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Climate Security and Resilience at COP22: Discussing the Implications for Africa

by Stephan Wolters, adelphi

After the landmark Paris Agreement, this year's climate conference in Marrakech was all about action – dubbed the “implementation conference”. Many initiatives announced in Marrakech, such as the [commitment of 45 vulnerable countries](#) to generate energy solely from renewable sources, fostered a shared sense that sustainable transformation has become the ‘new normal’. Another recurring message was that preventive, forward-looking climate policy and integrated approaches to resilience building were needed, especially in fragile countries. The implications of climate-fragility risks now need to be broken-down and addressed in local and regional contexts.

Possible pathways forward took centre stage at [two side events at COP22](#) which discussed the following key questions: *How to deal with the impact of climate change on peace and stability? What are key climate-fragility risks to development in Africa and how can integrated policy responses be designed and implemented?* The side events brought together policy-makers and experts to discuss relevant programmes and policies to strengthen resilience

“A recurring message was that preventive, forward-looking climate policy and integrated approaches to resilience building were needed, especially in fragile countries.”

related to climate change and security. A particular focus was put on the African continent and how initiatives there can address climate-fragility risks on the ground.

The G7 push for addressing climate-fragility risks

At the global level, the work of the G7 was the starting point for these discussions. The G7 foreign ministers last year received the independent study “A New Climate for Peace” that identifies compound climate-fragility risks which pose serious threats to state stability and possible ways to



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address them. The Ministers started numerous outreach events and established a [working group](#) to facilitate the implementation of the report's recommendations. Notable points where more progress is required, include (1) domestic integration and mainstreaming climate risks into foreign policy, defense policy and others, (2) shaping partnerships for local resilience and, being particularly cumbersome, (3) aligning efforts by linking adaptation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding with resilience building approaches. In order to translate such challenges and opportunities into action are inter alia discussed at the [Planetary Security Initiative](#), an annual conference which aims to enhance political awareness and involvement on the climate-security interface and facilitate cooperation between a multi-sector group of stakeholders.

The European Union and the African Union move to more strategic consideration of climate-fragility risks

The recently released EU Global Strategy recognizes the strategic importance of climate change as a root cause of conflict and a “threat multiplier that catalyses water and food scarcity, pandemics and displacement”, and calls for pre-emptive peacebuilding and diplomacy, and for enhancing energy and environmental resilience. Indeed, this is an

important step to help ensure that external climate action is more effective and coherent.

In light of first visible climate change impacts, ranging from food insecurity and droughts to land degradation and deforestation, African institutions, regional and continental, can strategically address climate-fragility risk in their work. In April this year, [the Peace and Security Council of the African Union dedicated an open session](#) to climate change, state fragility, peace and security in Africa. Participants stressed the need to mainstream climate change considerations into their national development agendas and the important role of early warning centres of the regional economic communities (RECs) and regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution in building national early warning capacities on potential climate change-related conflicts.

Working towards resilience in Africa

Across most of the African continent, livelihoods are heavily dependent on agricultural activities, a sector where pressures are particularly pronounced. Dynamic demographic growth, the dependence of over 80% of the people on natural resources for their subsistence, more industrial activities in forest areas, and the hazards caused by climate change are all factors threatening the region's stability, thus making it more vulnerable to climate change risks.



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Hence, initiatives starting at the foundation of the people's livelihoods, such as sustainable land and water management (SLWM), are key to ensuring climate-resilient development and food and income security. Several programmes at the regional and continental level could provide possible entry points.

For instance, institutional support to [New Partnership for Africa's Development \(NEPAD\)](#) has among its aims to provide a best practice guide and to establish a knowledge platform on SLWM. RECs such as ECCAS, the [Economic Community of Central African States](#), are entry points for developing integrated responses for Sustainable Land Management Scale-up in Sub-Saharan Africa. ECCAS supports the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative AFR100 that is currently piloted in four Central African countries and implemented on a national level.

“Resilience approaches which consider the full conflict cycle, anticipate security risks and address conflicts before they escalate are urgently required.”

The African Risk Capacity (ARC) helps Member States improve their capacities to better plan, prepare and respond to extreme weather events and natural disasters, therefore protecting food security. By merging traditional approaches of disaster relief and quantification with concepts of risk pooling and risk transfer, ARC contributes to creating a sustainable African-led strategy for managing extreme climate risks. ARC brings together three critical elements: (1) early warning, (2) response – through contingency planning – and (3) insurance (index-based insurance and risk pooling). It is an example of how cooperation can mitigate the fallout of climate-fragility risks, and foreign policy-makers should work on integrating these aspects. ARC thereby helps shorten emergency response times and reduces costly delays in responses after disasters. During the German Presidency, the G7 committed to supporting such insurance schemes in order to lift 400 million people out of food insecurity.

Lake Chad: a case in point

Since the 1960s, Lake Chad has shrunk significantly, placing the water-dependent livelihoods of roughly 21 million inhabitants in the region in jeopardy. 9 million of these people are heavily dependent on humanitarian aid and conflict has internally displaced or made refugees of an additional 2.4 million more. 30,000 people have been killed by terrorist activities. In order to create or usher in a lasting impact, possible entry points for cooperation include strengthening the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Joint Task Force of Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad. A move such as this

would assist in mitigating issues endemic within the region: mediate between different groups, stabilize livelihoods also providing alternative sources of income, and preventing crime and violence.

The role of climate diplomacy

Diplomacy needs to make these questions a political priority. As examples such as Lake Chad illustrate, resilience approaches which consider the full conflict cycle, anticipate security risks and address conflicts before they escalate are

urgently required. Climate diplomacy needs to shape processes in multilateral fora and organizations in a way that prioritizes the strategic threats posed by climate change. It is therefore promising, in this context, that Germany intends to use its G20 Presidency for this purpose - discussing climate, water and Africa in the context of the 2030 SDGs at the G20 foreign ministers meeting on 16-17 February 2017.

Focus: Climate Diplomacy

The Vulnerable Taking the Lead: New Energy for Implementing the Paris Agreement after COP22

by Dennis Tänzler, adelphi

Few would disagree that the Paris Climate Agreement was a massive success for diplomacy – its speedy entrance into force in early November, after less than a year, perhaps even more so. So what could we expect from the subsequent conference of the parties, COP22, in Marrakesh?

Widely considered a more technical summit focused on implementation issues, COP22 was overshadowed by the unexpected results of the US elections. However, those attending in Marrakesh made very clear that they had no intention of allowing anyone to build new barriers or of fighting old battles again. As Moroccan Environment Minister Anil M. Dave summarized, “[...] **the greatest achievement of the summit was that it managed to carry forward the momentum on climate action gained in Paris.**” His optimism seems to be justified given some of the major initiatives that complemented the more technical negotiations.

A strong signal was sent towards implementation with the launch of the **NDC Partnership**, to be co-chaired by the governments of Germany and Morocco. The partnership is a coalition of developing and developed countries, as well as international institutions like the World Resources Institute, that are working together to ensure countries receive the technical and financial support they need to achieve their



Photo by Brandon McKay/Flickr.com

climate and sustainable development goals. However, it still remains to be seen how quickly the partnership will be able to accelerate implementation and meet the high expectations of the countries facing the challenge of taking the next steps towards NDC implementation.

