Report: Working together to build climate resilience in fragile and conflict-affected situations

Monday 11 – Wednesday 13 March 2024

In partnership with

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ODI and the Center for Climate and Security, with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development

Background

Communities affected by fragility, conflict and violence face overlapping risks, including heightened vulnerability to climate change and food insecurity. Fragility and conflict reduce people's capacities to cope with shocks and stressors, and to adapt to climate change. Climate shocks and stressors further erode livelihoods, assets and wellbeing at the individual to community scales, and place further pressure on fragile infrastructure, basic services and governance systems at subnational to national scales.

The COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace (henceforth 'the Declaration') is a call to change the way 'governments, international and regional organizations, international and regional financial institutions, philanthropic and private sector entities, and organizations from the climate, environment, development, humanitarian, and peace sectors' work in fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCAS). The Declaration underpins the urgency to explore how climate, development, humanitarian, DRR and peace actors, together with governments, international and regional organizations and financial institutions, can collectively move beyond a crisis-based approach to supporting climate adaptation and peace outcomes. This requires a shift to linking and sequencing short- and long-term investments to build forward better, including by providing earlier and more timely support, to yield cumulative increases in the adaptive capacity, recovery and resilience of not only people and communities, but also the institutions and systems on which overall resilience is built. Greater cooperation among actors is critical to scale, link and sequence interventions, and accelerate and finance resilience and adaptation efforts commensurate with the scale of the challenge faced in FCAS.

In partnership with COP28, ODI and the Center for Climate and Security, in conjunction with Wilton Park, hosted a dialogue between humanitarian, climate, disaster risk management (DRM)1, peace and development actors to discuss lessons learned; to identify gaps, avenues for financing and good practice in areas such as coordination, communication, cooperation on intervention objectives, design and implementation; and discuss how to bridge the silos between these communities. The dialogue built on a previous discussion hosted by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, in conjunction with Wilton Park, in July 2023 on the role of international climate adaptation finance in addressing the underlying climate-related drivers of humanitarian need.

A key focus of the dialogue was on how to scale up, link and sequence interventions to bridge the silos between these communities, and accelerate and finance resilience and climate adaptation efforts to deliver on the Declaration. This dialogue was the first multi-stakeholder meeting on the Declaration to inform the route towards COP29 and beyond.

Although government representatives from various country signatories, including FCAS, were invited, only representatives from Somalia were able to attend for various reasons. Their perspectives and priorities are therefore not sufficiently represented in this event report. Government signatories to the Declaration must be included in further engagement and policy moments around the Declaration, to ensure that actions taken in the name of the Declaration are led by and supportive of Parties (countries) to the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC, as appropriate, while furthering cooperation efforts under non-climate forums.

The dialogue was conducted through guided working sessions, individual reflective commentary and facilitated plenary discussion. Key takeaway points, proposed actions and next steps are summarised in this event report.

Dialogue: Overall takeaways

The overall takeaway points of the dialogue can be summarised as follows.

- **Capitalise on the momentum to strengthen climate action in FCAS:** As many participants pointed out, there is strong interest from multiple organisations, funders and countries in advancing the Declaration and ensuring that words are turned into action. But motivation and momentum could quickly fade if more engagement efforts are not made to develop a consensus on visions of resilience and how the mandates and strengths of various organisations and funders can be better leveraged for working together with

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1 This report refers to both disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disaster risk management (DRM). DRR is the overall aim of the sector, which is achieved through DRM.

governments (where appropriate) and communities to support country- to community-owned resilience and climate adaptation priorities. Participants agreed on the needs to: (1) capitalise on the high-level commitments by building on current collective motivation; (2) articulate actions that advance the Declaration, prioritising geographical areas where these actions can be manifested; and (3) navigate the politics of donors, recipients, implementers and scaling reforms. Key policy moments for convening to continue discussions, refine priorities and engage with additional actors in the run-up to COP29 and beyond were flagged.

- **Need for further dialogues and spaces for discussion on strengthening climate action in FCAS:** This dialogue was the first to bring together actors from humanitarian–development–peace (HDP), disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate fields with representatives from governments, multilateral development banks and vertical climate funds. Participants noted the need for more convening and dialogues to clarify priorities for action and ways of working.

