



CLIMATE-RELATED SECURITY RISKS AND THE AFRICAN UNION

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INTRODUCTION

Africa is responsible for a mere 4 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions, yet is disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of a changing climate.¹ In addition, over half of the states in sub-Saharan Africa are among those most affected by the double burden of climate exposure and political fragility.² The continent is grappling with multiple climate-related security risks such as forced migration and displacement, livelihood insecurity, food and water insecurity, rising levels of intercommunal conflict between pastoralists and farmers, protracted cross-border resource conflicts and unsustainable resource exploitation.³ The transnational

characteristic of these risks stresses the need for a regional approach, which makes intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) including the African Union (AU)—but also the United Nations and regional economic communities (RECs)—crucial for identifying, assessing, responding to and ultimately mitigating climate-related security risks.

There has been considerable attention on the conventional climate mitigation and adaptation debate in Africa, including the prominent efforts of the African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change in global climate forums.⁴ However, there is little

and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) et al., *2019 The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World: Safeguarding Against Economic Slowdowns and Downturns* (FAO: Rome, 2019). See also African Union (AU), '9th African Union High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability "Strengthening African Union's conflict prevention and peacemaking efforts"', 25–26 Oct. 2018.

⁴ African Group of Negotiators, 'Home'. See e.g. Dampety P. T. M. and Zakiideen S., 'African Group of Negotiators (AGN)', eds Bueno Rubial, M. and Siegele, L., *Negotiating Climate Change Adaptation* (Springer: 2020); and Scholtz, W. 'The promotion of regional

¹ Ritchie, H., 'Global inequalities in CO2 emissions', *Our World in Data*, 16 Oct. 2018. See also the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative.

² United States Agency for International Development (USAID), *The Intersection of Global Fragility and Climate Risks* (USAID: Washington, DC, Sep. 2018).

³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018* (UNHCR: Geneva, 2019); Kishi, R. et al., *Year in Review 2019* (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project: 2020);

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SUMMARY

● There has been considerable attention on the conventional climate mitigation and adaptation debate in Africa, including the prominent efforts of the African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change in global climate forums. However, there is little understanding of how the African Union (AU) is discussing and responding to the security implications of climate change.

This Policy Brief outlines key strengths of the AU's response, such as a rapidly evolving discourse around climate security and efforts to improve collaboration and coordination among different parts of the institution. But also, key weaknesses in the discourse around AU policy responses, such as the lack of tangible policy operationalization as well as financial unpreparedness and limited member state accountability.

The Policy Brief makes recommendations highlighting entry points for advancing the understanding and response to climate-related security risks within the AU, such as: (a) develop and institutionalize coordinated responses to climate-related security risks; (b) develop strong climate security leadership within the African Union; and (c) change the narrative to focus on shared problems and therefore shared solutions—multilateralism rather than nationalism.



understanding of how the AU is discussing the security implications of climate change and how it is responding to climate-related security risks. For this reason, SIPRI has published a Background Paper that maps 16 AU policy frameworks (formulations of policies in treaties and similar agreed-upon frameworks) related to climate-related security risks. In the Background Paper and in this Policy Brief, the term ‘climate-related security risks’ encompasses a diverse and wide array of impacts and risks emerging from climate change and how they undermine the security of different referent objects—human and state security. The Background Paper finds that the AU is increasingly recognizing different security risks associated with climate change, and the AU’s discourse is rapidly developing towards more integrated responses to climate-related security risks. The mapping depicts that there are areas of success and also areas that need strengthening.⁵

This Policy Brief emerges from the Background Paper and outlines the strengths and weaknesses in the discourse around AU policy responses. In addition, it makes recommendations highlighting entry points for advancing the understanding and response to climate-related security risks within the AU and also with other actors such as the UN and RECs.

environmental security and Africa’s common position on climate change’, *African Human Rights Law Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2010), pp. 1–25.

⁵ Aminga, V., ‘Policy responses to climate-related security risks: The African Union’, SIPRI Background Paper, May 2020.

