newclimateforpeace.org/#report-top>

ⁱ Adger, W.N., J.M. Pulhin, J. Barnett, G.D. Dabelko, G.K. Hovelsrud, M. Levy, Ú. Oswald Spring, and C.H. Vogel, 2014: Human security. In: Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Field, C.B., V.R. Barros, D.J. Dokken, K.J. Mach, M.D. Mastrandrea, T.E. Bilir, M. Chatterjee, K.L. Ebi, Y.O. Estrada, R.C. Genova, B. Girma, E.S. Kissel, A.N. Levy, S. MacCracken, P.R. Mastrandrea, and L.L. White (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA, pp. 755-791. https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/WGIIAR5-Chap12_FINAL.pdf

ⁱⁱ Burke, Marshall and Hsiang, Solomon and Miguel, Edward, Climate and Conflict (August 2015). Annual Review of Economics, Vol. 7, pp. 577-617, 2015.

ⁱⁱⁱ https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/note_strategique_situations_de_fragilite.pdf

^{iv} https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/guidance_on_fragility.pdf

^v OECD (2018), *States of Fragility 2018*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264302075-en>.

^{vi} IPCC (2001), "Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability", Working Group II Contribution to the Third Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "Chapter 18: Adaptation to Climate Change in the Context of Sustainable Development and Equity", Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 877-912.

^{vii}

https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/Wet_Belgische_Ontwikkelingssamenwerking_19%20maart_2013.pdf

^{viii} https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/Strategy_note_Environment.pdf

^{ix} <https://ees.kuleuven.be/klimos/toolkit/index.html>

^x https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/nov14_De_Croo-Beleidsverklaring.pdf