
Statements submitted for the event ‘The humanitarian impact of combined conflict, climate and environmental risks’ on 25 September 2020, as part of the 75th United Nations General Assembly

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Afghanistan

Statement: Ambassador Mohammad Naeemi, DPR, Permanent Mission to the UN-NY

Honorable Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I join others in thanking Belgium, the European Union, the Republic of Niger, and the International Committee of the Red Cross for organizing today's high-level event. I also want to recognize OCHA's life-saving work, including in Afghanistan, and the able leadership of Mr. Mark Lowcock.

Today's discussion has been rich in detail and provided important lessons learned that could help Afghanistan tackle our complex set of intersecting challenges driving humanitarian needs and affecting humanitarian response. Amplifying the humanitarian perspective in climate-security conversations is essential in implementing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and breaking barriers between silos. It could further facilitate a more micro-level perspective that highlights the intersecting vulnerabilities and resilience of the individual and her community.

Afghanistan is one of the epicenters of the climate-security nexus. My country is routinely ranked among the most vulnerable to climate change and has experienced over 40 years of conflict. As many have pointed out before me, the former is undoubtedly a result of and a contributing factor to the later. In recent years, analyses have been published that shine the light on how climate shocks in Afghanistan may worsen poverty and contribute to unemployment rate, the recruitment of armed groups, and how water scarcity may increase community-level violence. The 2020 UNDP Afghanistan Human Development Report further established a relationship between minerals extraction and conflict.

The impact of climate change and environmental risks on the individual's resilience and vulnerability is less studied and understood. It will be essential to focus more significant efforts to understand this relationship. There is, however, little question that there is a strong negative link between them. For example, following the 2018 droughts, which were exacerbated by climate change, many families' debt-levels rose dramatically. In turn, increased debt-levels have increased their vulnerability and made many less resilient to new shocks and more likely to fall back on harmful coping mechanisms in the face of crisis.

Moreover, internal displacement and the return of large numbers of Afghan refugees from neighboring countries remain significant issue in Afghanistan. Afghans continue to be displaced by both man-made and natural disasters, including floods, earthquakes, and avalanches. Disasters are increasingly intersecting, which is making it more challenging to identify durable solutions.

To tackle these issues, more analysis, better data, and more context-specific interventions are needed. We must make efforts to reflect better the root causes of conflict and natural disasters in our studies and collect the data required to facilitate it. These efforts are needed both at the national, regional, and global levels.

Lastly, our efforts must be age and gender-responsive. Women and youth participation in the analysis and the response are critical to reflect their unique needs better and learn from their insights. Afghanistan is placing a significant focus on including women and youth in decision making and empowering these groups through leadership.

Afghanistan looks forward to the continuation of this discussion and to share lessons learned with others.

I thank you.

Austria

Statement: Her.E. Ambassador Ms Désirée Schweitzer, Vice Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance, Federal Ministry for Europe and International Affairs

Messrs Chairs, Excellencies and Colleagues,

I first would like to thank Belgium, the EU, the Republic of Niger and the International Committee of the Red Cross for the organisation of this timely debate and keynote speaker Mark Lowcock and all the panellists for their insightful remarks.

Today, we gained a lot of insights on the complex interrelationship of climate change and conflicts. There is however a sad certainty: The humanitarian impact on affected populations is compounded; the vulnerability of people is increased. COVID-19 aggravates the humanitarian situation of those most vulnerable and further reduces the resilience of individuals, communities and institutions to cope with these challenges.

Austria, not least due to the humanitarian impact of COVID-19 and the aggravation of the humanitarian situation due to climate change, has decided to double its humanitarian budget as of 2020. Together with our national and international partners, we have to take into account the complex interrelationship between conflict, climate change and environmental risks.

Austria has embarked on an ambitious programme to combine our humanitarian assistance with elements of development cooperation and the peace dimension. Short-term actions and medium to long-term resilience building Implementing the NEXUS will be key in our response to the combined challenge of climate change and conflict. We are learning from our COVID-19 experience in fragile contexts that the implementation of the so-called NEXUS is not only a nice political slogan but a sheer necessity to fulfil our humanitarian objectives of saving lives and reducing suffering.

We need to recalibrate our actions to support those who are particularly vulnerable to the combined onslaught of conflict, climate change and pandemics, notably women and girls as well as refugees and IDPs.

The protection of civilians needs to be strengthened through our humanitarian action but also through the promotion of respect for International Humanitarian Law and its further development. Austria will continue to work on measure to limit the exposure of civilian populations to the horrors of conflict, for example through explosive weapons in populated areas, the humanitarian impact of lethal autonomous weapon systems and the indiscriminate devastation of nuclear weapons.

We need to learn from each other's experiences and continue our cooperation. Today's event was a welcome opportunity to further this process.

Thank you!

Belgium

Opening remarks: Minister Goffin, Minister of Foreign Affairs and of Defence, Kingdom of Belgium

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to welcome you, together with EU-Commissioner Lenarcic, to this online high level meeting.

Let me start by conveying my sympathies to my Nigerese colleague and the Nigerese people for their suffering caused by the massive and lethal floods. Droughts, floods and other natural disasters are also occurring in the broader Sahel, in Somalia, in South Soudan, in Yemen and many other places. These disasters fuel tensions over water and land, force people into displacement, and disproportionately impact women and children. Affected communities become more vulnerable to recruitment by criminals and insurgents as they compete for scarce resources.

These examples demonstrate that the most vulnerable to climate change are the ones whose resilience to cope with these changes is already put to the test by several shocks. **Indeed, climate change reinforces existing social, political, economic and environmental drivers of conflict and it aggravates existing vulnerabilities and inequalities.**

Despite these undisputable facts, **the vulnerabilities of people and countries in conflict or with weak governance, are not sufficiently taken into account in the climate financing framework.** The countries that need climate finance most are least likely to receive it.

Let me give you 3 examples of Belgium's response to these challenges :

Firstly, as an elected member, Belgium supports an increased role for the Security Council to address climate-related security risks. Belgium's primary focus has been mainstreaming these risks into relevant Council action. We are pleased that currently twelve Security Council mandates can be considered climate-sensitive.

Secondly, in view of the underfinancing of LDCs, Belgium contributes about EUR 15 million per year to the Least Developed Countries Fund, in addition to our contributions to the Global Environment Facility and Green Climate Fund of around EUR 40 million per year.

Thirdly, the underfinancing of LDCs is also why the vast majority of the activities of the Belgian development agency Enabel are executed in fragile contexts. To further strengthen our engagement on this front, we are currently investigating how Belgian development activities in the region of Central Africa can be made more climate-sensitive.

Today we want to draw **more attention to the humanitarian angle.** Let me explain why this is important for our joint work.

First of all, **the environment is often an overlooked casualty of conflict.** Natural surroundings are even used as weapons. IS retained flooding or contaminated water resources in order to achieve military goals as it did for example by causing major flooding in 2014 at Fallujah Dam. Better compliance with the rules of international humanitarian law that protect the natural environment, would help limit the impact of conflict on nature.

Secondly, **humanitarian work has become increasingly complex.** Where it used to be exclusively response-driven, it now also needs to anticipate and focus on strengthening resilience of vulnerable communities. The Belgian humanitarian department has not lost sight of the crucial work to be done in this nexus, and has teamed up with Plan International and Oxfam, for a project aimed at strengthening youth resilience in the Lake Chad region. Its experience has demonstrated the need for more adaptable, localized, flexible, and innovative programs in fragile settings.

These humanitarian concerns have led to a growing call for further analysis and data to improve our understanding and to develop innovative tools.

We are therefore grateful to welcome our keynote speaker, our panel and moderator today, as they are well placed to share their insights on all of the issues I mentioned.

We wish you a fruitful discussion.

Brazil

Statement: Minister Counsellor (First Secretary) Ricardo de Souza Monteiro

While remaining sensitive to the impact of climate change on the most vulnerable countries and considering ways through which development issues can be better integrated into peace efforts, Brazil is of the opinion that the international community must avoid taking steps that could lead to an undesirable securitization of the climate change agenda.

By recognizing that climate change has a wide range and multiple dimensions, Brazil emphasizes that the most significant and accurate relation is not the alleged link between security and the environment, but between development and the environment. Climate change is above all an issue to be discussed within the context of sustainable development, as it requires simultaneous political, economic, and social approaches, rather than security responses.

Prior to considering the international community's responses to the humanitarian effects of environmental degradation in peace and security, it is important to highlight the principle of national sovereignty over the management of natural resources and the States' primary responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction do not cause damage to the environment of other states or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

The use of controversial language such as "climate-security nexus" and "climate-related security risks" is potentially misleading and can prove counterproductive to the goal of addressing the adverse effects of climate change. These terms might reinforce a fundamentally mistaken and even dangerous assumption that climate change inexorably leads to conflict.

Instead of emphasizing the impact of environmental degradation on peace and security, Brazil considers it all the more important to understand the adverse consequences of armed conflicts on the environment, and how it in turn affects the population.

In fact, the outbreak of conflict often relies upon manifold structural factors, rather than one single indicator alone. Experts have pointed out that while it is a far-fetched proposition to establish an automatic, direct link between climate change and armed conflict, singling out one among several root causes of conflict might bring about simplistic answers to complicated matters, thus endangering the solution to threats to international peace and security in the first place.

Rather than further investing in securitizing the climate agenda, developed countries should channel energy and resources into fostering those financial mechanisms, which aim at compensating the losses and damages of the most vulnerable states due to climate change. In fact, it may be detrimental to international security if the countries listed in UNFCCC Annex I do not take the necessary measures to meet their emission reduction commitments.

As it has been pointed out, Article 35, item 3 of the 1977 Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions prohibits "methods or means of warfare which are intended, or may be expected to cause, widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment". We believe that IHL thus provides a sufficient and adequate regulatory framework to deal with various issues related to contemporary armed conflicts, including its environmental aspect. The promotion of respect for IHL lies therefore at the very core of today's discussion, as a key preventive measure to safeguard the environment during armed conflicts.

Chile

Statement: Mr Franco Devillaine, General Director of Legal Affairs of Chile

On behalf of Chile, I wish to thank Belgium, Niger, the European Union and the International Red Cross Committee for the organization of this side event, which allows us to think of the challenges we are facing today and how Chile can contribute to formulate responses for us to go forward in strengthening humanitarian action.

This year in which we celebrate the seventy-first anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the cornerstone of International Humanitarian Law, coincides with one of the greatest challenges we have experienced as humanity. The Coronavirus pandemic has led us to reflect on the fragility of human condition, which becomes even more vulnerable when we add conflict situations.

The nature of the conflicts we face today has changed and some of the threats to humanitarian principles are different from those that existed 71 years ago. Indeed, the consequences of crises undermine the regulatory mechanisms to provide responses; instead, they favor the dismantling of institutional structures, as well as the loss of social support networks. In view of this, a quick and effective response can be key to safeguarding those at risk, particularly the most vulnerable.

In relation to the above, countries that are undergoing conflict experience severe damage to their critical infrastructure, which, along with making the living conditions of the most vulnerable groups more precarious, reduces their capability to face climate change. States are prevented from taking measures to protect the environment, severely impacting the civilian population.

Additionally, environmental degradation reduces the capacity to adapt to climate change and the resilience of societies, a central theme of what has convened us today.

This year the worst rains and storms have hit the Northern Hemisphere in the recent years, producing a level of destruction on a large scale. The Center for the Monitoring of Internal Displacement has reported that 25 million people are internally displaced due to situations caused by natural disasters, strictly related to climate change. Those displaced by weather-related causes have been forced to flee their own countries due to weather-related disasters and hazards, such as storms, cyclones, forest fires and landslides.

