



CLIMATE-FRAGILITY POLICY BRIEF

# CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITY IN THE UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION TO SOMALIA

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## Introduction

Intense alternations between heavy rains and extremely dry periods make Somalia highly susceptible to the effects of extreme weather and climate change, with its effects increasingly extending beyond the environmental sphere into the social, political and security realm. This was also reflected in a Security Council resolution (2408) on Somalia in 2018, which was one of the resolutions to recognise the nexus between climate change and security. In its [latest resolution \(2540\) on Somalia](#) the UN Security Council specifically:

*“Requests the United Nations, the FGS [Federal Government of Somalia] and the FMS [Federal Member State Governments] to consider the adverse implications of climate change, other ecological changes, natural disasters, among other factors, in their programmes in Somalia, including by undertaking risk assessments and risk management strategies relating to these factors, and requests the Secretary-General to provide an update in mandated reporting as appropriate;”*

In order to address the links between climate change, environment and conflict and to fulfil this mandate the UN in Somalia has embarked on a range of different activities and initiatives. This short policy brief will provide a concise overview of these activities, many of them being the first of its kind and breaking new ground to address climate-security risks as part of the UN’s engagement in a conflict-affected country.

### UNSOM Climate Security Advisor

In 2020, UNSOM, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, recruited a Climate Security Advisor to help forward the Climate Security and Environment agenda and report on the specific environmental mandate. Through the advisor UNSOM is supporting the Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member State Governments on Policy and strengthening the political and economic government system through capacity building and governance support. The Environmental and Climate Security Advisor works across UN’s Missions and Agencies, Funds and Programmes to coordinate and support policy efforts by the Somali Government and provide research and evidence on the links between climate and security. This is particularly important given the severe impact that climate change has on the population in Somalia.

### Climate Change Risk Assessment

The United Nations has developed a Climate Change Risk Assessment tool kit in June 2021 which through trainings will be put in place by partners in the United Nations Country Team. This will ensure program design and implementation includes climate risks highlighted in the assessment tool kit. Climate security is also being integrated in the UNSOM’s’ Risk Register which will ensure proper oversight and management of internal controls linked to climate change by senior management and the mission as a whole which will help manage the future of the risks around climate change.

### Mediation support

Earlier in 2021, the United Nations delivered two training sessions to UNSOM’s Political and Mediation teams and to Government officials in Galmudug state, on the links between climate and security. Further training sessions are planned at federal and member state levels for the Somalia maritime, military and police authorities. These trainings will increase the understanding of the links between climate and conflict as well as to assist leaders and elders to formulate different approaches to the insecurity in Somalia.

In the Mataban region in Hirshabelle there has been a long and ongoing conflict related to grazing rights and water access. To support local community mediation attempts the UN is piloting an environmental approach. Environmental Peacebuilding and Mediation approaches are being trialled with the support of United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs’ (DPPA) Mediation Standby Team in Hirshabelle and Galmudug. Partners from across the UN Mission, Agencies Funds and Programmes and NGOs such as the Berghof Foundation are working closely on environmental mediation opportunities.

## Capacity building for the Somali Government

The United Nations in Somalia is providing capacity building and technical support to the Somali Government to further advance the environmental agenda and ensure implementation of environmental policies. Enacted in November 2020 the UN supported Environmental Management Act has strong laws on environmental protection and the rights to a clean environment and sets out the structures for overall environmental management. This bill includes issues such as the polluter pays principle as well as the ability to raise revenues from environmental pollution. The UN is further supporting the Somali government in National Adaptation Planning and the process of formulating and implementing Nationally Determined Contributions. Furthermore, the UN is supporting capacity development at both the federal and state level. This includes policy development support, legal advice and capacity building to rule of law and implementation approaches.

## Climate-security related development initiatives

UNSOM and the UN Country Team are coordinating, strengthening and delivering projects with communities to build local Somali resilience and Somali's ability to adapt to and mitigate climate change. The United Nations in Somalia has fully incorporated climate security, climate change and environmental protection in the 2021-2025 United Nations Cooperation Framework. Based on the Common Country Analysis and the Companion Document analysing progress towards the 17 Sustainable Development goals, the Cooperation Framework has several important outputs focusing on the nexus between environment and climate security, while taking into account the different angles of this nexus such as the rule of law and environmental protection capacities in local police, green economic development around charcoal alternatives and alternative energies as well as social development and resilience building programmes such as community natural resources adaptation approaches.

