Environmental Crises and Development:

Risk Reduction Towards Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

Local Peacebuilders' Perspectives on the Peace-Development-Environment Nexus

CIVIL SOCIETY
PLATFORM
FOR PEACEBUILDING
AND STATEBUILDING

The respective achievements of peace, development and environmental security encapsulate the greatest challenges humanity has ever faced. Moreover, they are inextricably bound together. They determine both favourably and detrimentally the cardinal conditions of our lives; from our health and food, to our economies, energy sources and habitats, or even our cultures, personal and intellectual growth, not to mention our security and our very future.

What if there was a way to simultaneously ensure their respective fulfilment and upkeep?

CSPPS perceives intrinsic links uniting this Peace-Development-Environment nexus and believe that their maintenance may be commonly addressed by an "environmental cooperation for peacebuilding" and a preventive approach.

About us

The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) is a member-led international network bringing together more than 800 civil society organisations (CSOs) from the Global North and the Global South, supporting conflict and crisis prevention, peacebuilding and statebuilding in over 30 fragile and conflict-affected countries. We are the constituency representing civil society within the **International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding** (IDPS). The IDPS is a tripartite, international network, comprised of CSPPS, the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) - consisting of 30 OECD countries as well as international agencies and organisations - and the g7+ (an intergovernmental organisation of 20 fragile and conflict-affected countries). CSPPS sustains in-country interventions, by ensuring strategic and capacity assistance aiming at amplifying the voice of civil society both within the International Dialogue and outside its realm.

Context

Environmental crises are highly varied, both in their nature (whether they are man-made or natural disasters) as well as in the consequences they can have. As this report demonstrates, they affect the most fundamental resources of human life and well-being and thus, peacebuilding and statebuilding.

Environmental crises can jeopardize peacebuilding efforts, either by being an additional trigger of violence or by being one of the primary sources of conflict. The management of both natural risks and resources highlights the importance of maintaining a sustainable society that does not generate scarcity nor conflict. Its potential to cause increased fragility and inequality make environmental concerns a priority for both civil society and governments.

As a stakeholder in international development, CSPPS is determined to carry out its mission in a holistic way. Environmental challenges are becoming increasingly prominent and actively undermine our objectives of peace, security and prosperity, embedded in both the 2030 Agenda as well as the IDPS' New Deal and 2019-21 Peace Vision.

Approach

This report is the result of a collaboration between CSPPS member CSOs and the Secretariat. Its underlying analysis is founded on substantial consultation surveys to which the CSPPS Country Teams (and independent member organisations) have responded. The present report provides an overview of the environmental threats, their severity and the subsequently generated needs as perceived by civil society. CSPPS members have shared their own experiences of the effect environmental crises have on development, peacebuilding and statebuilding perspectives in their countries. They also had the opportunity to express their needs to international and national stakeholders and partners involved.

Overview

This report is threefold. The first part outlines the situations experienced by CSPPS members and is intended to explain the different gears binding conflicts, development issues and environmental challenges. It highlights cases in which the latter are primary sources of conflict, as well as cases in which they have a direct impact on development, and subsequently on potential conflicts. The second part aims to report the concerns, needs and constructive recommendations of CSPPS members to all the relevant stakeholders. Ultimately, the report is concluded with the guideline chosen by CSPPS to extend its future actions to environmental peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts.