Chile considers that climate change increases vulnerabilities compounded by the interaction of climate and environment crisis and conflict. Affects us all equally, regardless of the level of development that nations have.

Face with this scenario, we must take into consideration the role that humanitarian law plays in contributing to responses to these challenges, we certainly believe that greater respect for the laws of war can reduce the damage and risks to which affected communities are exposed due to conflicts resulting from climate change. In this sense, Chile largely support International regulations. It would be convenient to update the guidelines on the protection of the natural environment in armed conflicts as soon as possible.

We call upon to continue supporting the efforts that are being developed in multilateral entities in different latitudes to provide humanitarian assistance in emergencies. We trust that the United Nations Secretary General's most assume that Chile will support thus efforts and the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement will arrive at important conclusions next year to address this issue under holistic approaches.

Thank you very much for the organization.

Egypt

Statement: H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Edrees, Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt

Mr. Chair,

Allow me at the outset to thank Belgium, the Republic of Niger, the European Union, and the International Committee of the Red Cross for convening this important high-level event that addresses some of the most pertinent challenges we face.

Mr. Chair,

Egypt expresses its concern about the recent escalation in humanitarian crises and disasters globally due to the unrest, armed conflicts, and natural disasters such as drought, famine, and floods. This situation means that the world needs to provide more humanitarian aid, in highly complex security, political, and health conditions, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Conflicts - particularly armed - are the most severe challenges facing the improvement of the humanitarian situation in any region of the world, given the enormous suffering, they cause to civilians, as well as the restrictions they impose on humanitarian work activities. Egypt stresses the importance of the political will to settle conflicts, especially in Africa. We praise the African Union's efforts and initiatives to bring peace to the continent, the latest of which is the "Silencing the Guns" initiative. In this context, we note that Egypt exerts the maximum effort to provide aid to our brothers in the region and the African continent.

Moreover, the humanitarian impacts of climate change and conflict risk comprised a multi-dimensional and intricate relation where the practice has shown that climate change can often exacerbate risks related to energy production, food security, economic development, and social inequalities. Recent evidence confirms the confluence of climate and conflict risks, showing that many populations and/or extensive land areas in fragile states face high climate risks. Thus, as the pressure on natural resources increases, competition can lead to instability and even violent conflict in the absence of effective dispute resolution.

Mr. Chair,

In conclusion, the combined climate risks, environmental degradation, and conflict present a formidable challenge to some African countries in particular. The approach to addressing this challenge is through the international community's commitment, not only to unravel these combined risks and address their respective facets in a coordinated manner but also to reinvigorate the commitments undertaken at the international level. In the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement, obligations were undertaken to support developing countries to address their needs arising from climate change challenges, encompassing finance, and other means of implementation. Meeting these obligations should be a solid basis in enabling our collective response to this formidable challenge.

Thank You.

European Union (EU)

Opening remarks: Janez Lenarcic, European Union Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management

Thank you, Ms Peters, for your kind introduction.

Together with Minister Goffin, it is an honour to welcome you all to this online event.

We have an excellent line-up of speakers today and we look forward to the panel discussion.

In this year's Global Risks Report, published by the World Economic Forum, the **top five global risks in terms of likelihood** are all environmental.

Extreme weather events.

Major natural disasters.

Human-made environmental damage.

The failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

Biodiversity loss.

Individually, each of these risks represents a serious challenge. For every country, regardless of its socio-economic development.

We have all seen the devastating effects of wildfires in Australia last year, and now in the United States. Here in Europe, we have had our fair share of them, too.

Most countries, even the most developed, struggle to factor these risks into their decisions. To make their societies more resilient. To protect their people and their communities.

We try to prepare as best we can. But it is a complex, difficult business.

So, it is no understatement that we have set ourselves a challenging task today.

First, by adding **conflict** to the mix.

And second, because the 'societies' – the people we are talking about – are among the most vulnerable on earth.

The humanitarian impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are essentially two-fold.

There are the impacts resulting from **sudden onset disasters**. More floods. More extreme weather events. More wildfires.

As we know too well, these can cause extensive destruction of infrastructure, short-term displacement and loss of livelihoods – and of course, lives.

The response is generally immediate. Even if not always adequate.

And there usually follows a more or less long period of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Then there are the **slow-onset emergencies**. These have more pervasive and long-term consequences.

Longer and more intense droughts. Rising sea levels. Coastal erosion. Deforestation and land degradation.

These have less immediately visible impacts, but they are very real.

They are driving an upward trend in humanitarian needs.

They are leading to **displacement** and fuelling tensions in host communities.

And they are playing a role in conflict dynamics.

At the same time, 70% of the most climate vulnerable people live in conflict-affected regions.

Humanitarian actors are on the front line of these complex crises. They already have the difficult task of getting aid to those who need it. Of identifying needs and planning logistics.

They now face the added complexity of having to anticipate needs arising from these inter-linked impacts.

As policy-makers, we can help by developing **systemic, integrated solutions**.

Solutions that bring together the humanitarian, development and security communities. And that draw on climate and environment policy tools and strategies.

Solutions that integrate early warning tools, forecast-based anticipatory action, prevention and preparedness strategies to build **resilience**.

Solutions that help communities and governments better prepare for emergencies and build their capacity to respond.

And, ultimately, solutions that offer long-term, sustainable and stable futures for people wherever they live.

This is the direction in which we are moving in the European Union.

As part of **our disaster preparedness approach**, we are putting renewed focus on climate change and conflicts.

We are addressing issues of temporary displacement, together with key partners including some of you here today.

We are exploring innovative schemes to support communities in becoming more resilient, such as risk-based financing for anticipatory action or adapted models of insurance.

And we are working to ensure that our humanitarian response lays the foundations for a sustainable and long-term recovery.

I am cooperating closely with my colleague Jutta Urpilainen, Commissioner for International Partnerships, to make sure that development actors step in when the time is ripe.

Perhaps an even greater challenge when thinking about climate and environmental impacts is how it fits in the humanitarian and security nexus.

It is clear that these impacts can be drivers of conflict and displacement. But we should also they can also provide common ground for dialogue. Between refugees and host communities, for example. We need to see how we can bring both angles into our work.

I am sure that we will explore these and other issues in our discussion today, and identify ways forward.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations

Statement: Mr. Dominique Burgeon, Director -FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- The number of people experiencing acute food insecurity at crisis and worse levels is unacceptably high and rising.
- In 2019, conflict was once again the main driver of acute food insecurity, but weather extremes also played a major role, pushing an additional 5 million people into acute hunger compared with 2018.
- Recurrent and compounding shocks are eroding people's capacity to cope and sharply pushing up the number of people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance and further straining the capacity of the humanitarian system to respond.
- While the dynamics of exactly how climate change interacts with structural or contextual factors to create conflict are yet to be fully determined, it is clear that climate change can exacerbate the causes of violent conflict, further increasing the risk of poverty and hunger.
- At the same time, conflict contributes to environmental degradation and erodes families' access to essential resources for food production.
- Thus, creating a cycle of increased vulnerability and fragility that further erodes food security and livelihoods of people relying on agriculture for their survival, who represent up to 80 percent of those living in food crisis contexts.
- FAO notes with great alarm the situation in parts of the Sahel and the Sudan today, where recent flooding is devastating food production and could worsen already rising levels of acute food insecurity.
- At least 22 countries currently face repeat food crises and growing levels of acute food insecurity due to a combination of climate shocks, conflict, and weak institutions.
- This emphasizes the importance of investing in building resilience to address the multiple threats facing the most vulnerable, including substantially scaling up anticipatory action to reduce disaster impacts.
- Let me acknowledge Belgium for the un-earmarked and innovative character of its financing, including its pioneering support to FAO's Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities, which has enabled FAO to react fast when disasters strike, take early action in response to early signs of impending crises, and prepare for future crises.
- And I would also like to thank the European Union for their continued support to resilience building, particularly through the Global Network Against Food Crises.
- To effectively address the interlinking and compounding impacts of conflict and climate change, humanitarian, development, and peace actions must be complementary.
- The Global Network Against Food Crises offers an ideal platform to build consensus on analysis and programming to fight food crises. So that we are all the same page and acting as one.

Finland

Statement: Ms. Miia Rainne, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank our hosts Belgium, the European Union, the Republic of Niger and the ICRC for bringing us together virtually today.

Finland sees a clear link between climate change and security.

Climate change and environmental degradation deepen root causes of fragility, cause biodiversity loss and increase humanitarian hardship adding to the risk of triggering and prolonging armed conflict. Armed conflict results in extensive environmental damage severely impacting the health and livelihoods of the population. The presence of armed conflict also weakens communities' adaptive capacity in the face of climate change.

We must therefore take urgent action to address climate-related security risks in a coherent and interlinked manner, fostering an integrated approach across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus in a system-wide approach.

Let me outline just a few key steps:

- We need to improve early warning and preventive action tools and conflict-forecasting models to include climate information into conflict analyses and operational plans.
- We also need to integrate conflict analysis into climate scenarios, as well as mitigation and adaptation efforts.
- We should increase investment in disaster risk reduction, preparedness to climate shocks, resilience work, adaptive capacities and strengthened conflict sensitivity across the entire system.
- A regular comprehensive report by the Secretary-General on the climate-security nexus would help focus the efforts.

We welcome the revised ICRC Guidelines for the Protection of the Natural Environment in Situations of Armed Conflict. Respect for the rules of international humanitarian law on protection to the natural environment will help to lessen the environmental consequences of armed conflict. We are likewise encouraged by the ongoing work of the International Law Commission, UNEA and others regarding conflicts and the environment.

The intersection between climate change and conflict underscores the urgency of delivering in an integrated manner on the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sustaining Peace Agenda. Finland remains committed to all these efforts.

Thank you.

France

Intervention de M. Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, secrétaire d'état chargé du tourisme, des français de l'étranger et de la francophonie

Mesdames et messieurs, chers amis,

Le dérèglement climatique, on le sait, il est source de déstabilisation à la fois sociale, économique, politique. Que ce soit la raréfaction des ressources naturelles ou les phénomènes climatiques inhabituels ou extrêmes et bien cela provoque des tensions graves qui peuvent dégénérer en conflits. Ils viennent fragiliser les sociétés et les communautés les plus vulnérables dont les moyens de subsistance limités dépendent directement de la stabilité, de la prévisibilité de leur environnement naturel. D'ores et déjà, ces phénomènes provoquent des déplacements internes de populations, des mouvements migratoires transfrontaliers, une augmentation des besoins humanitaires, alimentaires, nutritionnels. Et c'est pourquoi la communauté internationale doit se doter d'instruments d'analyse, de consultation, de coopération en s'appuyant sur la science pour anticiper et répondre aux risques provoqués par le dérèglement climatique.

Dans cet esprit, la France et ses partenaires européens ont demandé au Secrétaire général des Nations unies de produire un rapport tous les deux ans sur la question des conséquences sécuritaires d'un dérèglement climatique. La France propose aussi l'élaboration de recommandations d'actions concrètes dans le rapport biennuel du Secrétaire général et s'emploie à ce que les résolutions des Nations unies, y compris celles du Conseil de sécurité, soulignent l'importance de lutter contre le dérèglement climatique.