Morocco, as the host of COP22, has also been involved in a number of other ambitious initiatives aimed at putting the Paris Agreement into action. These include the **Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF)**, a group of 48 countries highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. On the last day of the COP, the group launched its **Marrakesh vision**

and adopted an agenda to maintain the target of limiting warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. A major part of the CVF countries' rationale in supporting this objective was to maintain peace and stability in view of potential severe climate change impacts in the future. This is even more important given that the forum includes extremely vulnerable and fragile countries such as Afghanistan, Haiti, South Sudan and Yemen. One of the major elements of the Marrakesh vision is that the members "strive to meet 100% domestic renewable energy production as rapidly as possible, while working to end energy poverty and protect water and food security, taking into consideration national circumstances."

Although they CVF members have not set a target year for achieve their 100% renewables goal yet, they gave a clearer idea of how they envisage moving forward by further

elaborating their low emission strategies for 2050, with their updated nationally determined contributions playing a key role. With this announcement the group also put pressure on other country groups that have a larger role to play in meeting the overall carbon challenge. The most prominent example is the G20 – where Germany is due to take over the presidency on 1 December. The group accounts for 80% of energy-related CO2 emissions [according to the IEA](#). With the Marrakesh vision, 48 of countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change sent a strong signal to G20 and other major emitters: preserving the momentum from Paris and showing leadership in future will require an integrated approach that considers the interrelated nature of climate and energy challenges when taking the next steps towards implementation.

Focus: Climate Diplomacy

Cities Taking Action: What Does Habitat III Mean for Global Resilience Efforts?

by Eleni Dellas, adelphi

Taking cities seriously

Habitat III was the third in a series of conferences that take place every 20 years. While evaluations have indicated that progress on the goals of the previous conference – Habitat II – [has been limited](#), a paradigm change has taken place in the way cities and urbanization are perceived. While [urbanization was initially seen as a problem](#) – associated with poverty, uncontrolled growth of slums, and pollution – a shift has occurred towards recognizing that well planned, built and managed [cities can be drivers of sustainable development](#), climate action, economic growth and inclusiveness.

A further important contribution of the Habitat III process is that inputs for the New Urban Agenda were discussed during inclusive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders. Local authorities organized in interest groups such as the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, and increasingly spoke with one voice to call for a "seat at the table". They argued that since the New Urban Agenda is



Photo by Simon Matzinger/Flickr.com

about cities and local authorities, [they should have a more substantial role](#) in its elaboration than merely being given observer status. While this demand was ultimately denied, the Habitat III process nonetheless stands out as the first time that [direct consultations](#) between local authorities and member states took place in a UN context.

Resilience in the New Urban Agenda

Resilience is one of the guiding principles of the agenda, which emphasizes that changes in the way cities are planned, financed, designed, built, governed and managed can foster resilience. However, at the same time, when discussing resilience more specifically the New Urban Agenda primarily links it to climate change and disaster resilience, and emphasis is placed on transforming urban infrastructure, housing, planning and design as tools to achieve resilience.

This is a rather narrow conception that avoids a broader range of environmental, social, economic and political pressures and stressors that may contribute to fragility and undermine resilience. For example, the concept of “fragile cities” has in recent years been used to refer to the **destabilizing effect that can emerge in cities** where various global pressures – such as climate risks, rapid and unplanned urbanization, social inequalities, criminality and unemployment – converge, but does not play a role in the New Urban Agenda.

The relative novelty of the concept of “resilience” also means that **definitions are still contested** – consequently, very different (and potentially inconsistent) activities may be

“Climate security is not only about coping with destabilisation and conflicts. If we start acting ahead of time, we can create dialogue and form the structures and networks that can help prevent the conflicts.”

implemented in the same city with the aim of enhancing resilience. Evidently, more efforts may still be needed to arrive at a widely shared definition of urban resilience. At the local level, these discussions also need to take place to ensure that new initiatives share the same understanding of resilience.

Implementing Habitat III

While the New Urban Agenda outlines a broad vision for sustainable cities, enthusiasm for implementation thus far remains limited. Stakeholders are invited to register voluntary commitments **online**. However, thus far, only 69 initiatives have been entered, and only 23 of them have financial

resources of more than USD 1 million available. In comparison, more than 2100 partnerships have been registered to support the implementation of the SDGs – including more than 70 partnerships that intend to contribute to the



Photo by Simon Matzinger/Flickr.com

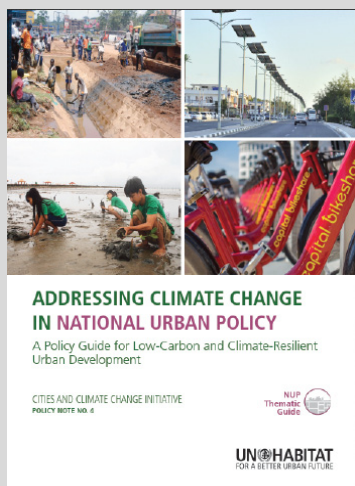
implementation of SDG 11. Moreover, more than 11,600 commitments have been registered in the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action (NAZCA). Of course, the latter two platforms have been around for much longer, and more voluntary commitments for the New Urban Agenda will likely be registered in the coming years.

More specifically, the number of voluntary commitments to support the implementation of the New Urban Agenda that mention resilience in the description of their goals and activities is currently limited. There are, however, several noteworthy initiatives that were launched or scaled up in the context of the Habitat III conference that could make substantial contributions to urban resilience.

For example, the C40 Cities Finance Facility (CFF) that was launched last year at the Paris climate conference received additional funding commitments at Habitat III. This initiative **aims to improve access to climate finance** for cities with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving urban climate resilience. While the New Urban Agenda **contains a commitment to improve cities' access** to international climate funds, member states will still need to translate this commitment into practice. In the meantime, the CFF can potentially play an important role in improving financing options for cities, which are currently not able to directly access funding from climate finance initiatives such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

The Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative (TUMI) that was announced at Habitat III by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development is also of interest. Resilience is one of several targets – the initiative emphasizes the relevance of “**climate-sensitive and resilient transport services and infrastructures**” – and with EUR 1 billion availa-

ble, TUMI has the potential to have a significant impact. While these two initiatives are thus noteworthy, it remains to be seen whether the New Urban Agenda can catalyze more activities to foster urban resilience, and what understanding of resilience they embody.



UN Habitat Report: Addressing Climate Change in National Urban Policy

At the Habitat III conference in Quito, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat) launched, ‘**Addressing Climate Change in National Urban Policy**,’ a guide developed to assist all national urban policy stakeholders to better understand the intersection between national urban policy and climate change. While urbanization has brought great benefits and opportunities, cities are a major contributor to climate change.

Regional Highlights: Asia

Saving India's Western Ghats: A Long-Drawn-Out Debate Surrounding Conservation and Development

edited by Dhanasree Jayaram, Manipal Advanced Research Group (MARG), Manipal University

Arrayed along India's southwest coast is a 1,600-kilometre-long mountain chain with forests older than the Himalayas: the Western Ghats. The mountains are one of the top biodiversity hotspots in the world, housing a large number of indigenous species of plants and animals, and are a recognized UNESCO World Heritage Site. Forming one of the four watersheds of India, the Ghats also attract large amount of rainfall and are at the heart of water conflicts in five states (Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu). Fragmentation and deterioration of forests, biodiversity loss, pollution (air, water and soil), soil erosion and landslides, soil infertility and agrarian stress, depleting groundwater resources, climate change and introduction of alien species, to name just a few, caused by developmental and mining projects have raised the alarm in recent years.



Photo by Navaneeth KN/Flickr.com

In response to this visible environmental deterioration, the central government constituted two panels comprising environmental experts and other professionals from both governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGO),

which recommended that certain landscapes be declared as Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA), where developmental activities would be banned or restricted. Reports released by both panels were rejected by the state governments. In September 2014, the **National Green Tribunal** (NGT), established for “effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources,” criticized the central government for not coming out with a clear and unambiguous stand on the issue and failing to accept completely the recommendations of either reports.

