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## FORUM

### **A Platform for Cooperation? A Post-Durban Assessment**

*By Dennis Taenzler, adelphi*

After days and nights of negotiations, the United Nations climate talks reached an agreement at the very last minute, the "Durban Platform." A compromise in many ways, the platform comprises decisions on negotiating a global climate agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for all countries by 2015; on a second phase of the Kyoto Protocol; and on a structure for a Green Climate Fund. However, many scientists warn that this ambition is in no way sufficient to keep global temperature rise below two degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels. As a result, the international community needs to prepare for the costs of this slow negotiation process. The political costs to be born may most likely also affect peace and stability in many regions, as the Security Council noted in the Presidential Statement agreed upon during its session on climate change on 20 July.

Today, this perspective on the security implications of climate change is established in significant parts of the foreign policy community. Limited progress in the international negotiations have encouraged numerous organizations and initiatives to enter the debate on how to avoid the outbreak of violent conflicts as a result of increasing resource scarcity and environmental degradation – especially in conflict-prone countries and regions. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and Christina Figueres, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Executive Secretary, two of the most prominent representatives of global environmental governance, have warned that climate change is threatening peace and stability.

The climate negotiations in South Africa may not have established only one "Durban Platform", but in addition, the debates on climate change as a foreign policy challenge may have also created another, virtual platform. What does this mean? For a long time, climate policies have mainly been the domain of decision makers representing ministries for the environment, although most agreed that climate change is a cross-cutting challenge affecting the fields of economy, trade, development, and finance, among others. Even comprehensive assessments in recent years on the security risks of climate change, as well as the first Security Council meeting on climate change as a threat to peace and stability have not immediately led to a policy change. Not least, because to move from risk analysis to risk management is far from simple.

This situation is apparently changing. Some observations on the discussions before and in Durban can help to back this observation: First, foreign policy makers – especially in Germany and the UK – are promoting activities to illustrate how climate diplomacy can make use of the convening power of foreign policy structures to move from early warning to early action, for example by supporting regional dialogues and cooperation. There is a clear willingness to strengthen the conflict preventive potential of climate policy and make it a main pillar of foreign services. Second, this is not only a European debate. Representatives from regional organizations, like those in Africa, and civil society organizations are calling for a design of climate policies that are conflict sensitive to contribute to peace and stability. One example is a policy brief by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), which asks for conflict-sensitive adaptation policies based on an international conference held in Durban a couple of weeks before the actual climate negotiations. Finally, as the climate finance landscape

becomes more and more concrete, questions about financial accountability have been raised. Well-known institutions like Transparency International are working to ensure that the people managing and spending public money allocated for climate change will be held accountable, both in developed and developing countries. There is no doubt the climate community cannot afford to lose financing due to misuse or corruption. Guidelines for transparency and accountability as well as the principle of do-no-harm can help to inform the design and implementation of climate policies to this end.

If the observation is correct, then the mainstreaming of climate change in the field of foreign policy can support constructive international negotiations towards a comprehensive and fair climate regime and, at the same time, contribute to strengthening crisis and conflict prevention. Seen in this way, the "Durban Platform" may in fact turn out to be a platform of cooperation.

For further information on the international dialogues regarding climate change and security, please see [here](#).

For the Policy Brief by ACCORD, "Climate change and conflict: Conflict-sensitive climate change adaptation in Africa", please see [http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/brief/policy\\_practice14.pdf](http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/brief/policy_practice14.pdf)

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## POLICY & RESEARCH

### Conflict-sensitive Adaptation to Climate Change in Argentina

*Interview with Pablo Lumerman, Executive Director at the Argentinean branch of Partners for Democratic Change International, Fundación Cambio Democrático*

**ECC: Dear Pablo, with your study "Climate change impacts on socio-economic environmental conflicts", you put a focus on climate change's potential security implications for Argentina. What kind of conflicts might occur in your country in light of climate change forecasts?**