- **Taking the Declaration to future COPs and beyond:** Participants cautioned against the Declaration being something simply signed at COP28, with no further action to take it forward among the signatories. It was also cautioned that actions toward realising the Declaration could not only occur within the UNFCCC processes. Participants expressed resolve to engage with the Presidencies of COP29 and COP30 to continue to implement the Declaration, while highlighting the need to work through national, regional and international policy processes and financial mechanisms beyond UNFCCC.

- **Identify countries to initiate the implementation of the Declaration:** Participants agreed to identify a few countries, from among those that are signatories to the Declaration, to anchor the implementation of the Declaration and explore how to co-operationalise suggested, priority actions that arose during discussions with those countries.

Dialogue: Key points of discussion

The dialogue included discussions on some key issues to be addressed during operationalisation of the Declaration. These issues centred around building collective vocabularies on vulnerability, exposure, fragility, conflict and climate impacts and risks; working towards a common vision for country-led climate-resilient development, taking into account contextual specificities; and building capacities to understand what types of financing can or cannot be used for certain interventions, as well as strengthening FCAS' climate finance readiness and climate-resilient development implementation capacities.

Terminology

The issue of terminology came up frequently. Participants reminded each other that FCAS are not homogenous contexts, and that even definitions and views of 'fragility' and 'conflict' are conceived differently by different organisations. Countries classified as FCAS – whether using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Bank or internal organisation classification systems – can exhibit a range of characteristics such as no war/no peace situations, high-intensity conflict, absence of a government, transitions from forming a government to strengthening governance or institutional fragility. Characteristics may even vary within countries.

Terminology is critical to the definition of climate resilience, and to actions to deliver on it as pledged by signatories of the Declaration. Participants noted that terminology used by various communities of practice – vulnerability, exposure, resilience, adaptation, risk – are not always comparable between HDP, DRM and climate actors, and this can influence how interventions are designed and deployed. Terminology tends to differ with the mandate of actors and inadvertently creates tension. This was evident during the discussions on finance in which it was pointed out that the use of humanitarian finance for DRR does not equate to humanitarian actors doing DRR. It was also pointed out that terminology is also not always amenable to translation into local languages. As such, terms might not be understood by local stakeholders in FCAS or reflect their priorities.

Discussions on vulnerability and risk must be specific about the spatial scale – individuals, households, specific groups, systems (e.g. basic services and infrastructure, economy) – and institutions (e.g. government capacity) that are considered vulnerable (see Figure 1). Vulnerabilities and risks also change with time, interventions will have different lifetimes of impact and not all interventions need to consider climate change (see Figure 2). Participants agreed that interventions should aim to reduce one or more elements of vulnerability at the different spatial or time scales, but also need to consider conflict and climate risk assessment for understanding how an intervention could inadvertently create/exacerbate conflict risks and/or maladaptation. One proposal suggested the need for a vulnerability compact to address this.