CURRENT DISCOURSE AND RESPONSES

The AU’s current discourse around climate-related security risks is vibrant and dynamic. Across the organization, 16 frameworks relate to climate-related security risks in key policy areas such as food security, peace and security, human security, and energy security and natural resource use crises. The AU has widely recognized climate-related security risks (on the assembly level and on the executive/administrative level within the African Union Commission (AUC) and its different departments).⁶ In fact, the AU is one of very few regional IGOs that recognizes and discusses climate-related security risks explicitly within its peace and security architecture.⁷ The Background Paper’s mapping and initial analysis offers four key findings, suggesting strengths and weaknesses in the AU’s policy response. The key strengths identified are the AU’s rapidly evolving climate security discourse, and improving collaboration and coordination. In contrast, the lack of tangible policy operationalization, financial unpreparedness and limited member state accountability are identified to constrain the AU’s climate security work.

⁶ Aminga (note 5).

⁷ Krampe, F. and Mobjörk, M., ‘Responding to climate-related security risks: Reviewing regional organizations in Asia and Africa’, *Current Climate Change Reports*, vol. 4, no. 4 (Oct. 2018), pp. 330–37; Dellmuth, L. M. et al., ‘Intergovernmental organizations and climate security: Advancing the research agenda’, *WIREs Climate Change*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2018), e496; and Scott, S. V. and Ku, C., *Climate Change and the UN Security Council* (Edward Elgar Publishing: 2018).

AU among few regional IGOs that recognize climate-related security risks within its peace and security architecture



Strengths

There is a rapidly evolving discourse around climate security within the AU.

AU member states and the AUC are increasingly recognizing the security risks associated with climate change. Across the 16 frameworks—most of which have been negotiated among member states in the AU Assembly—the AU explicitly or implicitly recognizes climate change as one of the emerging global trends undermining Africa’s human and state security.⁸ The discourse around climate security across the AU is rapidly developing and translating into new initiatives and programmes that are yet to be implemented. Notably, the discourse and its translation into practice seem endogenous—that is, they appear not to be driven by external donor interests but rather stem from inside the continent.

Frameworks around agriculture and food security are especially prominent in highlighting the impacts of climate change on the continent. This seems logical given the continent’s dependence on agriculture for livelihood and food security, and recurrent climate-related impacts such as droughts and famine.⁹ The agriculture sector also remains the most important area to achieve food security and poverty reduction—both of which are key elements for achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and the AU’s Agenda 2063.

On the member state level, a clear climate security champion is still missing. However, conversations with AUC officials suggest a

growing resonance of member states to the climate security agenda. For instance, AU countries adopted the Bamako Declaration on Access to Natural Resources and Conflicts between Communities in November 2019, showing the AU’s emerging policy rhetoric in framing and potential in developing effective integrated policy responses and implementation mechanisms for climate-related security risks.¹⁰

On the commission level, interviews with selected experts have indicated a strong sense of ownership, mutual partnerships and collective responsibility in important parts of the AUC on addressing climate-related security risks.¹¹ Indeed, climate security has found resonance within the top leadership of the AUC, with the AU commissioner for peace and security, Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, publicly calling on all member states to mitigate the effects of climate change in reference to the Silencing the Guns agenda, which is the AU’s key initiative ‘for ending all wars, civil conflicts, gender-based violence, violent conflicts and preventing genocide in the continent by 2020’.¹² The AU dedicated its annual theme

AU discourse and its translation into practice seem endogenous—that is, they appear to stem from inside the continent

¹⁰ AU, *Communique of the 901st PSC Meeting on the Theme Strengthening Governance Systems in the Management of Natural Resources Between and Among Communities in Africa: Briefing on the ‘Bamako Declaration on Access to Natural Resources and Conflicts between Communities’* (AU: Dec. 2019).

¹¹ AU officials nos 1 and 3, Conversation with authors, 3 Mar. 2020.

¹² Ambassador Chergui via Twitter, 20 Dec. 2019; AU, ‘Silencing the guns by 2020’; and African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), *Silencing the Guns, Owning the Future: Realising a Conflict-free Africa* (ACCORD: 2015).

⁸ Aminga (note 5).

