Climate Diplomacy: Focus on COP21

The Foreign Policy Dimension of Climate Change
by Alexander Carius, adelphi

Paris after the Attacks: the Peacemaking Potential of the Climate Conference
by Dennis Tänzler, adelphi

Climate Diplomacy at COP21
by Regina Treutwein, adelphi

Climate Diplomacy Beyond 2015: Catalyzing the Climate Economy
by Stephan Wolters, adelphi

ECC Factbook Case: Climate Change and the Civil War in Syria
by Adrien Detges, adelphi

Regional Highlights

Asia

Southeast Asia’s Haze Problem: Why So Hard To Solve?
by Jackson Ewing, Asia Society Policy Institute

Land and Food

Interview with Martin Frick, Director of Climate, Energy and Tenure at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization
by Shiloh Fetzek, International Alert

Early Warning and Risk Analysis

Preparing for Hazards, Preventing Disasters through Integrated Risk Assessment
by Katharina Nett, adelphi

Tools

Upcoming Events

Global Landscapes Forum; Conference on Water Security 2015; and Conference on Earth System Governance

Publications and Resources

Zero Emissions, Zero Poverty; Extractives, Natural Resources and Peacebuilding; Climate and Health; Cross-Border Displacement

The Planetary Security Conference 2015 in Videos

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How do you avoid that the urgent always takes priority over the important?

In the coming decades, we may see climate change destabilizing conflict regions, fueling new conflicts, and undermining progress on development. Climate change is thus increasingly a global threat to security. The Foreign Ministers of France and Germany co-hosted a high-level discussion on September 30 during the United Nations General Assembly on how foreign policy can address these risks. 30 Foreign Ministers and (Deputy) Prime Ministers attended the event and debated the question, “How do you avoid that the urgent always takes priority over the important?” in an era where acute crises absorb much of the attention and capacities of foreign policymakers.

This event was initiated by adelphi and the French and German foreign offices. An introduction of the study “A New Climate for Peace”, commissioned by the G7 Foreign Ministers, set the scene. The authors of the report highlight the need for concrete action towards a global agenda for resilience and peace.

“...The increased attention by the foreign policy community is an opportunity to embark on concrete action towards resilience and peace.”

Francine Baron, Foreign Minister of Dominica, and Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, emphasized that climate change is already causing devastating impacts in their respective countries. Both called for an effective loss and damage regime to help countries recover from the devastating effects of extreme weather events. Minister Mahmood Ali also stressed the importance of technology transfer. Minister Baron called for increased development assistance to help Small Island Developing States become less dependent on fossil fuels, as well as an effective and flexible financing mechanism accessible on short notice when extreme events hit economies and societies.

In a statement delivered by Janos Pasztor, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General on Climate Change, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon emphasized that the numerous recent extreme weather events and the current migration crisis in Europe provide an idea of the magnitude of the challenges that will have to be met in the future. Failure to achieve a robust global agreement in Paris would be a
threat to peace and security and would also threaten the achievement of the SDGs and decades of development efforts.

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius stressed the need for long-term approaches when addressing systemic climate and security risks. Reaching agreement at UNFCCC COP 21 in Paris will be an important starting point.

“The diplomatic toolbox is yet to be explored and developed into a broader agenda for climate resilience and peace.”

Short statements complemented the panel discussion. Tonga’s Prime-Minister Samiuela ‘Akilisi Pohiva emphasized that the Security Council should increase its attention on climate and security issues and suggested that the Security Council could request the appointment of a special representative on climate change and security. Ignacio Ybáñez, Deputy Foreign Minister of Spain, announced that his government intends to once again bring the issue of climate risks to the attention of the UN Security Council in 2016. Manuel González Sanz, Foreign Minister of Costa Rica and Miguel Arias Cañete, EU Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, both emphasized the need for an ambitious, binding agreement in Paris. Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Foreign Minister of Georgia, elaborated on the geopolitics of climate change and argued for assistance for countries most affected by the impacts of climate change.

The rich and intense debate among high-level foreign policymakers demonstrated the general political consensus reached on climate and security risks. In light of the upcoming climate summit, the security argument was used to raise the level of ambition and stress the need for a substantial climate agenda to be agreed upon in Paris in December. Participants agreed to continue this debate both within the G7 and at UN level. The diplomatic toolbox is yet to be explored and developed into a broader agenda for climate resilience and peace.

INFOBOX: Climate Change and Security in the G7

In early 2014, interested G7 members commissioned an international consortium of leading research institutes headed by adelphi, together with International Alert, the Wilson Center and the EU Institute for Security Studies, to conduct an independent study on climate change and fragility and establish an open online platform to share and disseminate the collected knowledge and research: www.newclimateforpeace.org.

In their final communiqué in Lübeck on 15 April 2015, the G7 Foreign Ministers welcomed the report A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks and agreed with the conclusion that there is a need to better integrate climate-fragility considerations across foreign policy portfolios. To address this challenge the G7 established a working group to scrutinize the study’s recommendations and to enhance international cooperation on climate change and fragility.