Our aim is to expose the following potential chain of consequences…
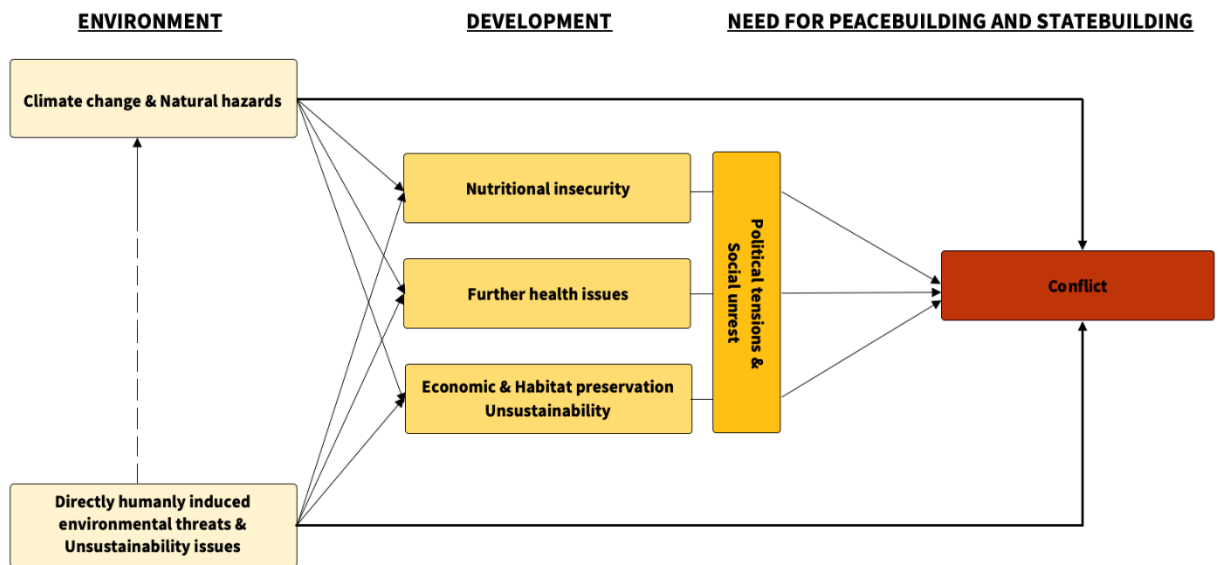
… and to recommend methods to reverse it, in order to implement this theory of change.
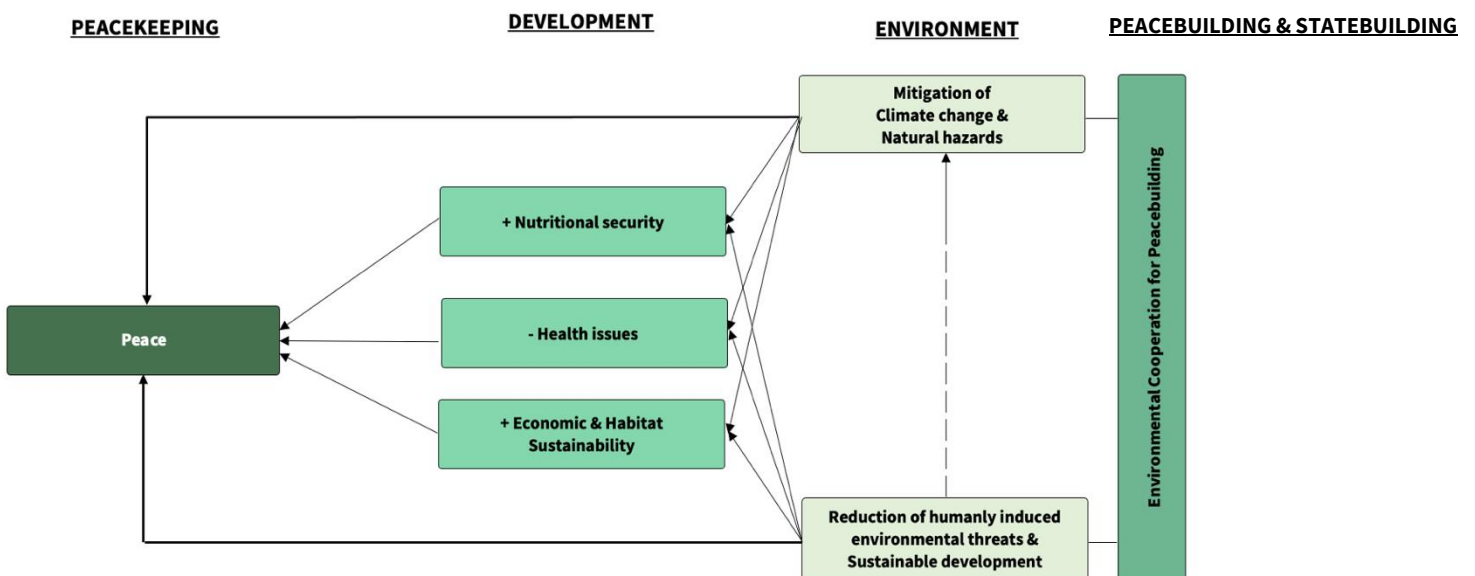
I- Situations of Intertwined Threats to Peace, Development and Environmental Security

CSPPS members are reporting how issues of peace, development and environmental security can adversely impinge on each other in multiple domains. Environmental challenges may constitute a primary source of conflict or an additional driver of tension, but in either case, they represent a significant threat to nutritional security, general health, and economic and habitat sustainability.

1. Environmental challenges affecting natural resource management are primary threats and sources of conflict.

Environmental challenges are often regarded in two erroneous ways: as future threats, or as issues having a comparatively very secondary role in the context of conflicts.

Yet, what emerges from the consultations with CSPPS members is a **unanimous perception of environmental challenges as a substantial stress on their activities and security**. In addition, they are **understood as frequently being a primary source of conflict**. About 60% of the CSPPS membership acknowledges that it is currently, or might eventually be the case in their country.

CSPPS members who experienced or feared the eruption of conflict directly arising out of environmental challenges, considered that the threat was mainly **those leading to the scarcity of vital or economic natural resources** (i.e. their depletion or even destruction). They also report that **most of the time, when a conflict occurs, it is due to a man-made social or economic dynamic leading to, or overlaid on, a natural issue**.

The challenges weighing on the availability of natural resources and seen as direct sources of conflict which were most frequently reported by the Country Teams are as much of natural as of human origin. In this first category, exceptional natural disasters and/or cycles have been mentioned, especially severe floods and phenomena of drought, desertification and erosion. Social, political and economic attitudes are often found to be superimposed on these natural disasters, aggravating the situations and/or catalysing tensions: the intensive and unsustainable use of resources destined to be exhausted, the unregulated or perceived as unfair exploitation and distribution of scarce resources, the deterioration (through pollution, impoverishment or contamination) of air, water and soil quality, or even of habitable land, including the regular problem of deforestation.

> "*These challenges are both primary sources of conflict and catalysts for future conflict. Current environmental issues generate direct conflicts: for example, deforestation brings indigenous peoples living in the area into conflict with land exploiters.*" – Eloi Kouzoundji, GERDDES-Centrafrique, CAR.

These environmental issues typically generate shortages in four resources, which are interrelated in their sustainability and in the interests that can be derived from them, namely: (1) water, (2) food, (3) cultivable and habitable land and (4) the economic yields gained from the exploitation of natural resources.

> "*These interactions have led to injustice, loss of livelihoods, food shortages, hunger and internal displacements/migration leading to political and physical struggles and violence.*" – Udé Faty, Voz di Paz, Guinea-Bissau

The reported scarcities in natural resources are reflected in four different patterns, which might act as the breeding ground of four different natures of conflict. This scarcity can be (1) "**physical**", that is to say caused by the gradual depletion of a finite resource. However, we have consequently been informed of (2) **environmental** scarcities; meaning that resources, which are supposed to naturally renew, are becoming critically lacking owing to environmental crises and/or their inconsiderate human exploitation. A very different scarcity may occur, of a (3) "**geopolitical**" kind, since when a resource is unevenly available from a region to another, dependence between countries is likely to be created or could result in a perceived economic injustice when the country possessing the resource is not its main exploiter and beneficiary. Lastly, and in the same spirit, there is a type of scarcity of a (4) "**socio-economic**" nature, when the financial income or well-being generated by a rather limited resource is unequally distributed in a country.