Following stiff opposition from the state governments in the Western Ghats region, the central government asked them to submit reports on the demarcation of ESAs, including ground surveys and objections, further delaying the draft notification for ESA in the region – prompting **mine owners** to seek conditional sanction from the judiciary to resume operations in Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra. All the states, except Tamil Nadu, have submitted their reports and all except Gujarat have recommended a **decrease in ESA**. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has initiated fresh consultations with the state governments to reach a consensus and, in the process, also interact with the locals before arriving at a final decision.



Photo by Senthil Prabu.S/Flickr.com

The Western Ghats continue to remain in the news as the stalemate over the ESA proposal is far from being resolved. The NGT has under its disposal many cases against projects in the Western Ghats region – the latest being against the **Yettinahole Project** in Karnataka, wherein the NGT has issued a notice to the MoEFCC, Karnataka government, Karnataka Neeravari Nigam Limited (KNNL), Regional Office of the Environment Ministry and the tree conservation officer. Protests have also not died down on both sides of the debate (conservation and development), as political parties try to

create mileage out of the issue by organising hartals (mass protests often involving a total shutdown of workplaces, offices, shops, courts of law etc), as evidenced by the dawn-to-dusk hartal in **Idukki district** called by the United Democratic Front (EDF), the opposition party in Kerala, against the ruling Left Democratic Front's (LDF) stance on the inclusion of certain number of villages in the ESA.

The state of socio-ecological affairs in the Western Ghats

Being a breathing ground for several endangered species of flora and fauna, carrying out effective development in this region is a greater problem as there is no comprehensive solution that can guarantee total sustainability as well as no degradation. The balancing act between conservation and development has given rise to more conflicts in the region

“The balancing act between conservation and development has given rise to more conflicts in the region than a way out.”

than a way out. For example, **Karnataka and Tamil Nadu** have been embroiled in an ugly legal battle over the sharing of water of the River Kaveri (Cauvery) that originates in the Western Ghats. This conflict remains unresolved despite the recommendations of a tribunal that oversees the sharing of the river's waters and repeated judgements of the Supreme Court (SC) of India (apex court). Recently (in 2016), both states witnessed violence against people and public/private property belonging to the other state in the aftermath of a SC hearing. With the two governments enmeshed in this conflict unwilling to negotiate on equal terms and accept any decision amicable to both parties, the Kaveri dispute is a long way from being resolved. At the same time, dam projects, as a solution for drinking water problems, are being pushed ahead.

With the **exclusion of dams for drinking water and industrial water supply** from the ambit of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification 2006, the rampant construction of dams throughout the Western Ghats is causing massive deforestation. The regions in which these dams are being constructed fall under the Ecologically Sensitive Zone (ESZ) 1, according to the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel's (WGEEP led by ecologist Madhav Gadgil, also called the Gadgil Commission, set up by the central government)

recommendations, wherein construction of large dams is not to be allowed. If these projects are undertaken on a larger scale, the Western Ghats are set to lose 6,000 hectares of forest cover. According to some estimates, these projects in the Western Ghats could trigger the displacement of more than 30,000 tribal peoples in Maharashtra, rendering it a social problem as well.

The region harbours a significant tribal population, such as in Karnataka, which includes the Malekudiyas, Siddhis, Soligigas and Halakkis among others. In the politics of development, these tribes who have considered the land their home for ages now, are the affected stakeholders. As the stakes of development rise, when the

central government talks of rehabilitation proposals, they do not seem feasible because such measures need a multi-fold backing as the displaced people need to sustain

themselves too. Although the provisions of the Recognition of Forest Rights Act exist, basic facilities such as education and healthcare are still lacking in many parts of the region. However, these lands are mineral-rich and have therefore been at the centre of controversy for long due to the lack of compensation and resettlement packages on account of mining and other extractive activities.

Environmentalists have been rallying to raise awareness regarding the loss of forest cover and other issues pertaining to the Western Ghats for a long time. When the Gadgil Commission's recommendations were made public, these caused massive protests across the five states, especially in Kerala, where strikes organised by political parties hit normal life in upland districts. Protesters called the Gadgil report anti-farmer and alleged that it would drive out forest dwellers. The original report by Gadgil does not mention any such moves and instead recommends that the tribals and other forest dwellers who reside in the Western Ghats region be provided financial assistance to help them switch to organic farming methods. In fact, this report revolves around the assertion that most members of the cultural landscape in the Western Ghats region are benefited by preservation of the natural landscape.

In the light of the protests that erupted as a response to the

“These lands are mineral-rich and have therefore been at the centre of controversy for long due to lack of compensation and resettlement packages on account of mining and other extractive activities.”

report, another expert panel was set up – this time under the chairmanship of space research scientist Kasturirangan – that came up with another set of recommendations. The Kasturirangan panel, also called the High Level Working Group (HLWG), mellowed the recommendations to a great extent by, as they said, taking into account human habitation and peoples' livelihoods in the region – giving equal weight to both human and nature. It identified only 37 per cent of the Western Ghats as ecologically sensitive. Moreover, the panel called for incentivizing green and sustainable practices in the region, rather than banning development outright. The result would reduce the area of the Western Ghats identified as ecologically sensitive by nearly half. In

fact, Goa Foundation (an NGO) filed an appeal before the NGT, contesting the rejection of the Gadgil report by the MoEFCC. It argued that the Kasturirangan committee had diluted the recommendations of the

Gadgil report and that the new report would not help in stopping environmental degradation in the Western Ghats. Still, certain state governments remained dissatisfied. For instance, Karnataka accepted the Kasturirangan report's recommendation of stopping mining but not quarrying and sand mining in the ESA.

In Kerala, the story does not end at these two reports. The regulations laid down by the Kerala Forest (Vesting and Management of Ecologically Fragile Lands) Act (that empowers the Forest Department to take over EFL from private owners) have also caused confusion in the minds of people, particularly the farmers who feared that their lands would be taken away from them if the ESAs were converted into an EFL and that they would not be compensated. The issues of plantation farmers and hydel power projects (especially the Athirapally power project) are the biggest roadblocks in implementing the ESA proposal in the state. The Athirapally hydel power project would not have been given the green light if the Gadgil report had been enforced according to the Kasturirangan report, it can be carried out, but with certain conditions by which the flow of waterfalls would not be affected. However, the project faces severe opposition from the tribal community in the project area, who claim that the project would result in their rights being infringed upon

under the Forest Rights Act of 2006.

On the tribal issue, both reports actually fail to reach any consensus on the fate of these communities, even while addressing the environment versus development debate. The 2006 Act on forest rights of tribal communities and traditional forest dwellers, allows them to cultivate the forest land on which they have depended for their livelihood for generations. But as the Gadgil report states, "Forest land should not be used for non-forest purposes." This contravenes the said rights provided to tribes and traditional forest dwellers. Also, there are thousands of leasehold farmers who cultivate and secure livelihood from forest land and this clause would be detrimental to them too. The Gadgil report says that public land should not be converted into private land. But there are tens of thousands of peasant families, including tribes, possessing agricultural land for decades in the Western Ghats region but they have been denied land documents; many thousand families are prevented from remitting land tax. They are small and marginal peasants belonging to a new generation of settled farmers who have migrated to high ranges, or poor tribal families.