Les Nations unies devront favoriser l'adaptation des communautés et la résilience au changement climatique. Dans ce cadre, l'action du mécanisme « Climat et Sécurité » mérite d'être renforcé notamment avec la nomination d'un envoyé spécial pour la sécurité climatique. Les acteurs humanitaires également doivent adapter leurs stratégies pour tenir compte de ce changement et prévenir ces risques climatiques.

L'initiative « Climate Risks and early Warning Systems (CREWS) », lancée par la France lors de la COP21, s'inscrit dans cette perspective. CREWS vise à améliorer la prévention, l'information sur les risques d'évènements hydrométéorologiques et climatiques, et donc à protéger des vies, les moyens de subsistance et les biens des populations vulnérables. Plus largement, la France poursuit un dialogue étroit avec ses partenaires humanitaires, les agences onusiennes comme les ONG concernant les conséquences du dérèglement climatique sur les situations humanitaires mais aussi les modes d'actions des acteurs humanitaires.

L'impact du changement climatique, son accélération, ne permettent plus d'opposer le temps court de l'urgence humanitaire et celui plus long de l'enjeu climatique. Il faut penser ensemble les modalités de l'assistance humanitaire et la préservation de l'environnement. Et lors de sa prochaine Conférence nationale humanitaire qui devra se tenir en décembre, la France invitera les acteurs humanitaires à débattre de cet enjeu.

Dans ce contexte global, où dérèglement climatique et conflit se renforcent mutuellement et affectent la sécurité, le développement d'une responsabilité environnementale globale est de plus en plus nécessaire et sera bénéfique à tous.

Je vous remercie.

Statement: Mr Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, Minister of State for Tourism, French Nationals Abroad and Francophonie

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

Climate change is a source of social, economic and political destabilization. The increasing scarcity of natural resources and rise of unusual and extreme climatic phenomena provoke serious tensions

that can escalate into conflicts. They undermine the most vulnerable communities and societies, the limited means of subsistence of which depend directly on the stability and foreseeability of their natural environment. These phenomena are already causing internal displacements, cross-border migratory movements and increasing humanitarian, food and nutritional needs. The international community therefore needs to create science-based instruments to analyze, consult and cooperate and respond to the risks caused by climate change.

In this spirit, France and its European partners have asked the UN Secretary-General to produce a report every two years on the security consequences of climate change. France also proposes the inclusion of recommendations for tangible actions in the Secretary-General's biannual report, and is working to ensure that UN resolutions, including those of the Security Council, highlights the importance of fighting climate change.

The UN will have to foster the adaptation of communities, and resilience to climate change. As such, the activities of the Climate and Security Mechanism need to be stepped up, in particular with the appointment of a Special Envoy for climate security. Humanitarian actors too must adopt climate change adaptation and climate risk prevention strategies.

The "Climate Risks and Early Warning Systems (CREWS)" initiative, launched by France at COP21, addresses this aim. CREWS seeks to improve prevention and information about the risks of hydro-meteorological and climatic events, and thus protect the lives, livelihoods and property of vulnerable populations. More generally, France is very engaged in dialogue with its humanitarian partners, including UN agencies and NGOs, concerning both the consequences of climate change for humanitarian situations and the mode of action of humanitarian actors.

The impact and acceleration of climate change mean that the short term of humanitarian emergencies can no longer be considered separately from the long term of climate issues. The terms of humanitarian assistance and of environmental protection have to be considered together. During its next National Humanitarian Conference scheduled for December, France will invite humanitarian actors to debate this subject.

In this global context, where climate change and conflicts are a vicious cycle and undermine security, the development of global environmental responsibility is increasingly necessary and will benefit all.

Thank you.

Germany

Statement: Sibylle Katharina Sorg, Director-General for Crisis Prevention, Stabilization, Post-Conflict Peacebuilding, and Humanitarian Assistance

Thank you to Belgium, Niger, ICRC and the EU for putting this side event on the agenda of this year's General Assembly.

I am happy to see that the work we started together at the level of the Security Council is being continued. We started off in July under the German presidency of the UNSC with a debate on the nexus of climate and security and in September we continued to discuss the Humanitarian Effects of Environmental degradation.

After listening to the panel, the following interdependencies are obvious:

Climate change contributes to a shortage of resources, to the destruction of livelihoods and thus to conflict,

Conflict itself contributes to environmental degradation,

And both developments impact on the humanitarian situation, exacerbating people's vulnerability.

This is why addressing humanitarian impacts related to climate and conflict is of particular importance!

What can be done and what is Germany doing? Four points:

1. To draw the right conclusions requires a profound understanding of the interdependency of risks. This is why we are currently operationalizing the Council's Informal Expert Group on climate and security.
2. Our goal must be to prevent violent conflicts in the first place. Peaceful societies are much more resilient and better equipped to adapt and respond to climate change impacts.
3. When climate related natural hazards or extreme weather hit, a well-equipped humanitarian system is crucial to provide needed relief quickly.
4. We are strongly committed to work with all our partners to improve and scale-up anticipatory humanitarian action. We need a paradigm shift towards a forward-looking humanitarian system, providing necessary means in advance. With an increased capacity to anticipate comes responsibility: Knowing a disaster is about to strike or a crisis is imminent we cannot just wait. There is a moral imperative to act.

Together with UN, Red Cross / Red Crescent movement as well as NGOs we made great progress in enabling such early action; and we will keep improving Forecast-based Financing and other anticipatory action.

Thank you

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Statement: Mr. Ashraf El Nour, Director of the International Organization for Migration Office to the United Nations

Distinguished Chair and panellists,

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you Mr. Chair and I have a few remarks to make.

1. Disasters, compounded by climate change, are increasing in frequency and magnitude, and every year they push millions of people into displacement and destitute.
2. In Sub-Saharan Africa alone, some 3.4 million people were displaced last year by natural calamities, and pastoralists, migrants and indigenous groups among the hardest hit.
3. In the Sahel and Lake Chad Region, a combination of climate variations and extreme weather conditions negatively impact states in fragile situations and exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities.
4. The climate change and conflict nexus affects communities that are already under severe stress, and increase resource based conflicts, triggering new displacements.
5. It is critical to adopt climate change adaption strategies and invest more in preventative and anticipatory capacities, including risk reduction and management and establishing more effective warning systems.
6. IOM, alongside UN partners, is playing its role in supporting countries to strengthen preparedness and climate risk reductions and management, and support community stabilization and recovery.
7. IOM is involved in data management to better capture complex drivers, and support research and policy advocacy to better understand the linkages between migration, environment, climate change and conflict.

We remain committed to working in partnership to support affected countries, and help them build adaptation and resilient capacities.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Statement: Mr Peter Maurer, President of the ICRC

Excellencies, Colleagues

Thank you for the opportunity to address you.

I have just returned from the Sahel region: a place hit hard by waves of armed conflict, environmental degradation and climate shocks.

There, I witnessed a deep humanitarian crisis.

All aspects of people's lives are impacted: poor health, water scarcity and economic insecurity.

Over many years, the ICRC has witnessed these trends in many theatres of conflict.

Wars are causing environmental damage and destruction; suffering is increasing as the climate crisis intensifies.

Wars fought without respect of International Humanitarian Law cause even greater destruction.

Today 12 of the 20 countries most vulnerable to climate change are also reeling from conflict.

It is simply not acceptable, nor practical, nor ethical to solely assist people in the aftermath.

The ICRC is not the clean-up crew of the international community.

Collectively we must do more to prevent people's suffering.

Collectively we must mitigate against the impacts of climate change, protect the natural environment and support people's resilience.

The ICRC is helping to build strong communities that can withstand environmental degradation and successive climate shocks.

We are supporting micro-economic enterprises, building flood walls, vaccinating livestock and distributing drought-resistant seeds.

We are reinvigorating our call for enhanced respect of International Humanitarian Law.

IHL remains an important tool for warring parties to reduce their impact on the natural environment.

Excellencies: for too long the environment has been a neglected victim of conflict.

Poisoned water sources, land contaminated by mines, deforestation.

The consequences on communities are severe and further weaken people's ability to cope with climate shocks.

For example, climate change threatens many of the lifelines that people rely on in conflict zones, such as clean drinking water and arable land. By prohibiting attacks on objects which are indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, IHL helps to prevent further suffering.

Climate change can also accelerate biodiversity loss, resulting in devastating consequences for people's health and for local economies.

IHL can provide a framework for designating areas of particular biological diversity as demilitarized zones during armed conflict, and can protect these fragile hotspots from additional degradation.

While the environment is frequently a casualty of war, it is rarely the priority of warring parties, despite their obligations under IHL.

Today I am announcing the release of the ICRC's updated Guidelines on the Protection of the Natural Environment in Armed Conflict.

In 1994, the ICRC was encouraged to produce the first iteration of the Guidelines by the UN General Assembly.

The updated Guidelines reflect developments in treaty and customary IHL.

They bring together existing IHL rules that provide specific protection to the natural environment; along with general IHL rules; including those governing the conduct of hostilities and rules on specific weapons that protect the natural environment in conflict.

The Guidelines also recommend measures that parties may adopt to reduce environmental impacts of conflicts. For example, pre-assessing the potential damage of military operations and implementing proactive measures to reduce this impact.

We trust the Guidelines are a useful reference tool to assist warring parties to adopt concrete measures to enhance respect for IHL that protects the environment, including by promoting these rules and incorporating them in military manuals, national policies and legal frameworks.

This implementation is essential to ensure that the law is put into practice and dictates behaviors in war.

For our part the ICRC will continue to partner with you. We offer you our legal and policy expertise, advice on IHL rules and support on the integration of these in national frameworks.

We will also continue to work with armed forces to support practical implementation.

Excellencies:

Through the twin tragedies of conflict and climate shocks, terrible harm has been caused to people's lives and futures.

We must change this trajectory.

States can act to build the resilience of people living in conflict.

States can act to meet their obligations to respect IHL and protect the natural environment.

Millions of people living under the threat of conflict and climate shocks are depending on you.

Ireland

Statement: H.E. Mr Colm Brophy, Minister for Overseas Development Aid and Diaspora

Ireland commends Belgium, the EU, the Republic of Niger, and the ICRC for convening this debate.

Ireland is a Member State of the EU, a principled international actor, committed to the multilateral system, and we will be a member of the Security Council for the 2021-2022 term.

We look forward to working together with Niger on the Security Council. Today's meeting is a useful follow-on from last week's open debate of the Security Council on the humanitarian effects of environmental degradation and peace and security, organised of course by Niger.

Chairs,

We will not achieve a peaceful and safe world if we do not address the environmental and climate-related challenges that are already exacerbating vulnerability. Slowing and, eventually, reversing climate change requires effective, collective action.

The interplay between climate and security will be a focus during Ireland's term on the Security Council. I am aware of the dynamics on the Council, which will require us to work effectively not just on the Council, but around the Council, to highlight how international efforts on peace and security must consider climate change. We will continue to call for a UN Special Representative on Climate and Security.

Ireland is very conscious that environmental degradation heightens the risk of humanitarian crises, displacement and conflict.

We are also aware that these effects are most felt by the people who have already suffered most during crises, including refugees and internally displaced persons, but also women and children. We see evidence of this every day in conflict zones such as the Sahel, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. That is why Ireland is committed to addressing the gendered impact of climate change and conflict across all aspects of its humanitarian work.

I would echo the words of the European Union at last week's debate that "protecting the environment, tackling climate change with high ambition, and ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources is a means to foster peace, security and sustainable livelihoods."

Ireland calls on all parties to conflict to abide by International Humanitarian Law prohibiting attacks on the natural environment and ensure safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian actors to people in need.