"Indeed, the exploitation of natural resources creates numerous conflicts. The people living next to these exploitations are not the first to benefit from their advantages. They therefore create barriers to the exploiters. This situation can lead to conflicts causing human death. Also, with the present system of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the central government is fighting with the provincial government and the provincial government with the local government." - Lisette Mavungu, Executive Secretary of Forum des Femmes pour la Gouvernance des Ressources Naturelles, DRC

In any case, these shortcomings and the resulting increased competition are conducive to the generation of tensions which, as our members explain, can emerge in an interpersonal manner ("*conflict over land between families*") from one community to another, between national and local institutions, from one country to another… When these tensions are not contained, or when they are added to a wider range of issues, they can **degenerate into conflict, in a potentially physically violent form.**

"Environmental security has been attributed in Sierra Leone as a bundle of issues involving the role that the environment and natural resources play in peace and security, including environmental causes and drivers of conflict, environmental impacts of conflict, recovery, and post-conflict peacebuilding. The scope of security and insecurity is by no means limited to violent conflict or its absence." – Musa Asumana Soko, WASH-Net, Sierra Leone.

2. Environmental challenges directly sway development and thus, also represent additional conflict triggers.

A variety of environmental issues are additional triggers of conflict. This, either at its origin (participating in its outbreak among other major factors), or during a prevailing conflict (contributing to its escalation). In particular, and in both cases, environmental issues act in a certain, albeit complex way with human, social and political dynamics. The result of this stacking of critical situations are mainly implications for food security (2.1), other health impairments (2.2) and for the sustainability of habitats and economies (2.3). In each case, depending on how the challenges are tackled, numerous inequalities or injustices might be felt, resulting in political tensions and social unrest. **The following challenges represent direct detrimental impacts on development and additional threats to peacekeeping**.

2.1 Nutritional insecurity

Nutritional insecurity - i.e. in the quality and quantity of food and water - is one of the first factors demonstrating the weight of environmental risks on both development and peace (as mentioned above in the framework of primary sources).

> "*We are likely to see unplanned migration into already congested localities, which will ultimately exert pressure on meagre resources. This could further exacerbate insecurity and trigger conflicts. Also, because of high population growth and growing land conflict due to the lack of proper land management structure, several studies have pointed out that land conflict could likely be the next source of any potential high scale conflict in Liberia.*"
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> "*Frequent sea erosion of costal land and homes, displacement of impoverished dwellers and illegal fishing by foreign companies in Liberia's territorial waters are leaving community dwellers without food.*"
> - Jimmy Shilue, Platform for Dialogue and Peace, Liberia

It is **due to a large variety of natural and human-induced challenges**. The most outstanding ones are the phenomena of droughts, aridity, desertification or heat waves; the floods, and the overly intense exploitation of agricultural soils. Other key challenges include the progressive annihilation of ecosystems, soil or costal erosion, oil spillages affecting marine resources, and the chain of consequences of the drying out of water points on the ability to drink clear water, to access it, to grow agricultural products and to perceive yields from it.

> "*Des conflits de communauté latents peuvent resurgir seulement parce qu'une ressource naturelle n'a pas été bien gérée. Le cas de la Province de l'Equateur où les populations riveraines se sont battues pour la gestion de poissons de cours d'eau qui les séparer et les politiques profitent pour instrumentaliser les uns et les autres, membres de communautés.*" – Lisette Mavungu, Executive Secretary of Forum des Femmes pour la Gouvernance des Ressources Naturelles, DRC

Environmental challenges inducing depletion of nutritional resources cause distress on the development of populations and States

The most critical aspect is concentrated in the health realm, with **sanitary issues** particularly diseases outbreaks due to water quality, and the even more broadly reported critical food and water shortages leading to **malnutrition or even starvation** for the exposed populations. These shortages are explained by the environmental challenges previously mentioned, whether natural or humanly induced. But CSPPS members also report how they interact in an even more complex fashion with conflicts and violence in general.

These same environmental challenges also weigh on economic development, not only for agricultural workers individually, but even more alarmingly at national level, particularly **when a country's main economic sector consists of food trade** (refer to the Somalia case below). The scarcity of natural raw resources is therefore, in this instance, the cornerstone of an economic chain depending heavily on the country's environmental security.

Finally, the third significant peril induced by economic and health-related drawbacks generated by nutritional insecurity is the internal displacements and migration phenomenon. In 2020, **80%** of internally displaced persons are living in countries affected by natural threats and nutritional insecurity leading to widespread malnutrition. The testimonies of CSPPS members do not differ from this. They ensure the validity of the recent notion of "**climate migrant**".

These environmental challenges and subsequent development issues generate conflict

Indeed, food and water shortages, their effects on heath and economy, and the perceptions of injustice around this issue can act as aggravating factors in an existing conflict, or even generate one as its original source.
But also, it is sometimes **a destructive conflict in conjunction with an already environmentally critical situation that can lead to severe shortages** (One can think of the case of the Yemeni war and health situation regarding water and food management, as an example)

It was also reported that perceived senses of injustice and misallocation of these scarce resources on the part of governments, may also be an additional factor of **social and political conflict.**

Climate displacement situations also interacts in a complex but certain way with violence and conflict, in particular with the **enrolment in terrorist groups** of individuals, and especially of the youth (as in the Somalia or Chad case below).

A significant number of countries are experiencing these interactions leading to food insecurity at the end of 2020, including for the CSPPS membership in Afghanistan, Cameroon, CAR, DRC, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

"In fact, a bold step that one of our member institutions (WASH-Net) has undertaken in Sierra Leone, is a comprehensive study of the water catchments in relation with climate change. It has already revealed that just for the city of Freetown 79% of water catchments have already dried up. Out of the 21 percent with water, 57% are already without protective forest covering. This became an evidence for the establishment of the Ministry of Environment; an institution that got off-spring from the Environment Protection Agency." – Musa Asumana Soko, WASH-Net, Sierra Leone

- **The Case of Somalia: a CSPPS member explains.**

The Somali case illustrates how environmental, peace and development challenges are intertwined, and the need to address them commonly.