Pablo Lumerman (PL): Actually, there is an inherent relationship between climate change impacts, the conflicts they produce, and human security in Argentina. This is so because those impacts cause socio-environmental vulnerability rates to rise in an economically disadvantaged population. In Argentina, the most commonly identified conflicts are related to changes in the use of land and to water stress, specifically to their direct impact on production activities. For example, in some regions, production patterns are altered due to changing rainfall rates. However, other conflicts are also expected, such as those arising from environment-related migration (environmental refugees), from natural disasters, and from a reduction in the country's hydroelectric power generation capacity, among others. All of these conflicts put water and food security in jeopardy and result in the weakening of state capacity in marginal areas, where organized crime networks may regain ground, and thus pose a threat to the whole population in terms of human security.

**ECC: Is the overall discourse on climate change and security, as it was also discussed in July in the UN Security Council, relevant for policy makers in Argentina? Have there been examples of natural resource-related conflicts in the past?**

PL: As far as we are concerned, in Latin America climate change is not on the political agenda relating to security. The interest policy-makers have in the subject is still rather small and it is mostly linked to economic and socio-environmental factors instead of security or defense. Violent conflicts do not arise due to a lack of natural resources but due to organized crime networks, which generally operate in urban areas and for resources which are not affected a priori by climate change impacts (for example, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and other smuggling).

However, this relation should be addressed more in-depth, especially in countries such as Colombia, where an armed conflict is still taking place, or Guatemala and Mexico, where the state is increasingly undermined by organized crime networks. This may be due to structurally weak institutions, poorly capable of addressing violent conflicts arising from the competition for natural resources. In Latin America the stress is put on population vulnerability, dependence on natural resources, and limited institutional and social capacity to adapt to new climate conditions.

As for the second question, conflicts related to the use of and access to natural resources have always existed, because they are essential to life and to the development of communities. However, we could say that in the last years, these conflicts have intensified for several reasons, such as the increase in investments for projects relying on non-renewable natural resources extraction. These are low-intensity conflicts, where social actors will generally not arm themselves and clash in fatal battles, but which effectively contribute to creating an increasingly tense atmosphere which could result in future violence.

**ECC: One of your recommendations is related to strengthening early warning systems and to design policies for adapting to climate change including a conflict-sensitive approach to environmental conflicts. Can you elaborate on the implementation of your suggestions and give examples?**

PL: Early warning systems combine fast transmission of data with the activation of institutional warning mechanisms so that previously-trained social actors can react dialogically and strategically in order to prevent the damaging effects of certain conflict events. Along with adaptation policies designed for forecasted impacts (land planning), the objective is to prevent, neutralize or reduce negative effects of these predicted scenarios by helping societies to adapt their production systems to the new low-carbon models of production, in order to considerably reduce socio-environmental vulnerability. In this context, according to the conflict-sensitive approach, the challenges and conflicts arising from climate change cannot be resolved single-handedly, and neither by the use of force nor just by market regulation policies. This is why it is important to include a series of guidelines oriented to prevent and/or address conflicts and decision-making processes constructively. Those guidelines include cross-disciplinary, cross-sector, and cross-level citizen participation, as well as the development of legitimate, clear, and trustworthy information; the use of democratic dialogue as a consensus building tool; and an active state, capable of coordinating different interests, promoting dialogue, and consolidating consensus-building mechanisms for the planning and application of public policies. The Climate Change Act recently passed in Brazil is one example of such an approach.

The publication on the impact of climate change on socio-environmental conflicts in Argentina is available [here](#).

For further information on the Fundación Cambio Democrático (in Spanish), please see <http://www.cambiodemocratico.org/>

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### **Very Likely – an Upcoming Climate Change Disaster**

The timing did not come by surprise: Right before the beginning of the world climate conference in Durban, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its special report, "Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation". This report is a large step towards further integration of two still separate communities: those working on climate change adaptation on the one hand, and those dealing with disaster management on the other hand. To design and implement future policy measures, these groups will need to continue to merge in the future.

