



A New Climate for Peace

Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An independent report commissioned by the G7 members

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Climate change is a global threat to security in the 21st century. We must act quickly to limit the future risks to the planet we share and to the peace we seek.

Achieving a robust agreement to reduce emissions is of paramount importance. Yet the relentless momentum of change means that despite future emissions reductions, the physical impacts from anthropogenic climate change are already visible and will continue for decades to come.

Climate change will stress our economic, social, and political systems. Where institutions and governments are unable to manage the stress or absorb the shocks of a changing climate, the risks to the stability of states and societies will increase.

The sharpest risks emerge when the impacts of climate change overburden weak states. Climate change is the ultimate “threat multiplier”: it will aggravate already fragile situations and may contribute to social upheaval and even violent conflict.

While all will feel the effects of climate change, the people in the poorest countries—and the most vulnerable groups within those countries—are the most threatened. In places affected by fragility and conflict, people face especially challenging obstacles to successful adaptation. If they fail to adapt to the effects of climate change, the risk of instability will increase, trapping them in a vicious cycle.

But even seemingly stable states can be pushed towards fragility if the pressure is high enough or the shock too great for systems to manage peacefully. Peace and security are paramount for all of us. We all share the risks—and thus we share the responsibility for tackling them.

“A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks”, an independent report commissioned by members of the G7, identifies seven compound climate-fragility risks that pose serious threats to the stability of states and societies in the decades ahead. Based on a thorough assessment of existing policies on climate change adaptation, development cooperation and humanitarian aid, and peacebuilding, the report recommends that the G7 take concrete action, both as individual members and jointly, to tackle climate-fragility risks and increase the resilience of states and societies to them.

Seven Compound Climate-Fragility Risks

The planet's limited resources are under pressure. While the global marketplace provides a growing number of people with a seemingly unending flow of goods, too many people in developing countries struggle to meet their daily needs, with limited access to basic services and functional markets.

Demand for food, water, and energy is increasing, particularly where the population or the economy is growing rapidly. Widespread unemployment, rapid urbanization, and environmental degradation challenge efforts to reduce poverty and increase economic development in many poor countries. In fragile regions, persistent inequality, political marginalization, and unresponsive governments exacerbate these stresses, increasing the potential for instability and conflict. Adding the impacts of a changing climate on water, food, and land will multiply these pressures and strain countries' ability to meet their citizens' needs.

The capacity of states and societies to meet this challenge can be measured along a spectrum of fragility, from most fragile to most resilient. Resilient states build constructive relationships with their citizens, maintain functioning institutions, and provide basic services. Resilient countries can absorb shocks and handle stresses peacefully, while maintaining political stability and preventing violence.

Fragile situations, on the other hand, arise when states cannot provide basic services, protect their citizens, or develop mutually constructive relations with society. Even states that are otherwise stable may endure periods of fragility or harbour pockets of fragility. If not managed well, these periods or pockets can spur a downward spiral of fragility and conflict, where states are locked into cycles of repeated violence, weak governance, and instability.

Managing these challenges begins with a clear understanding of the compound climate-fragility risks that emerge when climate change interacts with other social, economic, and environmental pressures, such as rapid urbanization, inequality, economic shocks, and environmental degradation.

1. Local resource competition

As the pressure on natural resources increases, competition can lead to instability and even violent conflict in the absence of effective dispute resolution.

Access to natural resources, particularly water and arable land, will be constrained in some regions due to climate change. At the same time, demand is increasing in areas with growing populations and rapid economic development. Together, these trends may spur competition over essential resources, increasing tensions and provoking local conflicts. Competition over resources is likely to be particularly disruptive in regions that rely on a narrow resource base, have a history of conflict, or are home to marginalized groups. Local competition can also trigger problems at the national and international levels. However, equitable and effective natural resource management can help reduce fragility and prevent the consequences of climate change, including increased competition over limited resources, from escalating into violence.



2. Livelihood insecurity and migration

Climate changes will increase the human insecurity of people who depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, which could push them to migrate or turn to illegal sources of income.