A few years after its independence in 1960, Somalia experienced a coup, followed by war with Ethiopia, and the subsequent establishment of clan-based militias in the early 1990s. It was precisely in **1991-1992 that a famine began, caused by both a catastrophic drought and the civil war in the country.** Moreover, this very civil war crippled the relief efforts, aggravating the famine, and precipitating the deaths of about 300,000 people. An Islamic Court Union was set up to fill the State's legislative vacuum during this period, but in the early 2000s, an affiliated group of young people: **Al-Shabaab**, later pleaded allegiance to Al-Qaeda and became an active terrorist organisation in the country, controlling large parts of its territory. **In 2012, a new famine broke out**, due to the East Africa drought of 2011. Fortunately, in the meantime, a federal government elected in 2012 declared victory over Al Shabab in 2014. Yet, the latter regrouped and resumed its activities between 2015 and **2017**. It was during that year that, despite preventive warnings from the UN, a new famine caused by **another drought erupted**, resulting in the death of nearly 300,000 people once again. In addition, and as is still the case, **Al-Shabaab takes advantage of the state of sanitary, nutritional and economic distress left by these environmental disasters** to enlist more young people, as our member can testify.

Even today, the end of 2020 (October-December) is marked by a new "acute food insecurity", as highlighted in the latest joint FAO and WPF report.[1] "*In Somalia, up to 2.1 million people are expected to face food consumption gaps or depletion of assets through December 2020 in the absence of humanitarian assistance. This figure represents almost 20 percent of the total population and is more than 80 percent higher than early 2020 estimates.*" The "acute food insecurity hotspots" are, according to these UN agencies, **emphasizing the link between conflict, insecurity, droughts, floods, locusts, migrations and nutritional insecurity in the region**. This without omitting to mention the effects of COVID-19 on the situation. The organizations are also pointing out the **alleged "simultaneous" effects of these environmental challenges on the spread of diseases, migrations, economic outcomes** from livestock and food production (cereal farming alone accounts for 60% of the country's annual income and is expected to be 45% less fruitful for the year 2020).

"*Since 1990, Somalia has experienced 30 climate-related hazards. This is triple the number of climate-related hazards the country experienced between 1970 and 1990.*[2]"

The Somali Country Team wished to indicate how environmental challenges in the area are threatening nutritional security and their peace efforts; a representative of IIDA Women's Development Organisation wrote the following declaration:

"*The challenges mentioned are both a primary source of conflict and an additional trigger. Somalia is among the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world which have been magnified by **a series of severe droughts, making the state-building process more challenging**. The frequency and severity of **conflicts between herders and farmers** in rural regions have increased as changing seasons and weather means herding nomads have to adjust their routes. Displaced populations exert enormous pressures on the environment for example improper and unsustainable use of the land. This has been further amplified by droughts and floods which has displaced more people and communities, who seek shelter in camps which then serve **as recruitment grounds for radical groups like Al-Shabaab**.*" "*Climate change has increased the disputes over already-scarce resources between communities. Further to this, Al-Shabaab has conquered large pieces of the country's territory. Al-Shabaab does not practice environmental conservation and the areas they have control over are worse. The group has been successful in attracting young people who are affected by famine and food insecurity and who face no job prospects; those youth end up joining the armed group in a bid to survive, finding no other option other than to submit to the extremist group. **The severe droughts have caused disruptions to water access, high rates of malnutrition, disease outbreaks, and food insecurity, leading to tension and even open disputes between the clans.***" – Smita, IIDA Women's Development Organisation, Somalia

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[1] WFP and FAO. FAO-WFP early warning analysis of acute food insecurity hotspots: October 2020, 2020
[2] OCHA, Africa under water : heightened 'mega' crises, UN Humanitarian, 2020

2.2 Further "environmental health" issues

CSPPS members also wished to expose the implications of environmental challenges on other health concerns, which are less pervasive than the one related to nutrition insecurity, but still significant.

These issues (including nutritional challenges) fall under the scope of the "**environmental heath**", as denoted by the WHO, which in a related 2020 report[3] stated very similar indications as CSPPS members: *"Known avoidable environmental risks cause about one quarter of all deaths and disease burden worldwide, amounting to at least a steady 13 million deaths each year. (…) Air pollution – one of the largest risks to health – alone causes seven million preventable deaths per year, with more than 90% of people breathing polluted air (…) More than half the world's population is still exposed to unsafely managed water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene, resulting in more than 800 000 preventable deaths each year. A large fraction of malaria cases and other vector-borne diseases is closely linked to the management and manipulation of the environment (…) More than one million workers die each year because their workplace is unsafe, and more than one million people die from exposure to chemicals"*
"Climate change increasingly affects people's health and well-being, as do other global environmental changes such as loss of biodiversity. Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of heatwaves, droughts, extreme rainfall and severe cyclones in many areas, and modifying the transmission of food-borne, water-borne and zoonotic infectious diseases, resulting in large impacts on health "

Two types of health impairment have been reported by CSPPS Country Teams: **illnesses or states of sanitary distresses caused or fostered by deteriorating environmental conditions** and **physical injuries induced by natural disasters or by the mishandling of hazardous waste**. CSPPS members report as major causes: floods, issues of hazardous wate management, the impacts of droughts, of overgrazing, of increased air pollution and deforestation.

"Health emergency due to environmental quality" - Eloi Kouzoundji, GERDDES-Centrafrique, CAR

"Air pollution - The occurrence of malformed children" – Lisette Mavungu, Executive Secretary of Forum des Femmes pour la Gouvernance des Ressources Naturelles, DRC

"Air pollution and air quality issues – Deforestation - Potable water pollution - Military destruction of land - Nuclear and industrial accidents - Overpopulation - Soil pollution or contamination - Hazardous waste management issues - Water pollution (oil spills, ocean dumping…)" - Maged Alkholidy, Chairman of Youth without Borders Organization for Development, Yemen

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[3] WHO. WHO global strategy on health, environment and climate change: the transformation needed to improve lives and well-being sustainably through healthy environments, 2020

- **The Case of Chad**: a CSPPS member explains.