At the G7 summit in Elmau, Germany in June 2015, G7 leaders furthermore endorsed the vision of decarbonisation of the global economy, phasing out fossil fuels by the end of the century and committed to the goal of 400 million people with climate insurance by 2020. These commitments by some of the world’s most powerful economies demonstrate high political awareness of the cross-cutting nature of the climate challenge. However, specific action is still to follow in many areas during the COP21 and beyond.
Climate Diplomacy: Focus on COP21

Paris after the Attacks: the Peacemaking Potential of the Climate Conference
by Dennis Tänzler, adelphi

Paris 2015: as climate advocate, this meant and means for me the upcoming World Climate Conference in December. And this hasn’t changed, even as a result of the horrific terror attacks in Paris a few weeks ago. On the contrary, the outcomes of the approaching conference can make a major contribution to stomping out the breeding grounds for these kinds of attacks.

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, there were brief discussions on whether to cancel or postpone the conference. The annual conference, at which national leaders and diplomats from every country come together under incredibly tight security conditions, will however still take place as planned from 30 November to 11 December in Paris.

Climate conferences are today amongst the few occasions when politicians and diplomats from all over the world come together to work on a common solution to a global problem. The new Paris treaty is intended to commit all governments to efforts to mitigate climate change, substantially reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and assist countries in making preparations for adapting to unavoidable climate change and in turn warding off the most severe harm from drought, floods and severe hunger.

Ideally, this agreement can be a key driver of international cooperation, setting a global example of fairness and solidarity. It can also provide a major contribution to international security. Here, Syria is one of the best examples of how environmental change can provoke political unrest and armed conflicts.

Between 2006 and 2011, Syria was faced with heavy drought, leading to massive rural flight to Syria’s cities. This was followed by the total failure of the government to respond adequately to the humanitarian crisis, escalating the already established discontent with the Assad regime.

Climate change thus already in the recent past reached a level of impact at which it can influence politics and inflame or aggravate conflicts. This is true above all in weak or unstable states, i.e. countries like Syria or Pakistan which are also central to discussions on international terrorism. In these countries, the state can often not provide sufficient nutrition, access to water or adequate healthcare. If climate change continues to act as an intensifier in the future, these states will be threatened with overload and, eventually, with collapse.

The Paris summit can be a signal of collective climate politics - in terms of security policy, it could be no less than a comprehensive peace treaty.

The Paris summit is intended to send a powerful core signal about the seriousness of collective efforts to combat climate change, being in terms of security policy no less than a comprehensive peace treaty; a treaty whose positive impacts will nevertheless take years to unfold, and even then only when it commits all countries to the framework of the same solution.
The chances for a successful summit in Paris don’t look all that bad. The international community has for years been working on embedding climate action in individual countries and on identifying ways to contribute to a global approach to the problem. This is just as true for weak states or currently unstable states, which sometimes have major problems putting climate projects in place or securing lasting international support.

Syria is one of the best examples of how climate change can inflame political disquiet and armed conflicts.

This year, I’ve taken part in climate projects in Tunis, Cairo, Beirut and Islamabad. Security warnings were ubiquitous and all of these countries suffer from regular terror attacks. At the same time, there was a spirit of optimism all around, as well as the conviction that taking action on the climate and expanding renewable energies can help to improve the current local situations and, for example, also create jobs.

In Islamabad, for instance, I accompanied provincial officials who wanted to know how they could best submit their ideas for tackling climate change to the Green Climate Fund. This fund was set up to allocate major portions of future resources for tackling climate change. These countries don’t just want to be a part of global efforts to combat climate change; above all, they want to avoid climate change limiting even further their desires for peace and security.

It is not only these countries which are hoping for a successful coming together in Paris. Not all countries are able to (or should) themselves go to Paris, but both government officials and members of civil society can this December create something in Paris which the recent terrorist attacks wanted to destroy: a global gathering of solutions and creative, future-orientated ideas which can help to dismantle the structural breeding grounds for poverty, chaos and terror, and which makes use of virtues like solidarity and cooperation at a global level. If the Paris summit turns out to be a success, this could have an even more sustainable impact than many of the announcements that were made public in the immediate aftermath of the attacks.

This article originally appeared in German on Motherboard.

Climate Diplomacy: Focus on COP21
by Regina Treutwein, adelphi

Building on the recommendations of the study “A New Climate for Peace”, the G7 Foreign Ministers agreed in April that risks of instability and conflict stemming from climate change must be effectively addressed. But how? The side event Climate Security and Resilience – The Way Forward will discuss potential activities by governments, multilateral institutions and initiatives.

It is organised by adelphi and the German Federal Foreign Office and aims at further exploring how to strengthen resilience as a key foreign policy focus.

Apart from the side event, the adelphi stand in the Climate Generations areas will also inform non-accredited COP21 visitors about climate diplomacy. adelphi’s experts will discuss climate diplomacy, resilience, climate security and conflict prevention.

Moderated by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there will also be a side event on planetary security in the Netherlands Pavilion on 5 December from 10.30-11.30. Participants will discuss policy actions on the impact of climate on security.

To learn more please click here.

