

# The NAP Process and Peacebuilding

## Briefing Note

### 1.0 Introduction

For states struggling to prevent, mitigate or recover from conflict and fragility, the road to stability and sustainability is fraught with challenges. There are immediate needs that must be urgently addressed: ensuring security, relieving suffering, delivering clean water, and restoring energy, health, education and other public services. For governments, addressing these priorities is difficult at the best of times; doing so with limited resources, weakened capacities and under the threat of violence is exponentially harder.

In these countries, it can be difficult to prioritize action to respond to climate change. However, it would be a mistake to neglect medium- and long-term adaptation needs in these contexts. The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process offers an important opportunity to align and integrate adaptation planning and peacebuilding processes. This briefing note will explore the importance and difficulties of bringing these two agendas together in contexts of fragility and instability. It will also take a look at some of the countries that have already begun to integrate conflict considerations into their adaptation planning processes. Addressing and integrating these agendas will be especially vital for the sustainable development of fragile states and regions that are seeking to prevent, stop or recover from conflict.



Sudan is ranked among the world's most fragile states and among those most vulnerable to climate change.

## 2.0 Context Setting: Adaptation in fragile settings

For many fragile countries, climate vulnerabilities are among the highest in the world, a combination of their high sensitivity to climate risks, their economic reliance on climate-dependent sectors like agriculture, and their histories of weak governance, conflict and poverty, all of which undermine climate resilience (Brown & Crawford, 2009). Table 1 illustrates the substantial overlap between those states deemed both among the most fragile and the most vulnerable to climate change and least prepared to adapt. Somalia provides an indicative example; it is the state ranked most vulnerable to climate change and is also the second most fragile (University of Notre Dame, 2019; Fund for Peace, 2019).

**Table 1. State fragility and climate vulnerability by country**

Rank	Most Fragile States*	States Most Vulnerable to Climate Change and Least Prepared to Adapt**
1	Yemen	<b>Somalia</b>
2	<b>Somalia</b>	<b>Chad</b>
3	South Sudan	Eritrea
4	Syria	<b>Central African Republic</b>
5	<b>Democratic Republic of Congo</b>	<b>Democratic Republic of Congo</b>
6	<b>Central African Republic</b>	<b>Sudan</b>
7	<b>Chad</b>	Niger
8	<b>Sudan</b>	Haiti
9	<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>Afghanistan</b>
10	Zimbabwe	Guinea-Bissau

Sources: \*Fund for Peace, 2019; \*\*University of Notre Dame, 2019.

**Conflict and climate risks often share the same drivers**, including weak institutions, discrimination, marginalization, historic inequality and poverty (Nicoson, et al., 2019). For many countries, the two converging crises of conflict and climate change can be mutually reinforcing; if left unaddressed, climate change impacts can interact with different parts of the conflict



UN Photo/WFP

Afghanistan has endured various forms of armed conflict for the last four decades, contributing to its status as the world's 9th most fragile state (Brown, 2019; The Fund for Peace, 2019). This history of conflict has heightened the country's vulnerability to climate change and inhibited its ability to adapt. Pictured here, farmers in Afghanistan harvest a reduced wheat crop resulting from below-normal rainfall across the country.

cycle, from underlying causes and triggers through recovery and peacebuilding, while conflict and violence weaken the governance structures and institutions needed to build national and community resilience (Crawford et al., 2015).

**Within contexts of conflict and fragility, it can be difficult to prioritize investing time and resources—both of which are often in short supply—in adaptation programs.** Addressing and reducing a community or country's vulnerability to future climatic forces and events is often superseded by those efforts deemed—often justifiably—more urgent: re-establishing law and order, rebuilding governance structures, providing basic services and strengthening the social contract between state and citizen.

Even with political buy-in, states struggling with instability may face a number of challenges in effectively planning and implementing adaptation actions. Most directly, **adaptation projects and progress can be derailed by conflict**; communities targeted by conflicts may have to flee, project staff may need to be evacuated, project resources may be damaged and funding priorities may shift. In Mali, for example, adaptation efforts carried out by the UNDP were halted completely in 2012 with the outbreak of conflict linked to Islamic terrorist groups in the north of the country (Tanzler, Ruttinger, & Scherer, 2018).

