

EU contribution to the UN Secretary General's Report on Climate Change and International Security

The risks posed by climate change are real and its impacts are already taking place, also with regard to international security. We expect that this will intensify in the years ahead. Climate science continues to evolve and there are indications that climate change poses an increasing risk and that the window of action might be closing. Hence, urgent action is needed at the global, regional and local levels. The EU is committed to addressing these challenges through a global partnership between developed and developing countries. All human societies will be affected, albeit to a varying degree and in different ways, and the more vulnerable ones will need our solidarity and assistance. There is a need for a comprehensive approach by raising awareness, increasing understanding and promoting concrete action. Our response to the security challenges posed by climate change must draw on the full range of policy tools and diplomatic efforts, including environmental enhancement, development and humanitarian assistance, trade, crisis management as well as security policy.

EU remains committed to limiting global warming to a maximum of 2°C, a goal that was also endorsed by the Major Economies Forum in L'Aquila. Global warming beyond 2°C may trigger a number of tipping points that would lead to further accelerated, irreversible and largely unpredictable climate changes, which, in turn, may lead to unprecedented security challenges. Mitigation measures reduce the magnitude of impacts of global warming and in turn reduce adaptation needs. Mitigation will also allow us to diminish the challenges represented by the shrinking global reserves of fossil fuels. Investment in mitigation to avoid worst case scenarios, as well as ways to adapt to the unavoidable consequences should go hand in hand with efforts to address the international security threats and risks created by climate change; they should all be viewed as part of preventive security policy.

In this global age, instability anywhere in the world can affect our security more quickly and in more far reaching ways than before. Climate change is best viewed as a "threat multiplier" which exacerbates existing trends, tensions and instability. Climate change is likely to undermine achievements and efforts to reach the Millennium and other internationally agreed development goals. It threatens to overburden states and regions which are already fragile and prone to conflict. Climate change presents a considerable challenge to global governance, but has also the potential to strengthen it, if the challenges are met jointly by human societies, countries and institutions around the globe.

Amongst the challenges that need to be met, are the following;

- the destabilizing effect of **global warming** to natural systems and ecological productivity
- threats to **human security** (when people's livelihoods are depleted or through increased spread of diseases such as malaria and water borne diseases)
- conflicts over shrinking or changing **resources** (including food and water, reduction of arable land, diminishing fish stock), compounded by population growth. Water shortage in particular has the potential to cause civil unrest and lead to significant economic losses, even in robust economies
- tensions over trade routes, maritime zones and natural resources previously inaccessible, as well as possible limited **accessibility** of energy supplies from

climate change prone regions

- **economic damage** and risk to coastal cities and critical infrastructure. One fifth of the world's population lives in coastal zones which are also home to major infrastructure. Sea-level rise and the increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters pose a serious threat to these regions and their economic prospect
- loss of **territory** and border disputes (receding coastlines and loss of entire countries, including small islands states). More disputes over land and maritime borders and their territorial rights are likely and will have to be dealt with within the realm of international law
- environmental **migration** (within and between countries) that the UN predicts will amount to the millions by 2020, with climate change being one of the main drivers of this phenomenon
- more frequent and intensified **natural catastrophes** such as hurricanes, floods, droughts, heat waves, forest and bush fires or epidemics
- overstretching of already limited governance capacities of weak or failing states, leading to new or deterioration of existing situations of **fragility** and **political radicalisation**
- need to ensure that the development of **civil nuclear energy** is carried out under the best conditions of non-proliferation, security and safety.
- pressure on **international governance** that will arise if the international community fails to address the threats outlined above.

EU stands ready to support the UN

Climate change is a global challenge that needs to be tackled at the global level. The UN has a central role across the board in addressing the security implications of climate change. The UN Secretary General's report is an important opportunity for the UN to take the lead in this process, lay out how best the UN system can contribute to these challenges, and examine whether the UN has the right internal coordination mechanisms in place to successfully deal with such a cross cutting challenge.

The EU stands ready to support the UN in this endeavor. The EU High Representative and European Commission March 2008 report sets out initial recommendations for action [attached]. These were supplemented by a paper from the EU High Representative in December 2008 [attached], with more detailed recommendations. Over the last year, the European Commission and Council secretariat have been working in close cooperation with Member States and others on their implementation on the basis of a roadmap, including with other international and regional organisations, NGOs, think tanks and civil society. Through our regular political dialogue with third countries, the EU has raised the issue with more than 35 partners, and held consultations with other organisations (UN, OSCE, ARF, AU).

At the European level we have identified the need to focus on enhancing capacities, knowledge and integration. The aspects outlined below may also be relevant for the UN-system;

- promoting further research and analysis on a region by region basis and enhanced early warning by identifying regions at risk. There is also a need to better understand how climate change might affect conflict dynamics. The analysis should pay particular attention to situations of state fragility and political radicalisation, possible tensions over natural resources and energy supplies, socio-environmental stresses, linkages between ecological resilience, productivity and stability, anticipated threats to critical infrastructure and economic assets, border disputes, the impact on human rights and potential migratory movements
- updating watch lists so that climate change and its impacts are included in existing instruments, such as early warning systems
- developing capacities to deal with the effects of climate change on the need for disaster relief and the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts
- developing methodologies to integrate climate change into development cooperation tools and strategies.

