

**Helpdesk report, 14 February 2025**

# Climate, Peace and Security in Africa

## Enhanced synergies between bilateral, regional, and global levels

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*Sida's Helpdesk for Environment and Climate Change is a government agency collaboration between the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), University of Gothenburg (GU) and Sida to promote enhanced integration of environmental issues and perspectives in Swedish development cooperation.*

## Executive summary

Sida's Helpdesk for Environment and Climate Change (the Helpdesk) was assigned by the Unit for East and Horn of Africa, Department of Africa, Sida Headquarters, and the Team Environment and Climate Change Africa, the Swedish Embassy in Kenya, to provide support to the identification of opportunities for enhancing Sida's work related to climate, peace and security in Africa. The aim of the assignment was to identify opportunities to enhance synergies between the support at global, regional, and national levels to climate change, peace and security.

Overall, the findings by the Helpdesk closely link to the collective commitment to increase investment and actions to drive resilience in countries and communities affected by conflict, fragility or humanitarian crises, as outlined in the UNFCCC COP28 UAE Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery, and Peace, 2023. The report highlights promising synergies across the geographical levels to holistically address climate change, peace and security, and building on local actions to create stronger synergies, while connecting to the global and African regional levels.

The work was undertaken as a desk study of 57 contributions across the three levels with complementary interviews with Sida and embassy staff. The contributions refer to the Swedish strategies for development cooperation; the *Strategy on environment, climate and biological diversity 2022-2026* and its predecessor, the *Strategy for sustainable peace 2017-2022*, the *Strategy for regional development cooperation with Africa 2022–2026*, and the bilateral strategies for Burkina Faso, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan. A literature review included the global policy level and the nexus that emphasises interconnectedness between humanitarian aid, development, and peacebuilding (HDP nexus).

The review shows how the contributions to climate change, peace, and security bridge the global, regional and national levels. (**Figure 3** provides an overview). Nodes of promising synergies and opportunities for positive outcomes have been described across the levels. These represent entry points to enhance the work on synergies and to find ways to ensure that global, regional, and country-level support aligns effectively in this thematic area. The findings need to be further assessed together with concerned staff. Specific sections address the global, regional or national level to facilitate these discussions and cases to look into are highlighted. The findings are also linked to the strategy reports of 2023 and their descriptions of synergetic effects in this thematic area and beyond. It is seen that these synergy efforts vary; from the modalities applied in Mali and Burkina Faso that helped connecting sub-regional level to global and country levels, to few connecting points under certain bilateral strategies.

The geographical synergies are most evident from the global level to regional or country levels. Several global organizations (e.g., GPPAC, Saferworld and Conciliation Resources) work across these vertical levels to connect climate, peace, and security, and many have a specific focus on locally grounded peacebuilding and risk-informed development. There are less bottom-up synergies (from country to global/regional). Notably, a limitation in the material refers to core support, which leaves out information on specific countries reached by this type of support.

In the policy arena, there are few linkages among the contributions to a global or African climate, peace, security “agenda”. One explanation is that key instruments like the above-mentioned Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery, and Peace, the Getting Ahead of Disasters Charter, and the Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment, and Climate Change have relatively recent been developed and were not available at the time.

Thematically, the intersection between climate change and peace/security is complex, requiring a multidimensional approach, which is seen in the majority of contributions. Key areas of conflict include land rights, natural resource management, and climate-induced displacement.

Among other thematic opportunities, the review indicates opportunities for greater focus on urban settings, and anticipatory action as a stronger and more outspoken component. Integrated concepts such as NbS are included, but efforts in this area can be expanded. While locally led adaptation is rarely mentioned explicitly, i.e., 7% of the contributions mention the *term* locally led, many contributions involve local actions. It is crucial that Sida and embassies continue strengthening locally led conflict-sensitive actions related to climate change for building trust, social cohesion, and peace in the affected communities.

There is a strong connection between the HDP nexus and resilience as shown across the global, regional, and country contributions. If the HDP nexus is well incorporated in an intervention, then resilience to crises is strengthened, and vulnerable people and communities are more resilient. The HDP nexus is explicitly incorporated in half of the contributions. This number is larger when applying a more lenient interpretation of the contributions.

There are strong links between climate, security, conflict and *migration*, but there are opportunities to more systematically integrate migration and forced displacement into the climate, peace, and security framework. Based on the review, migration and other aspects of mobility are included in context analyses, but more seldom in objectives. To strengthen the inclusion, there is a need to better understand the cyclical movements.

Most partner organisations are large, multilateral entities or INGOs that play a role in global climate policy. They include efforts to bridge the levels in the area of climate change, peace and security. However, their reporting on the results from these efforts can be strengthened. There are also innovative partnerships and different clusters of actors that possibly can be scaled up depending on context. In view of optimising complementarity of mandates and expertise across climate change, peace and security, development, humanitarian, and risk management, a deeper review of the included partners’ expertise is needed. What are the partner strengths in conducting context analyses addressing the themes holistically, and which flexible means exist to meet both humanitarian and development needs in these fragile settings?

## Recommendations

The report provides a set of recommendations or issues to consider to the Team Environment and Climate Change Africa and the staff at the global regional and national levels / embassies. They refer to the following main areas (more details in report):

1. **A follow up on the findings:** To follow up on the synergy findings with key staff and partners to strengthen and formalize synergies across strategies and contributions at the global, regional and national levels. Priorities and cases are suggested.
2. **Methods and processes:** To support the continuous work for strengthening the synergies across the levels, the development of a concise thematic framework for climate, peace and security that can act as a practical guide, incorporating experiences and lessons, is proposed.
3. **Partners' reporting on synergetic effects:** To encourage or request partner organisations to report on synergetic effects across the global, regional and national levels.
4. **Locally led actions:** To pay significant attention to locally led actions and support efforts that increase the understanding of the diverse people's perceptions of climate change and how people see its links with conflict and security, and necessary actions.
5. **The policy processes of climate, peace and security:** To align the support to the important and recent global and African declarations and commitments by countries in climate, peace and security, as well as NAPs and NDCs.
6. **Partner organisations:** To initiate a more thorough review of current and promising partners for the holistic approach to climate, peace and security, integrating humanitarian and development support.
7. **Integration of environment and conflict:** To enhance the integration efforts of conflict and environment and climate change
8. **HDP nexus:** To promote a systematic inclusion of the HDP nexus in climate, peace and security across the partners and in their programming.
9. **Migration and the wider area of mobility.** To facilitate the systematic work on migration at the different scales in Africa, with links to the global level.

*A take away:*

The Helpdesk highlights that climate change, peace and security cannot be addressed alone. The thematic framework is closely linked to **natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity**, and a range of different areas and sectors.