By clearly outlining the quality of knowledge, the IPCC found a precise language to tell decision makers the inconvenient truth: Some disaster-relevant climate change trends are virtually certain with a 99 to 100 percent probability. One trend, for example, is global increases in the frequency of warm daily temperature extremes throughout the 21st century. Other trends are very likely, with a probability above 90 percent. For example, the forecast of heat waves that will increase in length, frequency, or intensity over most land areas. The report also stresses that developing countries are more sensitive to these impacts than other countries: From 1970-2008, more than 95 percent of natural-disaster-related deaths occurred in these countries. Equally important is the notion that for exposed and vulnerable communities, even non-extreme weather and climate events can have extreme impacts. 6 million homeless as a result of the floods in Pakistan this year give a taste of what disasters can cause in countries lacking the adaptive capacities to prepare appropriately.

In a comment on the report, the international aid and development agency Tearfund highlights the costs for action versus inaction. Tearfund cited General Nadeem Ahmed, chairman of Pakistan's National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), who stated that nearly \$12 billion in losses and disaster relief costs would have been saved by spending only \$40 million on flood defenses. In addition, the IPCC writes that many approaches for managing risks will have additional benefits, such as improving peoples' livelihoods, conserving biodiversity, and improving human well-being. However, in light of the insufficient results of the Durban conference, we may assess that the probability of further inaction is very likely, i.e. above 90 percent. (*Dennis Taenzler*)

For the special report, please see [www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch)

The Tearfund reaction is available [here](#).

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### **Taxes for More Equity: Human Development Report Searches for a Better Future for All**

For nearly two decades, the concept of sustainable development has played a key role in international debates. However, many discussions about sustainability neglect equity as an aspect, treating it as a separate and unrelated concern. The Human Development Report 2011 (HDR), titled "Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All", argues that these two issues must be simultaneously addressed to achieve an inclusive and sustainable future.

The authors point out that on the one hand environmental degradation intensifies inequality through adverse impacts on already disadvantaged people, and that on the other hand inequalities in human development amplify environmental degradation, thus perpetuating a vicious cycle of impoverishment and ecological damage. The report expresses concern that development progress in the world's poorest countries could be halted or even reversed by mid-century unless bold steps are taken to slow climate change, prevent further environmental damage and reduce inequalities within and among nations. According to different scenarios, the average Human Development Index (HDI) could fall by 12 to 15 percent below the baseline projection for 2050, with the deepest losses in the poorest regions.

Furthermore, the HDR highlights the issue of food security, reporting that half of all malnutrition worldwide is attributable to environmental factors, such as water pollution and drought-driven scarcity. The authors forecast that unchecked environmental deterioration could cause food prices to soar by up to 50 percent and reverse efforts to expand water, sanitation and energy access to billions of people, notably in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

The report also emphasizes the possible security implications of environmental stress, arguing that climate change and limited natural resources have been linked to an increased likelihood of conflict, defining resource scarcity as a threat multiplier which interacts with other risks and vulnerabilities posing a pernicious threat to human development.

In order to prevent climate change and escalating environmental hazards from jeopardizing the notable progress of previous decades, the HDR 2011 advocates possible new public financing mechanisms, including an international currency transaction tax to help fund the fight against global warming and extreme poverty. "The tax would allow those who benefit most from globalization to help those who benefit least," the authors argue. (*Katherina Ziegenhagen*)

The HDR 2011 as well as further information on the report can be found at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2011/>.

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### **Toward Transparent Resource Use? Europe to Follow the US Example**

In June 2010, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act was passed in the United States (see also "Conflict Resources Reach Wall Street", ECC-Platform edition August 2010). With this law, companies - among them some of the world's largest extractive industry companies - were asked to publish details of the payments made to governments for mining activities. At the end of October, the European Commission proposed to follow this example.