The following testimony depicts the Chadian situation and in a broader context, the difficulties currently faced by the Sahelian countries. It highlights the fact that health hardships are linked to the environment. This can be ascertained if one considers the impact of environmental challenges on the proliferation of diseases. But also, their impact on poverty, conflicts, violence, and how they are therefore a factor in the aggravation of death and bodily injuries tolls.

*"Chad is one of the poorest countries in the world and one of the most affected countries by the consequences of environmental degradation. Today it is more than imperative for the people living in Chad to address this issue, given that, as an example, temperatures are rising to over 50 degrees. **The consequences, we are living them, it is important to become an actor and not an observer**."*

*"I will just take the example of **Lake Chad: 40 years ago, it had a surface area of 25,000 km2, today it is less than 2,500 km2, so this lake has lost more than 90% of its volume**. We are also exposed today to the advancing desert and experience irregularities in rainfalls, which impact agricultural yields on production, fishing and livestock. All of this is **pushing the populations of the north of the country to migrate to the southern areas which are a little more humid.** The population of northern Chad is mostly composed of nomadic herders, and in the south of farmers. The herders are forced to migrate to the south because the rains are no longer periodic. Herders in the drought-prone north are often forced to migrate south in search of pasture, yet at the same time farmers have not finished harvesting. Animals enter the fields, leading to conflicts and wars. This is a fact that is now becoming almost uncontrollable. **We are facing deadly conflicts in Chad, resulting in dozens and dozens of deaths every year.** It is lamentable. **Regarding the drainage of surface water, the retreat of Lake Chad leaves pools of water, which are vectors of diseases, such as malaria, cholera, typhoid, which kill thousands of people, especially children, every year in Chad.** It also leads to professional changes; people who were fishermen 20 years ago are forced to become herders, because they have no more water in their villages. This is a real source of poverty. **People today are really exposed to poverty and therefore more easily manipulated, hence the proliferation of extremist movements such as Boko Haram, who exploit them to enlist them. This has led to thousands of deaths and tens of thousands of displaced people in the Lake Chad basin region.**"*

*"I would therefore say that **today the issues of peace, development and the environment are inextricably linked**."*

- Joel Yodoyman, Coordinator of Espaces Verts du Sahel, Chad

2.3. Economic & habitat preservation unsustainability

There are very perceptible links between environmental challenges and economies. These interrelations may be embodied by different patterns: the positive and negative influence of natural resources on economic development opportunities in a country, the impact of natural disasters on the preservation of resources and infrastructures, or the issue of resources and land management (either because of their depletion or as a matter of sharing them between communities and countries). **Peaceful and thoughtful management of our environment can contribute to significantly improving economic incomes, ensuring their durability and preventing the hostilities that their vulnerability may generate**. It emerged from interviews with CSPPS members that this management is also seen as an affair of legal and political regulation, awareness raising and inclusion of civil society, and thus **a relevant statebuilding matter**.

Furthermore, the substantial losses of income directly imputable to environmental causes can even trigger two subsidiary consequences in some of the CSPPS national teams' country: **fostering forced migrations** and **favouring enrolment in terrorist groups** (possible reference to the aforementioned Somali and Chadian cases).

The environmental issues mostly reported as having drawbacks on economical sustainability and security of dwellings are overall the following: droughts, floods, destruction of ecosystems and particularly intensive deforestation, unsustainable use of agricultural lands and waste management issues.

Two processes inevitably entailing economic downturns have been reported:

The first is evident enough to not have to elaborate on it: **the destructive potency of environmental disasters**. In addition to affecting human security, with imaginable damages on infrastructures (habitats, work premises, essential public buildings, etc.) it is jeopardizing lands, which are generating resources that are not only an imperative condition of life, but sources of income (agricultural land, wood and other natural raw materials...).

Secondly, **environmental challenges in their multiplicity represent direct sources of impoverishment**. This may involve the scarcity of naturally renewable resources as well as the dependence or mismanagement of finite resources (mainly non-renewable energies and mining elements). One can also think about the economic upheavals following a natural disasters and recovery costs. Additionally, there might be conflicts, as aforementioned, mainly around food resources, but also with regard to energy exploitation, especially from one country to another. These difficulties are necessarily **intensified in a context of pronounced economic dependence on the agricultural, mining or energy sectors.**

This relationship between economic development and the environment is confirmed by the 2020 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)[4]. Out of the 10 indicators defining the "dimensions of poverty", 7 of them can depend on environmental conditions (namely: nutrition, child mortality, cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity and housing). Moreover, and as stated, "*poor and disadvantaged people suffer most from climate change and environmental degradation. The most disadvantaged carry a 'double burden': they are vulnerable to environmental degradation and must cope with immediate environmental threats.*" Indeed, the lowest rates of human and economic development are often cumulated with the highest environmental risks, demonstrating that the latter are additional factors of economic disempowerment.

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[4] UNDP, OPHI. "Multidimensional Poverty Index 2020: Charting pathways out of multidimensional poverty: Achieving the SDGs", July 2020

- **<u>The case of Sierra Leone</u>: a CSPPS member explains.**

The experience of the CSPPS Country Team in Sierra Leone is illustrative of many others.