⁹ Busby, J. and von Uexkull, N., ‘Climate shocks and humanitarian crises’, *Foreign Affairs*, 29 Nov. 2018.



for 2020 to silencing the guns to accelerate achieving the vision underscored in the disarmament instrument beyond 2020. AU officials have stressed the need for the AU to leverage and effectively exploit the 2020 annual theme to its full potential by discussing structural causes of conflict such as climate-related risks.¹³

Collaboration and coordination is improving. Like in most institutions, climate issues have been dealt with in silos and with limited coordination within the AU. Since the AU's inception in 2002, its climate-related security work (largely on food security) has been handled by the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA), which administers various programmes on climate change in agriculture. Various AU departments with mandates in the humanitarian, development and security nexus are already exploring opportunities for synergetic and cohesive cross-sectoral collaboration.

Recently, concrete steps have been taken to increase collaboration and coordination among different departments on climate-related security risks. For instance, the Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Division and DREA have given new life to the Interdepartmental Taskforce on Conflict Prevention (IDTFCP), inviting representatives from various AUC departments and specialized organs to establish and institutionalize a climate cluster. The IDTFCP was established in 2014 to synergize AU interdepartmental efforts

¹³ AU official no. 1, Interview with authors, 23 Apr. 2020.

in addressing the root causes of instability.¹⁴

With the renewed coordination, AU departments now have the potential to benefit from wider institutional knowledge and identify avenues for synergetic responses to climate-related security risks.¹⁵ However, it remains to be seen if this potential will translate into policy action. Some observers close to the AU fear that lack of dedication and commitment of senior leadership makes implementation slow.¹⁶

Weaknesses

There is a lack of tangible policy operationalization. The progress on strengthening the AU's institutional understanding of climate-related security risks is commendable. However, there remains a significant amount to be done to concretize timely and targeted responses and develop actionable commitments. Implementing the recommendations in the Bamako Declaration, for instance, has the potential to elevate the AU's understanding, political engagement and programmatic interventions for addressing conflicts associated with climate change, natural resources and stability. Yet, implementing well-intended frameworks remains a challenge. For example, the ambitious Master Roadmap of

¹⁴ Wachira, G. M., *Strengthening the Peace and Governance Nexus within the African Union: Enhancing Synergy between the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)*, NUPI Report no. 7 (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs: Oslo, 2017), p. 3.

¹⁵ AU officials nos 1 and 2, Comments on authors' manuscript, 30 Oct. 2019. See also Aminga (note 5).

¹⁶ UN Development Programme (UNDP) official, Conversation with authors, 23 Apr. 2020.



Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by Year 2020 still faces substantive operational and institutional obstacles.¹⁷ Similarly, the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods for accelerating agricultural growth and transformation and supporting livelihoods contains clear implementation, monitoring and evaluation strategies, but successful implementation is inhibited by limited member state commitments.¹⁸

Multifaceted challenges—such as extreme poverty, the rise of violent extremism in some regions, weak state capacity and structural weaknesses of the AU—remain core inhibitors to policy operationalization.¹⁹ Inevitably, rapid formulation and implementation of policy responses will have to consider Africa's diverse social economic and political realities.

Member states have limited accountability and financial unpreparedness. Despite a strong sense of ownership and an internally evolving climate security discourse, the AU is not financially prepared and independent enough to prevent and respond to existential challenges associated with extreme climatic events. Efforts to overcome the AU's funding gap from its own member states are ongoing as part

¹⁷ AU, *African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by Year 2020* (AU: 2016).

¹⁸ New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), *Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods* (NEPAD: 2016).

¹⁹ Institute for Security Studies official no. 2, Seminar with authors present, 9 Oct. 2019.

of AU reforms. Yet, the institution is still dependent on external donors—in the form of bilateral aid through states and also through UN agencies.²⁰ The AU can function without the necessary member states contributions; however, this limits its ability to achieve more independence from external actors and achieve more internal accountability.²¹

Even in cases where commitments were made for strong member state contributions, such as in the Malabo Declaration, frameworks failed to attain the targets. The 2017 progress report on the Malabo Declaration reveals that most countries had not met the 10 per cent investment target for agricultural growth that countries had committed to.²²

Out of the 47 countries that submitted their progress, only Mauritius was on track with government budget lines for enhanced resilience to climate-related risks through disaster preparedness, early warning response systems and social safety nets.