In the past, only a few natural-resources-exporting countries have gained sustainable benefits for the country. Quite the opposite is true in many cases: countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo are poor, fragile, and conflict-prone. Due to high degrees of corruption and prevailing governance deficits, major parts of the population are excluded from potential development gains.

To break this resource curse, a transparent market is a first step. The Commission is proposing that in the future, companies active in the oil, gas or mining sector must publicly disclose their payments to governments for each project in which they invest. To

this end, amendments of existing directives on market transparency and corporate accounting will be needed. Global Witness, a well-known resource watchdog, welcomed the Commission's initiative: "We welcome the leadership of the EC's President Barroso and Commissioner Barnier and the strong support of Britain and France for a proposal which could make a profound difference to many resource-rich-but-poor countries," said Simon Taylor, Founding Director of Global Witness.

Already in May of this year, the OECD and developing economies agreed - as the first inter-governmental agreement in this area - on new guidelines to promote more responsible business conduct by multinational enterprises, and a second set of guidances to limit the use of conflict minerals. The updated guidelines list new recommendations on corporate responsibility for their supply chains. The proposed rules can further strengthen transparency initiatives like the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) by extending its scope to all resource-rich countries. It remains to be seen in which way the European Parliament and EU member states agree on ambitious rules. Nevertheless, nearly ten years after the announcement of EITI, action on conflict resources seems to have entered a new stage. (*Dennis Taenzler*)

The ECC article "Conflict Resources Reach Wall Street" is available [here](#).

For the press release by the European Commission, please see [here](#).

For the press release by Global Witness, please see [here](#).

The OECD press release on the new guidelines is available [here](#).

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## CONFERENCE REPORTS

### A Nexus for Peace and Stability

Water, energy and food: Each sector is marked by existing or future scarcities and will be faced with great challenges in the coming decades and shed light on planetary boundaries. These trends were at the heart of an international conference organized by the German government in mid-November in Bonn that was the first global conference to discuss this nexus between water, energy and food security. The conference's recommendations will serve as one of the major contributions to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20. In his keynote speech, the Prince of Orange, Chair of the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Sanitation, underlined that each sector is also more likely to be viewed as a security issue.

In the course of the conference, a broad range of stakeholders further explored how to address these security dimensions by discussing the interlinkages and trade-offs across the three sectors of water, energy and food security. As one of the greatest challenges discussed was the trade-off between food and energy, the biggest question as whether biofuels should be promoted further or not. For example, at the plenary, Joachim von Braun, Director of the Center for Development Research at Bonn University, explained why anything that uses land and water is a competition to food. Hence, singling out some crops for biofuels "will not do the trick". Generally, making decisions based on thinking in "CO2-silos" was viewed as a shortsighted effort.

As a follow-up, the Parliamentary State Secretary at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Gudrun Kopp, announced that the BMZ had launched the "International Water Stewardship Initiative" in collaboration with WWF



and SAB Miller, one of the world's largest brewery groups. The initiative is supposed to jump-start innovative partnerships between business, society and government working together to improve land and water management in developing countries. More initiatives are to be expected at Rio+20, a "conference on how to organize the global economy within planetary boundaries for nine billion people", according to Dirk Messner, Vice Chair of the German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU). At Rio+20 the highest priority should be given to the "bottom billion" that live with scarcity of water, energy, food and other resources. Those people do not have to think about the nexus – they live it every day. (*Janina Barkemeyer*)

For further information on the conference, please see <http://www.water-energy-food.org/>

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### **Fighting Fire with Fire? Security Risks of Climate Engineering**

With stalling climate negotiations, the direct manipulation of the global climate receives increasing attention. Called "geoengineering or "climate engineering", such measures were scrutinized by various studies, including by the Royal Society. In particular, the unintended consequences of such manipulation raised criticism from many scholars. On 10-11 November 2011, an international conference at the Climate Campus Hamburg discussed in depth the potential security risks of climate engineering (CE).

