

Briefing on the African Continental Climate Security Risk Assessment Report on Climate Change, Peace and Security Nexus, and the Report of the Chairperson of AUC on the Study on the Nexus between Climate Change, Peace and Security in Africa

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Tomorrow (7 November), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) will convene its 1184th session at the ambassadorial level. The session involves a briefing on the African Continental Climate Security Risk Assessment Report on Climate Change, Peace and Security Nexus, and the Report of the Chairperson of AUC on the Study on the Nexus between Climate Change, Peace and Security in Africa.

Tomorrow's session is expected to start with open segment and proceed to closed segment. Following the opening statement by **Abdi Mahamoud Eybe**, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Djibouti who is also the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of November, it is expected that the AU

Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), **Bankole Adeoye**, will deliver his remarks. It is also expected that statements will be delivered by **Josefe Leonel Correla Sacko**, the AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) and a representative of the African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change. An expert from the Office of the Chairperson will then present the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the Study of the Nexus between Climate Change, Peace and Security in Africa.

The nexus between climate change, peace and security gained the attention of the PSC since its [585th session](#) on 30 March 2016. Introduced into the agenda of the PSC for the first time at that session under the theme, "*Climate Change: State fragility, peace and security*," the issue of climate, peace and security has since received increasing attention in the work of the PSC. In the various communiqués and statements of the PSC adopted on this theme, it has identified climate change as 'threat multiplier' to the peace and security situation in the continent and/or potential exacerbator of 'existing vulnerabilities, tensions and conflicts.' In order to further deepen its consideration of the subject, the PSC requested the development of *the African Continental Climate Security Risk Assessment Report on Climate Change, Peace and Security Nexus* and *the Report of the Chairperson of AUC on the Study on the Nexus between Climate Change, Peace and Security in Africa*.

It was at its [774th session](#) held on 21 May 2018 that the PSC requested the study on the nexus between climate change, peace and security in Africa. Additionally, during its [984th session](#) of 9 March, 2021, which was held at the Heads of State and Government level, the PSC expressed its anticipation of the study. Subsequently, the PSC requested the expedited completion of the study during its [1079th session](#) on 21 April,

2022. This urgency was reiterated during the PSC's [1114th session](#) on 18 October, 2022. It is also recalled that the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government [requested](#) the expedited finalization of the climate-related security risk assessment study during its 35th ordinary session on 6 February, 2022. All of these are indicative that the study on the nexus between climate change and peace and security is long overdue.

While the initial request on the study was pending, it was during the 1051st session of the PSC, held on 26 November 2021, that the African Continental Climate Security Risk Assessment Report featured in the deliberations of the PSC. Recognizing the urgent need to understand the diverse security implications of climate change across the continent, the PSC requested the AUC to expediate the finalization of the report, consulting with Member States in the process. The PSC, as per the session's [Communique](#), views the report as a stepping stone towards consolidating a common African position on climate change and security. The risk assessment report is based on the consultative [workshop](#) on Climate Security Risk Assessment methodology that was held in March 2023. The findings of this assessment report are expected to be included in the AUC Chairperson's report on the Study of the Nexus between Climate Change, Peace and Security in Africa.

Informed by the risk assessment report, the Chairperson's report is expected to highlight and expand upon the various concerns previously brought up in the PSC sessions regarding the nexus of climate change, peace and security. These concerns are primarily rooted in the [reality](#) that Africa is the region most susceptible to climate change. One issue of particular concern is the impact of climate change in the reduction of available water, pasture and cultivatable land. This heightened scarcity of these natural resources on which large number of people depend for their livelihoods and

survival has led to intensified [competition for pastoral land](#) between herders and farmers as well artisanal fishers in the Sahel and Western Africa, an increase in [cattle rustling](#) in Eastern Africa and conflict over scarce water resource in Central Africa regions.

Additionally, as climate change alters weather patterns, traditional rainfed agricultural practices are becoming less viable, especially in regions such as [the Sahel](#), Western and Eastern Africa where populations heavily depend on agriculture-based livelihoods. In addition to changing weather patterns, these outcomes are compounded by complex socio-economic, political and governance issues that affect the production and price of food, aggravating the threat of climate change to human security. It has also been observed that in some countries the soaring food price is a [catalyst](#) for protests and riots, as it inflates existing grievances.

The Chairperson's report may also highlight how scarcity of resources and climate change-induced catastrophes inadvertently [benefit](#) terrorist and armed groups. Such groups seize upon the desperation and instability caused by environmental crises and the inequitable nature or insufficiency of governments' response to those disasters to strengthen their numbers. A prime example is Boko Haram in Western Africa. For people whose lives and livelihoods were threatened by the impacts of climate change, they position themselves as a [beacon](#) of providers of alternative source of support, livelihood security, promising safety, stability, and access to vital resources for vulnerable communities.