What: side event Climate Security and Resilience – The Way Forward
Who: adelphi and the German Federal Foreign Office
Where: German Pavilion
When: 11 December 2015, 12:00-14:00
Climate Diplomacy Beyond 2015: Catalyzing the Climate Economy
by Stephan Wolters, adelphi

Foreign policy has had an important role to play in supporting international climate negotiations by reaching out to partner countries bilaterally and making the case for more ambitious climate action. A global climate agreement this December will be a game changer for climate diplomacy. However, this does not mean that climate diplomats can lean back afterwards – judging by the INDCs, we will need to do more than what the agreement in Paris is likely to achieve. Diplomats will have to shift their focus, from working towards an ambitious, comprehensive, legally binding climate agreement to the needs beyond it. And there are plenty. Catalyzing the climate economy will be at the heart of it: more than ever, after COP21, it can serve as a much-needed accelerator for a climate-friendly trajectory.

For too long, we’ve discussed how to share the burden of saving the planet. But in fact, climate action presents a huge business opportunity and, therefore, the opportunity to grow the economy sustainably. That is to say: it is in every nation’s individual interest to pursue climate-compatible development pathways. The New Climate Economy report shows that up to 90% of climate actions required to stay below 2° warming are compatible with economic development and broadly shared improvements in living standards.

Climate foreign policy needs to shift its focus towards catalyzing the climate economy, key to raising ambitions beyond Paris.

Many of these investments are profitable even without considering their benefits for the climate. For example, the health benefits of reducing air pollution in cities by shifting from cars to buses and bicycles are huge.

The key argument, therefore, that diplomats will have to convey more strongly than ever before is: if we don’t put an adequate price on carbon, we are effectively subsidizing (and locking in) the use of fossil fuels and other carbon-intensive resources and processes – at great cost to human lives, the environment, and the economy. Comparing the costs and all benefits shows: climate action is an imperative because it makes economic sense.

Thinking about climate and economy together will also help address climate-fragility risks, both directly and indirectly, as laid out in the integrated resilience agenda put forward by the report ‘A New Climate for Peace’. There is a direct link, because it will catalyze investments with strong synergies for reducing risk factors such as volatile food provision, local resource competition, and insecure livelihoods. And it indirectly addresses these risks by driving climate change mitigation in the first place.

Of course, there are reasons why implementation is lagging behind. A lot of them pertain to the political economy, a finding supported by research from Lord Stern’s institute at the London School of Economics and Political Science. These include some benefits shifting between groups, or hesitations to invest without credible long-term political signals.

We will need to highlight all of these opportunities, not only in the narrow environmental and climate discourse, but much more broadly – be it in economic ministries, in line ministries e.g. for transport, energy or land use, or of course...
in the business community. With their cross-sectoral convening power and bilateral relations, diplomats can stimulate feeding these opportunities into these discourses. To do so, they can share examples of good practice from across the globe, and provide lessons learnt from less effective policies.

And finally, they can scope and facilitate bilateral cooperative actions – such as improving the climate for green investments or promoting joint research and innovation. Intensifying these efforts will help build momentum to drive the climate economy and pave the way for increasing ambition in a periodic review mechanism of the climate agreement.

Climate Diplomacy: Focus on COP21

The ECC Factbook is an online tool that informs both policymakers and the general public about over 100 current conflicts with an environmental dimension. It seeks to contribute to preventing, transforming and resolving these types of conflicts by helping users to better understand the drivers behind environmental conflict and to harness the lessons from earlier (non-) interventions. It also calls for preventive measures to strengthen those institutions that stand between global environmental change and local, national and regional outcomes in terms of conflict.

One of the cases is the on-going conflict in Syria. It offers an important insight into how environmental factors can feed into popular grievances and, in combination with other social factors, produce widespread violence and suffering.

Since protests started in March 2011, the conflict has become one of the worst in recent decades, causing 220,000 deaths. The emergence of ISIS has further complicated the conflict, as has the increasingly direct intervention of regional and major powers. Millions of refugees and migrants represent a major challenge for countries neighbouring Syria and beyond. The direct causes of the Syrian crisis relate to popular discontent with the authoritarian regime of Bashar Al-Assad. Yet, numerous experts have highlighted the roles of climate change, drought and poor resource management as additional factors behind the crisis.

Over the past decades, the Mediterranean littoral zone and the Middle East have warmed up considerably leading to an intensification of drought cycles. According to a study from

Graphic by adelphi
Several short videos on case studies from the ECC Factbook can be found on the ECC Video Platform. They explain some of the conflicts with an environmental dimension. The videos demonstrate, for example, the dynamics and mechanisms behind the outbreak of the civil war in Syria or Darfur.

Regional Highlights: Asia

Great Strides in India-Germany Climate Diplomacy
by Dhanasree Jayaram, Manipal Advanced Research Group (MARG), Manipal University

One of the pivotal points of discussion between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Angela Merkel during the latter’s visit to India in October was climate change and clean energy. Under the Modi government, India has taken the next big step in the field of non-fossil fuel energy, announcing a new target of expanding the share of non-fossil fuel energy to 40 percent by 2030 ahead of the submission of its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Clearly, clean energy has emerged as a top priority for India in its battle against climate change as well as poverty. Therefore, this large sector is crucial when it comes to India’s foreign policy goals as it aims to raise US $200 billion worth of investments in clean energy projects, mainly from foreign sources.

