

# **Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change, Peace and Security Nexus: Building Resilience and Adaptation for Food Security in African Island States Towards COP27**

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Tomorrow (18 October) the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council is scheduled to hold its 1114<sup>th</sup> session at the ministerial level under the theme 'Climate Change, Peace and Security Nexus: Building Resilience and Adaptation for Food Security in African Island States Towards COP27'.

Following the opening remark by the minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of the Kingdom of Morocco and Chairperson of the PSC for October Nasser Bourita, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), Bankole Adeoye is expected to make a statement. Josefa Sacko, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) of the AU Commission is scheduled to make a presentation on the theme of the session. Omar Gad, Permanent Representative of Egypt and incoming chair of COP27 is also expected to deliver a statement. The representatives of the World Food Program (WFP), Climate Change Competence Center and Adaptation of African Agriculture are also expected to brief the PSC. Seychelles as Chair of the African Islands Climate Commission is scheduled to make a statement.

Climate change and security is one of PSC's standing thematic agenda items that is increasingly receiving attention from highest level of decision makers. Since 2016, PSC has addressed the nexus between climate change and security in Africa from various perspectives through the different sessions dedicated to the theme. In 2021 alone three sessions were held on the theme including two at heads of state and government level. More specifically the unique vulnerability experienced by small island states has been the focus of the PSC's 877<sup>th</sup> session. The meeting underscored the severity of climate change on island states and expressed its concern by noting how the effects of climate change are 'threatening their survival and impacting on biodiversity, food security and the livelihoods of communities' and further called for urgent action for the protection of livelihoods and biodiversity.

African island states and in most cases small island states are inherently vulnerable due to their size and remoteness from global interconnected economic system. These states are also highly vulnerable given their exposure to environmental challenges and limited resource base. Despite their negligible contribution to greenhouse gas emissions they have been disproportionately affected by the devastating effects of climate change. Availability of food and water resources remain critical challenges to these states. Food insecurity is a result of multiple factors. In the majority of these states the agricultural sector is characterized by subsistence production. Smallholder farmers constitute the majority producers in the sector. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report more than 80% of farmers hold less than 2 ha in Guinea-Bissau and 90% hold less than 1 ha in Cabo Verde. The sector also highly depends on rainfall and any decrease in precipitation due to climate change exposes communities to drought and the reduction of agricultural production. The use of fertilizers is also low in many of these states. In addition to the agriculture sector island

states are also highly dependent on their oceanic and fishery resources for food security and livelihoods and for economic development.

Food insecurity has deteriorated at an alarming rate across Africa threatening human security. The AU, FAO and the UN Economic Commission for Africa have reported that the hunger situation on the continent witnessed the most deterioration during 2019 and 2020. According to the three entities, 281.6 million Africans are undernourished in 2020. More reports are indicating that these trends will likely worsen in subsequent years (read more in Amani Africa's '[Insights](#)' on Food Security and Conflict in Africa).

In addition to the structural and economic difficulties of island states which make them susceptible to effects of climate change, their condition is further exacerbated by extreme weather events such as cyclones and slow onset processes like sea level rise. This vulnerability is expected to worsen in the coming decades. As per United Nations' World Meteorological Organization's report in 2022, Africa's island states and coastal states will carry a heavy brunt of rising sea level and it will cost them an estimated \$50 billion in damages by 2050. Moreover, extreme weather events and island states remain highly susceptible to external shocks. The combined effects of climate change, COVID19 and the global crisis that followed the war in Ukraine had severe effects that further exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities. These multiple crises have had direct impact on the economies of these countries including due to the adverse effects on the tourism sector, agricultural sector, infrastructure and energy.

The cost of adaptation remains high and these states face difficulties in accessing climate financing. According to United Nations Environmental Protection (UNEP) data the annual adaptation cost for developing nations is estimated at USD 70 billion. The numbers are expected to rise to up to USD 140-300

billion in 2030 and USD 280-500 billion in 2050. Developed nations are far from meeting their commitments of USD100 billion per year, to finance climate change actions at national, regional and international levels.

Building resilience is fundamental for communities and countries to respond to shocks without leading to crisis or conflict. However, security and environmental crises continue to erode the resilience of communities. Drought, water shortage, food insecurity, and desertification that are caused or aggravated by climate change, are risk multipliers for conflict. Moreover, other external and global factors also contribute to this fragility. Hence, tomorrow's session may reflect on policy responses that support island states in scaling up their efforts towards a more resilient and climate-smart agriculture that can respond to internal and external difficulties.

An important aspect to consider during tomorrow's session is the relationship between climate change and security and how these interplay in the context of island states. Although there is an increasing recognition of the nexus between climate and security, it is an area that is yet to be properly studied and analyzed. The relationship is complex and as also highlighted in the concept note there is no direct causal link between climate change and security. Nonetheless, the compounded effects of declining security and environment are being witnessed in various parts of the continent. In recognition of the link between the two components, the 6th IPCC Report on Climate Change stressed the importance of building synergies between climate adaptation and peacebuilding to address climate-related fragility and conflict risks more comprehensively. Indeed, some of the island states in Africa in addition to climate change related challenges, are also experiencing insecurities and fragile political processes, as has been the case in Comoros. Climate change has the effect of accentuating these existing

vulnerabilities and insecurities.

As highlighted in the concept note, one of the key developments that is expected to take place in tomorrow's session is the presentation by the AUC of the 'key messages' on the nexus between climate change, peace and security within the context of the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture to facilitate the development of a Common African Position on climate change, peace and security nexus. This builds from previous PSC decisions and it is also a critical exercise to integrate peace and security matters within COP27 which have been absent in previous COPs.

From the perspective of the upcoming COP27 presidency, the representative from Egypt is expected to highlight the COP priorities and the various initiatives. The representative may also highlight the centrality of adaptation, losses and damages as priorities in the COP and for the continent. These priorities are particularly critical for island states. The absence of a loss and damage fund and the sensitivity around the issue, which was also witnessed in COP26 negotiations, continues to affect developing nations ability to access financing for recovery, reconstruction and to assist communities whose home and livelihood have been destroyed. The representative may also use the opportunity to remind participants and highlight the importance for Africa to clearly articulate its position and interest and ensure that African states advance a collective goal in addressing a global challenge that is disproportionately affecting the continent.

The expected outcome is a communique. Council may underscore the unique vulnerabilities of African island states to climate change and the consequences related to food insecurity. The Council may express its concern over the devastating effects of climate change induced natural disasters and the consequent loss and damage. The PSC may welcome the key messages presented by the AUC as an important step in forming a common

position and informing the COP27 deliberations on climate and security matters. The PSC may commend Egypt for the work it has undertaken in preparation of COP27. The Council may call for the harmonization of policies and action at all levels between the AU, member states and Regional Economic Communities in early warning and early action. The PSC may also call for the need for investing in preparedness and capacity for effective response. Additionally, the PSC may call for a strengthened cooperation between the Africa Multi-hazard Early Warning System and Early Action (AMHEWAS) Situation Room and the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) Situation Room. The Council may reiterate its previous call for countries most responsible for climate change to honor their pledge and deliver on the USD100 billion for annual climate financing to developing nations. It may also highlight the imperative for countries with the most responsibility for greenhouse emissions to take the urgent measures for meeting the target set for limiting emissions. With respect to island states and countries whose economies are battered by the impacts of climate change, it may welcome the plan for including loss and damage in to the COP27 agenda and call for the establishment of a dedicated mechanism for supporting loss and damage.