The testimony of Musa Ansumana Soko, a member of CSPPS from WASH-Net Sierra Leone, follows:

First of all, he wished to comment on the weight of the human-induced environmental challenges on the Sierra Leonean economic development: "*As a matter of fact, **Sierra Leone has extensive natural resources**, but these are under pressure from population growth, dependence on biomass for energy needs, water pollution, and environmentally unsound mining activities, leading to high rates of deforestation, increased rates of soil erosion, and occurrence of landslides. **High dependence on agriculture and natural resources, coupled with high rates of poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation**, leave Sierra Leone vulnerable to environmental and climate change impacts. Land degradation in Sierra Leone is also aggravated by some natural disasters.*"

He also recalled the plurality of natural threats affecting Sierra Leone:

"*The natural disasters most commonly experienced in Sierra Leone include, but are not limited to:*
Tropical Storms*: These blow off the roofs of houses, destroy farms, fell trees across roads, damage overhead telephone and electrical cables etc,*
Reduced quantity, quality and drinking water source contamination*: Because of rapid climate change and accompanying impacts from flooding, higher weather patterns, water sources significantly get affected and as such supply becomes hugely challenged; resulting of poor communities surviving on already infested and unprotected water sources.*
Erosion and flooding*: These may cause the loss or inundation of farmlands, sweep bridges and houses away, loss of agricultural productivity, damage physical infrastructure (siltation of dams and water ways), and a deterioration of water quality, loss of aquatic ecosystems and the subsistence of local communities.*
Coastal erosion*: This threatens the lives and livelihoods of coastal communities.*
Windstorms, landslides and earthquakes *are natural phenomena: These cause major disruptions to economic life and require avoidance strategies.*
Drought: *Often hampers agricultural productivity, livestock management that would lead to loss of livelihood among pastoral communities and even displacement/migration.*
Desertification*: Often triggered by drought or over-exploitation of plant cover/trees by, for example, bush burning and intensive firewood extraction. This leads to dwindling of farm yields thereby negatively affecting livestock management with the resultant loss of livelihood and subsequent migration.*
Climate change impact*: This is caused by global warming, melting of ice in polar caps to sea level rise. It also causes coastal erosion, inundation of small islands, saline intrusion into coastal aquifers, and increase in the frequency of coastal storm surges and changes in ocean dynamics. This can impact on fisheries resources and undermine subsistence of local communities.*
Storm surges and changes in ocean dynamics*: This can impact on fisheries resources and undermine subsistence of local communities.*"

Finally, he highlighted the risk of conflict resulting from the interaction of these challenges with economic outcomes and the needed positive role that government authorities could assume: "*They both are primary sources of conflict especially when considering key dimensions in the fragility spectrum around economic foundations, revenues and services and to a significant extent, inclusive politics when it comes to making governance open and owned by all. In all interventions where conflict risk is salient (even if not immediate), there are opportunities for the **government and partners to contribute actively to conflict prevention, not only by mitigating the vulnerabilities affecting particular stakeholder groups but also by strengthening institutions of environmental cooperation and equitable resource governance**.*"

– Musa Asumana Soko, WASH-Net, Sierra Leone

III- Needs & Recommendations

The CSPPS members have not only outlined the various risks jeopardizing the peace, development, and environmental security nexus, but also the challenges impeding to thwart them. Recommendations are highlighted to provide constructive ideas and proactive solutions.
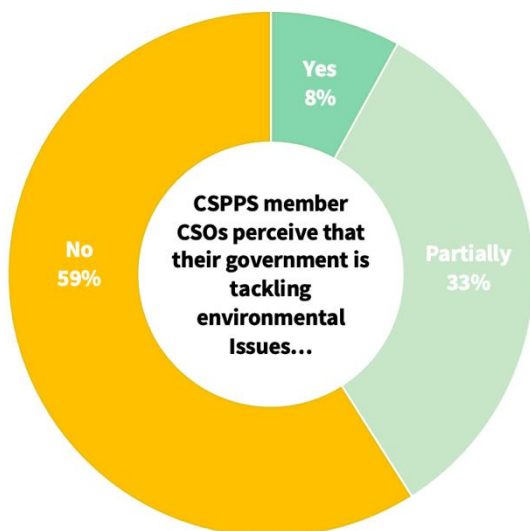
NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

Country teams across the Platform have reported an overall lack of policies or mechanisms in place dedicated to mitigating risks and effects of environmental challenges.

It might be the resulting situation of outright lack of political incentive or authoritarian governance. When policies or mechanisms have been put in place, the lack of communication or transparency surrounding them results in insufficient utilisation or implementation in practice. Some governments have been depicted as struggling with the assertion of environmental regulations in the face of powerful companies of the private sector, which are responsible for environmental damage. Often, the direct economic effects of intensive natural resource utilisation are prioritized over their sustainability. Political inaction on environmental challenges, whether or not coupled with conflict, is sometimes perceived to be linked to individual behaviour of political stakeholders, either out of disinterest or unwillingness to act, corruption and personal enrichment, the active exclusion of civil society in environmental response and in some cases, a neglect of accountability or transparency.

Furthermore, heightened situations of fragility, insecurity or even conflict, hinder the prioritization of environmental risk mitigation, often resulting in a lack of or weak institutions. Governments of fragile and conflict-affected states (and their external partners) are often focused on more immediate priorities, which carries the risk of exacerbating ongoing environmental threats in the country or region. Some conflicts even result in loss of governmental authority over certain areas of national territory or state institutions, impeding the implementation of countrywide comprehensive policies. Capacity shortcomings such as a lack of financial resources, expertise or technical organisation only further hamper the needed environmental action, limiting governments and civil society organisations in their scope of action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Yes 8%

No 59%

Partially 33%

CSPPS member CSOs perceive that their government is tackling environmental Issues...

To governing authorities

- **Build or consolidate institutional settings for environmental peacebuilding.** Governments are encouraged to establish institutions dedicated to managing environmental risks and their impact on peace, security and development. This could enable the definition of clear mechanisms for action and policy frameworks and to make them explicit to civil society and invite it to become a fully-fledge partner. This would also facilitate a local and therefore more effective action, thus freed from dependence on INGOs and UN operations.