Ireland is matching advocacy with investments. In 2018, we provided €186 million to humanitarian responses, and have maintained a dedicated budget line for gender and protection. We are fully committed not only to provide life-saving assistance and protection, including from gender-based violence, to people caught in humanitarian crises, but also to addressing conflict and climate change that puts them in such difficult circumstances.

Thank you.

Maldives

Statement: His Excellency Abdulla Shahid, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Distinguished colleagues,

I wish to thank the delegations of Belgium, the EU, the Republic of Niger and the International Committee of the Red Cross for organizing this timely event on the “Humanitarian Impact of Combined Conflict, Climate and Environmental Risks.”

The Maldives has argued for decades that climate change is the defining issue of our time. Exactly one year ago, in an event similar to this, I pointed out that we can no longer ignore the humanitarian and security challenges that climate change presents to the world’s most vulnerable populations. Climate change is a threat that spans across continents, touching every nation; the human impact of this threat is enormous. Of the countries that are most vulnerable to climate change, 60% are also affected by armed conflict. We know that long-lasting conflicts and insecurity threaten people’s ability to cope with climate change and undermine the ability of societies to adapt to the consequences of extreme weather. If left unchecked, this crisis could worsen both economic and social tensions in conflict or post-conflict zones, with serious implications especially for the poor and marginalized populations.

Distinguished colleagues,

We know climate change is a threat multiplier, contributing to increased natural disasters, refugee flows and conflicts over basic resources such as food and water. With this in mind, the President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih presented a plan, entitled Climate Smart Resilient Islands, at the UN Secretary-General’s Climate Action Summit last year. The plan seeks to achieve environment-related targets in a number of areas, including designating environmentally protected areas, safeguarding food and water security, promoting green tourism, and ensuring climate-resilient infrastructure and sustainable waste management practices.

As the effects of climate change increase, the interaction of climate, environment and conflict-related crises are also projected to increase over time. Despite this combined threat, the humanitarian impact of climate change remains one of least understood dimensions of the climate crisis. For this reason, I join with the organizers of this event in their call for a deeper analysis of combined conflict, climate and environmental risks and vulnerabilities, and for further reflection on how humanitarian responses should adapt to bolster the resilience of the most vulnerable communities.

Distinguished colleagues,

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that a crisis can change the world with tragic consequences. Beyond the immediate health crisis of the pandemic, predictions are that it will cost the world economy up to 5 percent of GDP and push us towards the worst recession in decades.

In the case of Maldives, by the end of 2020, our economy is expected to contract by more than 10 percent. It is the developing countries, especially the poorest and the most vulnerable, that have been hit the hardest during this crisis, not necessarily by disease itself, but by the devastating socioeconomic ripples launched by tattered social safety nets, inequalities and disregard for our planet. Consequently, COVID-19 has further fueled both economic and social tensions in conflict or post-conflict situations, with serious implications for the most vulnerable populations.

But this pandemic is also an opportunity to reverse the conditions that brought us here. Our experience with COVID-19 has truly demonstrated what could be achieved if we act and work together to address global challenges. We need to exercise the same urgency as our response to COVID-19, to tackle climate change. Most importantly, recovery from crises must not be driven by a zero-sum game of economy versus environment, or even health versus economy.

As we recover from the COVID-19 crisis, we must adapt so that our systems are more resilient to future crises. We must also assist countries experiencing the adverse effects of conflict and climate

change to build back better, so that we may continue to progress towards a fair, equitable and sustainable future.

Distinguished colleagues,

My heart goes out to the millions of people dealing with armed conflicts who are also affected by climate change and the COVID-19 crisis. They are the first to suffer and the worst hit. Unless the international community takes decisive action to address climate change, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a higher potential for endangering communities struggling to survive conflict, insecurity or poverty.

I invite you all to share your experiences and work with the international community to reduce the suffering of the world's most vulnerable populations. I would like to conclude by thanking the organizers for this important discussion.

I thank you.

Malta

Statement: Ambassador Vanessa Frazier

I would to thank the organisers for bringing us together and for providing us with an opportunity to discuss this vital topic, indeed the humanitarian aspect is often lacking in discussions on climate and security.

Regrettably, climate change is occurring at an exacerbating step with its effects spilling over into political and social issues. The reality is that often there is a set of complex and interrelated drivers, many which have already been mentioned, at play which together contribute to destabilisation or conflict.

Delivering humanitarian aid is becoming increasingly challenging in certain areas because climate change is altering the dynamics of ongoing conflicts and thus increasing the possibility in erupting violent conflict.

We need to strengthen cross-agency knowledge sharing and for all parties involved to proactively identify climate action and environmental risks as an opportunity to build sustainable peace and resilience. Such an exercise would allow for greater coordination and better information on the ground allowing for a more comprehensive response. A thorough assessment of climate-related and environmental risks should be carried out prior to any humanitarian action.

In order to address our security concerns effectively we need to focus on a preventative strategy, which is both comprehensive and integrative.

Comprehensive because any actions taken in response to climate or environmental emergencies should be complementary to our long-term mitigation and adaptation efforts. Integrative because we also need to work towards the integration of environmental and socio-economic concerns into policy making on a national and international level.

Thank you.

Montenegro

Statement: Ms Ivana Vojinovic, Director-General for Environment, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism

Dear Mr. Goffin,

Dear Mr. Lenarcic,

Dear Mr. Lowcock,

Dear panellists and participants, it is my great pleasure to participate at today's virtual event on The humanitarian impact of combined conflict, climate and environmental risks. I would like to express my satisfaction that despite the world's crisis caused by COVID 19 pandemic we are all here present to exchange experiences, ideas and plans, to share knowledge and learn from each other.

Montenegro is confronting climate and environmental challenges spared of conflicts, but Montenegrin people deeply sympathize with mankind that confronts today's climate and environmental risks in conflict areas.

Next year Montenegro will celebrate 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Ecological State, and putting that label was first clear signal that the Government is committed to protecting the environment.

After gaining independence in 2006, Montenegro sets reaching EU environmental standards as a high priority goal of the country.

Waste management, wastewater treatment and adaptation to climate changes are some of the most pressing environmental challenges for Montenegro.

Climate change is affecting every country on every continent. People are experiencing significant impacts of climate change, which include changing weather patterns, rising sea level, and more extreme weather events.

Climate action has been speeding up in response to the climate crisis, with more and more governments, cities, and companies aligning their plans, policies and projections with the Paris Agreement on climate change. On that note, Parliament of Montenegro adopted the Law on ratification of the Paris Agreement on 11 October 2017.

National Climate Change Strategy (NCCS) is the key strategic overview of the area of climate change in Montenegro to 2030. It provides guidance and direction for climate-change policies, as well as analysis of the mitigation policies measures and actions that will be implemented during this period to reduce GHG emissions. The NCCS has a strong focus on harmonization with the EU's climate-change legislative framework, as well as mitigation measures, while it is relatively vague on adaptation to climate change.

When it comes to the key foreign policy priority of the state of Montenegro - European integration, we remind you that in December 2018, Montenegro opened negotiations in Chapter 27 - Environment and Climate Change. In the past three years Montenegro has invested around 200 million euros in projects for the construction of infrastructure for wastewater treatment and waste management, rehabilitation and construction of the sewerage network, remediation of the so-called "black ecological points", improvement of air quality, technological and ecological improvement of economic entities, nature protection, etc. In order to fully harmonize the system with European standards, Montenegro is projected to make investments of slightly more than 1 billion euros by 2035.

We cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around us. What we do makes a difference and we have to decide what kind of a difference we want to make. The Earth is what we all have in common, and only together, guided by the same idea and goal, we can preserve it.

Niger

Statement: Almoustapha Garba, Minister of Environment, Urban Sanitation and Sustainable Development, the Republic of Niger

Bonjour Mesdames et Messieurs, soyez les bienvenus à ce Panel de Haut niveau sur les risques climatiques, la dégradation de l'environnement et les conflits exacerbant la vulnérabilité des populations.

C'est un honneur qui m'a été fait, et au-delà de ma modeste personne, à mon pays le Niger et à l'ensemble des Etats membres de la CCRS, dont **SEM Mahamadou ISSOUFOU, Président de la République du Niger**, assure la présidence, d'en être un des animateurs.

Il vous souviendra, qu'au cours de cette décennie, dans de nombreux pays africains, il est observé que la dégradation des terres, les changements climatiques et les conflits armés ou liés à l'accès aux ressources naturelles se conjuguent et mettent à rudes épreuves les moyens d'existence des populations, qui deviennent ainsi de plus en plus vulnérables aux différents chocs. En effet, l'Afrique est confrontée à une explosion démographique sans précédent : 1,1 milliards de personnes en 2016, ; cette population serait de 2 milliards d'ici 2050. Ainsi, depuis 1950, environ 65% des terres cultivables en Afrique sont affectées par la dégradation. Par conséquent, plus d'un quart des terres du continent pourraient devenir impropres aux activités agricoles. Ces tendances sont d'autant plus alarmantes d'autant plus que l'agriculture est le pivot des économies africaines avec en moyenne plus du tiers du PIB et que plus de 80% de la population dépendent des ressources naturelles pour leur subsistance. Plus de 67 millions de personnes vivent dans des régions vulnérables au Sahel, notamment dans les régions affectées par la dégradation des terres (et la désertification) et les conflits armés. Un tiers de la population vit déjà dans des régions sujettes aux sécheresses.

Les Changements Climatiques ont, cette année eu des répercussions très importantes dans le Sahel. A titre d'exemple, la saison des pluies en cours et les crues successives du fleuve Niger ont engendré au 7 septembre 2020 : 329 958 personnes sinistrées, soit 38 099 ménages ; 51 décès par effondrements des maisons, 14 décès par noyade et 90 blessés ; 34 000 maisons et cases sont détruites et 5 768 hectares de cultures submergés par les eaux (d'après ...).

En somme, le Changement climatique et l'amenuisement des ressources naturelles compromettent le développement durable, la sécurité et la stabilité à travers :

- **l'Intensification des conflits liés à l'utilisation de l'eau**, des pâturages et de la terre. On estime qu'environ 25% de la population africaine subissent actuellement des pénuries sévères d'eau ou un stress hydrique dus à des précipitations insuffisantes et imprévisibles. Les rendements des récoltes ont une tendance à la baisse de 50% dans certains pays pauvres d'ici 2020. La réduction de la productivité des sols dues aux températures élevées et à l'augmentation des précipitations imprévisibles augmentera les prix des denrées alimentaires et auront pour conséquence l'insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle accrue. La lutte pour le contrôle des terres agricoles et de nouveaux conflits sont susceptibles d'éclater. A titre d'exemple, au cours du 20^{ème} siècle la baisse des précipitations dans le Sahel a poussé les éleveurs du Nord vers le Sud sur les terres à vocation agricole. Ceci a conduit à des conflits et une dégradation accélérée des terres agricoles. En même temps, pour répondre aux besoins alimentaires croissants, les agriculteurs étendent leurs cultures sur les terres marginales traditionnellement utilisées par les éleveurs, accentuant les conflits agriculteurs-éleveurs.
- **Augmentation des flux migratoires** : On estime qu'environ 60 millions de personnes risquent de se déplacer des terres dégradées de l'Afrique Sub-Saharienne d'ici les dix prochaines années. Un tiers de la population africaine vit déjà dans les zones exposées à la sécheresse. De nombreux africains (3% par an) se déplacent des centres urbains. Actuellement, 50% de la population africaine vivant principalement dans les zones rurales vivra dans les centres urbains d'ici 2030, la population

africaine urbaine doublera de 373,4 millions à 759,4 millions. En 2050, il y aura plus de 1,2 milliard de citoyens en Afrique. Il est mis en évidence que le déplacement massif des populations constitue une menace potentielle à la paix et à la sécurité internationale, particulièrement s'il existe déjà des tensions sociales et ethniques.