However, tensions also emerged around using a common language, because the meanings of different terms are related to the mandates of organisations. This tension became clear during the discussions on finance, with examples raised about humanitarian finance being used to deliver DRM, does not mean that humanitarian actors are delivering DRM.
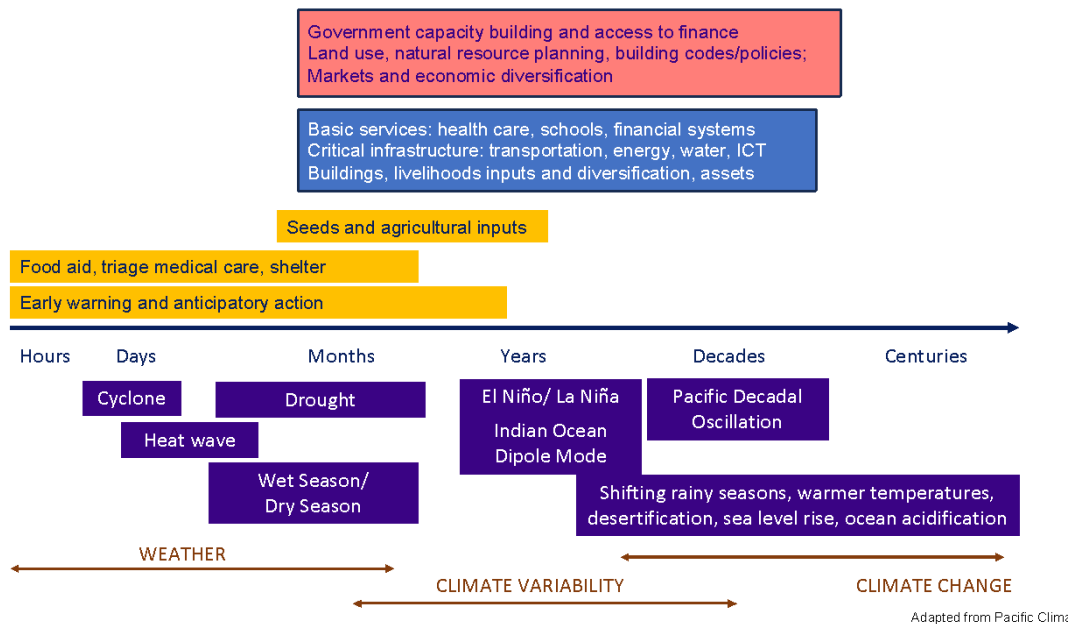
Figure 1: Spatial scales of vulnerability

Interventions are targeting what vulnerabilities at which spatial scales, for whom or what?

Adapted from ISET, 2010
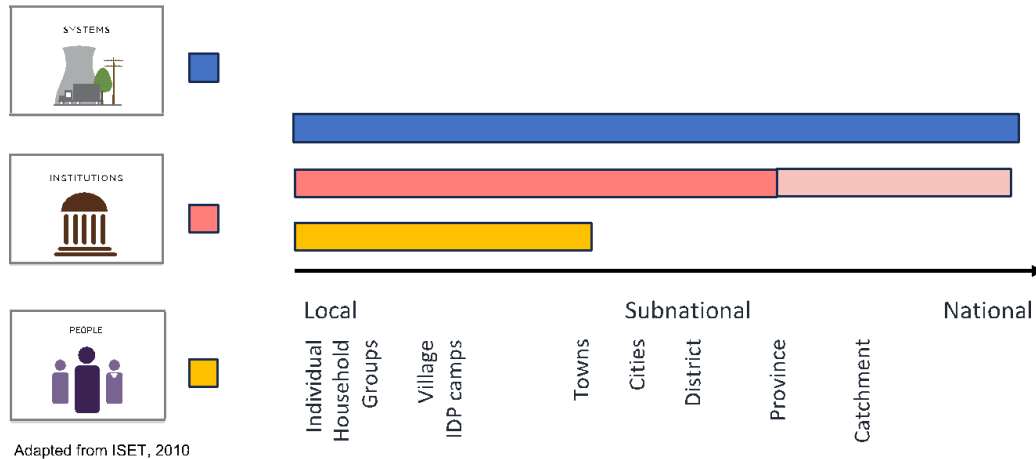
Source: ODI Global Risks and Resilience

Figure 2: Time scales

Time scale of expected lifetime of interventions?

Source: ODI Global Risks and Resilience

Approaches to building resilience

Participants agreed that building durable and local- to national-scale climate resilience in FCAS necessitates a shift away from small-scale, incremental adaptation to transformational adaptation. Climate resilience in FCAS is intrinsically linked to development; transformational adaptation at the scales needed – from local to national – can only be delivered through more risk-informed, equitable and sustainable development. It was noted that FCAS are being deprived of core development assistance, thereby threatening or reversing many of the development gains in FCAS and eroding climate resilience.

Participants' perspectives differed on how to break the cycle of fragility in FCAS, particularly in contexts also affected by violent conflict. Some stressed that approaches that prioritise peacebuilding and humanitarian responses before delivering development, DRM and climate action need to be reconsidered in favour of approaches that build adaptive capacity to a range of conflict and climate risks. It was, however, pointed out by others that there can be no resilience in the absence of peace, as violent conflict will destroy or erode development, climate and DRM investments.