Germany is one of India’s largest strategic partners and clean energy has been at the core of Indo-German coope-
ration in the past few years. This year too, as a part of the (institutionalised) third India-Germany Intergovernmental Consultations, the two countries widened and deepened their cooperation in clean energy. Besides agreeing on the Indo-Germany Climate and Renewables Alliance, Merkel has pledged $2.25 billion for India’s Green Energy Corridor and solar projects.

This gave a big boost to India’s climate commitments and negotiating position in light of the upcoming Paris Summit. As a component of the international climate agenda, India has stressed on the need for the international community to espouse a clean energy-centric approach that is not based entirely on emissions reduction targets.

What is more interesting about these initiatives is the fact that they emphasise long-term and comprehensive agenda of tackling climate change. More importantly, it talks about harnessing “technology, innovation and finance in order to make affordable, clean and renewable energy accessible to all.” Rural electrification and ‘electricity for all’, which are priority areas for Modi, feature prominently in these initiatives. Germany’s keen interest in “exploring and developing rural areas” (access to energy) has led to a deeper cooperation between the two countries as it stems from its greater understanding of the realities of India.

The above explanations highlight the indications of recognition of each others’ perspectives on issues such as climate change. In essence, Germany has acknowledged India’s position on the post-2020 climate treaty while calling for an “ambitious” treaty that should ideally be legally binding. It welcomed India’s INDC in which its pledge to curb greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions intensity by up to 35 per cent from the 2005 level is highlighted. India’s INDC states that it would require at least US$ 2.5 trillion at current prices to implement all the climate plans it has outlined in it; and for this India has urged the developed countries to finance the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Germany has agreed to give priority to adaptation and climate finance in the treaty – a demand that remains central to India’s post-2020 climate commitment.

“Clearly, clean energy has emerged as a top priority for India in its battle against climate change as well as poverty.”

There is undoubtedly the need to go much beyond these promises and bonhomie. A strategic partnership needs to delve further into tangible deliverables. This is where there are several hurdles including the problem of land acquisition in India that could potentially stand in the way of those clean energy initiatives.

However, expectations are that the Modi government would find ways to surmount them so that collaborations between the two countries would not be stonewalled at the initial stage itself due to problems such as the lack of land. Interestingly, the Modi government has allowed state governments to make amendments to the Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013 so as to ensure that key projects can take off.

It has to be admitted that far from rhetoric, the two countries have agreed to implement numerous steps that make a difference on the ground. For instance, they endeavour to integrate adaptation into all sectors including urban planning, infrastructural development and so on. They also intend to advance their cooperation in fields such as climate risk insurance. In addition to investments in the clean energy sector, Germany has expressed its willingness to put teeth into joint research on clean energy and energy efficiency.

Besides these bilateral efforts, the two countries would continue to cooperate at the international level. As the UN’s efforts to bring countries to a consensus continue, it is more important for countries to engage at other levels to address
Peace Park Expedition to Balkans Reveals Tensions over Development, Rule of Law for New Governments

by Ohio University’s Environmental Studies Program at the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs

One of the last biodiversity hotspots in Europe was also backdrop to one of its last violent conflicts and now home to its newest nation states. The Prokletije/Bjeshket e Nemuna Mountains are a large expanse of wilderness and stunning alpine landscapes that form the border between Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo. Three national parks share borders and form a patchwork of protected land that could be the basis for an international peace park – a shared resource that could promote cross-cultural exchange, collaborative natural resource management and eco-tourism.

Under the leadership of International Peace Park Expeditions Director Todd Walters and Ohio University Professor Geoff Dabelko, a small group of students trek through this prospective Balkans peace park each summer in May.

Combatting Corruption in Montenegro

Prokletije National Park in Montenegro began as a “paper park” in 2009 – a protected area by legislation but not in practice. The park gained legitimacy in 2012 when Enes Dresković was appointed its first director. “Illegal logging is the biggest threat,” Dresković told us. The industry has roots in organized crime and illicit support from officials at the state and local levels, he said. Loggers evade taxes. This dynamic reduces money flowing into public budgets and the formal economy while encouraging corruption. According to the Regional Environmental Center, an NGO based in Hungary, more than half the conifers illegally logged in Montenegro in 2007 were from the municipality of Plav, a centre of mafia activity near Prokletije National Park’s borders.

Dresković has more mundane challenges as well. Acquiring funds to hire staff and build basic infrastructure is a top prio-
rity. Encouraging people to use and care about the park is a major focus as well. The park recently reached a significant milestone when the Austrian Development Agency and the National Parks of Montenegro co-financed the construction and outfitting of a visitor’s center on land donated by the municipality of Gusijne.

Gaining a Foothold in Kosovo

The Bjeshkët e Nemuna National Park, like its Montenegrin twin Prokletije, faces a battle for legitimacy. To become a member of NATO and the European Union, countries must set aside at least 10 percent of their land for conservation and protection. The government of Kosovo has set aside Bjeshkët e Nemuna with this in mind. However, the economy is the top political priority, making funding for park management, law enforcement and educational and recreational opportunities nearly non-existent. This neglected “paper park” designation has generated distrust of the national government and opposition to the park itself from some quarters.