- **Augmentation de la population vulnérable** : Le Changement Climatique et la dégradation des terres deviendront des facteurs d'incitation à la radicalisation de la jeunesse africaine. 70% de la population de la région a moins de 30 ans, et un peu plus de 20% des jeunes ont entre 15 et 24 ans. Le taux de chômage à longue durée chez les jeunes a atteint 48% en 2014. Peu de jeunes sont capables d'atteindre leurs aspirations réelles. Les possibilités d'emploi sont particulièrement limitées, les jeunes chômeurs devront augmenter. 330 millions de jeunes africains en plus entreront sur le marché du travail en 2025. Traditionnellement, beaucoup vont travailler la terre et avec peu de terres disponibles à cause du Changement Climatique, la dégradation de l'environnement et le manque des intrants agricoles ; le manque de ressources deviendra un grand facteur qui conduira aux migrations transfrontières et forcera la jeunesse à trouver des alternatives loin de leurs communautés. Le manque de perspectives d'emploi pour beaucoup de personnes déplacées des zones rurales vers les centres urbains à la recherche de meilleures opportunités, amplifiera la radicalisation. Les groupes extrémistes capitalisent sur ce sens de désespoir. Un jeune sur deux qui a rejoint les mouvements rebelles ou terroristes cite le chômage comme une des principales raisons.

Les réponses pour remédier les risques climatiques, la dégradation environnementale, l'exacerbation des conflits entre les populations vulnérables

- Définir la mise en œuvre des cibles nationales volontaires de Neutralité en matière de Dégradation des Terres (NDT), restaurer les terres dégradées et valoriser les produits agricoles locaux comme les produits forestiers non ligneux.
- Élaborer des politiques concrètes et des mesures incitatives pour promouvoir des variétés végétales et agricoles résilientes, la croissance verte, l'agriculture intelligente face au climat, incluant la création d'emplois verts, la promotion de la HIMO et des opportunités d'investissements pour les populations vulnérables et les migrants retournés, en fournissant des moyens adéquats pour la remise à la production.

Pour y parvenir, les pouvoirs publics œuvreront pour :

- a. promouvoir les programmes horizontaux pour l'emploi des jeunes et l'éducation, la réintégration des rapatriés et la création d'emplois ;
- b. Intégrer la dégradation des terres et les effets des changements climatiques comme une des causes profondes du déplacement des populations et de la migration. Intégrer ces aspects dans la planification nationale et le plan d'action national (PAN) sur les CC ;
- c. Adopter un système d'alerte précoce sur les risques majeurs environnementaux y compris la sécheresse et coordonner des activités de réduction des risques de catastrophe qui intègrent à la fois les données fiables, avec les connaissances locales et traditionnelles
- d. renforcer le régime foncier conformément aux lois et règlements ;
- e. renforcer la disponibilité de l'eau pour la population et le bétail et les denrées alimentaires à des coûts abordables pour les populations ;
- f. identifier et cartographier les zones à forte dégradation des terres, de déplacements des populations et de migration ;
- g. intégrer la gestion des ressources naturelles dans les stratégies nationales de sécurité et dans la gestion des migrations;
- h. identifier les nouveaux couloirs de transhumance des pasteurs pour prévenir les conflits liés à l'accès aux ressources naturelles ;

-
- i. renforcer la coopération entre tous les acteurs pour prendre en compte de l'interrelation entre risques, vulnérabilités et résilience climatique et à refléter dans les évaluations des risques multiples et l'analyse de la stabilité.

Par ailleurs, en ce qui concerne spécifiquement la région Sahel, il faut se rappeler de l'adoption par les Chefs d'Etats et de gouvernements, d'un Programme d'Investissement Climatique (PIC-RS 2018-2030), d'un coût global d'environ 440 milliards de dollars US.

Pour son opérationnalisation, cette Commission s'est dotée d'un Programme d'Investissement Climatique pour la Région du Sahel (PIC-RS 2018-2030), d'un coût global d'environ 440 milliards de dollars US.

Ce programme vise comme objectif global, de contribuer à l'effort planétaire d'atténuation des émissions de Gaz à Effet de Serre (GES) et d'accroître les capacités d'adaptation et de résilience des populations Sahéliennes.

De même, un Cadre Transitoire Opérationnel de la Commission Climat pour la Région du Sahel a été créée en vue notamment de suivre la concrétisation de ces annonces, conduire la préparation des projets issus du Programme Prioritaire pour Catalyser les Investissements Climat au Sahel (PPCI 2020-2025), et de contribuer à la poursuite du plaidoyer pour le financement du PIC-RS.

Je vous remercie de votre aimable attention.

Norway

Statement: H.E. Mrs Marianne Hagen, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ladies and gentlemen,

Climate change and environmental degradation increase the vulnerability of millions of people, especially in areas of armed conflict.

Norway is working actively to help to reduce the humanitarian impact of conflict and climate change. Let me highlight three of the challenges we are addressing:

First, in relation to mitigation: We promote innovation and green humanitarian responses. We ask our partners to choose sustainable and environmentally friendly solutions for their operations.

Second, in relation to adaptation and resilience: More than 40% of the countries experiencing a food crisis face the double burden of climate shocks and armed conflict. We will increase support for climate adaptation and resilience, with a special focus on food security.

Third, in relation to protection. Those who are already at risk in conflict-affected communities are often forced into an even more vulnerable situation when climate-related disasters strike.

Protection is the number one priority in Norway's humanitarian policy. This includes protection against sexual and gender-based violence, protection of children and protection against mines and other explosive remnants of war.

The International Committee of the Red Cross is a key actor in the efforts to address these issues and promote greater respect for international humanitarian law.

I would like to thank the ICRC for its guidelines, which help to raise awareness of the need, and indeed our legal obligation, to protect the natural environment in armed conflict.

I would also like to thank you and your co-host Niger for your commitment to addressing the humanitarian impact of conflict and climate change at all levels, from local communities and all the way to the UN General Assembly. Rest assured that Norway will support your efforts in this field.

Thank you

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

Statement: Ms Nina M. Birkland, NRC

Thank you...

My name is Nina Birkeland, and I work for Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) NRC is an independent humanitarian organisation helping people forced to flee. We work in crisis in more than 30 countries, providing life-saving and long-term assistance to millions every year.

We want to congratulate ICRC with the updated Guidelines. These are very timely as we experience more frequently that environmental degradation, effects of climate change and conflict collide and have severe impact on displacement risk.

In Yemen, one of the world's worst humanitarian crisis, the situation intensified in the first half of the year when ongoing conflict, high Covid-19 infection rates combined with some of the worst flooding in years. IDMC's recent report shows that more than 160.000 people were newly displaced by conflict and drought in the first half of 2020.

We experience in our work that regions and countries affected by conflict are more vulnerable to impact of climate change and environmental degradation since people's resilience already is stretched as they are struggling with displacement and other the effects of the conflicts.

Climate change is also projected to increase disaster displacement risk as extreme weather events become more frequent and intense. Other risk factors, such as rapid and unplanned urbanisation, population growth, poverty, and weak governance will also feed the risk and heighten the needs of those affected.

In many countries we have seen how resilience decreases and displacement risk increase with every shock and stress – such as drought, violence, poverty - that a community is exposed to.

To conclude; when discussing and taking action on integration of the humanitarian perspective in the climate and security debate we must stay true to humanitarian principles and not revert to security approaches, ensuring that displaced people and others affected by climatic shocks, environmental risk and conflict must be allowed to access the aid they need in the locations they need it.

Oxfam

Statement: Ms Abby Maxman, President and CEO at Oxfam America

Ms. Maxman, do you see a shift in the way NGOs work in conflict situations when climate impact is growing? We would be interested in hearing from a field and practitioner's perspective how climate change is affecting the way humanitarian organisations have to work.

Thank you, Katie, and to all our hosts for including Oxfam in this important conversation.

Oxfam has been working with conflict and disaster affected communities worldwide for over 75 years. We provide humanitarian assistance, carry out advocacy and campaigning work to elevate the rights of communities, support women's rights groups, and keep governments and the international community accountable.

As others have outlined, over the past few decades, we are seeing more frequent and severe disasters striking communities. Weather-related disasters have tripled, while CO2 emissions have more than doubled. During the same period, the poorest half of the world – who are overwhelmingly the humanitarian casualties of the climate crisis – were responsible for only about 7% of total carbon emissions. The number of people being internally displaced by climate-fuelled disasters has increased fivefold in the last ten years, and could reach 140 million people by 2050.

Climate change and its impact on populations is a consequence of our deeply unjust and unsustainable global economy. People with less access to power and resources – such as women, indigenous people, and children – face greater risks. The impacts of climate-related shocks are felt most profoundly in fragile contexts, where it acts as a “threat multiplier,” both aggravating existing larger-scale conflicts and affecting lower-scale communal violence.

This COVID-19 pandemic created an era-defining occasion to demonstrate commitment to a multilateral system that works for all – starting with the most fragile among us – to prevent the catastrophic impacts of conflict and the climate crisis. Our response must meet the needs of multiple disasters at once. For instance, in South Sudan we're providing lifesaving assistance to conflict affected communities. But on top of that, we are working in those same communities to mitigate the disastrous effects of flood water.

These crises on top of crises have created challenges in the way we effectively respond to and address humanitarian needs, from logistical constraints to program interruption. I want to highlight three important ways Oxfam is adapting to provide effective and efficient humanitarian programming in these complex scenarios.

First, a nexus approach and conflict-sensitive programming. A – nexus approach is crucial to developing a holistic program that addresses the multiple disasters faced by communities and ensuring that responding to climate-induced disasters will not exacerbate existing tensions and inequalities. Our collective work in the Lake Chad region is a good example of this type of approach. Over the years, Oxfam's work with partners in the province of Maguindanao, Philippines has experienced repeated displacements due to flooding, clan clashes, and fighting between government troops and non-state armed groups. This disrupts the lives of thousands of people, hinders access to basic services and sustainable livelihoods, and drives displaced families deeper into poverty. Our work with local partners ensures that our humanitarian response is linked with development programming, which is the only way to ensure sustainable prospects of peace.

Second, local humanitarian leadership. Local actors are first responders and best-positioned to monitor hazards and develop preparedness strategies. Oxfam works with local leaders and organizations on strategies from determining livelihood choices and emergency shelters that are mobile to choosing crops that can withstand floods or droughts.

Finally, centering gender at the heart of assessments and responses. Independently, climate-related impact and conflicts already disproportionately affect women. Together, the impacts are even more

calamitous. In Maguindanao, we partner with a local, women-led organization that is integrating women and peace programming at the heart of their humanitarian work to ensure the unique needs of women and girls are being met. On the eve of 25 years since Beijing, we must keep working to align our actions with our commitments.

These are just three examples of how organizations like Oxfam are adapting to address the compounding effects of climate and conflict. However, we cannot do this work alone and multilateral cooperation, resourcing, and coordination will be critical to our success. We must increase the humanitarian and climate funding available to the world's most vulnerable communities. We must meaningfully support the Secretary General's call for a global ceasefire. We must also proactively engage women in developing early warning, climate mitigation and disaster response strategies as well as peace processes.