Thus, participants agreed that approaches need to be context appropriate. For example, in contexts of high-intensity conflict, interventions may need to be more around shock-responsive human security needs and peace stabilisation, but in contexts of simmering or protracted conflict, a blend of interventions might be appropriate that target both shorter-term 'coping with crises' to more medium-term approaches such as peacebuilding, supporting health centres or schools, or building and transitioning handovers of community-based financial systems.

What (sets of) interventions are appropriate will continue to depend on the mandates of delivery partners, and their capacities to understand and account for fragility and/or conflict, climate and other risks in intervention design, implementation, monitoring and adaptive learning. The impetus of the Declaration was reaffirmed – better coordination between HDP, DRM and climate actors, financial institutions, governments and international and regional organizations towards linking, layering and sequencing interventions to deliver on transitions towards transformational adaptation and climate-resilient development is the only way to support FCAS.

Finance: Appropriateness, readiness and access

Participants emphasized the urgency of accelerating finance for portfolios of interventions that might be linked, layered and sequenced to support country-led transformations to climate-resilient development. Conversations centred on access, appropriateness, quantity, quality, utilisation and effectiveness of various types of finance.

- *Access:* Discussions echoed the need to enhance responsiveness of finance providers (especially international financial institutions and multilateral development banks) and speed of access by simplifying frameworks, processes and requirements for access for FCAS. Some participants noted the unfair criticism of absorption capacity of FCAS without regard to the requirements for access that are beyond the reach of FCAS and the multiple crises facing FCAS.

- *Appropriateness:* Various types of finance are constrained to certain types of interventions – they cannot be used beyond the scope of the fund's mandate.

- *Quantity:* Finance for building climate resilience goes beyond the existing yearly $100 billion climate finance that developed countries committed to provide and mobilise to developing countries. Resilience finance encompasses all finance that builds resilience to climate change.

- *Quality:* The quality of finance is critical and finance that builds climate resilience should not lead to debt distress for FCAS.

- *Utilisation:* The multiple crises facing FCAS mean that countries have competing uses of the official development assistance (ODA) they receive and that ODA is not being prioritized for building climate resilience. For example, some countries are using up to a third of the ODA they receive towards managing refugees. There is an urgent need to build a pipeline of solutions and local partners to deliver these solutions and to improve synergies between climate resilience and other uses of ODA. *Effectiveness of finance:* Discussions highlighted the need to reconsider how to channel and use existing funds in a future that is likely to be characterised by shrinking humanitarian pools and ODA. The aid architecture and proliferation of global initiatives translates into an even greater number of national channels, competition for resources, and siloed programming. This has the effect of splitting existing funds into smaller pockets that are not easily collectively leveraged to support community- to country-led resilience and adaptation efforts. Participants reiterated the need for greater transparency in how existing funds are used and the impacts of those funds, their beneficiaries, and for finance to target the 'local level'. Some pointed out the need to overcome the obsession with scale and direct finance towards a multitude of local interventions, while others stressed the need for scale but with tailor-made interventions.

Suggestions were made for donors to consider flexible and responsive funding arrangements that rely on the use of crisis modifiers, and explore 'market-based solutions' and de-risking instruments. Other suggestions included expanding pilots with the objective of learning what works and then scaling interventions, exploring innovative financing mechanisms (e.g. debt swaps) and promoting partnerships with the private sector. It was also suggested that donors should consider longer time horizons to enable projects to be better layered and sequenced, and for tracking effectiveness with time. Donors did note,

however, that there are constraints on various funds and that it will take time and consistent engagement to shift finance/donor institutional structures.

Moving beyond recognition of the humanitarian–development–peace nexus

Participants agreed that the HDP nexus has gained recognition, but it is yet to be concretely operationalised in various contexts to demonstrably reduce the need for humanitarian assistance over time. Participants engaged on their ambition for moving beyond the nexus to strengthen linkages with DRM and climate actors. The also discussed practical experiences around strengthening collaboration and coordination in various country contexts and improving monitoring and adaptive learning.