But Prokletije’s Dresković has found partners in environmental defence here. The Environmentally Responsible Action Group (ERA), an NGO based in Peja is dedicated to improving environmental protection and sustainable development in Bjeshkët e Nemuna. ERA establishes and supports educational programs for local youth, hunting and forestry associations, reforestation projects, ecotourism and efforts to preserve traditional culture. The Peaks of the Balkans and the Balkans Peace Park Project are also working to promote a transnational hiking trail that winds through Kosovo, Montenegro and Albania.

“This single alpine ecosystem spans three new democracies and is crucial for European Union membership in all three countries, providing an important barometer for cross-border cooperation.”

Despite these efforts, Bjeshkët e Nemuna Park is not welcomed by everyone. Rights for land owners was a new and confusing issue when the park was first established, and loggers have spread rumors about the government trying to take over private land. Poaching and illegal logging is lucrative and continues, though it has been dramatically reduced through stricter monitoring of the single-lane access road which provides access to Rugova Gorge at the heart of the park.

Culture Clash in Albania

With the help of GIZ, the German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation, many Albanians are opening their homes to travellers in an effort to promote tourism in a country that was closed to most outsiders during 50 years of communist dictatorship under Enver Hoxha. Ecotourism has created a wide range of economic opportunities for families in the village and national park Thethi.

But as tourism increases, others have tried to expand the industry in ways that conflict with a smaller, sustainability-focused, local character vision. Between 2012 and 2014, a three-story red brick hotel was built among the traditional limestone rock structures nestled in the valley. Aside from diminishing Thethi’s cultural presentation and historic atmosphere, new construction for other large hotels is underway on park land with no permits and no permit process. New roads are also under construction to ease access to the region.

The race for development is part of the country’s push for European Union membership. Like Kosovo, the government has focused on showcasing Albania’s preserved landscapes to draw foreign interest and facilitate joining the European Union. Indeed, in June 2014 the European Union granted Albania candidacy status, the next step on the way to becoming a full member. But in order to preserve the culture of Thethi and other small villages, it is clear more open discussion between stakeholders is needed. Comprehensive planning that takes into account the impact of development on...
the landscape, the culture, and the people is sorely lacking. A critical dynamic that will determine the success of this transition from isolated subsistence to interconnected development across the Balkans is how effectively laws protecting Thethi, Bjeshket e Nemuna, and Prokletije are enforced. This single alpine ecosystem spans three new democracies and is crucial for European Union membership in all three countries, providing an important barometer for cross-border cooperation. Cross-cultural exchanges contribute towards establishing the cooperative frameworks needed to achieve these goals. And, as grassroots activism and action integrate with top down policies, we hope there will one day be formal recognition of a Balkans Peace Park.

Todd Walters is the founder and executive director of International Peace Park Expeditions. Geoff Dabelko is a senior advisor to ECSP and professor and director of the Environmental Studies Program at Ohio University’s Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs.

The original version of this article appeared on New Security Beat.

Regional Highlights: Asia

Southeast Asia’s Haze Problem: Why So Hard To Solve?
by Jackson Ewing, Asia Society Policy Institute

Smoke from Indonesia has again brought large parts of Malaysia and Singapore to a grinding halt. By the morning of 24 September 2015 the Pollution Standards Index (PSI) had crossed into the ‘Very Unhealthy’ range on its way to a ‘Hazardous’ rating, and by Friday the 24-hour PSI rating hovered between 264-321; the highest levels in 2015. Conditions have fluctuated since, but the haze continues to shake both countries and impact their economic life.

The effects of this type of haze are increasingly familiar. Schools were closed, the most vulnerable became sick, health care services were stressed and businesses that remained open saw commerce decline. The financial costs will prove significant when the numbers are in. The 1997 episode – which until recent years set the benchmark for haze pollution – likely cost Singapore upwards of SGD250 million in health expenditure, tourism reduction and lost productivity. The episode in June and July of 2013 was far worse, with financial impacts that are still being assessed. Beyond the dollars and cents, the haze impacts the quality of life for Singaporeans and the island’s visitors in ways that only those who experience it can appreciate. So why is the haze problem so hard to solve?

Haze prevention efforts
After decades of regional, national, academic and civil society attention, the problem is as intractable as ever. Recent efforts to combat haze have been far from cursory. The source country Indonesia has enacted logging moratoria, combined its environmental and forestry ministries and ratified – albeit with great delay – the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze in September 2014. It has improved its land concession maps, expanded programmes on community-based forest management and fire prevention, levied a fine of over USD 25 million on an offending palm
oil producer and recently arrested executives of companies allegedly behind the current fires.

Singapore has commissioned studies on haze reduction, pursued tangible cooperation with nearby Indonesian provinces and passed legislation holding offending companies culpable. Large private sector players have recognised the reputational risks they face from the haze and dedicated greater resources towards eliminating haze-causing activities from their supply chains. Research institutes have improved monitoring and assessment, while civil society organisations have helped build capacities on the ground. Still, the problem pervades the dry months and defies solutions. The primary reasons are three-fold.