Inaction on the climate crisis and ending conflicts is at all of our peril. Only together will we achieve the results we need. The urgency required of this moment can be met with political will and global action and coordination. Together, we can evolve humanitarian responses to effectively address the impacts of both conflict and climate in these increasingly complex times. Thank you.

Qatar

Statement: Rwodah Ibrahim Alnaimi, UN Officer, Qatar Fund for Development

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to begin by extending our thanks to the Kingdom of Belgium, the European Union, the Republic of Niger and the ICRC for convening this meeting and shedding light on the humanitarian impact of conflict and climate risks.

I would also like to seize this opportunity to congratulate the ICRC for the launch of the updated Guidelines on the Protection of the Natural Environment in Armed Conflict. We look forward to utilizing these guidelines as a reference for a green humanitarian response.

There is no doubt that climate change poses threats that can exacerbate both the risks for and existing situations of violence, posing even more challenges to vulnerable populations, particularly displaced persons.

We have witnessed a similar scenario in Darfur, Sudan, where disputes over scarce water and land, triggered by climate change, were among the main drivers of conflict.

The State of Qatar, through the Qatar Fund for Development, have implemented a Development and Reconstruction Strategy for Darfur via multiple UN agencies which focused on combatting the impact of climate change through optimizing water and land resource management and supporting safe and sustainable reintegration of IDPs.

Just a few days ago, we have launched an additional program in Sudan supporting the Ministry of Health in strengthening emergency health system preparedness and addressing the humanitarian disaster caused by the recent floods.

We are also very proud to implement a \$100 million pledge by the State of Qatar for climate change adaptation and mitigation which HH has pledged during the UN Climate Action Summit in 2019, the Qatar Fund started integrating climate action as one of its key priorities, with a particular focus on addressing the devastating impacts of climate change on LDCs and SIDS and building the necessary resilience, while working in close cooperation with the governments in question and other relevant stakeholders.

I thank you.

Republic of Korea

Statement: Ambassador OH Hyunjoo

I first would like to thank the co-hosts for convening today's meeting and distinguished panelists and speakers for sharing their invaluable insights. Korea would like to highlight three points on this important topic.

First, we believe that climate change and environmental degradation is an ever-growing threat to international peace and security.

We are witnessing the adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation all around the world, many of which are on an unprecedented scale. This year alone, Asia had one of its hardest monsoon floods, North America was struggling with historic wildfires, Europe was suffering from heat waves and droughts, and Africa was having gigantic swarms of locusts.

All of these will have severe humanitarian consequences, including forced displacement, food insecurity, and public health problems, to name just a few; which are increasingly spiraling into instability, particularly in fragile and conflict-ridden regions. In order to help mitigate the complex challenges and prevent their further aggravation, Korea has provided humanitarian assistance to Sudan following its recent floods and to the fourteen Southwest Asian and African countries suffering from locust swarms.

Second, we need a UN system-wide approach to climate- and environment-related security risks and more concrete actions.

The inter-linked nature of risks requires a coherent and coordinated approach through the HDP nexus. We agree with others that the humanitarian community should work closely with development and peace actors to integrate climate, environment, and peace into risk analysis and all programming responses. A joined-up action with a multi-year timeframe can move us beyond addressing the acute needs towards building resilience in climate-affected fragile settings.

Equally important is the continued engagement of the Security Council on climate change-related agenda, and we welcome the establishment of the Climate Security Mechanism and its initiatives in this regard. We also support the Secretary-General submitting a timely and comprehensive report to the Security Council regarding climate-related security risks.

For concrete actions, we would like to reiterate that we can find a good example in the recently adopted ECOSOC resolution 2020/02 on international support to the Sahel region. It sets out closer cooperation between relevant UN bodies and Member States leading to more concrete actions. The Republic of Korea will continue to play an active and constructive role for the follow-up and implementation of the resolution.

The 'Peace Forest Initiative' launched at UNCCD COP 14 in 2019, which promotes peace and trust through collaboration on the rehabilitation and restoration on degraded land and forests in fragile and conflict-affected regions, provides another good example to this end.

Third, our recovery plan from COVID-19 needs to place at its core the requisite consideration for climate change and environmental degradation.

The pandemic is causing damage to our societies and economies at an unprecedented scale, but our recovery efforts should not put us back to where we were before. Instead, to help recover from the damages of COVID-19 and build back better, we need a "green recovery plan."

In this regard, the Korean Government has recently launched "The Korean Green New Deal," which pursues a low-carbon and sustainable economy by investing in green sectors and creating green new jobs. This will ultimately put the Korean economy in line with the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda, which we believe are essential to reduce climate-related security risks and enhance resilience worldwide.

Climate change and environmental degradation are increasingly becoming the drivers of regional instability and threatening global peace; and we cannot cope with these alone. Indeed, humanity and

our planet are collectively vulnerable to these global threats and we must act in solidarity in response. The Republic of Korea will continue to actively participate in international cooperation to prevent climate and environmental crises from further spiraling into threats to peace and security.

Thank you. /END/

Save the Children

Statement: Greg Ramm, VP, Humanitarian Response, Save the Children

I want to thank the organizers and previous speakers for bringing attention to this pressing set of issues.

In my short intervention I will focus on the humanitarian impact on children.

- First, on their food security and nutrition. Families in conflict areas are extremely vulnerable to both climate shocks and violations by parties to conflict. With the additional crisis of COVID added to this crises, the specter of famine is again a reality. Without urgent action dramatic increases in acute malnutrition in children and starvation will be soon a reality.
- Second, on their education. In recent years 75 million children saw their education interrupted each year many due to conflict or climate-related disruptions and displacements. To make matters far worse COVID has disrupted the education of an entire generation globally for the first time ever – 1.6 billion learners but it has also highlighted the importance education in humanitarian responses. Many millions, especially in conflict settings and girls, risk never going back to school.
- Thirdly, on their protection. Movement of people linked to climate change and conflict creates additional risks to children including exploitation, child labor and family separation. Girls are particularly at risk of dropping out of school, child marriage or early pregnancy.

What can we do about it?

- First, donors need to fully fund Humanitarian Response Plans and provide increased funding to respond to these acute needs including direct funding to local NGOs,
 - Priority must be given to cash programming to address hunger, malnutrition, education and child protection related concerns,
 - And we must invest in building predictive and anticipatory capacities we can act before the crisis
- Second, a global ceasefire must be enforced immediately in line with the Secretary General's call. Parties who violate international law must be held to account.
- Finally children have proved their power and activism on climate related issues and in humanitarian crises.
 - We need to listen to their voices and ensure they have a seat at the table.

Thank you.

Slovenia

Statement: Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia to the UN in New York, H. E. Darja Bavdaž Kuret

Excellences,

Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to commend the organizers for convening this timely debate. It is my great pleasure to present Slovenia's observations and actions.

The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are clearer and more widespread than ever. They act as a risk multiplier. Climate disasters lead to humanitarian disasters, conflicts, food shortages, population movements, economic, social and demographic shocks. Communities and countries affected by armed conflict tend to be especially vulnerable to the effect of climate change. Environmental challenges undermine development gains and human rights, escalate violence and disrupt peace processes.

We cannot lag behind. We must act now.

Our collective task is immense. I would like to underline 5 points of action:

1. The need to improve early warning, risk analysis and enhancing UN system capacity to address current challenges related to COVID-19, climate-related security risks and operational response. Design climate-sensitive conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding interventions. We therefore welcome the increased attention and debates on this matter within the UN SC.
2. Focus on adaptation and resilience building, especially at the community level being critical to conflict prevention.
3. Investing in new human centered technologies to improve climate risk forecasting, ensuring that countries affected by conflict have the tools to anticipate and prevent climate stress.
4. We need better and more focused support to humanitarian organizations, who are already struggling to cope with cumulative impacts of climate risks and conflicts, while being cautious of the environmental footprint of humanitarian interventions.
5. Upholding International Humanitarian Law to regulate environmental damages deriving from conflicts.

Furthermore, I would like to touch upon the effects of climate change on water. It is a known fact that one of the most critical consequences of climate change is water scarcity.

40% of the world's population is already affected by water scarcity, with prediction of water demand to rise more than 50% by 2030. In armed conflicts, water resources and installations are being increasingly attacked and used as weapons of war. It is for this reason that the questions related to water in international relations are one of my country's foreign policy priorities.

We believe it is in our collective interest to shape the global hydro-politics agenda, starting from a fundamental rethinking of cross-border water cooperation to a formulation of principles on protection of water sources and installations in conflict situations.

Slovenia is actively addressing these issues as a Chair of the Group of Friends on Water and Peace in Geneva and within the Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace. Water diplomacy will also be one of priorities of Slovenian EU presidency in 2021.

There is a mounting evidence of climate induced drought. South East Europe is no exception. In this connection I would like to bring to your attention the work of the Drought management Centre for South East Europe, established by Slovenia, focusing on drought preparedness and reducing drought impacts.

Let me end this intervention with a call to urgent climate action to protect our planet and our environment, a defining task we cannot afford to mismanage. Security and prosperity of the 21st century will depend on how we manage global commons!

Thank you!

Spain

Statement: H.E. Mrs Cristina Gallach Figueras, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Iberoamerica and the Caribbean

- Spain is particularly vulnerable to many of the worse impacts of climate change, in particular desertification. We have adopted the strong legislation and ambitious commitments to fight climate change.
- Our domestic, international and cooperation policies and strategies are fully in line. Coherence is for us paramount.
- Spain is fully convinced that climate and environmental degradation increases the vulnerability of populations in any circumstances, and much more so in case of armed conflict.
- However, it not only increases vulnerability, but very often, it is at the root of conflicts. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account both dimensions: the environmental and the security.
- It is clear that in several parts of the world, climate change is a threat to the lives of millions of persons, and endangers food security and the supply of drinking water.
- Spain has been very aware of the effect of climate change on the security and vulnerability of many States.
- To help address this challenge, we are acting in several fronts, in a concerted and structured manner. Let me mention three:
- Firstly, Spain is part of the group of countries that, while having a seat in the Security Council, strived for the prevention of conflicts, including addressing root causes such as climate change.
- For instance, in order to focus on the evaluation of the effect of climate change on international security, we brought to the UN Security Council a number of debates on climate change, as multiplier of security risks and on climate and food security.
- Furthermore, we joined the Group of Friends of the UN on “Climate and Security”, created in 2018, with the purpose of cooperating in the search of means to reduce the impact of climate change on the security issues.
- Secondly, with reference to practical implementation in our development cooperation strategy and actions:
 - In the Coalition on Social and Political Drivers for the SG’s summit last year, we strived to include the security dimension in the climate action process.
 - Furthermore, we have several examples of good practices. One is the so-called “Shire Alliance”, a public-private partnership, which includes companies, academia and the Spanish Cooperation Agency. This Alliance has been bringing electricity and water to the refugee camp in Ad-Harush (Ethiopia) since 2016, in compliance with several SDGs.
 - In the same line, we act on mitigation of the effects of climate risks. The “START project”, -the Emergency Medical Team created by Spain’s Cooperation Agency-, that was deployed for the first time in Mozambique on the occasion of the floods that ravaged the north of the country in 2019.
- Thirdly, we are mainstreaming the climate and environment dimension in our humanitarian action through a guide that will become public in the next weeks. We hope that this will be a very useful tool for many, governments and NGOs when planning and working in the most vulnerable scenarios.
- Last but not least, another priority of Spain is the defence and respect of International Humanitarian Law, which in armed conflict protects civilians and the environment. We commend the work done by the ICRC in this field.