It is to be noted that the most polluting 'red' category industries (like fertilizer plants, oil refineries, tanneries and copper smelters), as per the Kasturirangan report, can be established outside the ESA (67 percent of the Western Ghats), while 'yellow' category industries can be set up anywhere in the Western Ghats. The only activities that are barred within the ESA are mining, quarrying and sand mining. These activities are banned in the protected areas anyway. The methodology adopted by the HLWG declares this agenda unmistakably clear and loud. According to this, the "natural landscape" needs to be considered for conservation, while in the rest of the area, referred to as "cultural landscape", any kind of developmental activity is permissible. In other words, of the 164,280 square kilometres of the Western Ghats, as defined by the HLWG, only some 60,000 square kilometres (37 percent) have been set apart for conservation,

and in turn to be declared as an ESA. And, it is to be noted that this includes national parks, sanctuaries, reserve forests, world heritage sites and other protected areas. Such kinds of conclusions should be reviewed further for an apt and viable solution.

Finding solutions and reaching consensus

While reaching a solution on the conflicts related to the Western Ghats seems to be a very difficult task, a certain degree of consensus can be reached on a few issues that affect all in the region and where solutions are implementable in terms of feasibility. The governments and other concerned stakeholders need to provide accurate information to

the people so that players with vested interests cannot spread rumours to incite violence in order to further their own ends. The **mining mafia** has played a role in mobilising general sentiments against the Gadgil report.

On top of these two committees, the Kerala Government formed another committee to review the



Photo by Senthil Prabu.S/Flickr.com

Kasturirangan report and it has recommended that "the **inhabited areas, plantations and agricultural lands** in the Western Ghats region be excluded from the scope of ESA." This bureaucratic logjam must end and steps to protect the eco-sensitive areas of the Western Ghats need to be taken. Water-sharing issues will have to be dealt with in a more co-operative manner than is currently being done, as the focus now lies on division of waters and not co-development. As far as energy requirements are concerned, if not on a large scale, a shift from the conventional sources of energy production is important and should be initiated at the primary level so as to sustain and promote it further. Such projects have been successful, as seen in the case of solar energy projects in towns like Kanhangad, Kerala.

On the social front, proper documentation of tribal and other backward and poor communities should be produced so as to segregate households and families during the implementation of projects (with their consent), giving a mutually accepted compensation securitised by a legal

expert, an ecologist and a representative of a trusted local NGO, along with the tribal representatives so as to avoid any kind of exploitation in both legal and monetary terms. The local governments (grama sabhas and panchayats) have to partake in the final decision-making on the recommendations of reports or the draft notification (and its implementation). The best option, however, for the MoEFCC would be to get the summary of the reports of the WGEEP and HLWG translated into local languages and sent to the local governments in the Western Ghats region and seek their feedback. An overall objective approach of study and scrutiny should be initiated for further discussions involving all the key people in a true democratic manner.

A democratic process of identifying and demarcating the ESAs should be undertaken in order to avoid the mistakes committed by both Gadgil and Kasturirangan – the former took a completely ecological point of view while the latter's methodology, as many (especially farmers) would argue, was highly “**unscientific**”, which is why many sensitive areas (such as Kuruva islands and Edakal caves in Wayanad) are excluded and many areas where no stipulated criteria were satisfied have been included. Aerial surveys have mistakenly marked plantation areas as forests. Both reports have declared numerous heavily populated habitats as ESAs though the suggested criterion is a population density below 100 persons per square kilometre.

Hence, the MoEFCC must take steps to have a detailed survey with the involvement of the local people to identify

and demarcate the ESAs. The government must also issue land pattas (a legal document issued by the government in the name of the actual owner of a particular plot of land) to deserving peasant families in possession of agricultural land. Instead of depending on surveys submitted by the state governments, the MoEFCC should take into consideration the recommendations of the two panels (Gadgil and Kasturirangan), based on another review conducted by a joint committee of experts, environmentalists and government officials (local, state and national). Additionally, based on the survey of industries, polluting ones need to be barred or restricted, but those critical for livelihood/employment and basic facilities should not be scuttled completely in the name of conservation. At the same time, big power projects need to go through strict environmental impact assessment procedures.

The Centre – MoEFCC – is not in a position to make a decision that caters entirely to conservation or on other hand, the states' demands. In the end, it is about finding solutions to the problem of power shortage, paucity of drinking water, poverty and unemployment, without forgetting the fact that ecological biodiversity needs to be recognized as an integral part of the human and cultural landscape as well as the natural one. Everyone agrees that one must strike a fine balance between conservation, preservation and development and ensure that they can go hand in hand; but this is easier said than done.

Regional Highlights: Middle East

„You Are Asking About Pollution?": One Journalist's Perspective on the Mid East's Environmental Crisis

by Peter Schwartzstein

It was some point in May last year, shortly after ISIS surged into the city of Ramadi, and I was working on a story about Iraq's fast-disappearing **Mesopotamian Marshes**. Keen to fact-check a few statistics with the Ministry of Water Resources and to hear the government line on the wetlands' struggles, I dialed its Baghdad offices. After being passed from official to official like a hot potato, a young employee, Hussein, finally gave it to me straight. “No, no, we don't have this sort of information,” he said, clearly impatient to get off the phone. “There are much more important things in Iraq right now.”



Photo by Sebastian Horndasch/Flickr.com

Several months later, while traveling across Sudan, I encountered a similarly dismissive tack from a lady at the country's Ministry of Irrigation: "You're asking about pollution in the Nile? This is not our responsibility." With a curt goodbye, she walked away.

Reporting in the Middle East brings with it an array of challenges, but for those of us covering the region's fearsome

"Reporting in the Middle East brings with it an array of challenges, but the failure of relevant ministries to even pay lip service to many of the problems they're charged with tackling has added a measure of extreme difficulty."

environmental woes, the failure of relevant ministries to even pay lip service to many of the problems they're charged with tackling has added a measure of extreme difficulty. Statistics on everything from temperature to water quality and desertification can be nightmarishly hard to come by (if they exist at all), complicating efforts to accurately pin down the gravity of climate changes.

Such is Egypt's lack of data on wave direction and height, some of the indices used to gauge sea-level rise, for example, that authorities in Cairo are reputed to use readings from an Israeli scientific station, several hundred miles along the Mediterranean coast from the Nile Delta. How, one wonders, can authorities hope to **safeguard** this low-lying and densely populated expanse when the available information is so meager?

Budget Cuts and Bureaucratic Hierarchy

Much of this failure to collect adequate data can be attributed to chronic government underfunding, exacerbated in some instances by conflict and low oil prices, which has deprived many responsible agencies of the tools and cash to conduct regular studies.

The Iraqi government has slashed many of its ministerial budgets as it devotes its depleted energy revenues toward fighting ISIS. In Lebanon, international donors who'd previously financed everything from agricultural programs to dam construction have redirected chunks of their spending to the Syrian refugee crisis.

Some public sector workers have come to see environmental roles almost as punishment postings

But the problems run much deeper than that. The environment is widely considered a "soft topic," civil servants in several Arab capitals have told me. Environmental agencies and officers are often saddled with secondary status within government and face a struggle to make their voices heard.

Some public sector workers have supposedly come to see these impotent roles almost as punishment postings – so much so that an Egyptian diplomat, who supposedly drunkenly disgraced himself at a European embassy, was rumored to have been banished to the environment ministry last year. When it comes to issues that are even tangentially related to national security, like water, food, or energy resources, environmental officials struggle to even get a hearing to present their case.

There are, of course, still a host of brilliant and dedicated environmental officials across the Middle East. But shackled by more powerful organs of state, their stands often amount to nothing.