Countervailing forces

Expanding palm oil and paper sectors: First, the forces causing the haze are outpacing efforts to mitigate it. While Indonesia has taken recent steps to combat the fires causing the haze, it has simultaneously advanced its palm oil and pulp and paper sectors as key engines of the wider economy. After surpassing Malaysia as the world’s leading producer of palm oil in 2006, Indonesia announced plans to double production and brought millions of new hectares under cultivation. These plantations now cover an area more than twice the size of Singapore and Belgium. Meanwhile demand for paper continues to rise in emerging Asian economies, particularly China, and Indonesian plantations reflect the country’s place as a key supplier. Indonesia’s pulp and paper industry may expand by 20% between 2014 and 2016 and projects strong longer-term growth.

The boom in these sectors has changed their structures and characteristics. Expansion has been defined largely by estate-level land clearance, with blurred lines between corporate firms and the small-scale landowners they often contract out to. There is also a growing presence of mid-sized actors that develop plantations but have scant or nonexistent public profiles. These actors gain official and unofficial concessions from local governments, whose leaders seek capital for their budgets, their campaigns, and on some occasions their wallets. Haze does not present the same reputational risks to these mid-level operatives as it does to large corporations like Nestlé and Golden Agri-Resources – both of which have implemented haze prevention policies.

Hotter and drier: Second, the source areas of the haze are getting hotter and drier. Burning remains an attractive method for land clearing because it is quick and efficient, requires minimal labour, enriches soils, and acts as a default strategy in lieu of affordable alternatives. In years like 2015 with a strong El Niño warming trend, fires often become large and difficult to control. In carbon-rich peatlands, these fires can burn for weeks and spread far beyond their areas of origin; which in turn problematises efforts to establish culpability. With climate change projections predicting warming trends and drier months in equatorial Southeast Asia, these problems may well become more acute.

Long gestation: Third, the redoubled efforts to combat the haze are relatively new and will take time to be effective. Indonesia’s levying of fines and arresting of executives send important signals, but the legal processes surrounding these efforts take years and do not appreciably change the short-term conditions on the ground in Indonesian plantations. It remains difficult to identify haze-causing culprits even with new legislation, greater enforcement ambitions, and better maps detailing where concessions are situated. Time may improve the effectiveness of these mechanisms, but, as the current smoke demonstrates, they are not up to the near-term challenge.

Hazy future

Despite these limitations, continued regional cooperation on the haze issue is imperative, without viable alternatives. Affected Indonesian citizens suffer even more painfully than...
their neighbours during acute haze episodes and hope for solutions as much as anyone. Such solutions are taking shape, but better outcomes may be years in the offing.

Such is often the case with transboundary environmental challenges, which leave impacted countries vulnerable to effects that they cannot prevent through their own action. These countries are left to respond to the environmental stress that they inherit at home, while trying to stimulate changes in neighbouring territories. Singapore is on such a trajectory, but, as Euston Quah and Tan Tsiat Siong recently wrote in the Straits Times, Singaporeans will likely be asked to “accept that the haze will be with us for years to come and learn to live with it while mitigation efforts are ongoing”. This assessment seems likely to bear out, as near-term solutions remain difficult to see.

Interview with Martin Frick, Director of Climate, Energy and Tenure at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization
by Shiloh Fetzek, International Alert

The FAO recently held a major event on the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture. Some elements of climate-smart agriculture obviously have co-benefits for conflict prevention agendas, e.g. integrated policy approaches and empowering local institutions affect dynamics that are important for inclusion and equality. Can you talk about any closer engagement FAO might have with the political dimensions of food security and promoting a resilience agenda that addresses those?

I think the question is spot on. If we look at where the world’s conflicts mainly are it is clear that pressure on natural resources is an integral part of the picture. Climate change and a growing population are increasing the pressure on all areas FAO works with: agriculture, fisheries and forestry. In our work for climate-smart agriculture we are aiming at producing more with less and strengthening the resilience in particular of smallholder farmers. It is vital that we see the full picture in agriculture. It is not only about food production but also about the management of natural resources and building stability and peace by providing a sustainable basis for people’s life.

The recently released State of Food Insecurity in the World Map 2015 illustrates the degree of overlap between hunger and other challenges, including instability and conflict. How does FAO view the relationship between food insecurity and social unrest, and what are some of the ways this is incorporated into its work?

We see the downward spiral of land degradation, loss of agricultural productivity, hunger and conflict very clearly. Efforts like the international year of soils are joint initiatives to build stronger awareness about the issue. However, it is still a huge advocacy task to argue for the relatively cheap mea-
sures needed to keep and restore the productive capacity of land in “hard” security circles. It is time to look in a much more preventive manner into emerging security situations and to mobilize funds for restoring agricultural capacity before regions slide into conflict. In this respect, FAO helps governments to develop an enabling environment for the management of multiple hazards and risks that put agriculture, nutrition, food security and food safety at risk. This support varies depending on national needs and the ability of countries to manage crises.

“From everything science tells us, we risk disruptive changes in the global food supply if we overshoot 2 degrees.”

What emissions scenario assumptions are in place in the FAO’s climate-smart agriculture planning? How much of the strategizing is based on a world that exceeds 2°?

Staying within the 2 degree guardrail is simply an imperative. From everything science tells us, we risk disruptive changes in the global food supply if we overshoot 2 degrees. So I hope for a strong commitment of state parties and a solid outcome of COP21 in Paris.