**Effective adaptation planning and policy is built on a clear understanding of climate vulnerabilities, which is in turn built on a base of solid, reliable climate data and information.** In many of these contexts, such information is extremely limited (Mason et al., 2015). Weather stations have often been damaged or neglected to the point of unusability; in

Rwanda, for example, the number of reporting rain gauge stations dropped from 100 in 1990 to almost none following the 1994 genocide (Mason et al., 2015). In addition, technical staff may have fled the violence or been killed, training programs to build up domestic capacities may have been suspended, and domestic and international investments in generating and managing climate data may have dried up (Mason et al., 2015). Upon seizing power in 1996 in Afghanistan, for example, the Taliban fired the country's 600 meteorologists, shuttered the Afghan Meteorological Authority and burned the country's climate data archives (Dokoupil, 2015).

**Financing is similarly problematic in these contexts.** Domestic budgets are typically overstretched and under-resourced, while the capacities of governments to effectively raise and absorb climate financing from bilateral and multilateral donors are limited (Saunders, 2019). This can be due to a number of factors: a fragile state may continue to struggle with corruption, may lack the pre-existing infrastructure needed to apply for and manage adaptation funds, may possess lower levels of private sector activity, or may have a limited ability to develop and manage a pipeline of bankable adaptation projects. Donors may also feel compelled to fund more immediate, humanitarian needs in such contexts; there may, for example, be a stronger case to rebuild roads and hospitals than to invest in adaptation. Finally, funding for conflict prevention or peacebuilding often comes from a different source than that of climate change adaptation; rarely are the two coordinated.

**Taken together, these challenges mean that frequently those most vulnerable to climate change—namely those living in contexts of fragility and exposed to climate risks—may be among the least able to adapt to its impacts.** And if left unaddressed, climate change can undermine the long-term sustainability of humanitarian actions and development programs—and exacerbate the drivers of fragility. Droughts, floods and rainfall variability can result in shortages of food, water and arable land, which in turn may intensify competition over scarce resources. Extreme weather events can compromise and threaten the viability of ongoing humanitarian responses; Rohingya refugees living in camps in south-east Bangladesh, for example, are extremely vulnerable to landslides and flooding during the monsoon season (UNDP, 2019). Climate change may also result in the large-scale movements of people, shifts in the range of vector-borne diseases, or the loss of territory due to rising sea levels—each one potentially destabilizing, if not existential (Stark, Terasaw, & Ejigu, 2011). These adverse impacts can, in turn, overwhelm state institutions—especially in states struggling with fragility—by placing additional pressures on health, water, food and energy systems (Crawford et al., 2015).

**Adapting to the impacts of climate change can help address these challenges.** Support for adaptation, when thoughtfully designed and implemented,<sup>1</sup> can do more than enhance the capacity of countries and communities to cope and rebound from climate shocks and stresses; it can also help address the root causes of conflict and strengthen the foundation upon which peace is built. For this to occur, planning is critical.

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<sup>1</sup> Adaptation often deals with the management and (re)distribution of resources. As such, it can influence power dynamics, political relations and equality among stakeholder groups. It is vital that adaptation measures are planned and implemented in a conflict-sensitive way that considers these potential conflict, fragility and power dynamics, to ensure effective delivery of its joint benefits to addressing climate and conflict vulnerability.



UN Photo/Tobin Jones

Climate change impacts including drought, flood, and rainfall variability can result in shortages of food, water and arable land, which in turn can overwhelm state institutions. In Somalia, the occurrence of drought can lead to food insecurity and famine.

