

Joint Press Stakeout on Climate Change, Food Insecurity and Conflict 13 February 2024

Today, the Security Council convened for an open debate on the impact of climate change and food insecurity on the maintenance of international peace and security. On behalf of France, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, The Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and my own country Guyana, we take this opportunity to highlight the importance that we attach to a holistic approach to these issues in the context of international peace and security.

As countries that have joined the Joint Pledges related to Climate, Peace, and Security, our delegations have acknowledged that climate change can aggravate existing threats to international peace and security. We are concerned that the increasing occurrences of extreme climate events are severely impacting access to vital resources such as water and agricultural lands, abetting inter-communal conflicts, especially in the most vulnerable regions of the world, including in several countries on the Council's agenda.

There is increasing evidence of the interrelationship between climate change, food insecurity, and conflict with each directly or indirectly impacting the other. The science is compelling and we are of the strong view that this issue requires a systematic and strategic approach by the Council.

Food and water insecurity and hunger are among the primary pathways through which the effects of climate change on peace and stability and the enjoyment of human rights manifest. Just as with land-based agriculture, blue food insecurity, contributes to a number of today's most significant security challenges. Conflict can in turn exacerbate food crises and environmental degradation creating a vicious cycle: of the ten countries most sensitive to climate change-related risks, nine are food insecure. Low-income, fragile, vulnerable, and conflict-affected countries and communities are most at risk of being overwhelmed by climate impacts.

As temperatures continue to rise, increasing unpredictable rainfall patterns, severe droughts, floods, sea-level rise, and changing agricultural patterns result in food insecurity, disrupted livelihoods, and migration which are among the key factors driving conflict and violence. Climate change, in this regard, is considered a risk multiplier.

Women and youth, children, and older persons are among the most disproportionately affected while Indigenous Peoples, who for decades have long been considered guardians of the environment and many of whom rely on nature for their subsistence, face the reality of being displaced, forced to seek not only refuge but new avenues to be food secure.

We, therefore, cannot afford to ignore the interlinked nature of these three phenomena and call on the Security Council and the wider multilateral system to take a holistic view of these challenges.

We do note that the Security Council has recognized the adverse effects of climate change on stability in resolutions on the mandates in peacekeeping operations and political missions. However, the Council must endeavor to adopt a long-term strategy based on comprehensive risk assessments, utilizing data and analytics to build resilience.

Finally, as responsible and committed members of the Security Council and to the Climate, Peace, and Security Agenda, we stand ready to consolidate our efforts to advance a systematic, responsive, inclusive, and evidence-based approach.