Yet there are also positive signs towards more financial commitments. The AU Peace

²⁰ AU, 'What is financing of the Union'; and AU and Board of External Auditors, *Report of the Board of External Auditors on the Consolidated Financial Statements of the African Union for the Year Ended 31 December 2018* (AU: May 2019).

²¹ AU expert no. 1, Seminar with authors present, 25 Oct. 2018.

²² AU, *The 2017 Progress Report to the Assembly: Highlights on Intra-African Trade for Agriculture Commodities and Services: Risks and Opportunities, Inaugural Biennial Report of the Commission on the Implementation of the June 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods* (DREA: 30–31 Jan. 2018).

Rapid formulation and implementation of policy to consider Africa's diverse social economic and political realities



Fund—one of the five pillars of the African Peace and Security Architecture through which the AU plans to fund large parts of its operational activities on peace and security—is expected to ‘soon be operational by requiring mandatory member states’ contributions and introducing a sanctions regime’.²³ Some experts see potential that parts of the Peace Fund’s activities could include tackling issues such as climate-related security risks.²⁴

WAYS FORWARD

Given these strengths and weaknesses in the AU’s response to climate-related security risks, how can the organization capitalize on and translate the current discursive momentum into effectively implemented opportunities? How can it reorient its already limited financial, information and human resources to address overlapping mandates and effectively respond to climate security issues? Based on analysis and background mapping, this Policy Brief suggests three possible ways forward.

Institutionalize coordinated responses

The ongoing institutional reforms within the AU provide an opportunity to enhance institutional integration of data collection and analysis relating to climate-related security risks. They also provide an opportunity to strengthen coordination among different actors.

²³ International Crisis Group, *The Price of Peace: Securing UN Financing for AU Peace Operation*, Africa report no. 286 (International Crisis Group: 31 Jan. 2020); and AU, ‘Peace Fund’.

²⁴ UNDP official, Interview with authors, 23 Apr. 2020.

Evidence-based, shared and jointly accepted information is a prerequisite for effective decision making and project implementation.²⁵ Developing coordinated analytical capacity is likely to facilitate coordinated responses and is necessary within the AU and with its external relations.²⁶

Enhanced internal coordination within the newly formed climate cluster between the Peace and Security Department (PSD) and the DREA is a prerequisite to harmonizing programmatic interventions in efforts to better understand and address climate-related security risks. This improved institutional coherence will reduce shortcomings associated with replicating interventions and synergize the use of financial resources. For instance, the DREA, as a key implementation actor of the AU climate work, will thereby benefit substantially from the PSD, and also through the Peace and Security Council’s normative agenda setting ability.

Developing coordinated analytical capacity will require coordination with regional actors.²⁷ To reach such actors, the 2008 memorandum of understanding between the AU and RECs provides a natural platform for furthering the climate security discussion, especially between the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and the REC early warning centres such

²⁵ Mitchell, S. M. and Zawahri, N. A., ‘The effectiveness of treaty design in addressing water disputes’, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 52, no. 2 (2015), pp. 187–200.

²⁶ AU, ‘Overview of institutional reforms’; AU expert no. 2, Interview with authors via Skype, 10 Jan. 2019; and AU expert no. 3, Interview with authors via Skype, 24 May 2019.

²⁷ AU (note 26); AU expert no. 2 (note 26); and AU expert no. 3 (note 26).



as ECOWARN (the Economic Community of West African States Early Warning and Response Network) and CEWARN (the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism).²⁸ The AU is presently working towards an integrated early warning structure that will shift and reinforce the mandate of the CEWS from solely a conflict centric early warning system to a more integrated early warning response mechanism.²⁹

These efforts to coordinate with RECs and their existing regional early warning centres deserve credit and call for consolidation and strengthening—structurally within the AU institutional framework and also financially.³⁰ The AU Peace Fund (window 1: mediation and preventive diplomacy; window 2: institutional capacity; and window 3: peace support operations) could also provide valuable entry points to find a sustainable funding stream to support climate security work.³¹

Moreover, this kind of cooperation will be an opportunity to climate proof the AU's peace and security architecture (i.e. make it 'sensitive to climate-related security and development risks'³²). It also

provides opportunities to identify root causes by developing joint early warning indicators, and to address human insecurity in a more coherent and integrated manner in the long term. This should catalyse achievement of the AU's ambitious Agenda 2063 (Africa's 50-year development blueprint aiming at repositioning Africa as a dominant player in the global arena by 2063).