At a multilateral level, efforts should focus on;

- achieving an ambitious, viable and sustainable post 2012 international climate regime, keeping global mean temperature increase below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels
- developing a dialogue on the security aspects of climate change in multilateral fora. It is important that this issue is addressed by policy makers in the foreign relations, environmental, security, development and trade fields
- better international cooperation on early warning, prevention and response to the security threats posed by climate change, especially at a regional level.

Proposals for the UN

The UNGA resolution 63/281 has been an important demonstration of international commitment to addressing this issue. The EU will support the UN system in taking up the challenges of addressing climate change and international security by pursuing the following goals;

- discussion on climate change and security in international fora. The UNSC debate in April 2007 and the recent UNGA resolution 63/281 on Climate Change and Security are two major steps in this process. More debate is required to raise awareness and ownership. We hope that these discussions will positively influence COP 15 in Copenhagen and vice-versa. In line with this the EU supports that the issue be kept regularly on the agenda of the UN General Assembly, i.e. by requesting recurrent reports (annual, ad hoc or otherwise) of the Secretary General. The EU also supports consideration by the UN Security Council on this issue on a regular basis, if necessary
- enhance policy coherence by mainstreaming climate protection into national, foreign, development, environmental, trade and security policies. Keeping the issue of climate change high on the world's agenda will

maintain awareness and ownership beyond Copenhagen and give the necessary political traction to drive policies

- integration of climate change issues into existing security mechanisms (early warning systems, conflict prevention, management and resolution)
- sharing of analysis. We are still at an early stage of our collective understanding of this issue. Detailed analysis will be crucial on the causal links between climate change and security, on the impact of climate change on existing situations of tensions as well as on possible regional security consequences of climate change. We therefore need better sharing of assessments, particularly on early warning, between different regions and international organisations. Many UN agencies have a role to play, where UNEP and CEB would seem to have a given role in promoting UN coherence on climate change. The role of the UNFCCC should be highlighted in this regard. The security dimension may need to be further considered within these efforts
- support for the strengthening of relevant observation networks such as the GCOS (Global Climate Observing System) and the ongoing work on the development of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS)
- managing disasters. Climate-related disasters are likely to increase in the future. International co-operation and improved capabilities will be crucial, to reduce risks in advance, manage crisis and respond to the consequences afterwards. The UN, including OCHA and UNHCR, may need to further review and develop its capacity to manage an anticipated growth in disasters and migration flows related to climate change
- defining common guidelines for disaster prevention and management to be used in developing national plans, in collaboration with the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), building on the Hyogo Framework for Action and on national experiences as well as improving management risks, awareness raising and training of the population and civil protection real-time response, such as logistical support for emergency situations
- more systematic utilization of win-win opportunities to ensure that regional / multinational adaptation activities can have a trust creating and peacebuilding function
- mainstreaming climate change within the realm of UN activities: it is important that relevant organs take into account the security implications of climate change and aim to strengthen this aspect of their work. For example, ongoing efforts in the Secretariat, notably in DPKO and DPA, to mainstream climate change concerns in the security realm could become more systematic. DPKO and DPA could, for example, further develop their analytical capacity taking into account climate aspects in specific country situations. This applies as well to the UN Funds, Programmes and specialized Agencies. The monitoring and planning capacities of agencies should be strengthened at both HQ, regional and country level. Efforts

should be made to co-ordinate UN's activities in this field with that of regional organizations such as the EU, AU etc.

- emphasizing the reduction of above mentioned threats in current negotiation processes within UNFCCC on how to design adaptation strategies in the most vulnerable regions and countries

Climate change is a global challenge that can only be tackled at a global level. Solutions must be based on a just and comprehensive system of multilateralism. If these efforts fail, it is likely that, from the mid 21st century onwards, crisis management on a global dimension will have to contend with the proliferation of local and regional conflicts and the destabilization of the international system, threatening global economic development and overwhelming global governance structures. The political scope for peaceful management and mitigation of conflicts would narrow steadily while the costs of crisis response and adaptation to climate change would escalate. In order to avoid these dangerous developments, policies in response to the security implications of climate change must be put on track now. The UN Secretary General's report is therefore an important opportunity to take a lead in this process. The EU stands ready to contribute and work with its partners.

Focal points for the Swedish Presidency of the European Union: Alexandra Berg von Linde (Ministry for Foreign Affairs) and Katarina Engberg (Ministry for Defence)

Focal point for European Commission: Alessandro Villa (RELEX A2)

Focal point for EU Council Secretariat: Ikaros Moushouttas (Policy Unit)