Photo by Sebastian Horndasch/Flickr.com

Laila Iskander, Egypt's environment minister in 2013-14, said she tried to combat the flood of pollutants that hundreds of factories along the Nile dump into the river during her tenure, but she was stymied by local governors, most of whom were drawn from the security services. After the country's cement industry, in league with the Ministry of Industry, later went behind her back to **import coal** without first conducting environmental impact assessments, Iskander quit the cabinet. Her replacement hastily dropped the ministry's objections.

Even when environmental officials do succeed in getting their initiatives off the ground, they sometimes accidentally or deliberately find themselves at odds with the objectives

of other government departments. Recognizing the perils of the country's fast growing population combined with the potential for dam construction in upstream Ethiopia to cut the Nile's flow, Egypt's Ministry of Water Resources **recently launched a series of conservation campaigns** intent on dissuading farmers from growing rice. But with the Ministry of Supply continuing to subsidize this highly water-intensive crop, their efforts have been more or less strangled at birth.

A Crucial Part of the Puzzle

Issues as expansive as the environment usually spill into the affairs of multiple ministries; getting them to share their turf and coordinate better in pursuit of a common cause is a trick many bureaucracies – not just in the Middle East – have yet to master. Indeed with much of the region in turmoil, it's understandable that authorities are swamped and inclined to deal only with

what look to be the most pressing economic and social concerns on their doorstep. **"When it comes to issues that are even tangentially related to national security, like water, food, or energy resources, environmental officials struggle to even get a hearing to present their case."**

It's clear to me that human and natural degradation of the landscape is contributing to broader instability

But after four years of environmental reporting across the region, it's clear to me that human and natural degradation of the landscape is contributing to broader instability. As Sudanese farmers see their yields crumble in unprecedented heat, they're ditching their fields and migrating to already overwhelmed urban areas. Up the Nile, in Egypt's Delta, their counterparts are threatening unrest if their water crisis

– mostly caused by trash clogging irrigation canals – isn't resolved.

There are a few strands of faint hope. Slowly but surely the region's environmental lobby is growing and its adherents are increasingly willing to hold officials' feet to the fire. Activists and experts working across even the world's most intractable disputes can come together to great effect, as the Israeli-Palestinian-Jordanian board of the NGO **EcoPeace Middle East** has shown in working on the Jordan River.

As well, a few environmentally sound practices appear to be being embraced by some of the most powerful actors in the region: the armed forces. Egypt's military has converted many of its bases to solar power, and Lebanon's army has hinted it will do the same. With the increasing awareness that **shoddy agricultural conditions** likely played a part in

triggering Syria's civil war, foreign and local media are beginning to take more of an interest in stories beyond bombs, bullets, and coups.

For some, there's a feeling that it's all too little too late. When a recent study suggested swathes of the Middle East **might be uninhabitable by 2050** due to soaring summer-time temperatures, the local social media response was best summed up by one long-suffering Iraqi on Twitter: "2050??! It's 2016 and it already is uninhabitable!"

*The article is a contribution from the Wilson Center and originally appeared on **New Security Beat**, the blog of the Environmental Change and Security Program.*

Peter Schwartzstein is a Cairo-based journalist who reports on environmental and geopolitical issues across the Middle East and East Africa. His work regularly appears in National Geographic, Newsweek, and Foreign Policy, among other news outlets. He won the Society of Environmental Journalists' 2016 award for Outstanding Beat Reporting in a Large Market.

Sources: The Cairo Post, Climatic Change, Foreign Policy, National Geographic, TakePart.

Multifaceted Crisis Scenario in Fragile Cities: The Haiti Case

by Clémence Finaz, International Alert

Last month, world leaders convened the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (**Habitat III**) in Quito, Ecuador. The conference aimed to assess accomplishments to date, renew political commitment for sustainable urban development, address poverty and identify and tackle new and emerging urban challenges over the period of the next 20 years.

To inform policy and programming in urban settings, the conference got to grips with several key areas underlying urban vulnerability, such as urbanisation, migration and refugees. Cities are today's primary destination for most of the world's international migrants, refugees, and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). In fact, the majority of these persons are thought to be living in urban areas as a result of conflict, or other drivers such as climate change, disasters, environmental degradation or insecurity.

A significant proportion of this urban expansion is occurring in fragile and conflict-affected areas, such as Haiti. The conference represented a timely opportunity to address the underresearched and oft-overlooked linkages between climate change, migration, urban resilience and fragility.

Port-au-Prince, Haiti, is a case in point to illustrate the complexities of a densely-populated city's vulnerability to compound risks, including climate-related disaster and a high level of insecurity.

"Port-au-Prince is a case in point to illustrate the complexities of a densely-populated city's vulnerability to compound risks, including climate-related disasters and a high level of insecurity."

As one of the world's poorest nations, Haiti has endured repeated natural disasters, health crises and political unrest since 2000. Last month, a major hurricane struck again (Hurricane Matthew), at a time when the country is still struggling to recover from the 2010 7.0 earthquake that claimed the lives of almost 220,000 people.



Photo by Stella Schaller

If Matthew caused havoc in the south of the country, Port-au-Prince, the capital, and biggest city in Haiti, has not been spared by the storm. The hazard-exposed city provides a good case example to dig deeper into factors of urban vulnerability.

Rural-urban migration in Haiti has been an ongoing phenomenon since the 1980s. This is largely due to environmental degradation, including soil erosion and population increase which has led to a reduction in the average space which can be cultivated in rural areas. The rural exodus has put increased pressure on space within the Port-au-Prince metropolitan region. The capital has expanded rapidly and is now populated by more than 2.3 million urban dwellers, representing a quarter of the total population. Hazard-prone, segregated and poorly maintained informal settlements, like Cité Soleil, have mushroomed. Unplanned and poorly managed urban growth has resulted in an inequitable, exclusionary and fragmented city, which ranks among the most violent in the world.

Climate-related extreme events frequently hit the Caribbean region as a whole. However, the impacts and disaster-related consequences are not felt the same in Haiti, where urban and rural populations are affected differently and inequitably within urban areas.

The poorest urban slums of Port-au-Prince have the highest levels of youth unemployment. Indeed, it has been estimated that almost 50% of urban Haitians are unemployed.

The lack of access among large segments of the population to basic services, including health, education, and sanitation exacerbate disaster impacts, which rapidly turn into a health and food crisis emergencies. The cholera outbreak which followed the 2010 earthquake proved deadly, killing at least 9,100 people and affecting hundreds of thousands more. Again, in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, and in the wake of destroyed sanitation and water infrastructures, cholera is making a surge in Haiti. In addition, the hurricane severely impacted the food basket of the city (Gressier, 20 miles southwest of Port-au-Prince), affecting productivity and, therefore, food prices, which have risen in the capital.

In the past, food price increases of roughly 40% in a time period of less than a year resulted in violent protests in Haiti and the fall of the government after the parliament voted to oust Prime Minister Jacques-Édouard Alexis. The concentration of extreme poverty in those areas, combined with high levels of income inequality, lack of access to basic services and repeated disasters reveal the failure of authorities to respond to the needs of the population, factors conducive to violence. Port-au-Prince remains a high-risk environment, tarnished by gang activities where political and economic conditions can rapidly turn into violent unrest.

The latest hurricane once again threatens to strain an already fragile and unstable political and economic situation. The country has been without an elected president since February. The presidential and legislative elections planned on

9 October were postponed after Hurricane Matthew, whilst the first rounds of voting, held in 2015, were cancelled following violence and a high level of fraudulent activity. This serves to illustrate how a disaster might have cascading impacts on political instability and fragility.