Aside from collaboration with regional entities, the AU can also benefit further from cooperation and knowledge exchange with the UN through existing mechanisms such as the UN–AU Joint Task Force on Peace and Security and from deepening existing consultative meetings on conflict prevention and management.³³ There are positive signs of deepened consultations: in February 2020 the UN–AU joint task force highlighted climate security as a challenge in the continent and called for the creation of a UN–AU climate cluster (in addition to an internal AU climate cluster under the IDTFCP). The UN–AU climate cluster is to be created within the UN–AU Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and will further enhance coordination between the two organizations.³⁴

AU working towards an integrated early warning structure that will shift and reinforce the mandate of the CEWS

²⁸ AU, 'Memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the area of peace and security between the African Union, the regional economic communities and the coordinating mechanisms of the regional standby brigades of Eastern Africa and Northern Africa', 2008.

²⁹ AU official no. 1, Interview with authors, 23 Apr. 2020.

³⁰ AU, 'Press statement', PSC/PR/BR.(DCCCLXXIV), 5 Sep. 2019; and AU, 'Communique of the 901st PSC meeting on AU's conflict prevention and early warning efforts and the challenges encountered, as well as on the horizon scanning briefing on the state of peace and security in Africa', 13 Mar. 2020.

³¹ AU (note 23).

³² De Coning, C. and Krampe, F. *Multilateral Cooperation in the Area of Climate-related*

Security and Development Risks in Africa, NUPI Report no. 4 (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs: 2020).

³³ AU, 'Joint communiqué: United Nations–African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security holds eighteenth consultative meeting in Addis-Ababa on 11 February 2020', Feb. 2020; and UN Office to the African Union, '12th annual UN–AU–RECS/RMS consultative meeting kicks off in Addis Ababa', 11 Mar. 2019.

³⁴ UN and AU, *United Nations–African Union Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security* (UN and AU: New York, 19 Apr. 2017).



The UN–AU cluster should further leverage the work of the UN Climate Security Mechanism, which is a centrally placed joint mechanism of the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the UN Development Programme and the UN Environment Programme. Enhanced knowledge sharing will provide entry points for successful international cooperation and help generate synergies in operationalizing institutional responses to climate-related security risks on the field/local level. Another channel would be the existing consultations between the AU and the UN Peacebuilding Commission. Some observers see potential that regular exchanges of views on the impact of climate change on peacebuilding, and on lessons learned, including in the context of Agenda 2063 and the Silencing the Guns initiative, would provide opportunities for deeper engagement on the AU and UN levels.³⁵

International collaboration for these processes will be crucial, but the AU should have ownership and set the agenda. To be successful and sustainable the AU’s response and coordination will require institutional consolidation and political willingness within the AU

and its member states. So, there is a requisite for a strong climate change and security strategy, and strategic leadership is also required to effectively implement such a strategy.³⁶

³⁵ International Peace Institute official, Conversation with authors, 30 Apr. 2020.

³⁶ Krampe, F. and Aminga, V., ‘The need for an African Union special envoy for climate change and security’, SIPRI Commentary/

Develop strong climate security leadership within the African Union

Strategic leadership will be important. The anticipated appointment of an AU special envoy for climate change and security will thus be pivotal—although not sufficient—to build political willingness and institutionalize a strategic coordinated response to climate-related security risks. On several occasions the AU has reiterated the need for such a special envoy, for instance in various AU peace and security open sessions and in recent AU summits.³⁷

It will be important to draw upon vital lessons learned by past and current special envoys on constraining factors to their political leadership, such as time-limited assignments and quick rotations, as well as member state influence and financial dependence. Nevertheless, there seem to be some concrete operational tasks for the envoy that would advance responses to climate-related security risks by the AU.

The envoy should:

1. Provide leadership

The envoy should provide the necessary political leadership required to steer the climate cluster and consolidate a well-placed institutional home for climate-related security risks.

Essays, 7 Feb. 2019; and AU expert no. 3 (note 26).