Currently there are 19 initiatives across the United Nations family and under the United Nations Cooperation Framework in Somalia focusing on charcoal alternatives, displacement, alternative energy, green economic growth, resilience building around agriculture and food security, provision of water and cash for work. This includes the following initiatives on water management and disaster displacement.

The United Nations in Somalia is working together with the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), Federal Member States (FMS), local communities, and non-governmental organizations to coordinate a triple nexus-based approach (humanitarian, development and peace) to water management and the extreme shocks of recurrent droughts and floods. Bringing together communities, humanitarian and development agencies, peacebuilding and stabilization teams, the United Nations is making a positive impact on the response to the climate, displacement and conflict cycle that has been affecting Somalia. For example, during the May 2021 [Gu rain season](#), the coordinated approaches between communities, UN agencies and NGOs in Beletweyne contributed to reducing the impact of flooding through repairing breakage points and working with communities to minimize duplication of activities (such as breakage fixing) during and in preparation for the flooding. In Jowhar, Hirshabelle, however the lack of coordinated approaches led to the displacement of 1,100 households (66,000 people) across 27 villages. Through funding from the United Kingdom, the United Nations are modelling nature-based solutions to flood risk management in the wider Hirshabelle river catchment area.

Climate displacement is a recurrent issue and together with the durable solutions team in the Integrated Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia (DSRSG/RC/HC) the Environmental Advisor is advising on environmental approaches to displaced site planning. There are currently 2.9 million displaced persons across Somalia and the Government and partners are identifying relocation sites that can serve as long term residency for the populations in need. From an environmental perspective and ecosystems approach the UN have re-planned the new Internally Displaced (IDP) Luglow site to include tree planting, the energy needs in terms of charcoal as well as looking at bank stabilization for flood risks all based on the Environmental Impact Assessment that was conducted in March 2021

by the UN and the Government which is a positive example of environmental collaboration. The engagement in Luglow will lead to a more sustainable site and integration of displaced and host communities.

However, with only 2% (according to [Aid Information Management System \(Somali AIMS\)](#)) of aid to Somalia supporting Environmental and climate change programming there is still much to be done.

## Reducing the environmental footprint of the UN

The UN in Somalia is making progress towards reducing its own environmental footprint as set-out in the United Nations Secretariat Climate Action Plan. It uses both traditional approaches such as recycling and reducing electricity use and innovative initiatives such as the renewable energy project in Baidoa, where the United Nations is engaging a private company to set up a fully solar powered camp. In addition, the Water and Environmental teams of United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) are analysing the energy needs of Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and reviewing wider UN energy use. The UN in Somalia is also increasing recycling and reducing consumption of single-use plastic.

Furthermore, the UN in Somalia is in the process of signing a country wide MoU with the Somali Federal Government to scale up the distribution of seed balls through drones to help with the UN commitment of re-wilding and replanting of trees across the country. In addition, the UN is engaging with the Stimpson centre to partner on alternative energy issues in the mission. The UN has also established a tree nursery in its compound in Mogadishu and it will be expanded in all other sectors. The tree seedlings will be distributed for planting by AMISOM personnel, UN personnel, local authorities and local communities as part of reforestation effort in Somalia.

To mitigate the emissions resulting from solid waste management that contributes to global warming, the UN in Somalia has established waste management yards in all their major locations, where waste is segregated for recycling and the residues are incinerated instead of put on a landfill. In addition, the UN is recycling treated wastewater for non-potable water uses in their compounds to reduce the abstraction of fresh water. Furthermore, the UN is mentoring AMISOM uniformed personnel in environmental management when carrying operations in remote locations, including climate mitigation measures.

## Conclusions and Outlook

Being one of the first political missions globally to have climate and environmental language in its mandate it is clear that there is a need to expand this approach across other UN Missions. Climate projections show that climate related disasters and climate related displacement will increase over the coming years in Somalia. Coupled with the projected 3-4 degree rise in temperatures by 2080 many parts of Somalia could become unliveable. Green growth, clear support for mitigation and adaptation approaches, are needed across the development, peace and humanitarian approach. Coupled with this must come a mainstreaming of climate and security approaches through the UN and its partners to support the government in Somalia to respond to the climate crisis and build resilience in communities.

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The **Climate Security Expert Network**, which comprises some 30 international experts, supports the Group of Friends on Climate and Security and the Climate Security Mechanism of the UN system. It does so by synthesising scientific knowledge and expertise, by advising on entry points for building resilience to climate-security risks, and by helping to strengthen a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities of addressing climate-related security risks. [www.climate-security-expert-network.org](http://www.climate-security-expert-network.org)

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