Repeated disasters only revealed the pre-existing institutional, governance and management failure of Haitian authorities. Urban governance is, therefore, a key battle to fight in order to build resilience in such contexts.

Climate change is expected to bring more significant challenges to fragile and conflict-affected countries. Emerging research indicates that we will see increased rural-urban movement within countries, more labour migration, and more frequent or longer lasting circular migration patterns. With more people moving to cities, and with many cities already facing increased vulnerability to climate and disaster risks as well experiencing existing social, economic and political fragility, these dynamics will be a major determinant of urban resilience.

There is therefore a need to better understand the relationship between climate change, migration, cities and conflict. This issue is a major lacuna within the global research community and, as such, overlooked in policy and programming. To promote sustainable urban development, it is necessary to build resilience to climate change and to conflict.

Topics: Co-Benefits

German-Polish Cooperation: An Illustrative Case of the Potential to Implement the Paris Agreement by Means of a Benefits Approach

by Camille Serre, adelphi

Assessing the positive impacts of climate action, an approach which considers the broad spectrum of social, economic and health benefits, has increasingly gained global recognition. This is due, in part, to the insightful work done by the [Global Commission on the Economy and Climate](#). On this platform, [Christian Friis Bach from UNECE](#) noted on February 2016: "Taking into account such co-benefits can radically change the picture and demonstrate that action can pay off, not only in the long term, but also in the short



Photo by Radek Kolakowski/Flickr.com

to medium term.” With the [Paris Agreement recently ratified by the European Union \(EU\)](#), what is the potential of the benefits approach for achieving these new commitments in Europe?

As attention now shifts to actions in each of the European states, and notably in cities, cooperation and actions on the local level, focusing on the co-benefits approach, will become all the more important. The example of German-Polish relations illustrates this opportunity very well. Here is why:

Fostering action and cooperation in cities can act as a bridge over troubled water.

Take for instance the EU’s recent adoption of the Paris Agreement: although not unexpected, Poland’s demands considerably slowed down the pace of the EU’s fast-track ratification as a common group. The Polish special climate envoy, [Pawel Salek, reminded only a few days ahead of the extraordinary meeting of the European ministers of environment on September 30](#) that a common ratification would “be possible if Poland can secure its national interests” – essentially, read as protecting its coal industry. Across the border, Germany did not wait for the joint ratification and went ahead on September 23, after both chambers of the parliament adopted the agreement text. Despite this gap in national climate policy, on the local level, priorities of municipalities and communities in Germany and Poland often converge to achieve – or maintain – economic prosperity, as well as ensuring a good quality of life for all, including efficient infrastructures and a clean environment. This is why focusing on solutions which foster local development can help sustain good working relations, build bridges, and lead to substantial climate action.

We need to escape insularity by promoting positive solutions to local challenges.

In Poland, many cities and their inhabitants are afraid of the perspective of a structural change away from coal, especially its effects on employment and access to cheap energy. Unemployment, lower quality of life and energy poverty are issues which concern many Europeans, as the effects of the 2008 economic crisis are still felt in many regions and cities. In an era of growing fear and insularity which threatens

European cohesion, there is a need to address expectations on the field.

We must broaden the scope of action.

As the ambition level increases, we cannot afford to simply enter dialogue with those who are climate pioneers. Achieving the required transformation will only be possible if we demonstrate that climate actions can contribute to solving social, economic and health challenges that local populations face anyway. We must debunk the notion that there is an opposition between local development and climate protection.

“Despite this gap in national climate policy, on the local level, priorities of municipalities and communities in Germany and Poland often converge to achieve - or maintain - economic prosperity, as well as ensuring a good quality of life for all, including efficient infrastructure and a clean environment.”

Widespread use of cleaner fuels, efficient heating systems, as well as broader energy-related retrofits, combined with behavioural changes, can significantly increase competitiveness, improve outdoor and indoor air quality, address energy poverty, and create economic opportunities. Evidence shows that energy-related retrofits leads to the creation of jobs and revenues, notably in small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) from the local craft industry: large-scale building retrofit programs may have created over 100,000 jobs in Poland[1], whilst the programs of the German Bank for Reconstruction (KfW) funding energy-efficient construction and rehabilitation are estimated to have led to the creation of 341,000 jobs and 79,000 jobs respectively in 2013 – over 80% of which were created in SMEs[2]. In a local dumpling factory located near a major Polish coal basin, low-carbon technologies led to a 40% reduction in energy consumption. The payback period is estimated to be around three to ten years, depending on investments, whilst the overall cost savings are estimated to be 50%. Further, the deployment of renewable energies can provide complementary sources of revenues to citizens and local companies. In Germany, 35% of the RES installations are owned by private households, over 10% by farmers and 14% by businesses[3].

This is only a fraction of the benefits that can be harnessed through low-emission solutions. How? Three possible courses of action:

(1) Multiply dialogues in cities to underscore the link between local challenges and potential low-emission solutions: It is important to develop a vision for and with local communities. Transformations do not unfold without tensions. To support this undertaking, the independent think-tanks adelphi, WiseEuropa and the Polish Institute for Sustainable Development prepared the discussion paper „[Tapping into the co-benefits of low-emission economy in cities](#)“, which offers a basis for reflection in cities about the selected benefits based on evidence from Germany and Poland. Debates on the grassroots level, as well as within municipal administrations, will be paramount to identify local priorities, integrate potential resistance to change, and eventually unlock benefits. The German government is already supporting local dialogs in selected Polish cities through cooperation projects (see [here](#) and [here](#), Polish only). This can be further scaled up – in terms of variety of actors reached, depth and geographical scope – e.g. using the Climate and Energy Fund of the German Federal Foreign Office for such outreach activities and drawing on the cross-actor, cross-sectoral convening power of diplomatic networks.



Photo by Radek Kolakowski/Flickr.com

(2) Empower local leaders that have recognized the link between local challenges and low-emission solutions: There is evidence that local communities are already taking action for a clean, sustainable future, including in coal-reliant countries such as Poland – see for instance the success of social movements of [Polish Smog Alert](#) or [More than Energy](#) campaign. There is space and potential for scaling this momentum. Bilateral cooperation can support local leaders in evaluating and documenting the respective success factors of good practice examples: providing insights from behind

the scenes is key for a successful replication. This may also include fostering the development of tools – ideally with local decision-makers and/or citizens themselves – that will enable them to visualize the potential gains of low-emission measures: there is still a gap to be filled in order to move from mobilization to scaled-up actions.

(3) Support tangible city-to-city cooperation that reaches beyond climate pioneers: Some cooperation initiatives target model megacities (such as the [C40 Group](#)), others have a broader scope, yet focus on the development of action plans (e.g. the [Covenant of Mayors](#), now [Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy](#)). A complementary lever is the joint or parallel development of tangible projects under the umbrella of bilateral cooperation. The demonstration effect of these projects can give municipalities that are not yet climate champions a new impetus to advance climate issues on the local agenda. At the same time, this kind of cooperation helps build capacity within the municipal administration and local communities. In the best case scenario, the bilateral approach helps access funds and/or helps make better use of available funds through the mutual inspiration and a more in-depth exchange of knowledge and know-how. For instance, [eight Polish and German cities](#) embarked on such low-emission partnerships. The profile and degree of ambitions of these cities varies greatly. However, they all see an opportunity to scale up actions on the ground, notably in the area of energy-related refurbishments, sustainable urban design and renewable energies, and to mobilize actors that would not necessarily be inclined to join climate initiatives. National governments can play a role in financing programs that support this joint, bilateral implementation on the ground, bringing climate action and local development together.