Highlights of this discussion included the following.

- Putting a common vision of resilience at the heart of collaborative efforts.

- Shared or collective integrated conflict/fragility and climate risk analyses of various contexts to identify structural obstacles to building climate resilience, and to inform finance flows and the design and deployment of resilience interventions.

- Complementary collaboration and coordination on risk analysis tools and linking this analysis with national processes to better support country-owned climate resilience.

- Integrating climate information into HDP programming and integrating fragility/conflict-sensitive guidance into climate programming and climate risk assessments.

- Working beyond silos and fragmentation to use humanitarian and peacebuilding finance towards development, supporting interventions for climate resilience in a manner that avoids maladaptation and leaves no one behind.

- Ensuring that climate change mitigation and adaptation projects do not exacerbate conflict and social inequalities.

- Outcome-based planning and using common metrics, approaches, and monitoring, evaluation and learning tools to measure outcomes.

- Overcoming political, institutional and operational challenges to deliver support in FCAS.

- Strategically linking, layering and sequencing multiple organisations' activities.

- Need for sharing practical experiences, models and strategies of linking, layering and sequencing activities across organisations.

- Advocating for financing across multiple types of programming, while safeguarding financing to respond to immediate humanitarian needs as they arise.

Principles for building climate resilience through HDP, DRM and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) assistance

Discussions identified considerations and principles for building climate resilience in FCAS through HDP, DRM and CCA activities. Key among these were the need to reconfigure programming approaches to serve local communities through area-based coordination of multiple types of activities. Participants reiterated the need to establish clear communication channels to support linking, layering and sequencing of activities based on context and local to national priorities, and flexibility to strategically steer programming to respond to dynamic contexts.

Discussion reinforced the need for strong environmental and social safeguards in the provision of climate finance, and the risks of relaxing these safeguards in FCAS. Suggestions were made for collaborations with peacebuilding and humanitarian actors in implementing climate-resilience programming. Collaboration is not contrary to humanitarian or peacebuilding principles. Participants pointed out that complementarity and collaboration can enable HDP, DRM and climate actors to harness mandates, expertise, capacity and differing principles of engagement to deliver better outcomes in contexts with weak, fragmented, decentralised or absent government participation. The right level of collaboration based on people-centred approaches in each context can also enable the shift away from small community-based interventions delivering incremental adaptation to transformational adaptation, and advance the shared goal of reinforcing and linking local to national systems. Participants were reminded to distinguish between people-centred approaches and localisation as the two approaches differ in terms of process, focus and interventions.

At the same time, there were contrasting perspectives on approaches and investments to building climate resilience. Some participants advocated for greater investments in DRR, particularly in early warning systems and early action, premised on anticipating immediate needs within FCAS given hazard forecasts; others advocated for investments that enable medium- to long-term adaptation to climate change. Some noted the growing trend of early warning systems that are either not used or are used only by a small set of actors. The need for toolkits and guiding frameworks was also discussed, as was the proliferation of platforms at country levels. Some participants were concerned about the proliferation of toolkits and the absence of guidance on their relevance and application. Others cautioned against creating new platforms and advised working through existing structures.

In the end, discussions converged around the need for people-centred, locally led, nationally owned, and regionally and globally supported interventions to build climate resilience in FCAS.

Proposed actions

Participants repeatedly emphasised the need to identify a suite of concrete actions, each with clear ownership and delivery dates, to advance the Declaration. On the final day, the proposals and actions identified throughout the dialogue were grouped and summarized by categories: finance, programming, evidence building, localisation and country platforms. Some actions aim at advocacy during key policy processes in 2024 (see Figure 3), while others are focused on technical work. The main actions were as follows.

- Identify geographies based on willingness of actors, existing communities of practice and availability of platforms to anchor the implementation of the Declaration.

- Adopt a needs-based finance approach that is based on assessment of the landscape, barriers and opportunities to build a coalition of actors to advance the Declaration.