The UN Financing for Development conference held in July was seen by some as an early indicator of how successful Paris might be, in terms of countries’ political will to take difficult but necessary steps to address sustainability issues. Were there particular commitments that you were looking for at this event in terms of genuinely kickstarting action? What did you expect to see happen?

In this context – and also in the context of the Green Climate Fund – FAO is developing large-scale proposals as we believe agriculture is uniquely positioned to combine the fight against poverty with the fight against climate change. Some 75 per cent of the world’s food insecure and poor people rely on agriculture and natural resources for their livelihoods. The agricultural sectors (including forestry, fisheries) are particularly exposed to the impacts of climate change and climate variability and are already being substantially affected.

Addressing climate risks requires taking steps to create more resilient food production systems that are better adapted to climate change. Larger scale climate investment programmes could enhance the climate proofing of national agricultural investment programmes and policies and create momentum for transformational change of the agriculture sectors needed to ensure food security under changing climatic conditions.

The FAO is evolving as an institution and expanding its focus on climate change and energy. Is there any other aspect of the work that you would particularly like to highlight that has relevance to peace and stability?

Land tenure: FAO successfully led the process of preparation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of National Food Security. Tenure rights are unclear in the majority of areas in the world and a major source of conflict. Addressing responsible governance of tenure and respecting and securing legitimate tenure rights are key challenges for successful climate change policies.

Biofuels: The issue of biofuels vs. food is well known. Although cheap oil is currently masking the issue, it will resurface. Biofuels are here to stay. Therefore, it is more important to get biofuels right. Based on its work in different countries, FAO has concluded that biofuels are not good or bad per se; it depends on how they are managed. FAO has developed a sustainable bioenergy support package; which allows governments and operators to reduce the risks of “food versus fuel” and move towards the opportunities and “food and fuel”

But the issue is much bigger: Using biomass e.g. from residues from agricultural production can and should be an integral part of bringing sustainable energy to all. With the environmental pressures on our food production we need to cascade down and make best use of all the biomass we produce. In particular for least developing countries, this represents a massive opportunity to bring clean energy to their population.
Preparing for Hazards, Preventing Disasters through Integrated Risk Assessment
by Katharina Nett, adelphi

In 1997/98, an El Niño of unprecedented strength in modern records occurred, entailing heavy rains in North America, landslides in Peru and wildfires in Indonesia. As forecasts had largely failed to reliably predict the intensity of the El Niño event, most states were hit rather unprepared and the magnitude of damage was enormous, causing at least 33 billion USD in global loss and damage and claiming the lives of 23,000 people.
Although available data had pointed towards a major weather event, fear of false prediction made forecasters excessively cautious to state the expected magnitude.

Scientists project that the 2015/16 El Niño that started earlier this year could be at least as strong and they have not been silent about the risks it poses. They are warning that the potential effects on health, food security, infrastructure and economic development are expected to be most severe on states and societies with the lowest adaptive capacity – elevating the risk of fragility and conflict. This El Niño will be another critical test of how well early warning systems are able to prepare for climate-fragility risks and if policymakers are able to start managing risks instead of responding to crisis.

El Niño describes an unusual warming of Pacific ocean surface temperatures with alarming knock-on effects on weather patterns around the world. The phenomenon occurs every two to seven years with varying intensity and different regional manifestations, ranging from heavy rainfall and tropical storms to severe droughts, with detrimental effects on the socio-economic development of the affected countries.

The Horn of Africa has been identified as one of the hotspots of this year’s El Niño. The episode is projected to bring a mixture of extreme drought and floods to Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia. Periods of above-average drought already led to livestock death that could feed into herder conflicts and cattle raiding, with destabilizing effects on the drought-stri-
sed variability of manifestations of the El Niño phenomenon makes it increasingly hard for farmers and pastoralists to brace themselves, and even the governments of East African states are uncertain about how to prepare. The chronically food-insecure region has already seen substantial losses of staple food in earlier 2015, and weather conditions are creating a fertile soil for plant diseases like the rust fungus – with potentially severe consequences for coffee production, one of Kenya’s major cash crops.

To prevent future crises, governments should use the available information more strategically to support farmers in adjusting crop planting to weather conditions, stock grain reserves and establish livestock intervention programs. While models can predict the onset and probability of El Niño occurrence with relative certainty today, vulnerability assessments and early warning often fail to include the likely socio-economic impacts – crucial for political leaders to design adequate responses. This strongly supports the call for integrated risk assessments that span the climate and conflict fields in order to prevent an escalation of the climate hazard.

But the effects of El Niño are not confined to regions struck by the extreme weather. El Niño can impede the supply of rain-driven agricultural commodities, creating inflation in global food prices and food shortages in import-dependent poor countries. Australian wheat yields, which account for 14 percent of the world’s exports, are projected to decrease by 50 percent in 2015 – with potentially destabilizing effects on wheat importing countries. Fear of food price spikes is also another reason for overly cautious predictions of El Niño’s severity. As the 2007-9 food crisis in Egypt has shown, food price volatility and high prices significantly elevate the risk of social unrest and even civil conflict.