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[2] Diefenbach, Nikolaus et al. 2014: Monitoring der KfW-Programme "Energieeffizient Sanieren" und "Energieeffizient Bauen" 2013. Darmstadt, Bremen: Institut Wohnen und Umwelt, Fraunhofer IFAM. Im Auftrag der KfW Bankgruppe. Retrieved 22.08.2016 from: https://www.kfw.de/PDF/Download-Center/Konzernthemen/Research/PDF-Dokumente-alle-Evaluationen/Monitoringbericht_2013_05-12-2014.pdf

[3] Trend Research 2013: Anteile einzelner Marktakteure an Erneuerbare Energien-Anlagen in Deutschland (2. Auflage). Bremen. Retrieved 15.06.2016 from <http://www.trendresearch.de/studien/16-0188-2.pdf?78173118885f9df0cb21c42fb245d074>



Tapping Into the Co-Benefits of Low-Emission Economy in Cities – Discussion Paper

A low-emission transition will require profound changes in terms of infrastructure, business models as well as individual habits. In order to support this process adelphi, WiseEuropa and the Institute for Sustainable Development launched a Polish-German discussion on the benefits of a low-emission economy for local development. The **discussion paper** draws on this exchange, and offers a basis for further reflection about selected benefits based on evidence from Germany and Poland.

Topics: Land and Food

Conflict in Context: Land Subdivision in Kenya Compounds Climate Costs

by Jonathan Rozen, ISS Pretoria

Eddah Senetoi lives with her son in the small pastoralist community of Elangata Waus. They keep cows, goats, sheep and donkeys to buy food and pay school fees. For her and other pastoralists living in southern Kenya's Kajiado County, climate change is compounding challenges from land subdivision and privatization, magnifying social tensions and community conflicts over access to resources. As the world leaves the COP 22 global climate talks in Morocco with 'irreversible momentum' for action, Kajiado County offers lessons for preventing conflict and sustaining peace amid worsening climate conditions.

Rising global temperatures have caused increasingly variable rainfall patterns in many areas of sub Saharan Africa, placing strain on weather dependent livelihoods like

"Animals which are the source of income become skinny and later die due to lack of pastures and water."

pastoralism. "Climate has affect[ed] my family and the community at large when there are no rains and the drought ... animals which are the source of income become skinny and later die due to lack of pastures and water," Eddah Senetoi



Photo by Anita Ritenour/Flickr.com

told me. In Kajiado County, unpredictable climate patterns act as a "threat multiplier" on existing challenges rooted in privatization of community lands to increase economic precariousness and social fragility. "Conflict will be experienced whenever animals trespass to other people's parcel [of] land since everyone has his/her own parcel," Eddah Senetoi continued. "Conflicts always arise ... due to scarce water and grass." Land subdivision in Kenya began as a colonial proposition by the British in the 1950s to limiting land degradation. Privatization policies were continued following Kenya's independence in 1963, intending to incentivize

better land management. However, research by Dr. Esther Mwangi finds that individualization of land rights does not precipitate ecological sustainability in arid and semi-arid areas, like Kajiado.

Before land subdivision, pastoralists could respond to seasonal variation and drought by moving freely across the land to find adequate grazing for their animals. But now

“Failure to recognize and integrate local perceptions and knowledge of climate change risks jeopardizing peacebuilding opportunities.”

private land titles have carved once common and increasingly scarce resources into pieces for individual use. In response, traditional social networks have helped Kajiado residents maintain access to resources and sustain pastoral livelihoods. In many cases, long-standing clan, age group, and family networks have been used to maintain access to land and resources during hard times. While increased scarcity has sewn conflict and division, it has also affirmed certain community bonds as people come together to support each other's animals. Together, people are building climate resilience. In their Collective Action on Property Rights (CAPRI) working paper, Dr. Shauna Burnsilver and Dr. Mwangi highlight these networks and recommend land “re-aggregation” to grant herders access to resources and reverse ecological decline associated with subdivision.

For the Maasai people, pastoralism is more than a livelihood – it is also a matter of cultural identity. Many youth in pastoral communities like Eddah's feel their traditional occupation is threatened by reduced access to water and grazing, leaving them without suitable employment alternatives. As traditional Maasai social structures leave both women and youth largely outside of formal land decision-making, some have sought to improve their chances of maintaining a pastoral livelihood by resisting land sales. In Kajiado County's Torosei area, for example, youth have organized to prevent further subdivision and deter land speculators. NGOs such as the Mainyoito Pastoralist Integrated Development Organization also work to reduce land sales, strengthen people's legal representation, and promote the court system for peaceful resolution of land disputes. Recognizing public concern and despite political opposi-

tion, the Kajiado governor placed a freeze on land sales in 2014. While the situation is not as violent as pastoral conflict in north-western Kenya, Dr. Bobadoye Ayodotun Oluwafemi, former researcher at the University of Nairobi's Institute for Climate Change and Adaptation, told me he is concerned about a possible escalation of violence over resources in Kajiado County. Projections indicate that increasing global temperatures may result in overall increased rainfall across East Africa, but predictability remains uncertain. As Dr. Bobadoye highlights, differences exist between pastoralist perceptions of climate change and meteorological rainfall data. He found that while rainfall amounts in Kajiado County have not decreased since 1970, 83% of surveyed pastoralists have perceived reduced rainfall during the same period. For Kajiado's pastoralists, shortened and more variable rainfall periods, as well as land subdivision, have heightened perceptions of declining precipitation. This is not to say that pastoralists are unaware of climate patterns. In fact, as Dr. Bobadoye's notes, there is significant and accurate indigenous climate tracking that should be integrated into broader adaptation strategies. Failure to recognize and integrate local perceptions and knowledge of climate change risks eroding communities' trust in larger national or international adaptation plans, jeopardizing peacebuilding opportunities.



Photo by Anita Ritenour/Flickr.com

For Eddah Senetoi, rainwater collection methods and government provision of hay and food supplements are welcome support. They help her community and the animals they rely on in the face of unpredictable seasons. In harnessing ‘momentum’ from COP22 for climate action, responses should include reflection on systemic issues, such as land privatization in Kajiado, which predate current climate realities but also contribute to climate vulnerability and conflict.

Upcoming Events

The Hague, Lund, other European and US cities
(December 2016 & January 2017)

Film Screening: The Age of Consequences

Climate Change is a stimulus for social, political and economic conflicts around the world. The award-winning film „The Age of Consequences“, tours **around the world** and will be screened this December and in 2017 in the Netherlands, Sweden and several US states. It is an illuminating call to action, highlighting the manifold security threats posed by climate change from a US military perspective. The next screening will take place in The Hague on 4 December, in the context of the Planetary Security Conference with 300 participants, among them foreign ministers, high-ranking officials from international organizations and think tanks.



Photo Screenshot YouTube



Photo by NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center/Flickr.com

Colombo, Sri Lanka (16-17 Februar 2017)

International Conference on Climate Change 2017

The 1st International Conference on Climate Change (ICCC) 2017 aims to continue climate action momentum in 2017 by providing a platform to exchange ideas and discover new opportunities. For this, it brings together those involved in research and development activities in climate change mitigation, vulnerability, and adaptation, nationally and internationally, thereby bridging the gap between government & non-governmental organisation.

Johannesburg, South Africa (1-3 February 2017)

T20 Africa Conference: How can Africa and the G20 Build Alliances for Sustainable Development?

The German G20 presidency is expected to put emphasis on the Group's cooperation with Africa. The **T20 Africa Conference** brings together opinion leaders from think tanks and universities in Africa and G20 countries to discuss how future cooperation between the G20 and Africa could and should look like. The T20, a network of think tanks from G20 countries, serves as an „ideas bank“ for the group.