### 3.0 Peacebuilding and the NAP Process

The NAP process offers governments, donors and other stakeholders a new approach to development in contexts of fragility. By integrating climate adaptation into a country's medium- and long-term development plans in a participatory, country-owned and holistic manner, the NAP process can be designed in a way that addresses many of a country's core and overlapping vulnerabilities to both conflict and climate change. The NAP process itself will not be able to address all of the drivers of conflict in a country; however, as an integrated approach to development and adaptation planning, it is well-positioned to support peacebuilding processes for a number of reasons:

1. **NAP process timelines are well-aligned with peacebuilding timelines.** The impacts of violent conflict are widespread and long-lasting; on average, it takes 22 years for a country's economy to recover from a major conflict (Hoeffler, 2012). Successful peacebuilding involves addressing immediate post-conflict needs, but also creating legitimate institutions and addressing the root causes of fragility, both of which require long-term commitments and access to predictable financing (United Nations, 2015). The National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan for the Central African Republic, for example, includes the short-term priorities of national disarmament and demobilization but also has the long-term objective of building up institutional capacities (World Bank, 2018). Past adaptation planning processes, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC's) National

Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), rightly focused on the urgent and immediate adaptation needs of LDCs, but as such, they were not necessarily as well-aligned with some of the longer-term peacebuilding goals and timelines for those states recovering from conflict. The NAP process, conversely, is focused on mainstreaming adaptation needs and priorities into medium- and long-term development plans across sectors and levels of governance (LDC Expert Group, 2012). As such, it can be aligned with both short-term and longer-term peacebuilding processes—from the identification of immediate priorities through to the prolonged period in which these processes are integrated with development planning efforts. The NAP process is also iterative, and thus is designed to take into account the dynamic contexts of fragile states; plans can be adjusted over time to reflect the changing realities on the ground.

2. **The NAP process takes a holistic approach to addressing vulnerability.** Many adaptation actions tend to focus on the proximate impacts of climate change and not necessarily the underlying drivers of vulnerability, including historic inequality, poverty and conflict. Though they are important parts of building resilience, these technocratic or incremental approaches—including climate-proofing existing operations, building climate-resilient infrastructure or adopting new technologies—may not be transformative enough to ensure the overall resilience of vulnerable people and places (Church & Hammill, 2019). The NAP process requires that countries take a more holistic approach to adaptation, encompassing both incremental and transformative actions across sectors and levels of government, to increase resilience more meaningfully and sustainably. Doing so effectively will entail addressing the underlying drivers of climate vulnerability, which can include conflict and its root causes while also addressing the overlapping drivers of both climate change and conflict.
3. **The NAP process provides a platform for dialogue and trust-building among a diverse range of stakeholders.** The Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) Technical Guidelines for the NAP process stress that it should be participatory, gender-responsive and transparent (LDC Expert Group, 2012). By including traditionally marginalized groups in national adaptation planning and implementation, these groups will be better able to ensure that their voices, needs and potential grievances are known and addressed. This will not only contribute to the effectiveness of adaptation actions, but can support peacebuilding by promoting trust and dialogue among actors that had not previously worked together or had had contentious relationships; the need to adapt to climate change may prove to be a less politically contentious topic for discussion among parties than land rights, for example, or historical injustice.
4. **The NAP process has considerable political and financial momentum.** There has been increasing national and international interest in (and action on) adaptation planning alongside the financing required to support it. As of October 2019, 120 out of 153 developing countries had undertaken activities related to the NAP process—an increase of 29 countries from 2018, according to the LEG's annual submission to the UNFCCC (LDC Expert Group, 2019). And while many fragile governments still lag behind more stable governments in their adaptation planning efforts, there is growing recognition of how climate change can affect humanitarian,

conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. As previously mentioned, financing adaptation in fragile states has traditionally been difficult, though this may be changing; while overall funding for adaptation is not as significant as that available for humanitarian action in fragile states, there is an expanding pot of money from which these governments can access support, some of which is earmarked specifically for them. For example, developing countries all have access to the Green Climate Fund's (GCF's) NAP Readiness Programme, which allocates money to strengthening the institutional capacities of governments initiating the NAP process. It is hoped that the capacity-building support provided through the NAP Readiness Programme will help governments better position themselves to apply for larger amounts of financing from the GCF—and other sources of financing—in the future. Some fragile states have already successfully accessed GCF funding; for example, in July 2019, the GCF approved a USD 10 million project to increase the adaptive capacity of food-insecure households in Zimbabwe, while in 2019, Somalia was granted USD 3 million in readiness funding to improve the climate-risk preparedness capacities of its pastoralist communities (Green Climate Fund, 2019). Beyond the GCF, funding for adaptation across a number of sources (including other international climate funds, bilateral donors and the private sector) is growing, and while these levels of funding remain smaller than those earmarked specifically for humanitarian action, they could still provide already-stretched national budgets with the resources needed to reduce climate vulnerability and risk.



