

# Climate Change Funding in Line with the Africa Adaptation Initiative to Contribute to Peace and Security

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Tomorrow (February 19) the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) will have an open session on climate change funding in line with the Africa Adaptation Initiative (IAA) to contribute to peace and security.

The session has been initiated by Gabon as the incumbent PSC chair of the month. The session is designed as part of Gabon's role as both the AU Champion of IAA and the coordinator of the Committee of African Heads of States and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC).

It is envisaged that the Chair of the PSC, Gabon's Ambassador Hermann Immongault, will make an opening remark on the theme. Mr Tanguy Gahouma Bekale, Permanent Secretary of the Conseil National Climat (CNC) of Gabon, is expected to provide the PSC with the lead briefing on the theme to frame the deliberations of the session.

The core focus of tomorrow's session is not simply on the nexus between climate change and insecurity but also importantly on the financing of climate change adaptation as a peace and security measure. The session is to be held under the theme 'Financing of climate change adaptation within the framework of the Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI) to contribute to peace and security'. The concept note envisages that the session will address the climate change and conflict

nexus, highlighting the main correlation 'especially how climate change gives rise to or aggravate conflicts in Africa'. Of particular interest is the attention that the concept note draws to the role of climate change related events in precipitating forced displacement and migration of people.

The security dimension of climate change is being increasingly recognized. It is elevated as a factor that destabilizes communities' coping capacity and as a trigger of tension due to competition over depleting resources. The security narrative is gradually dominating the way climate change and its effects are being characterized. In Africa, environmental degradation exacerbates existing economic inequality and political polarization as it can be observed in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin regions where the compounded effects of insecurity and climate change are critically affecting communities' survival and livelihood. According to the Climate Change Profile undertaken by the government of the Netherlands, the Sahel contributed an estimated of 0.92% of the global gas emission yet almost all of the countries in the region rank among the 20% most vulnerable to climate change, and three (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali) are among the most vulnerable 10%. Similarly, the Greater Horn of Africa region including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan makes a negligible contribution of 0.59% to global gas emission, however four countries in the region (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan) are among the most vulnerable 10%.

Previously the PSC held three sessions on climate change and peace and security in Africa. At its first session on the subject at its 585th session under the theme 'Climate Change: State fragility, peace and security in Africa', the PSC stressed the importance of the Commission to mainstream climate change in all its activities, particularly in early warning and conflict prevention efforts. Moreover, at its 660th meeting the PSC highlighted the correlation between

human security and environmental protection, and expressed 'serious concerns over the devastating impact of climate change in Africa as manifested through recurrent droughts, which is one of the major triggers of tensions and violence in communities'. More relevant to the focus of tomorrow's session, the PSC at its 774th session noted the importance of 'coordinated efforts in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change'. During the session the Council has requested the Commission to undertake a study on the nexus between climate change and peace and security and to appoint an AU Special Envoy for climate change and security.

While it has been more than 11 years since the issue of climate change and peace and security started to feature on the agenda of the UNSC (the latest being the open debate on addressing the impact of climate-related disasters on international peace and security held on 25 January 2019), it expressly recognized under Resolution 2349 the need for adequate risk assessments and management strategies by governments and the UN relating to the adverse security effects of climate and ecological factors in the Lake Chad Basin.

Climate change and its related effects in the continent particularly on peace and security has become an important theme featuring annually on the agenda of the PSC over the past few years. It will however be the first time for PSC to address climate change in the context of the IAA and funding for adaptation. For Africa, adaptation is seen as a policy priority in addressing the adverse impacts of climate change. During the COP 21 Africa has taken a clear direction towards addressing its major concern by launching the IAA to enhance adaptation financing and address loss and damage in Africa. In 2017 Gabon became the first African country to make a financial contribution by pledging USD\$500,000 to the IAA.

As set out in the concept note, the objective of the session is to address the impacts of climate change including 'the

complete link existing between climate risks and conflicts on the one hand and how the Africa Adaptation Initiative could be a collective response both for the fight against climate change and to guarantee peace and security’.

In focusing on adaptation and its financing, the session positions the channeling of funding to adaptation to be a conflict prevention tool, particularly in relation to conflict risks arising from climate change. This will be of particular interest for conflict situations or vulnerabilities in the Sahel, Lake Chad and Horn of Africa regions. It would thus be of interest for PSC members and more immediately for Nigeria in the context of the implementation of the regional strategy on the stabilization of the Lake Chad Basin Region. Also of note is the links of the theme of the session to the policy framework on post-conflict reconstruction and development, which encompasses protection against environmental degradation. One of the issues raised in the concept note is also the link between IAA and the AU Peace Fund particularly under the preventive diplomacy window. The linkage to such existing policies will provide a holistic picture of the nexus between security, climate change and adaptation.

The session is taking place following the recently concluded 32nd AU Summit which reiterated the need for developed countries to continue to increase climate finance towards achieving the 2020 finance goal to reach the US\$100 billion annually. The Summit has noted the increased role of the IAA in close collaboration with other Africa led global processes to spearhead the adaptation agenda of the continent. The AU may also work towards mobilizing financial and political support before the cutoff date of 2020, which is considered as a critical turning point in the global climate change agenda. The PSC session will also be a platform to share an update on the last IAA partners’ roundtable meeting held at the margins of the 73rd UN General Assembly, which has made a decision to produce and launch the first Africa State of Adaptation

Report.

The expected outcome is a press statement. The statement may call on further support to the IAA by African states as well as the international community. It may particularly call for the strengthened integration of climate change and adaptation into the security agenda, hence the need to tap into existing funding associated to peace and security to also be utilized for climate change adaptation. The PSC may call for the establishment of a mechanism that establishes complementarity between IAA and the AU Peace Fund with respect to the climate change dimension of conflicts. Taking forward its previous meetings on the theme of climate change and peace and security, the PSC may also reiterate its call for a study on the nexus between climate change and peace and security as a basis for determining the appointment of a special envoy on the theme.