Photo by Paul Saad/Flickr.com

Factbook News: Focus on Food Price Volatility and Fragility in the MENA Region

by Adrien Detges, adelphi

Global food prices are on the rise again. The [FAO Food Price Index](#) shows a clear increasing trend over the last 12 months. In countries highly dependent on food imports in order to satisfy their internal demand this is likely to have a negative impact on food security, but possibly also on political stability, if mixed with a range of preexisting social grievances. A case in point are countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, which are among the world's [largest importers of cereals](#) and other basic food-stuffs, and in which rising food prices [have contributed to social turmoil in the past](#).

Against this backdrop, we (the Factbook editorial team) thought it was timely to review the interaction of global food price hikes and political fragility, with a particular emphasis on the events

leading up to the Arab Spring revolutions. The latest additions to the [ECC Factbook](#) include a general overview of the origins

and consequences of recent global food price crises, but also a series of more specific case studies that investigate the connection between food price shocks and fragility in selected MENA countries. This series is further complemented by an overarching text that discusses possible policy solutions.

Causes and consequences of global food price hikes

As part of an effort to analyse social and environmental conflict dynamics that transcend national borders, we review the [origins and international consequences of recent food price hikes](#). It is clear that global food price crises in 2007 and 2010 were driven by many factors: rising prices for energy and farm inputs, financial speculation and restrictive trade policies, but also adverse climatic events (droughts, floods) [in major exporting countries](#), thus underlining the

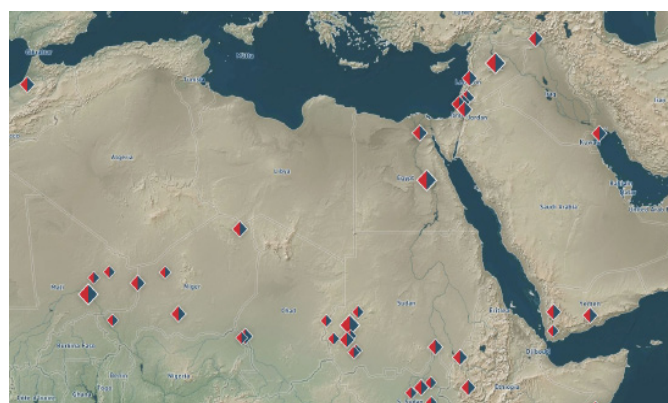


Photo: Factbook Screenshot, adelphi

vulnerability of international food markets to sudden environmental shocks.

We further illustrate that food price hikes can contribute to fragility by adversely affecting the living standards of the poor, accentuating social inequalities and revealing the incapacity of governments to provide for their constituents. Whether or not such

dynamics come into play is a matter of context, however. Food price shocks, food insecurity and fragility are most likely to interact in the presence of weakened and contested political regimes.

Focus on MENA countries

This conjuncture is also visible in a series of country-specific case studies that delve deeper into the origins of the 2011 uprisings in the Arab world. The link between food price inflation and fragility is not deterministic, but we show that, in several MENA countries, rising food prices had an aggravating effect on a number of preexisting social grievances. In Egypt, for instance, soaring food prices combined with dire job prospects and years of political disenfranchisement exacerbated [popular discontent with the autocratic regime](#) of President Hosni Mubarak.

Likewise, rising food prices were among the main concerns of those **demanding the departure of Tunisia's president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali**, even though the Tunisian government did comparably well in protecting local consumers through food **subsidies and price controls**. Yet, these measures could not make up for **years of economic mismanagement, corruption and social marginalisation** which made food prices a politically sensitive issue.

Entry points for preventive action

Given these past connections between food price inflation and fragility, are we likely to see an intensification of

conflicts and a renewal of political crises across the MENA region, now that global food prices are on the rise again? Not necessarily. In an overview, we present and discuss **different policy measures** that have (or could) be implemented to reduce MENA countries' vulnerability to global food price spikes and related social and political challenges. These include efforts to strengthen domestic food production capabilities in an efficient and sustainable way, but also options for further **reducing trade barriers** with an amplifying effect on global food price volatility.

To learn more about our series on food prices and other cases, please visit the **ECC Factbook**.

Publications and Resources

Video: Incentives for Climate Action in China – An interview with Fergus Green



Photo: Screenshot, adelphi

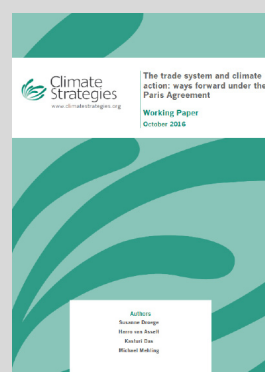
Climate change mitigation actions have numerous co-benefits. In this **video**, climate policy consultant Fergus Green explains the top three incentives for Chinese leaders to devote resources to climate action: energy security, health problems due to air pollution, and the possibility to boost economic growth by manufacturing green technologies.

World Economic and Social Survey 2016: Climate Change Resilience - An Opportunity for Reducing Inequalities



The **World Economic and Social Survey 2016** by UNDESA adds to the debate over challenges to successfully implementing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. It thereby focuses on climate change and its disproportional impact on population groups and communities who are most vulnerable, stating that without transformative policies which coherently address the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development, building climate resilience will remain elusive and poverty and inequalities will worsen.

Climate Strategies Report: The Trade System and Climate Action - Ways Forward under the Paris Agreement



Both international trade and climate policy are integral parts of countries' overall foreign policy challenges. A comprehensive understanding of their interconnection and how to make use of trade policy instruments in ramping up climate action can therefore be seen as a crucial element of successful climate diplomacy. This new **Climate Strategies Report** provides valuable insight.

The newsletter „Environment, Conflict, and Cooperation“ is published several times a year. To subscribe or unsubscribe, please click [here](#).

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Energy Poverty Research Group at the University of Queensland: EPRG was established at the University of Queensland (UQ), Brisbane by the UQ Energy Initiative and the School of Chemical Engineering in 2013. The EPRG is a transdisciplinary group which investigates how energy access and poverty alleviation are interconnected in developing contexts. It incorporates the disciplines of engineering, economics and business, communications and social change, and behavioural sciences to support enabling environments that can positively shape energy dynamics in impoverished communities. Bringing together research capability and innovation across disciplines, the group explores sustainable, reliable and affordable energy systems that are tailored to local and regional socio-economic contexts.

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Contact:

Publisher: Dennis Tänzler
adelphi research gGmbH
Alt-Moabit 91
D - 10559 Berlin Germany
Phone +49-30-89 000 68 0 Fax +49-30-89 000 68 10
www.adelphi.de

Editorial team:

Johannes Ackva, Paola Adriázola, Alexander Carius, Eleni Dellas, Adrien Detges, Daria Ivleva, Annika Kramer, Julia Melnikova, Katharina Nett, Benjamin Pohl, Lukas Rüttinger, Stella Schaller, Camille Serre, Helen Sharp, Dennis Tänzler, Stephan Wolters. Editing support by William Hull.

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.

The **Manipal Advanced Research Group (MARG)** was formed in early 2006. Given the wide variety of expertise available at Manipal University this initiative seeks to establish synergies between fundamental research in the natural (physical) sciences and engineering. MARG has also launched the **Science, Technology and Security Forum (STSf)** website, which is intended to provide a platform to the larger strategic, academic, diplomatic and scientific community to participate in debates on matters impacting international security with a particular focus on Asia and in particular, India. The need for such a forum has its origin in the necessity to integrate scientists and technologists with the matrix of decision-making in matters of policy.