Migration and displacement due to climate change disasters is another concern expected to be reflected in the Chairperson's report. As droughts, erratic rainfall, and rising sea levels continue to impact communities, more people are forced to leave their homes in search of safer environments. In East Africa, the United Nations High Commissioner (UNHCR) for Refugees released a [report](#) in November 2023 indicating that

2.3 million people had been internally displaced in Ethiopia and Somalia. The UNHCR has also [reported](#) that as of 31 March 2023 there were almost 11.71 million internally displaced persons in East Africa and the Great Lakes Region. While the data is clear that conflicts account for the substantial majority of cases of forced displacement, the contribution of climate change to displacement has over the years been on the rise. With respect to migration, a recent [survey](#) of 6,000 people in West and Central Africa found that 49% of the respondents cited environmental issues as a factor in their decision to migrate. For receiving countries and communities, migration and displacement frequently results in competition for resources, strained infrastructure, and social unrest, at times escalating into violence within the communities hosting migrants.

On the contrary, the displacement of communities and the disruption of agriculture and food production in conflict-affected areas can lead to deforestation and land degradation as people rely on natural resources for survival. Hence, the Chairperson's report is expected to highlight the flip side of the climate-security nexus. The instability caused by ongoing conflicts can hinder efforts to implement sustainable environmental policies and implement mitigation and adaptation measures to the challenges of climate change. This has been observed in incidents, such as the recent collapse of dam in [Libya](#) and the ongoing cases of human suffering in [South Sudan](#). Additionally, the exploitation of natural resources, such as oil and minerals, to finance armed conflicts can further exacerbate environmental degradation. This is particularly evident in Central Africa, Sahel and North Africa, as seen in the Democratic Republic of Congo ([DRC](#)), where the exploitative extraction of the vast resources of the country are fuelling conflicts.

The report may also focus on island nations, as it was requested by the PSC to 'pay particular attention on the

plight of island Member States' in undertaking the study. These countries, which are often already at a disadvantage due to their small size and remoteness from the global interconnected economic system, face urgent and existential challenges posed by climate change. These challenges include rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and ocean acidification. The environmental changes not only lead to displacement and resource competition but also contribute to maritime insecurity and the depletion of marine resources, threatening human security in these countries.

Additionally, another element expected to be emphasised in the report is the disproportionate impact of climate change and conflict on vulnerable members of society including the poor, children, women and persons with disabilities particularly from marginalized sectors of the population.

The Chairperson's report is also expected to highlight the climate financing gap for African States. Despite their acute climate-related risks, most African nations struggle to access the necessary funds to implement mitigation and adaptation measures. While African states access to climate funds remains poor, those fragile and conflict affected countries face further access challenges. According to a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) [report](#), extremely fragile states received an average of \$2.1 per person per year in adaptation financing between the years 2010-2017, compared to \$161.7 per person for non-fragile states.

Tomorrow's session may also emphasize the imperative for narrowing down the enormous financing gap for climate action in Africa, as rightly [noted](#) by the African Development Bank Group President Akinwumi Adesina, a lack of adequate financing for tackling climate change in Africa has become dire and is 'chocking' the continent. Apart from exploring new sources of funding, there are two aspects of the financing issue that deserve attention. The first is for the commitments relating to financing adaptation measures in developing countries to be

honoured. The second critical aspect of this requires the easing of the conditions and processes for accessing climate funds.

Moreover, the report is expected to present the relationship between conflict and climate change in Africa as a complex and interlinked issue, with far-reaching consequences for both human security and the environment. Putting this into perspective, the report may highlight on best practices in terms of innovative mechanisms to address climate-related security risks, early warning systems and cross-sectoral cooperation at national and regional levels. It is also expected that the report will provide recommendations pertaining to financing, governance, coordination and partnership.

Building on its decision from its 1114th session and the [initiative](#) of the COP27 presidency on having the peace and security dimension into the agenda of the COP processes, the PSC may call for climate and security as one of the thematic areas in COP policy processes and request the AU and its member states to ensure that the security dimension is also fully integrated across the mitigation, adaptation, financing, loss and damage and transition streams of the COP.

The outcome of the session is expected to be a **communiqué**. The PSC is expected to commend the chairperson for the Study on the nexus between climate change and peace and security in Africa. The PSC may request that climate sensitive analysis is used for all AU peace and security initiatives across the African Peace and Security Architecture to ensure that such initiatives are tailored to address the implications of climate change. Council may also request the AU Commission to develop a Common African Position (CAP) on the nexus between climate change, peace and security based on the study of the Chairperson for the forthcoming COP 28 in United Arab Emirate (UAE), planned for November 2023. In light of this, The PSC

may emphasize the importance of Member States presenting a unified position at global forums, guided by the Committee of African Heads of States and Governments on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) and the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN). In this regard, the PSC may also express its support to the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) in advancing Africa's priorities in climate change negotiations and promoting comprehensive and effective responses to climate change impacts at the national, regional, and continental levels. Additionally, the PSC may underscore the importance of accelerating the implementation of the AU Climate Change and Resilience Development Strategy and Action Plan. The PSC may further underscore the importance for the AU to support the efforts of Member States to enhance their national intervention for climate change resilience, mitigation and adaptation including through building early warning, preparedness and response capacities. The PSC may also draw attention to mobilizing targeted intervention for building resilience for the most vulnerable regions of the continent such as Sahel and Horn of Africa in key social and economic sectors such as agriculture and rural economy.