Climate change is expected to double the frequency of extreme El Niño events in the future. This will elevate the risk of extreme weather events wreaking havoc around the globe, adding to a series of climatic stressors and disruptions that strain the resilience of fragile and conflict-affected states. The way states respond to this year’s El Niño is thus also a litmus test of how ready they are to counter the risks of climate change.

To prevent the looming climate hazard from developing into a full-fledged disaster, reliable forecasting and functioning early warning are integral instruments. With the scientific knowledge available on the 2015/16 El Niño event states not only need to start preparing for its immediate influence on weather pattern, but also need to analyze its socio-economic knock-on consequences, in particular the resulting conflict and fragility risk.

“The way states respond to this year’s El Niño is also a litmus test of how ready they are to counter the risks of climate change.”

Read more on what foreign policy makers can do to improve early warning in the recommendations chapter of “A New Climate for Peace”, in particular action areas 1 (Global risk assessment) and 3 (Disaster risk reduction).

Upcoming Events

Paris, France (5-6 December 2015)

Global Landscapes Forum

This year’s Global Landscapes Forum takes place in parallel to the COP21 in Paris. Held over two days, it offers discussion opportunities on multiple topics from the area of climate change and development, e.g. food security, forest & soil management, land tenure. The complete agenda is available online as is the registration form.

Photo by Rainforest Action Network / Flickr.com
WHO Report: Short-Lived Climate Pollutants and Global Health

In this new report, the WHO draws attention to the fact that Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCP) are not only detrimental for climate, but also take a heavy toll on human health. By implication, action to reduce SLCP emissions in cities, food and energy sectors, transport, industry, building and waste management significantly reduces the disease burden, as the report authors demonstrate. The visibility of these positive effects makes reducing SLCP emission a rewarding political task.

ODI: Zero Emissions, Zero Poverty

According to the report “Zero Emissions, Zero Poverty”, implementing low carbon development is compatible with and a condition for eliminating poverty. Extreme poverty can be eradicated by 2030 by integrating approaches to sustained growth and inequality reduction. At the same time, major emitters need to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions to prevent climate change impacts from reversing progress in alleviating poverty. The report concludes that domestic and international aid priorities must focus on a transition to ‘Zero Zero’, or no emissions and no poverty, as the most effective pathway.

Can Extractive-Sector Development Help Build Peace?

The authors of this research paper reassess some common assumptions about the linkages between resource development, conflict and peace. Building on existing literature and over 25 researched examples, they find that the effects of resource development are unlikely to be conflict-neutral and that the complexity of conflict-situations makes sensitive decision making by external actors such as extraction companies difficult.

Governance, Natural Resources and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

This book focuses on governance and natural resource management in post-conflict contexts and their interlinkage with peacebuilding. Experts from academia, diplomats, military personnel and practitioners discuss, for example, frameworks for including natural resources in peace agreements and peacebuilding, as well as a variety of case studies on the role of peacekeepers, the military and natural resources, the cornerstones of good governance and questions of transitional justice and accountability.
The Nansen Initiative: Protection Agenda

On 12-13 October 2015, the Swiss/Norwegian Nansen Initiative on disaster-related displacement organized a Global Consultation in Geneva, Switzerland. The event ended with the endorsement of the “Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change” in a declaration. Over 350 representatives of governments, civil society and academia participated in the meeting.

The Planetary Security Conference 2015 in Videos
by Daria Ivleva, adelphi

Acknowledging that climate change is a global threat to security in the 21st century, the Dutch government has convened an international conference on Planetary Security on 2-3 November 2015 in The Hague. The aim of the conference was to facilitate strategic exchange on existing foreign policy and security architecture. During the conference, experts and policy-makers presented their perspectives on the risks of climate change and actions needed.

We have interviewed several experts for the ECC Video Platform. There was broad consensus that the compound climate-fragility risks require integrated solutions.

Alexander Verbeek, organiser of the conference, underlines that the participants from the climate and security community appreciated the opportunity for continuous knowledge building and for joint planning, as the conference is meant to take place annually.

Dan Smith, Director of SIPRI and co-author of “A New Climate for Peace”, highlights the importance of cooperation and broad dialogue to build an integrated resilience agenda.

The conference, therefore, both helped reiterate the value of integrated action across sectors and disciplines and contributed to building the necessary networks. Part of the solution to climate-related security challenges will be to craft a positive narrative on climate action. Ensuing discussions and activities will require all pieces of the jigsaw puzzle to come together. The defence, aid and foreign policy communities need to cooperate closely and create an integrated, action-oriented agenda.
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**adelphi** is a leading think tank for policy analysis and strategy consulting. We offer creative solutions and services on global environment and development challenges for policy, business and civil society communities. Our projects contribute to sustaining natural life systems and fostering sustainable enterprises.

**The Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining (CSRM) at the University of Queensland** focuses on the social, economic and political challenges that occur when change is brought about by resource extraction and development. The Centre works with companies, communities and governments in mining regions all over the world to improve social performance and deliver better outcomes for companies and communities.

**Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano (FFLA)** mission is to promote constructive dialogue, strengthen citizen, political and institutional capacities, and articulate processes towards sustainable development in Latin America. Therefore it utilizes multi-sectoral public policy dialogues and conflict prevention methodologies as its main strategies.

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