- Use the coalition to synchronise risk analysis frameworks, explore the United Nations Climate Security Mechanism, galvanise climate finance, interrogate people-centred approaches to support countries' building of climate resilience, form partnerships with all levels of government and non-government partners, and build on the knowledge of existing national and international networks.

- Use the coalition to promote risk-informed linking, layering and sequencing of interventions by multiple actors with the objective of building climate resilience.

- Strengthen the evidence base of successful linked and sequenced interventions that build climate resilience.

- Create a repository of information on FCAS.

- Engage with UNFCCC processes to amplify the needs of FCAS.

- Engage proactively with key political and policy processes, including those beyond UNFCCC, to advance the Declaration.

Figure 2: Time scales

Key policy events 2024
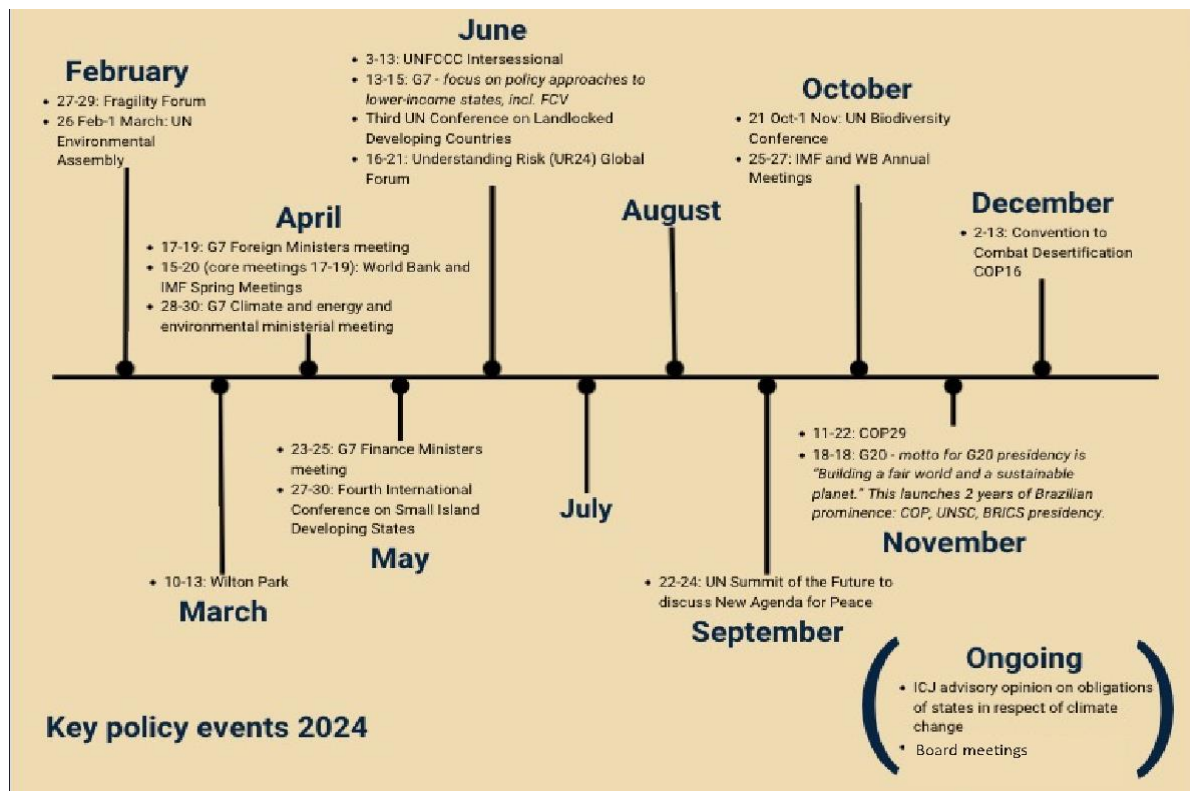
Next steps

- Participants agreed to review the actions emerging from the Dialogue to identify concrete actions to take forward in support of the Declaration, timelines and actor responsibilities.

- Participants agreed to convene regular meetings to advance the agenda.

- Participants agreed to engage with actors, in particular those from FCAS, that were not present at the Dialogue and bring them into the coalitions being built to advance the Declaration.

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