“Central African Republic Crisis” by Ivan Lieman is licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

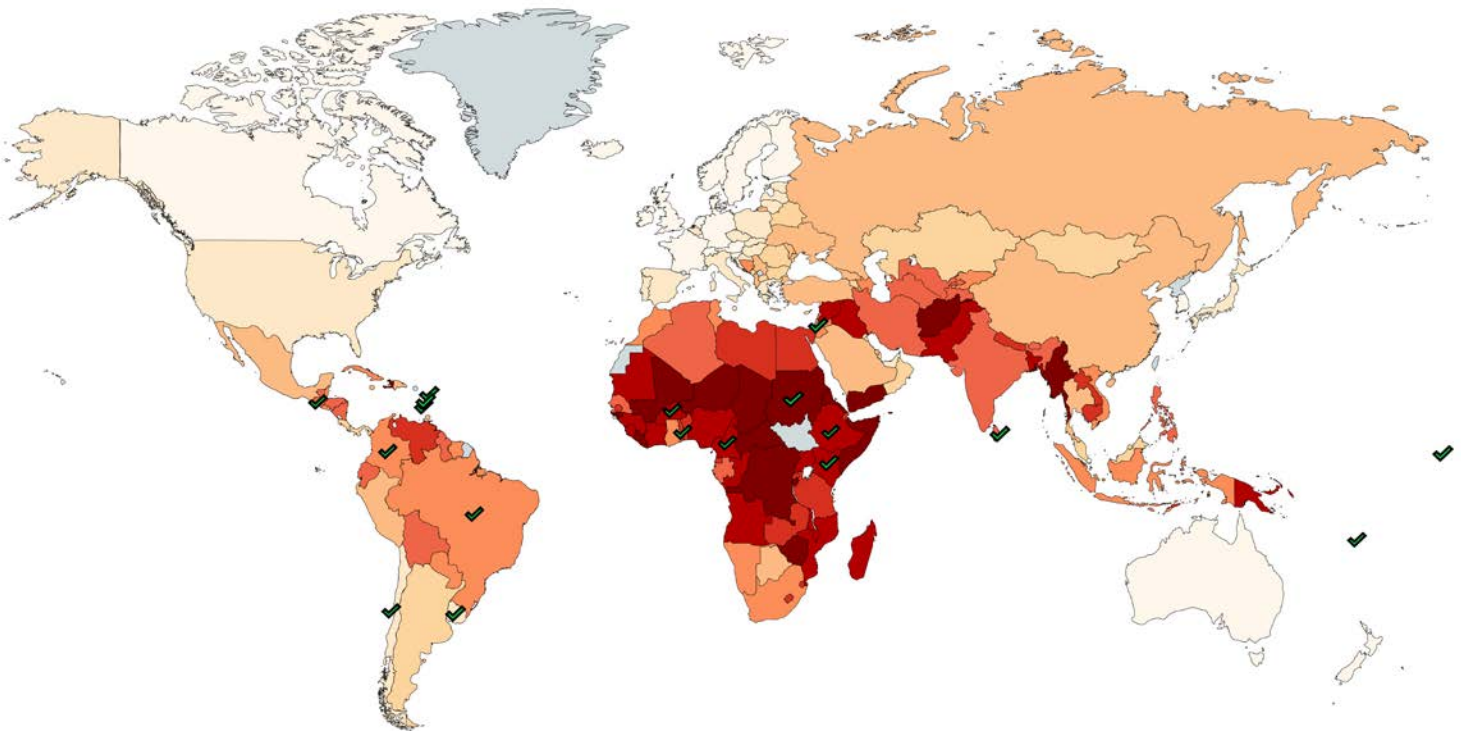
The Central African Republic is ranked among the world's most fragile states and among those most vulnerable to climate change.