Sweden

Statement: Johannes Oljelund, Director-General for International Development Cooperation

First, I would like to commend Belgium, Niger, EU and ICRC for taking the initiative to this timely meeting. The humanitarian impact of conflict, climate change and environmental risks has reached unacceptable levels. Projections show that the situation will become much worse if we do not urgently start addressing the issue. Especially the links between climate change and humanitarian impact has for too long been neglected.

The ongoing pandemic has hit populations all over the world with devastating force. Many countries have also suffered a hard blow to their economy. In light of that, some may be reluctant to spend money on addressing climate change. However, that would be a costly mistake. In an inspiring report called the “The cost of doing nothing”, the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) managed to show just that. If measures are taken now, the future cost will be much lower. If no measures are taken now, the cost may prove too high to handle.

So, from an economic point of view, it makes sense to act now instead of later. But more importantly, we need to act now to save people from suffering. Climate change is already exacerbating floods and drought in many parts of the world. As we speak, countries are facing severe flooding in Sahel and the Horn of Africa. Sudan has been hit by the worst floods in decades. Floods and drought lead to serious food insecurity and the risk of acute hunger or even famine.

Very proud to announce that on 21 October Sweden, together with WFP and UNDRR, will co-host a high-level meeting on addressing the humanitarian impact of climate change. Special attention will be given to food insecurity and measures to reduce and anticipate disaster risk. The meeting will be opened by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson alongside the Heads of WFP and UNDRR. The meeting will be held in a virtual format and we look forward to welcoming a broad audience. Invitations and programme will be sent out early next week.

Switzerland

Statement: Ambassador Manuel Bessler, Federal Council Delegate for Humanitarian Aid, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)

Distinguished Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- [We heard it from several distinguished speakers before me] – **We, humanitarians, must act now!**
- The world's eight worst food crises are linked to conflicts combined with floods, droughts and other natural hazards. **Climate change and environmental degradation is exacerbating people's vulnerability to humanitarian crises.**
- We must act decisively!
- First, we need to be **context specific and conflict-sensitive and able to provide foresights** – **Switzerland invests in developing better understanding on how multiple risks** in fragile, conflict-affected contexts, are interrelated and on how they affect directly and in the long run people's lives and livelihoods.
- Second, we need to be **principled, equitable and inclusive** – **Switzerland therefore invest in communities' resilience** to support them absorb and recover quickly from shocks. And we partner with **local authorities and humanitarian actors** to better **anticipate disasters**, to support them building inclusive networks, systems and procedures to **act early**.
- Third, we need to **address the root-causes and be transformative** – **Switzerland supports communities to invest in environmental regeneration, sustainable management of land, water and forests; be it in rural or urban areas or around camp settlements.** This requires context specific in-depth analysis and understanding of underlying socio-economic vulnerabilities and calls for empowerment, inclusion and equality of vulnerable people.
- And last but not least, we need to **reinforce our efforts for more durable solutions** – **Switzerland links therefore its humanitarian – development – peace efforts for**
 - for a improved **strategic programming** through joint assessments and multi-year planning;
 - for better supporting **policies and legal frameworks** that protect the people affected by disasters, including forcibly displaced people, their freedom of movement and their right to work;
 - for improved assistance to those displaced in camps and urban areas, to **gradually reducing dependency and fostering self-resilience.**
 - for **reinforcing communities and host communities capacity** as the real agents of change and the first responders when a disaster strikes; and
 - for planning for **building back better** from the beginning, to ensure we are not re-creating risk.
- Switzerland is committed to join efforts to break the vicious cycle of disaster and support the people most in need.

Turkey

Statement: Dr. Mehmet Gulluoglu, Head of Disaster of Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior

Thank you to the organizers of the event.

There is a lack of a concrete multilateral strategy nor a legal framework that exists to account for climate change as a driver of migration. Whether in terms of limited access to clean water, food scarcity, agricultural degradation, or violent conflict, climate change will intensify these challenges and be a significant push factor in human migration patterns.

We have gradually accepted that there is an interplay between disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. This recognition has not yet officially transformed itself to a universally accepted and adapted response by humanitarian actors. However, the interplay of climate-related disasters and conflicts are real and are becoming more common. People in conflict zones are not only forced to move from their homes due to conflict but are also forced to move more than once due to weather-related difficulties.

For instance, in the case of Syria, the war has been ongoing for 9 years. Turkey is home to nearly 4 million refugees. There is a total of 13.5 million internally and externally displaced Syrian peoples. One factor that is missed in the response to the crisis in Syria is the combined effect of climate and conflict. In June this year, there was a flood in a refugee camp in Idlib that left 3 people dead. The flood occurred a day after humanitarian aid was delivered to that camp. This shows that our response as humanitarian partners need to bear in mind the difficulties that occur when we work in a region that has not only been torn apart by war but has also got to face the consequences of climate change.

Therefore, within the scope of Disaster Risk Reduction we should focus our efforts on how to develop schemes of resilience for countries that are prone to climate-related disasters. And, to provide mechanisms that will allow people in low-developed countries and areas of conflict to prepare for such disasters.

United Kingdom

Statement: Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth and Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office

Thank you. This event offers an important opportunity to focus on the pressing spectre of a major famine.

Food security conditions are deteriorating in Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen. The UN warns that one in every 30 people in the world is likely to face acute food insecurity by the end of the year. More than 690 million are chronically food insecure or hungry.

The causes of this are complex and compounded by COVID-19. Africa, particularly, is facing the perfect storm of conflict, a pandemic, extreme weather events, and desert locusts. Allow me to be blunt: this is a collective failure. The risk of famine in the 21st Century is man-made, and was preventable.

Armed conflict denies civilians their basic rights to food and to life. Climate change makes this worse. It exacerbates food insecurity and promotes further conflict.

Armed conflict prevents people from cultivating their land and buying food.

People's assets have been attacked. Climate hazards such as the recent flooding in South Sudan and the Sahel have been disastrous. The international community must come together to overcome these combined threats.

The UK Foreign Secretary recently announced action to prevent famine and catastrophic hunger. This included a new £119 million aid package to help alleviate acute food insecurity and the appointment of the UK's first Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs. Last week, we committed a further £5.8 million to help avert a famine in Yemen.

Now we must focus on three key areas.

Firstly, we need to provide life-saving assistance and prevent further escalation. Donors must step up and commit resources. It is vital, too, that funds are rapidly disbursed. International Financial Institutions have an important role to play.

Secondly, we need better data for targeted and coordinated action. That requires an assessment system based on more regular and comparable real-time data and projections, endorsed by the international community so they can prioritise action.

Finally, solutions lie in political action. The UK has an enduring commitment to International Humanitarian Law. We will use our diplomatic networks, our seat at the UN Security Council, and all our partnerships to overcome obstacles. It is incredibly important to emphasise the role of women in political processes.

We will continue to work multilaterally and bilaterally to prevent and resolve conflict.

The time to act is now. All of us need to be able to look back to this pivotal time and say that we ensured on our watch we played our part to help the plight of the suffering and commit ourselves to end and prevent famine

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Statement: Anna Azaryeva Valente, Programme Specialist, UNICEF

Dear Excellencies, etc.

We would like to salute this initiative, which brings much needed attention to the links between a degrading environment and climate change, conflict and humanitarian emergencies:

- Investing in **integrated solutions** that address these interconnected threat multipliers **critical to safeguarding the rights of children**.
 - We know that children bear the biggest brunt of climate change impacts— whether the slower-onset impacts or extreme weather and especially conflicts and humanitarian crises. More than half a billion children live in areas with an extremely high flood risk, nearly 160 million children live in high or extremely high drought severity zones, and 300 million children live in areas with extremely toxic levels of air pollution.
 - Often these areas are affected by conflict or social tension that are at the same time cause or exacerbation of the existing inequalities. The current pandemic has only revealed us again these interconnections and the areas where we should continue investing.
- These threats are only increasing, but we **cannot lose hope**—we know there are **concrete solutions we can support that make a difference**:
 - **Investing in disaster risk reduction is one of them. Taking corrective action through effective disaster risk reduction** is often far cheaper and more effective than trying to address issues when they have become humanitarian crises – while evaluations (conducted by UNICEF, WFP, Boston Consulting Group, PWC and others) may differ in their estimate of Return on Investment (ROI) on emergency preparedness—what they all agree on is this: that returns dividends are many times greater than the cost. With a mandate that combines humanitarian action and development work, UNICEF recognizes its crucial responsibility to integrate DRR into its programmes with a child centered approach that guarantees and set up the basis of equitable and sustainable solutions for future generations.
 - **Building and enhancing the resilience of basic social services with a special focus on social protection** is another agreed solution: Strengthening the resilience and inclusivity of social services, such as water/sanitation, health and education can go a long way to reducing climate change induced conflict over access to these resources. These efforts must be underpinned by robust multi-hazard risk analyses as a way to identify and better anticipate and prevent the impact of these hazards. We want to invest and promote a preventive approach that encompasses the gains towards the SDG's that COVID has deteriorated and be better prepare to “build better earlier”
 - **We are increasingly recognizing the indispensable role that educating our children, particularly girls, play in building the awareness, skills and opportunities to build the climate resilience of societies and their ability to mitigate and recover from climate shocks.**
 - **Given the direct impact that communities can have on the survival, development and transformation of children and women**, engaging communities at the local level is a critical way to ensure that societies are equipped and empowered to prevent the effects of shocks and stresses and manage residual risks. Another lesson from the current COVID response is that as access is becoming an increasing challenge, solutions are coming from within communities, individuals, local business or youth and women's groups
- Lastly, I would like to emphasize the importance of engaging young people. They have experience and learnt often more than anyone the risks of climate and conflict

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- At the same time, they have been at the forefront of calls for and leading change in their communities and societies building and sustaining peace transforming conflicts at local level through meaningful engagement in decision making processes.
 - UNICEF with its partners is proud to support programmes worldwide engaging children and young people in disaster risk reduction, through vulnerability mapping, training and being the visible and inspiring force on global engagement for climate action

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Statement: Filippo Grandi, UNHCR High Commissioner

I hope you can see me and hear me. Greetings everybody and thank you very much for inviting UNHCR to this important discussion.

A lot has already been said by the [EU] Commissioner and the Minister [Belgium] and by Peter [Maurer]. Let me add, perhaps a few informal remarks on the subject that you asked me to talk about, from the perspective of, as you said Katie, 70 years of working in forced displacement crises.

I think there is no need to stress again, it has already been done by all the previous speakers, that the climate emergency in many different ways, Commissioner Lenarcic explained it very clearly, displaces people, short term, long term, sometimes permanently. On the IDMC figures, this are a set of statistics that are quite reliable in terms of internal displacement, tell us that last year for example, out of about 25 million new people displaced in their own countries, the vast majority were displaced by approximately 2000 forms of disasters in 140 countries. This is a set of figures which is likely to be repeated if not increased this year that should give us some pause for reflection.

I am often, when I speak publicly, I am often asked this question. How many climate refugees will there be? And this is a question that leaves me a little bit perplexed. We do not talk about climate refugees, mostly because the notion of refugee in the current political environment is one that has to be handled with extreme care. But certainly, we talk of climate displaced, of people displaced by climate, sometimes in big numbers. I am also very hesitant to make predictions. We've seen a lot of predictions about millions of people, hundreds of millions of people moving because of climate in the next few years. I think we need to be very careful, one of the big limitations that we have, and I'll go back to this point in a moment, or one of the big challenges that we have, is the need to have better data, so it's difficult to make predictions in terms of numbers.