CE can be divided into two categories: First, the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and second, the management of solar radiation. The first category includes, among others, iron fertilization of algae to increase their carbon uptake. The second category includes the injection of aerosols in the atmosphere to block sunlight, thus cooling the earth. The different methods greatly vary in effectiveness, cost and time span. In case of carbon dioxide removal, it may take decades before any results – that is, reversal of climate change – are recognizable due to the inertia of the climate system. Artificial cooling, however, could be achieved in just a few years and also relatively cheaply, as some proponents say.

Conference participants agreed that possible side effects are far reaching. According to Ulrike Niemeier from the Max Planck Institute, changing solar radiation could alter precipitation patterns and lead to unequal warming and cooling across the globe. The potential regional security risks are then similar to those of climate change. Moreover, governance questions emerge: A single state or small group of states could implement CE. In such a case, political tensions are likely to emerge as long as there is no adequate international regime. This includes research on CE, as field experiments can already have problematic effects.

"Climate control" therefore adds security risks, without necessarily preventing those risks already considered a hazard of climate change. More research is necessary on these and other risks before reaching a decision on climate engineering. As such research is controversial, the conference attendees' emphasized that it must be internationally, independently, and transparently conducted. (*Achim Maas*)

For more information on the conference, please see <http://clisec.zmaw.de/Geoengineering-the-Climates-An-Issue-for-Peace-and.1877.0.html>



The report "Geoengineering the Climate" by the Royal Society is available [here](#).

The report "Solar Radiation Management: The Governance of Research" is available [here](#).

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### **Think Regional, Act National: Climate Adaptation in the Nile Basin**

Climate change is a reality and already affects the countries in the Nile basin. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Nile Basin Development Forum held in Kigali, Rwanda from 26-28 October 2011 was therefore dedicated to exploring the issue of "Climate Change and its Implications for Sustainable Development and Cooperation in the Nile Basin". The conference was organized by the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) with the support of its development partners.

More than 200 policy makers from the Nile riparian countries, donor organizations, civil society, and private sector representatives, as well as international and regional experts attended the forum and shared their views on possibilities and challenges for adequately coping with the impacts of rising global temperatures in the region. They underscored that climate change offers a strong opportunity for enhancing cooperation among the NBI member countries. Because of adverse impacts on transboundary ecosystems, adaptation to climate change needs to be tackled from a regional perspective. This requires joint efforts and exchange of information between the riparian countries. However, regional objectives need to be translated into concrete measures on the national level, for example by including climate change considerations in domestic water management policies.

Participants agreed that regional organizations, and especially the NBI, would play a decisive role in the coordination of adaptation efforts in the basin. Furthermore, they could provide their member states with relevant information on funding opportunities for adaptation measures and become a primary interlocutor for development partners in the region to pave the way for efficient transboundary adaptation projects. (*Kerstin Fritzsche*)

The Nile Basin Development Forum is held every two years. It is dedicated to enhancing information and knowledge exchange between the manifold stakeholders and actors in the Nile basin region. Further information on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Nile Basin Development Forum is available on the following webpage: [www.nilebasin.org/nbdf/](http://www.nilebasin.org/nbdf/)

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### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Upcoming events are also regularly published at <http://www.ecc-platform.org/>.

### **"Environment and Security" in Washington, DC (18-20 January)**

The 12th National Conference on Science, Policy and the Environment aims to provide a forum to explore selected environment and security issues, the interrelationships between them, common underlying scientific issues, as well as regional case studies. The conference is organized by the National Council for Science and the Environment and is expected to bring together attendees from the scientific, business, academic and

environmental communities, as well as international, federal, and regional government officials.

For further information, please see <http://www.environmentandsecurity.org/>

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### **"EU and UK Gas Security of Supply" in Steyning, UK (23-25 January)**

This conference aims to shed light on the role of gas in the UK's future energy mix, as well as to assess global supply and demand for gas and European gas security issues and evaluating EU gas infrastructure and market design. Organized by Wilton Park, the conference will consist of a number of workshops as well as roundtable discussions, encouraging participants to exchange their views on the UK and EU gas and energy market.