## 4.0 NAPs and Conflict in Practice

The NAP process is already being used as a tool to recognize and integrate conflict dynamics into adaptation planning and efforts. Many of the 18 NAP documents submitted to the UNFCCC as of January 2020 have incorporated peace and conflict dynamics to varying degrees: some countries argue that adaptation action is needed to prevent conflicts, while others note that conflict is a source of climate vulnerability that must be addressed and subsequently informs available adaptation options.

Figure 1 overlays the ND-GAIN Country Index, which demonstrates a country's vulnerability to climate change and its overall resilience, with the Fragile States Index. The darker the red, the more fragile and vulnerable to climate change the country is perceived to be by the two indices. The checkmarks summarize which countries have submitted their NAP document to the NAP Central as of January 2020.

**Figure 1. Countries' fragility and vulnerability to climate change**



Sources: University of Notre Dame, 2019; The Fund for Peace, 2019; UNFCCC, 2019.



**Table 2. Fragility and climate vulnerability rankings for countries that have submitted their NAP document to NAP Central, January 2020**

Countries with NAP Documents on UNFCCC NAP Central	Fragile States Index Ranking 2019 <sup>2</sup>	ND-GAIN Country Index Ranking 2019 <sup>3</sup>
Brazil	95	80
Burkina Faso	130	161
Cameroon	162	138
Chile	28	28
Colombia	108	76
Ethiopia	154	163
Fiji	96	87
Grenada	56	47
Guatemala	121	111
Kenya	153	150
Kiribati	No data	No data
Saint Lucia	No data	63
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	No data	49
Sri Lanka	132	100
State of Palestine	No data	No data
Sudan	170	176
Togo	140	145
Uruguay	21	55

<sup>2</sup> For the Fragile States Index Ranking, a ranking of 1 denotes the least fragile country, a ranking of 177 denotes the most fragile country (Fund for Peace, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> For the ND-GAIN Country Index Ranking, a score of 1 denotes the least vulnerable to climate change, a ranking of 181 denotes the most vulnerable to climate change (University of Notre Dame, 2019).



UN Photo/Gill Fickling

In Colombia, Wayuu villagers make use of increasingly scarce supplies of water. The Colombian NAP document has identified water scarcity – due to the adverse impacts of climate change – as a potential source of conflict.

Many of the governments that have submitted their NAPs to the UNFCCC—whether fragile or not—recognize that climate change could act as a driver of conflict if left unaddressed through adaptation action. These governments note that the adverse impacts of climate change (including droughts, floods, and rainfall variability) may place a strain on valuable natural resources, which could result in competition—sometimes violent—between opposing groups and livelihood strategies. The NAPs for Togo, Kenya, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Sudan, and Burkina Faso all highlight the importance of adaptation as a mechanism for preventing potential land- and water-use conflicts, particularly those that might arise among pastoralists and farmers. The Sudanese NAP, for example, highlights that many of the country's most recent conflicts have been between these two opposing groups and that drought could further exacerbate these grievances (Republic of the Sudan, 2016). The government sees adaptation as a means of mitigating this risk by bringing opposing groups together to sustainably manage shared water and land resources (Republic of the Sudan, 2016). Similarly, Burkina Faso's NAP identifies establishing a National Observatory of Pastoralism as an adaptation priority, as it would promote lasting social peace among pastoralist groups through adaptation actions explicitly designed to reduce tensions relating to resource competition (Burkina Faso, Ministry of Environment and Fishery Resources, 2015). Finally, the Cameroonian NAP lists improved land governance as a key adaptation priority; without it, the degradation of arable land as a result of climate change will likely amplify the risk of conflict in the worst-affected regions (Republic of Cameroon, 2015). In each of these cases, adaptation is recognized as a key mechanism for the prevention of climate-related conflicts.

