



# The Hague Declaration on Planetary Security

## Preamble

The third annual Planetary Security Conference met in The Hague, the Netherlands, on 12-13 December 2017 to discuss ways to take action on the linked risks of climate change and security. Climate-related risks are a key factor – and at times a key driver – of human insecurity and conflict. Over the past ten years, understanding and awareness of these risks have increased tremendously. Now is the time to step up the work to turn knowledge into action.

Successfully addressing climate-related security challenges requires knowledge sharing, partnerships, and getting out of separate silos. It requires, in short, the emergence of a new community of practice. Through our commitments in this declaration, we aim to consolidate and strengthen this new community and spur the momentum to reduce the climate-related security risks. The challenges are both global and local. Global, because of the role of the multilateral system in programming and funding interventions; local, because, solutions are never ‘one size fits all’ and must be locally informed. Our agenda must work at both levels.

With this declaration<sup>1</sup>, we set out an Agenda for Action for the community of practice on Planetary Security. The Agenda for Action builds upon and seeks to contextualise the priority themes and geographic regions of the 2017 Planetary Security Conference. We decide today to support concrete steps to advance six action areas:

- 1 **Creating an Institutional Home for Climate Security**
- 2 **Coordinating Migration and Climate Change Responses**
- 3 **Promoting Urban Resilience**
- 4 **Supporting Joint Risk Assessment in Lake Chad**
- 5 **Strengthening Climate and Conflict Sensitive Development in Mali**
- 6 **Supporting Sustainable Water Strategies in Iraq**

<sup>1</sup> *This Declaration does not create any rights or obligations under international law.*

## AGENDA FOR ACTION

**1 Institutional Home for Climate Security:** In a year when floods devastated millions of households across South Asia, back-to-back hurricanes caused destruction and desolation in the Caribbean and drought heightened food security in the Horn of Africa. The UN plays a crucial role in assessing climate-related security risks, and developing plans to respond appropriately. But the responsibility and capacity to do this presently falls across different institutions with different mandates. To this end, we support calls for the UN to create an institutional home for climate security – either appointing a special envoy for ‘climate security’, or establishing a unit within the UN Secretary-General’s office, or both. This would support the UN system - and indeed other global governance mechanisms – in coordinating its work on climate-related security risks, including with joint risk assessment and risk management assistance.

This suggestion builds on previous suggestions and corresponds to the request from Small Island States to develop a more proactive approach for the UN Security Council. Establishing this capacity does not amount to creating a new agency or diminish the role of other UN bodies in addressing adverse effects of climate

change. Rather, it will help the existing UN bodies develop so the UN system fits the purpose of meeting current and coming challenges.

**2 Enhancing Coordination on Migration:** The world is experiencing historic levels of migration. A stronger recognition of how climate-related security risks affect migration is of major relevance for appropriate policy responses for both migrants and host communities in countries of origin, transit, and destination. This recognition should be addressed in (implementing) the Global Compact on Migration and Refugees and for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migration. Climate-related security risks must feature in strategies and funding programmes to address the root causes of, as well as in sustainable management strategies for migration. To this end, we call for the relevant participants in the planetary security community of practice to initiate a dialogue process on the links between climate change, migration and security, for instance to inform the Global Compact negotiations and its subsequent implementation.

**3 Urban Resilience:** The trend towards rapid urbanisation in capitals and secondary cities continues unabated. The social, economic and political impacts of climate change in cities are exacerbated by the concentration of populations, infrastructure, economic activity and services. Though cities offer many advantages for many individuals, urbanisation often exacerbates and highlights inequalities through the proximity of rich and poor. This, in turn, is all too often a factor leading to instability and conflict.

Both climate change and conflict have profound impacts on cities, but there is currently little acknowledgement of how climate change and urban instability and violence intersect and interact in urban planning processes. We value the goal of sustainable urbanisation set out in the New Urban Agenda, whilst acknowledging the absence of specific provisions to address climate related security risks in urban areas. This omission can be addressed in implementing the New Urban Agenda.

Without adequate consideration, climate-related security risks are not reflected in most urban planning processes. Addressing the research, policy and implementation gaps is important in order to ensure that cities are safe, sustainable places to live. To this end, we support efforts to partner for urban resilience. Specifically, we encourage members of the planetary security community of practice, and their networks, who are separately focusing on change, on conflict prevention and on urban dynamics, to plan together how to strengthen citizens' resilience in urban settings. These efforts could build on existing urban resilience networks and municipal fora to foster discussions and policy exchange on how to tackle the linked risks posed to cities by climate change and conflict as an important aspect of sustainable urbanisation.

**4 Joint Risk Assessment in Lake Chad:** The Lake Chad Basin is currently suffering one of the world's largest humanitarian crisis with residents around Lake Chad struggling with extreme food insecurity. There has been widespread violence. Approximately 10.7 million people need immediate humanitarian assistance. Extensive efforts have been made by governments in the region and the international community to address the crisis. However, challenges in balancing short-term crisis response with long-term prevention and sustainable development efforts remain. Given the complexities of the situation, more concrete attention needs to be paid to the understanding of the underlying factors contributing to the crisis that help successful responses and effective prioritisation.

We encourage all actors working on the Lake Chad crisis to take account of the climate-related security risks at play in the region and integrate these considerations into efforts to address the root causes or the symptoms of the crisis. For example, through rehabilitating degraded natural capital to provide livelihoods opportunity to the displaced population and prevent further conflicts, as proposed by the African Governments' Initiative

on Sustainability Stability and security in Africa (3S). To this end, we support the G7 Lake Chad Risk Assessment Project, a concerted effort to address the critical gaps in knowledge and inform the actions of governments concerned, assisted by G7 and other governments and organisations on climate-related security risks in the region.

**5 Climate and Conflict Sensitive Development in Mali:**

Mali faces multiple interconnected governance, security and environmental challenges. The political and security situation has been particularly volatile in recent years, despite the 2015 peace agreement. Environmental challenges such as droughts and increasing desertification make peace and sustainable development harder to attain. To achieve stability in Mali, we understand that addressing environmental challenges such as drought and desertification, for example, through integrating natural resource management into national security strategies and migration policies, are vital steps towards security, stability and sustainability. We call upon all actors engaged in Mali to reassess their strategies based on what is known about climate-related security risks, and mainstream these issues into existing planning, implementation, and evaluation processes and indicators. This calls for improved capacity for compound risk assessment, monitoring and integrated planning. It also requires aid agencies to test integrated approaches – such as conflict sensitive adaptation projects, and climate-smart youth employment, renewable energy and governance programming, to bolster lasting stability in Mali.

**6 Support Sustainable Water Strategies in Iraq:**

The first priorities for Iraq today are stabilization and emergency aid. Sustainable and equitable natural resource management, especially of water resources, however underlies all challenges in post-Islamic State Iraq. This is also a transboundary issue at the heart of geopolitical tensions in the wider region and is fundamental to the prospects of lasting peace in Iraq.

We encourage the investment in rebuilding vital water infrastructure and stabilisation and humanitarian efforts which promote access to potable water and basic sanitation. We also underscore the need for long-term approaches to water security which factor in climate change. This requires strengthening existing local and national institutions for water management, improved knowledge management and building on existing efforts to foster cooperation on transboundary river resources. Such steps should not be postponed until after the cessation of conflict. Water has become a major strategic objective of all groups involved in the conflict. Thus these steps are a fundamental component of any stabilisation and peacebuilding strategy.

**We thank the Netherlands for hosting this edition of the Planetary Security Conference and look forward to meeting again in The Hague in 2018.**