³⁷ AU, ‘The 774th meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council, an open session on the theme: “The link between climate change and conflicts in Africa and addressing the security implications”’, 29 May 2018; and AU, ‘The 828th meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council, an open session on the theme: “Climate change funding in line with the Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI) to contribute towards peace and security”’, 27 Feb. 2019.

A requisite for strong climate change and security strategy, and strategic leadership to effectively implement strategy



2. Play an outreach role

The envoy should have an important outreach role that will strengthen African ownership on shaping the continent's climate security agenda and strengthen Africa's voice in international forums such as the UN General Assembly, the UN Security Council and the Conferences of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. This would also ensure conflict- and climate-sensitive donor engagement to strengthen African societies.

3. Have a diplomatic role

The envoy should have a diplomatic role to mediate and support confidence-building measures. As recent research suggests, African mediators are more successful in finding negotiated solutions to conflicts on the continent because of their inherent legitimacy.³⁸ This latent advantage of the envoy has the potential to accelerate the AU's understanding and response to climate-related security risks. This can be done through early special assignments in climate security hotspots that could be identified through early warning mechanisms. Coordinating the assignments with AU RECs will establish synergetic and integrated regional responses that combine climate adaptation with peace and security, development and governance.

For the suggested diplomatic endeavours to be successful, appointing an envoy will certainly not be sufficient. African member states must be open and willing to take ownership and lead the continent's response to climate-

related security risks jointly with the envoy, RECs and the AU. Only then will the envoy be in a position to raise climate security issues at the highest political level, thereby mitigating some member state doubts and reservations.

This will inevitably require a new narrative around climate change and security within the AU.

Change the narrative

With the recognition that climate change is transforming and redefining the African security and development landscape comes the need for a narrative around climate security that promotes a joint vision and regional, cooperative approaches to addressing climate-related security risks.

Previous SIPRI research suggests the need to focus on shared problems and therefore shared solutions—multilateralism rather than nationalism.³⁹ A vision for cooperation in addressing climate-related security risks may promote confidence among countries, the lack of which has inhibited cooperation in the past.

Part of this vision has to be anchored in enhanced language sensitivity around the framing of climate security issues. In the past—elsewhere and within the AU—climate change has often been labelled as a 'threat multiplier'.⁴⁰ However, the framing matters because terms such as 'threat' encourage zero-sum thinking and

African mediators are more successful in finding negotiated solutions to conflicts because of their inherent legitimacy

³⁸ Duursma, A., 'African solutions to African challenges: The role of legitimacy in mediating civil wars in Africa', *International Organization* (2020).

³⁹ Krampe, F. et al., 'Water security and governance in the Horn of Africa', SIPRI Policy Paper no. 54, Mar. 2020.

⁴⁰ AUC, *African Peace and Security Architecture: APSA Roadmap 2016–2020* (AUC: 5 Dec. 2015), p. 20.



Reframing the issues as climate-related security risks places human security and development at centre of debate

nationalistic solutions.⁴¹ Reframing the issues as climate-related security risks places human security and development at the centre of the debate. This does not have merely semantic implications because avoiding the more interventionist associations to the threat discourse has direct effects on policy and the potential for more multilateral, integrated responses to climate-related security risks.

The challenge at hand is immense when looking at climate-related security risks within the AU. Yet, the problems of today are most likely small compared with the problems of the future. Coordination, political leadership and new narratives are required to overcome current issues and provide a foundation of trust. Drawing on these will drive solutions for dealing with climate-related security risks and offer steps towards cooperation and securing human livelihood for present and future generations.

⁴¹ Mobjörk, M. et al., *Climate-related Security Risks: Towards an Integrated Approach* (SIPRI and Stockholm University: Stockholm, Oct. 2016); Born, C. et al., 'Advancing United Nations responses to climate-related security risks', SIPRI Policy Brief, Sep. 2019; and De Coning and Krampe (note 32).



ABBREVIATIONS

ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
DREA	AU Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture
ECOWARN	Economic Community of West African States Early Warning and Response Network
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IDTFCP	Interdepartmental Taskforce on Conflict Prevention
IGO	Intergovernmental organization
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
PSD	Peace and Security Department
REC	Regional economic community
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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