I said we don't talk about climate refugees, but surely the refugee experience that we and other organizations have is useful in addressing this phenomenon. In particular because of the very close link between conflict and climate, and between these two and displacement, that has already been mentioned by some of the previous speakers. From that perspective and in very simple terms, I'd like to flag three important elements, of effects that the climate emergency has on population movements. First, is that these movements very often create protection gaps, (I'd like to call them like this) expose those displaced to risks we would call as related to protection. Risks and gaps that can be often, usefully addressed by, actually by existing refugee legal instruments and principles. The Africa Convention on refugees that dates back to 1969, the Cartagena Declaration that covers Latin America and that has a much broader definition of refugee protection, have a lot of very useful legal elements that can be used in addressing forced displacement due to climate in these situations. And this is important, this is an issue that sometimes governments are suspicious or nervous about. What we tell governments is that on the contrary protection tools can help governments address some of these issues more effectively. It's not just an affirmation of principles, it's also a tool for better effectiveness in response.

The second element is of course that climate change, climate emergencies, disasters, provoke displacement that require responses very similar to traditional refugee situations, and sometimes, and increasingly in fact, mixed with refugee flows. And there the humanitarian community, the refugee aid community, has a lot to offer in terms of emergency capacity.

And third, and sometimes this is less thought of, displacement, and not necessarily displacement due to climate causes, but displacement tout court, displacement due to conflict or other causes, has an impact on nature, that itself contributes to the climate emergency as it very often happens or almost always happens in regions, in countries which are already exposed to the climate emergency. This is different from being pushed by climate but you impact on the climate emergency in these situations.

Finally, what to do other than what has already been much more eloquently already said by the previous speakers. And in addition of course to mobilizing the humanitarian resources that help respond to the catastrophes I have mentioned, or I would add that we need to mobilize in the aid community to ensure a reduction of our own carbon footprint; a smaller footnote that should not be forgotten.

I would say fundamentally, the most important, and I echo Peter [Maurer] here, and what he said earlier, is collectively to strengthen the resilience of those that are exposed to the climate emergency, either before displacement, in preventing in preventive ways or after displacement to ensure that not only their humanitarian needs are covered but that solutions to this displacement are sought from the beginning of the emergency.

And on this front, in order to do this better it is very clear that all of us humanitarians, development actors, need to improve the work that we do on data. On our side and just to give you a very small example, we've been working with a collection of other agencies on improving predictive analysis of displacement due to climate factors. We have done interesting work in Somalia linked to drought - analyzing very interesting data like the price of goats, the fluctuation of the price of goats and linking it to a predictive analysis to displacement which was quite interesting and successful. We've done a lot of similar work in Bangladesh linked to Monsoon, and you know that Bangladesh is one of the biggest refugee hosting countries in the world, and we are currently working with a large number of other organizations, about 20 of them in the Sahel, which as we heard from Peter is one of the most fragile areas.

I'd like to conclude simply by thanking the organizers for keeping this issue alive, or rather alive in the debate, it's not very easy as the entire world focuses on the pandemic, but it is very important not only to talk about it, to work seriously, collectively together, systematically, but also to continue to inject in the international community a sense of urgency about the whole phenomenon and its displacement component in particular.

Thank you.

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)

Statement: Mr Ricardo Mena, Director of UNDRR

The world is experiencing an unprecedented moment of fragility and uncertainty, resulting from “mutually exacerbating catastrophes”.

We have no option but to change how we reduce risk and manage crisis, because this is fundamental to meeting humanitarian needs AND achieving sustainable development.

The common connection between conflict, climate change and environmental degradation is **risk**.

To reduce vulnerability and exposure, we need to understand and address this relationship in a systemic way.

In our increasingly connected world, where risks cascade, we are missing critical opportunities to improve how we reduce risk in humanitarian contexts.

The era of hazard-by-hazard risk reduction is over, we must adopt multi-hazard, comprehensive and integrated risk management approaches.

Collaboration across the sectors, simultaneously meets lifesaving needs, while ensuring longer-term investment in addressing the systemic causes of vulnerability, conflict and environmental degradation.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction advocates a joined-up approach to reducing risk and promoting resilience across the humanitarian and development sectors.

Priority four highlights the need to ‘link...relief, rehabilitation and development [and to] use opportunities during the recovery phase to develop capacities that reduce disaster risk in the short, medium and long term’.

If we act coherently, the same risk nexus will in fact become **resilience**.

UNDRR will shortly release a report produced in collaboration with more than 49 organisations across the disaster, humanitarian and development sectors, called ‘*Scaling up Disaster Risk Reduction in Humanitarian Action*’.

This concrete set of recommendations provides guidance to better integrate disaster risk reduction into humanitarian response, including incorporating disaster risk reduction through the phases of the humanitarian programme cycle and supporting governments to create legislation and plans- supported by funding- which include provisions for both climate-and conflict- related risks.

I invite you all to take a look and I welcome the opportunity to work together as we strengthen resilience today for the risks of tomorrow.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA)

Statement: Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

Thank you very much to have started the conversation and in particular to the Minister [Mr. Philippe Goffin, Minister of Foreign Affairs and of Defence, Belgium] and the Commissioner [Mr. Janez Lenarcic, European Commissioner for Crisis Management] and set out the issues facing us today.

Conflict, climate shocks and environmental degradation as they say increasingly go hand in hand. They drive humanitarian need and where they occur together, ramp up suffering.

And I want to congratulate the ICRC for their excellent new report which clearly shows that people affected by conflict are also disproportionately impacted by climate shocks and environmental degradation. And I am sure Peter will speak more for about this and he told the Security Council last week, far too many people are walking on a “tightrope of survival”, as a result.

The world’s least resilient countries are the most likely to experience political instability, economic collapse, and social fragmentation, and they are also exceptionally vulnerable to environmental breakdown.

Of the 20 countries most vulnerable to climate change, 13 of them were countries with a UN coordinated humanitarian response plan last year, and almost all are experiencing violence, instability or armed conflict.¹

Conflict, climate change and persecution have left a record 85 million people forcibly displaced today.

For many of them hunger is a daily reality.

Last year, seven of the world’s eight worst hunger crises, in fact, were driven by a confluence of conflict and climate shocks.

This year, because of the consequence of the COVID pandemic, we predict the number of food-insecure people may in fact double.

We see famines looming, and particularly acute risks especially in South Sudan, Yemen, DRC, parts of the Sahel - as David Beasley, Qu Dongyu and I told the Security Council last week.

It is also the case that climate shocks and environmental triggers can themselves be among the things that fuel violence and conflict. So these interactions are in multiple directions we see as competition over access to scarce resources leads to rising tensions. We see the behavior of fighting parties can also have a direct effect on the environment.

And this cycle of conflict and violence, climate shock, environmental risk and humanitarian need are playing out now in many countries where humanitarian organizations are working. The Institute for Economics and Peace cites three regional hot spots at highest risk for instability due to environmental threats: the Sahel and Horn belt from Mauritania to Somalia; the Southern Africa belt from Angola to Madagascar; and the Middle East and Central Asia from Syria to Pakistan.

And in fact in you look ahead, analysts expect these problems to get worse as environmental crises increase both in frequency and intensity, and that then has an effect on further compounding already rising humanitarian needs.

If current trends continue some people think that more than one billion people could be displaced by ecological disaster and conflict by the middle of the century.

The demand for food and water is projected to reach crisis levels for some regions over the next few decades, with one country in five experiencing catastrophic food insecurity and over a third of countries set to experience catastrophic water stress – all that means is that they won’t have enough water to meet their needs .

1 Ethiopia, Myanmar, Mali, Yemen, Burundi, Afghanistan, Haiti, Niger, Sudan, DRC, CAR, Chad, Somalia.

It doesn't have to be like this. There are things that we can do to build countries' resilience to climate change and environmental disaster, and to address tensions when they arise to stop them turning into conflicts.

Firstly, we know that early action saves lives and money. We can already predict many climate-related events and where and who they will hit hardest. By forecasting risk, we can use this evidence to trigger pre-positioned financing ahead of an impending climate hazard, to fund, as the Minister said, anticipatory action.

And that is one of the best things to do to protect hard-won development gains and support resilience.

And humanitarian agencies are already pursuing important examples to track that kind of programming and indeed it is a priority for me and the major fund line manage the Central Emergency Response Fund to allocate out money especially for the anticipatory action for this kind of problems.

Scaling up adaptation finance also for those countries most vulnerable to climate change can increase their ability to withstand climatic shocks.

Secondly, respect for international humanitarian law is vital to protect the lives of civilians in conflict, to protect aid workers, to help preserve essential services and also to avert food insecurity. Hence, by doing all these kinds of things, it could also contribute to the reduction in the pressure on the natural environment.

Thirdly, I think donors and international financial institutions can help build the resilience of at-risk countries by investing in risk reduction and risk management, including by supporting social safety net systems. This requires that all donors step up to meet the climate finance needs of the most vulnerable countries, so they are able to prepare for rising competition over food, water, and other resources. And fourthly, I think we need to really seize the opportunity of the COVID-19 crisis to heed the call the Secretary-General has been making to build back better by investing in a green economic recovery. As the key to tackle growing unemployment, inequality and environmental degradation. It is only when world leaders start to take serious action on climate change, that humanitarian organizations will be able to see a future beyond nearly dealing with the symptoms. At the moment, all our focus is on trying to contain violence, hunger, displacement, disease, and suffering. We need to have a mind set with a much stronger focus on solving the underlying problems.

Thank you.

United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)

Statement: Valerie Guarnieri, WFP Assistant Executive Director

- Thank you to the conveners for the opportunity to participate in this event today. WFP is working in many fragile settings where we observe first-hand how the interaction of environmental factors with economic, social, institutional and political ones is fuelling a vicious cycle of poverty, hunger and conflict. And the poorest, most food insecure and marginalised groups are the ones that pay the highest price.
- The triple threat of climate change, conflict and economic inequality forces WFP to look at humanitarian programs differently, and we are doing this.
- As an organization with a large, supply chain footprint in the developing world, we are taking steps to ensure that our operations “do no harm” – not just in terms of avoiding exacerbating tensions or undermining markets, but also in reducing damage to the natural environment.
- WFP is doing this through deliberate, systematic investments in fuel efficient trucks, to shift our facilities from diesel-powered generators to grid connectors and renewables, to reduce food packaging and our dependence on airlifts in remote areas. These investments have proven to reduce emissions from 13-40 percent, often also at reduced cost.
- WFP is also bolstering programs that “save lives” by scaling up and rolling out programs to “change lives” and strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable. This includes:
 - forecast based approaches that trigger anticipatory and preventive action before disasters materialize, such as climate risk insurance programs that provide pay-outs after irregular rainfall and help farmers get back on their feet after climate shocks.
 - programs that reduce social tensions through collaborative action, like in the Sahel where we are assisting 2 million people until 2023 through an integrated package of activities that bring children back to school, degraded land back to life, support healthy diets, create jobs for the youth and build social cohesion. A recent study undertaken by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has confirmed how such collaborative projects can strengthen social capital, for instance in Mali where previously conflictual communities now interact on an economic basis.
- Summing up, we have the tools to contribute to addressing the climate-conflict nexus, but using them requires political will and predictable, multi-year financing to support tried and tested approaches such as forecast-based finance, shock-responsive social protection, and climate risk insurance which help protect people and reduce conflict and forced displacement.