

Update on the impact of climate change on peace and security

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30 August 2023

Tomorrow (31 August), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) is expected to convene its 1172nd session to receive updates on the impact of climate change on peace and security.

Following opening remarks by Willy Nyamitwe, Permanent Representative of Burundi and the Chairperson of the PSC for August, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), Bankole Adeoye is expected to make a statement. AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, Josepha Sacko, may also deliver a statement. A representative of the UN may also make a statement.

Since the PSC's 585th session of March 2016, which decided to hold annual sessions on climate change, the PSC held [nearly a dozen sessions](#) to discuss issues of concern related to climate change. PSC last met on the theme during its 1114th session last October at Ministerial level, which specifically addressed the issue of 'building resilience and adaptation for food security in African Island States towards COP27'. In the light of the wide range of decisions that the PSC adopted on this theme, an important aspect of tomorrow's session could be a review of the decisions and their implementation as well as the identification of action plan for the follow up of those decisions that are awaiting implementation.

Tomorrow's session is taking place ahead of the inaugural

Africa Climate Summit, which will be held from 4-6 September 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme 'Driving Green Growth and Climate Finance Solutions for African and the World'. Accordingly, of immediate interest for this session is to explore how best to advance the climate and security agenda as part of the Africa Climate Summit. Depending on how this session informs the African Climate Summit, it can also position the AU and its participation in the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), set to take place between November and December 2023.

As part of this session, it is worth recalling the growing impact of climate change particularly in the developing world including Africa, considering that 17 out of 20 countries most affected by climate change are in Africa despite the fact that Africa contributes the least to global greenhouse gas emissions. The adverse impacts of climate change in Africa are reflected in how climate induced extreme weather events affect not only the lives and livelihoods of increasingly large number of people on the continent and curtail progress in achieving development goals but also the governance, security and stability dynamics of affected populations and societies.

The PSC in tomorrow's session is expected to build on its earlier decisions. In a major development that aims to bring the security dimension of climate change to the center of policy processes on climate, its 1114th session called for the inclusion of discussions on climate and security in the agenda of the meetings of the AU Assembly Committee of African Heads of States and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) – a committee that provides political leadership and strategic guidance on the continent's engagement on climate change. During the COP27 hosted in Egypt in November 2022, for the first time the issue of the climate security nexus featured during COP. Apart from various side events and high-level events in which the climate-security nexus took centre stage,

the COP27 Presidency presented the Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP).

Building on its decision from its 1114th session and the initiative of the COP27 presidency, the PSC may not only call on the Africa Climate Summit to declare the designation of climate and security as one of the thematic areas in COP policy processes and ensure that the security implications of climate are duly accounted for so that the security dimension is also fully factored in policy initiatives across the mitigation, adaptation, financing, loss and damage and transition streams of the COP processes.

Understandably, how the security implications of climate change can be addressed as part of the COP processes is something that may be decided as part of the COP negotiation by the states parties. However, the ***PSC may request that the outcome document of the Africa Climate Summit includes a dedicated segment to the security implications of climate change.*** As proposed by Amani Africa in its [statement](#) on 'the climate and security nexus in preparation of COP27', this may involve the establishment of a thematic focus and a dedicated expert group on climate and security on the COP negotiations, which would enable a continuous and robust policy engagement and consultation on climate and security that will make COP processes agile and effectively responsive to various dimensions of the climate crisis.

The other decision that the PSC could build on is from its summit level 984th session, which decided on the establishment of African Union Fund on climate change. Tomorrow's session may discuss how to concretize the establishment of this fund particularly having regard to the existence of the Africa Climate Change Fund under the Africa Development Bank (AfDB). Considering that an important aspect of the focus of the African Climate Summit is climate finance solutions, 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 'choking' the continent. Apart from exploring new sources of funding, there are two aspects that deserve attention in this respect. 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. Available statistics show that African countries particularly those most affected by climate, and fragility and conflict receive the least funding on account of the prohibitive nature of the conditions of access for these countries.

The other aspect of the session may focus on how to take the agenda of climate change and security forward both at a global and continental level while strengthening its own structures to effectively respond to the scourge. Apart from integrating climate in the various engagements that the PSC has with the UN Security Council and the European Political and Security Committee building on the last thematic focus of the consultative meeting of the PSC with the UN Peacebuilding Commission, attention may be drawn to mobilizing support for building resilience for the most vulnerable regions of the continent in key social and economic sectors such as agriculture and rural economy.

The expected outcome of tomorrow's session is a communiqué. PSC is expected to express concern over the rising climate-linked disasters and their implication over the peace, security, stability, and development of the continent. In that regard, it may reiterate its call for the Commission to continue and enhance the identification and mobilization of support to Member States in building national resilience and address the adverse impacts of climate change. PSC may welcome

the convening of the inaugural Africa Climate Summit in September in line with decision of the 36th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly and may urge participants to pay attention to the security implications of climate change in Africa. In relation to the various initiatives and decisions adopted in previous sessions and cognizant of the need for a systematic follow-up to their implementation, PSC may request the Commission to submit a comprehensive report in the next PSC session on the theme, highlighting the status of the implementation of each decision, and action plan on follow up of those decisions pending implementation. As COP28 negotiations will kick off in few months, PSC may urge relevant AU stakeholders, notably the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) to make thorough preparation to ensure that the continent's interests and priorities are taken onboard in the negotiation process and in this respect to add to the negotiation process the proposed establishment of a dedicated thematic focus on the peace and security implications of climate to help inform how best this agenda can be taken forward in COP processes.