- **Foster the strengthening of a preventive justice system**
  - To review existing regulations and international agendas in the environmental sector and to verify the adherence to these standards is also imperative to conflict prevention.
  - This entails the monitoring of corporate social responsibility and the enforcement of the necessary regulations on the private economic sector.
  - Working, particularly in a transboundary context, on the delimitation of exploration, exploitation and conservation areas.
  - Strengthen national judicial systems by empowering them to legally settle conflicts over resources.

- **Enable greater social justice and environmental risk mitigation through economic incentives**
  - Tax corporations emitting substantial negative externalities.
  - Reallocate these funds towards research and the financing of consumption alternatives that are less prejudicial to the environment, social justice and local economies, notably: local productions and green energies.
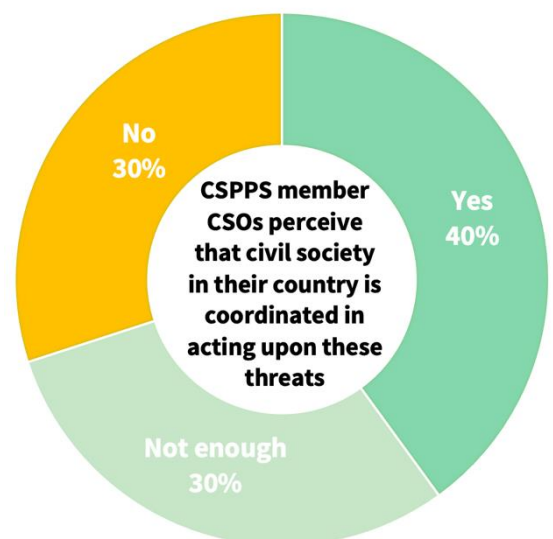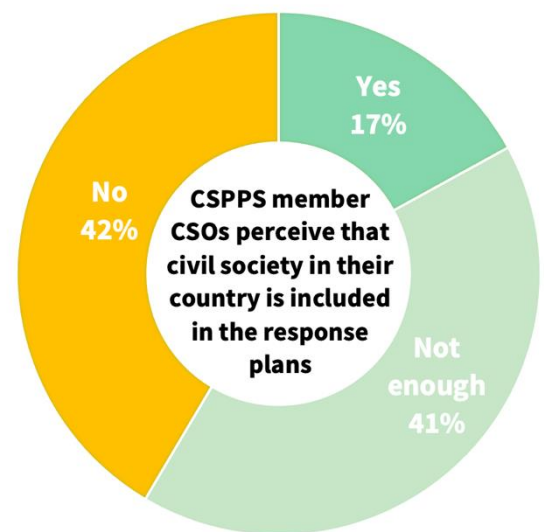
CSPPS members report a lack of coordination and political inclusion of civil society in the environmental realm, which is disconnected to its widespread need and desire for action.

In addition to a lack of action, the results of the consultation reflect a frequent exclusion of civil society from political spheres, sometimes coupled with a deficiency of civil society coordination around these challenges. Though, they are to be imperatively compared with other striking results of this CSPPS investigation. The perfect entirety of the consultations expressed: a willingness to act upon these threats (1); the fact that at least one CSO per Country Team has already acted in the environmental peacebuilding area, tried to, or put it on its agenda (2); and the desire to collaborate with other CSOs (3). In particular, 92% of those CSPPS members stated that the field of environmental risk mitigation is clearly tied, and thus relevant, to their peacebuilding and statebuilding activities.

CSOs often have to renounce to establish projects or abort them due to a lack of resources, mainly financial ones. This is the reason why the results show, on the one hand, a rather partial coordination of civil society, and on the other hand undeniable necessity and willingness to act. The clear majority of these Country Teams report too powerful holding-back factors to act in any way, principally funds unavailability, but it might also be because of (an often linked) lack of expertise or a situation of understaffing.

CSPPS member CSOs perceive that civil society in their country is included in the response plans

Yes 17%
Not enough 41%
No 42%

CSPPS member CSOs perceive that civil society in their country is coordinated in acting upon these threats

Yes 40%
Not enough 30%
No 30%

CSOs and NGOs
to initiate collaboration towards environmental peacebuilding.

These consultations demonstrated that coalition-building could be a way of bridging resource gaps and/or maximizing the impact of CSOs actions. Therefore, all organisations interested in working for the Peace-Development-Environment nexus should encourage each other to:

- Partner with organisations having similar or complementary eras of expertise, nationally and through transboundary work. Especially for purposes of peer-to-peer learning, networking, environmental peacebuilding , cross cutting actions, implementation, and joint advocacy work.
- Incorporate, when relevant, recovery from environmental upheavals in development and humanitarian relief activities.

Transnational actors, including the IDPS
as valuable fora for international discussion and action on environmental peacebuilding.

- Advocacy & Dialogue Steer
- Within the discussions of the IDPS itself, the question of environmental peacebuilding must be addressed, and the voice of civil society heard on these issues.
- The IDPS - and other international networks - shall enable civil society to share their findings, awareness raising messages and recommendations within international and high-level spheres, and to adopt common positions in these frameworks.
- CSPPS member CSOs recommend that the IDPS and other transnational stakeholders facilitate dialogues between political stakeholders and local peacebuilding CSOs, but also with the private economic actors. The aim would be to find agreements whereby the private sector serves as a promoter of peace and environmental security and not the opposite.

- Facilitation of International Knowledge Sharing
  The CSPPS CSOs also wish to encourage peer learning between political stakeholders in the context of international fora.

- Funding
- Donor partners are solicited in financial backing for projects aimed at mitigating both environmental and conflict risks and to adjust their funding streams to these emergencies.
- This involves supporting CSPPS and thus financing both a localized action and a common and international initiative.

- Policy development and implementation
  The IDPS and relevant transnational stakeholders are encouraged by CSPPS members to promote the development of environmental peacebuilding policy frameworks, including internationally, and to assist in the implementation of the existing ones.

CSPPS
to tackle environmental peacebuilding challenges.

