TENTATIVE CONCEPT NOTE

Climate Pressures, Resilient Communities, and Sustainable Peace in Africa

Friday 23rd October 2026, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

Background

Climate-related pressures are increasingly interacting with existing vulnerabilities across Africa. Their security significance does not arise from climate change alone, but from how climate pressures intersect with livelihoods, resource governance, mobility, institutional capacity, and community resilience. Africa is among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts despite contributing the least to global greenhouse gas emissions. Across the continent, rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, erratic rainfall patterns, floods, desertification, and increasing climate-related disasters are placing unprecedented pressure on livelihoods, ecosystems, and governance systems. These climate stresses are particularly acute in fragile and conflict-affected contexts where communities depend heavily on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, pastoralism, fisheries, and natural resource-based economies. A central policy challenge, however, is to shift the climate, peace, and security discussion from risk diagnosis to practical responses.

While climate change rarely directly causes violent conflict, it acts as a threat multiplier by exacerbating existing social, economic, and political challenges. Competition over diminishing natural resources, environmental degradation, displacement, food insecurity, and loss of livelihoods can increase tensions within and between communities, especially where institutions lack the capacity to manage shocks and mediate disputes effectively. At the same time, conflict and insecurity can weaken adaptive capacities, undermine climate resilience efforts, and reduce communities' ability to pursue sustainable development.

Across Africa, however, communities continue to demonstrate remarkable resilience in addressing intertwined climate and security challenges. Local knowledge systems, traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms, transboundary cooperation arrangements, and community-led adaptation initiatives have strengthened social cohesion and helped manage resource-related tensions in many regions. These experiences underscore the importance of placing communities at the centre of climate, peace, and security responses while recognising the role of women, youth, Indigenous peoples, pastoralists, and other vulnerable groups as key agents of resilience and peacebuilding.
Existing continental frameworks on climate action, peace and security, Agenda 2063, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable development provide important foundations for a coherent African response. However, the growing scale and complexity of climate-related security risks require greater policy alignment, stronger institutional coordination, enhanced evidence generation, and a unified African voice in global discussions on climate, peace, and security.

Strengthening dialogue and cooperation on climate, peace and security presents a strategic opportunity to articulate Africa's priorities, perspectives, and solutions on this emerging agenda. Such engagement can help ensure that international policy debates and financing mechanisms reflect African realities, emphasise resilience and prevention, strengthen climate adaptation and peacebuilding efforts, and support locally led responses to climate-related risks. It can also encourage cooperation among Member States, Regional Economic Communities, civil society, research institutions, and development partners in advancing sustainable peace and climate resilience across the continent.

The Tana Forum provides an important platform to discuss these critical issues because it brings together African decisionmakers, practitioners and experts working directly on peace and security. The proposed side event will identify lessons from African experience, examine what works at community and institutional levels, and consider how those lessons can inform national, regional, and continental policy. This discussion will also contribute perspectives to broader climate, peace and security policy discussions, particularly by drawing on practical experiences from communities and Member States.
Furthermore, the Side Event will bring together policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and civil-society representatives to examine how African countries and communities respond to the interaction between climate pressures, livelihoods, mobility, natural-resource governance, resilience, and peace. The

discussion will focus not only on identifying risks, but also on practical approaches to strengthen resilience and sustain peace.

Objectives

The event will:

a. identify practical African approaches for strengthening resilience to climate-related peace and security risks;
b. examine how climate pressures interact with livelihoods, mobility, natural-resource governance and community resilience;
c. connect community and national experience with regional and continental policy discussions;
d. generate policy-relevant perspectives that can inform practical responses to climate-related peace and security risks; and
e. strengthen collaboration among African institutions, practitioners, researchers, civil society and development partners working on climate, peace and security.

Expected Outputs

The event is expected to generate:

a. a focused set of policy messages on strengthening climate resilience for peace;
b. practical lessons and examples of African-led responses to climate-related security risks;
c. stakeholder perspectives on priorities for strengthening climate resilience and sustaining peace;
d. a concise summary of key conclusions and recommendations from the discussion; and
e. strengthened networks among policymakers, practitioners, researchers and partners working on the climate, peace and security nexus.

Expected Outcomes

Beyond the immediate event, the initiative is intended to contribute to:

a. stronger incorporation of African experiences and practical solutions into continental climate, peace and security policy discussions;
b. closer connection between community-level resilience approaches and institutional policy responses;
c. greater engagement of relevant stakeholders with the AU's evolving climate, peace and security agenda; and
d. stronger partnerships for future work on climate resilience, conflict prevention and sustainable peace.

Format

The Policy and Expert Roundtable will enable key speakers to provide a 10–15-minute input on the topic, after which the moderator will facilitate a discussion incorporating participants' views and engaging the speakers.

Duration

2 hours

Language

English