For further information, please see [here](#).

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### **"Negotiating Climate Change: From Durban and Beyond", web-based course (13 February - 6 April)**

This online course devised by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) aims to facilitate international negotiations, public sector work, and diplomatic engagement in relation to climate change through an enhanced understanding of its science, international policy framework, and the key negotiation issues relevant to a post-2012 agreement. The course targets government officers, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organization staff, diplomats as well as experts from the private sector, and students.

For further information, please see [here](#).

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## **IN BRIEF**

### **Natural Resources and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding, Land Conflict in Burundi and Ethiopia, Women at the Frontline of Climate Change, Water Resources Management in the Nile and Niger River Basins, and a Report on Migration and Global Environmental Change**

A new book titled "[High-Value Natural Resources and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding](#)" has been published by researchers of the Peace Research Institute Oslo. Focusing on resource-rich post-conflict countries, the book investigates experiences from more than a dozen countries in post-conflict management of high-value resources, and examines challenges and opportunities in the peacebuilding process.

The study "[Mediating Land Conflict in Burundi](#)" conducted by ACCORD provides an assessment and an evaluation of how land conflict mediation addresses long-term challenges for peace in Burundi. The project report analyzes ACCORD's land conflict mediation practice in two Burundi provinces, contributing to the work of a wide range of actors in post-conflict peacebuilding, repatriation, reintegration and reconciliation, and land tenure issues.

**"Women at the frontline of climate change - Gender risks and hopes"** is a rapid response assessment, which focuses on the vulnerability of women in the context of climate change. It calls for relevant agencies operating across the spectrum of development and climate assistance to put women at the center of their strategies in order to make sustainable adaptation a success.

Aiming to fill the knowledge gap regarding how climate-related vulnerabilities interact with the dynamics of conflict in specific locations, the study **"Climate Change and Conflict in Pastoralist Regions of Ethiopia: Mounting Challenges, Emerging Responses"** by USAID and the Foundation for Environmental Security focuses on the pastoralist regions of Ethiopia, scrutinizing climate trends and impacts the inhabitants confront and investigating their adaptation strategies and capacities.

International Alert, in partnership with the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research and the School of International Development at the University of East Anglia, is leading the project **"Climate Change, Water, and Conflict in the Niger River Basin"**. This project focuses on Mali, Niger and Nigeria and aims to examine the links between environmental stress, climate change, conflict and adaptation at local, national and regional levels, and in different localities along the Niger River.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) project **"Information Products for Nile Basin Water Resources Management"** is intended to prevent conflicts by strengthening the ability of the governments of the ten Nile basin countries to make informed decisions with regard to water resources policy and management in the Nile Basin.

**"The Foresight Report on Migration and Global Environmental Change: Future Challenges and Opportunities"** by the UK Government Office for Science considers migration in the context of environmental change over the next 50 years. It examines potential migration patterns and concludes that migration may be part of the solution to managing global environmental change, as a form of adaptation and contributing to long-term resilience.

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### **Contact**

Publisher:

Dennis Taenzler  
adelphi research gGmbH  
Caspar-Theyss-Strasse 14a  
D - 14193 Berlin

Phone +49-30-89 000 68 0

Fax +49-30-89 000 68 10

[www.adelphi.de](http://www.adelphi.de)

**Editorial team:**

Contact: [editor@ecc-platform.org](mailto:editor@ecc-platform.org)

Janina Barkemeyer, Alexander Carius, Irina Comardicea, Christopher Knupp, Kerstin Fritzsche, Annika Kramer, Achim Maas, Lukas Ruettinger, Dennis Taenzler, Stephan Wolters, Katherina Ziegenhagen

Translation support by Anya Malhotra, Editing by Eleeza Agopian

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