- Advocacy within and outside the IDPS
  CSPPS shall facilitate the engagement of its member CSOs in international spheres for advocacy in the field of environmental peacebuilding, within and outside the IDPS.

- Networking and peer-to-peer learning
  Member CSOs expressed their desire to be connected to each other in order to confront common challenges together. Although already interlinked within the framework of CSPPS Country Teams, cross-border networking is sought. This, for purposes of regional and inter-regional collaboration, experience and knowledge sharing.

- Fundraising
  CSPPS should continue to serve as an interface platform between local CSOs and international donors and extend this fundraising mission to environmental peacebuilding projects.

- Technical support to project implementation
  CSPPS Secretariat should help in elaborating resources for environmental peacebuilding project implementation, such as: reports, cases studies of climate adaptation and mitigation operated by peacebuilding CSOs, policy briefs for CSOs as well as helping strategizing agendas and program or to run trainings on this matter.

Concluding

CSPPS' Statement

As a global network, CSPPS seeks to strengthen its actions by integrating the recommendations raised by its members and to respond as far as possible to our common concerns. We have therefore developed the following guideline to steer our future endeavours.

- **Risk Reduction through a Pre-emptively Focused Approach.**

Optimally, CSPPS seeks to be proactive in anticipating potential conflicts and hardship (partly) due to environmental challenges, before having to address their outbreaks, and is thus adopting a "risk reduction" approach.

1. REGULAR ASSESSMENT

Considering that **the cornerstone of a preventive approach is a timely and constant updating of information**, we call upon all CSPPS members to keep the Secretariat (and all the relevant members) informed of **their perceived environmental and conflict risks** simultaneously, in any possible and desired manner. Members CSOs' vision of the situation shall be documented, as far as possible ahead of the escalation of distress situations. This regular information may be about risks assessment but will also intend to review the **level of inclusion of civil society in the related national policies,** as well as **transnational coordination**, in order for CSPPS to support statebuilding processes…

2. RISK PREVENTION AND MITIGATION

…This, in order for **CSPPS to understand localised situations** and to strive to carry out a subsequent response. CSPPS holds a strategic position in the international development landscape and will use it to **conduct pre-emptive information and advocacy efforts to alert the international community and national stakeholders** about the reported situations. CSPPS also aspires to be enabled to above all support these prevention and **awareness-raising missions locally**, along with its members. To the fullest extent possible, CSPPS will endeavour to **support the environmental peacebuilding projects of its member CSOs intending to mitigate situations**, prior to the outbreak of a conflict or any adverse consequences for civil society welfare and development in their respective country.

(3) RESILIENCE

In the instance that a disaster or conflict has already erupted and is crippling our peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts, CSPPS also wishes to take action. In this event, our joint efforts will be focused on building resilience, that is to say, the be **simultaneously mitigating the harmful effects of conflict and post-conflict situations** and additionally, to be striving to **prevent future conflicts** from arising out of environment-related factors.

- **Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding**

CSPPS promotes an "environmental cooperation for peacebuilding" as a strategy to ensure the simultaneous maintenance of peace and environmental security. This cooperation has an underlying twofold virtue. Firstly, increasing cooperation around environmental challenges helps to **consolidate inclusive partnerships** (within civil society, between civil society and the governance of its country, and at international level). This is conducive to dialogue and to bringing societies together around shared issues, **fostering peaceful and constructive cooperation**. Secondly, in the longer run, the fruits of this cooperation may alleviate environmental insecurity and thus **mitigate an additional factor of conflict**, favouring peace.

To implement it, CSPPS seeks to support **cross-cutting partnerships and projects** via 3 intertwined goals:

INCLUSIVITY
in nexus projects

Every effort will be made to promote **a double inclusivity in CSPPS' projects.**

This inclusivity involves, on the one hand, **cross-cutting connections of the programmatic areas** of the projects undertaken, of the priorities they address. CSPPS' consultations shed light on the extremely prevalent need to tackle environmental challenges in order to achieve peace, and their ever-important link to the diverse missions of its CSOs. Whenever possible, CSPPS will therefore support the implementation of **projects about the Peace-Development-Environment nexus, including any specialisation of its CSOs,** notably when it comes to the crucial connection of the YPS and WPS agendas with these challenges.

On the other hand, and as a consequence, these cross-cutting projects shall **promote social inclusivity among their implementers**, whether in terms of gender, age, social strata, origin or culture. This will have the advantage of bringing complementary strengths to these projects in terms of perspectives and peaceful collaboration. But It is also a matter of aiming for **cooperation between CSOs**, in order to coordinate and **strengthen civil society participation** in these issues, as well as **overcoming possible resources gaps** (by building on their complementarity between CSOs or by gaining visibility as coalitions).

INTERDISCIPLINARY
expertise

Addressing nexus projects, requires a pooling of complementary expertise in various fields. This can indeed be addressed through increased inclusivity and cooperation. CSPPS wishes to **connect CSOs with experience in different specialisations**. In particular, our desire for **knowledge-sharing** was emphasized, notably by the interest in simultaneously **engaging the insights of the scientific and of the peacebuilding sector** in future projects.

TRANSBOUNDARY
initiatives

We will also intend to capitalise on our position as an international network to connect members, not only in the framework of Country Teams, but also CSOs at regional level. Indeed, a transnational collaboration, whenever possible, can yield multiple payoffs. This is relevant in terms of coalition-building and project implementation because **environmental challenges are universally encountered and often regionally similar.** Secondly, we believe that this international collaboration carries the prospect of peace. Especially because **instead of creating resource conflicts between countries, the same issue could on the contrary be an additional motive for peaceful collaboration.**

About CSPPS

[The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS)](#) is a global network of civil society organisations (CSOs) supporting peacebuilding efforts in fragile and conflict-affected settings, jointly striving for inclusive societies and sustainable peace.

Cordaid, as part of its commitment to addressing fragility, hosts the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. The Secretariat is managed and coordinated by Peter van Sluijs, Senior Strategist at Cordaid.

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