In Latin America, the NAPs for Brazil, Colombia, and Chile recognize the potential for sectoral tensions emerging around increasingly scarce water supplies—and the need for increased conflict management and dispute resolution mechanisms to mitigate these risks. In Colombia, changes in the water cycle are expected to lead to water shortages and subsequent impacts on household use, sanitation and health. This could in turn lead to potential conflicts between the population and those entities responsible for the provision and management of water. In all three countries, the NAP process is a mechanism for identifying potential conflicts and planning for their prevention.

Though less common, some countries have through their NAP processes recognized that conflict can be a significant source of climate vulnerability and can even limit the number of adaptation options that are open to them. Sudan's NAP, for example, identifies ongoing conflicts in certain provinces as a key driver of regional climate vulnerability; South Kordofan province, in particular, is identified as one of the most vulnerable regions in the country, not because of its susceptibility to drought but rather because it continues to be defined by a context of fragility, conflict and a lack of basic services (Republic of the Sudan, 2016).

The Palestinian NAP is perhaps the most responsive to conflict, especially as it pertains to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. It recognizes that the ongoing conflict will continue to impact climate vulnerabilities across both Gaza and the West Bank; for example, while olive and vegetable production in the Gaza Strip could decrease as a result of climate change, this vulnerability is compounded by the number of agricultural facilities destroyed by Israeli airstrikes in 2008, 2012, and 2014 (State of Palestine, Environment Quality Authority, 2016). The NAP states explicitly that the ongoing conflict with Israel constrains Palestine's ability to adapt, particularly by limiting the adaptation options available to the Palestinian Authority, given the restrictions on the movement of peoples, the import of new technologies, the development of infrastructure, or the import and export of raw materials and products (State of Palestine, Environment Quality Authority, 2016).

## 5.0 Ongoing Challenges

Practitioners and policy-makers working on climate and peacebuilding often work in silos, and coordination among those working on adaptation and those who work on conflict prevention and peacebuilding can be limited. The alignment of these agendas and programming will be essential for the sustainable development of fragile states, given the mutually reinforcing nature of the climate crisis and conflict. The NAP process presents a new mechanism to bring climate change adaptation and peacebuilding agendas together. While some states have already begun to integrate conflict and peacebuilding dynamics into their NAP process, there remain some limitations to these ongoing efforts and challenges which should be addressed:

1. **Accounting for transboundary risks and issues.** Though the NAP process is a country-led process, the impacts of climate change and conflict are not confined to country borders. Continued efforts must be devoted to exploring or developing transboundary adaptation plans between neighbouring countries in order to account for these shared risks.
2. **Adaptation planning and implementation in active conflicts.** Despite the necessity of planning and implementing adaptation processes in the world's most fragile states, the feasibility of doing so is severely constrained if the country is in a state of active conflict. These states may lack the basic services, institutions and resources needed to initiate the NAP process.
3. **Ensuring the full participation of marginalized populations.** While the NAP process aims to be inclusive and participatory, there are still some populations that struggle for representation. Refugees, for example, are among the world's most vulnerable populations, and yet are largely absent from existing NAP processes in host and destination countries. To account for representative and inclusive NAP processes in fragile states, it is important that these populations are not neglected in adaptation planning and decision making.

These three limitations represent key areas for future study and consideration and will be crucial to the success of NAP processes in fragile states.

Climate change will not inevitably cause conflict; communities and countries have successfully and peacefully adapted to droughts, floods and extreme weather events in the past. And conflict will not inevitably result in a failure to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change; populations that live under the constant strain of conflict are arguably among the most adaptive in the world. Despite this, the twin and often mutually reinforcing crises of climate change and conflict require that the drivers of both be considered and addressed for meaningful progress toward sustainable development. Thankfully, many of the attributes of successful adaptation planning and peacebuilding are aligned; both must be country-driven, holistic, participatory and gender-responsive; they must involve multiple levels of governance; and they should be planned and implemented in response to immediate, medium- and long-term priorities. For those countries most struggling with both climate change and conflict, bringing these two agendas together is not just good practice: it is imperative.

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Financial support provided by:

Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :

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