Many people who depend directly on natural resources will find their livelihoods endangered by climate change. In some areas, climate change will reduce grazing land, dry up water sources, and threaten jobs connected to climate-sensitive economic sectors. These environmental changes can combine with other problems such as unequal land distribution, insecure land tenure, poorly developed markets, trade barriers, and inadequate infrastructure to push populations to seek alternative livelihoods. Some will move to urban areas that already suffer from high levels of unemployment and poor living conditions, while others may be forced to turn to more informal or illegal sources of income. Climate change will alter both existing migration patterns and the number of people likely to move. While migration can be an effective way to cope with climate stress, the increased movement of people driven by climate change impacts could, if migration and resettlement are poorly managed, lead to local and regional instability.



3. Extreme weather events and disasters

Extreme weather events and disasters will exacerbate fragility challenges and can increase people's vulnerability and grievances, especially in conflict-affected situations.

Extreme weather events and disasters endanger and destroy people's lives, livelihoods, assets, health, and communities. The relationship between disasters and fragility is often mutually reinforcing: Disasters put additional stress on already stretched governance systems, decrease economic opportunities, reduce resources, and displace people. A lack of safety nets, preparedness, insurance mechanisms, and other methods to cope with the impacts of disasters can fuel grievances, especially if government or international assistance is inadequate or inequitably distributed. Poorly designed humanitarian interventions can also exacerbate tensions and increase the risk of conflict. In addition, in fragile and conflict-affected situations, disasters can undermine or override efforts to bolster resilience, increasing the severity of the disaster's impact. Conversely, disaster risk reduction and effective disaster management efforts can provide opportunities to improve resilience to climate-fragility risks and build peace.



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4. Volatile food prices and provision

Climate change is highly likely to disrupt food production in many regions, increasing prices and market volatility, and heightening the risk of protests, rioting, and civil conflict.

Climate change is highly likely to decrease yields and disrupt food production in many areas. Combined with increasing global pressures—including population growth and changing energy demands—food insecurity is likely to increase and food prices to



become more volatile. As exemplified by the 2007-9 food riots in more than 40 countries, food price volatility and high prices can increase the risk of public unrest, democratic breakdown, and civil and local conflict, particularly when combined with poverty, poor governance, and a weak social contract. States that depend on food imports and spend a significant proportion of household income on food are particularly vulnerable. However, the likelihood that food insecurity contributes to instability depends not only on local factors, such as the degree of urbanization and market access, but also national policies, such as consumer subsidies and export markets.

5. Transboundary water management

Transboundary waters are frequently a source of tension; as demand grows and climate impacts affect availability and quality, competition over water use will likely increase the pressure on existing governance structures.

While the management of shared water supplies can provide opportunities for collaboration between stakeholders and governments, it can also be a source of tension. Many transboundary water basins are located in regions with a history of armed conflict and significant interstate tensions. Though historically, armed conflicts between states over water are nearly unprecedented, the future may not look like the past. Competition over water use will likely increase as demand grows and climate impacts affect availability. Managing the effects of climate change on water resource use will be particularly complicated in transboundary basins affected by fragility or conflict, where water management is often eclipsed by political considerations or affected by power asymmetries.



6. Sea-level rise and coastal degradation

Rising sea levels will threaten the viability of low-lying areas even before they are submerged, leading to social disruption, displacement, and migration, while disagreements over maritime boundaries and ocean resources may increase.

Rising sea levels already threaten the economic and physical viability of low-lying areas. Current estimates of sea-level rise suggest that no country will be entirely submerged during this century. However, as land and coastal resources are gradually lost, the economic viability of many coastal areas will significantly decrease; damage from cyclones and storm surges will become more severe; and the risk of future land and resource loss will become more pressing. These changes may displace people or push them to migrate, increasing the risk of tension and conflict in the receiving areas. As seas rise, changing coastlines may also alter border demarcations and trigger disputes over maritime boundaries, territorial seas, sea lanes, and ocean resources.



7. Unintended effects of climate policies

As climate adaptation and mitigation policies are more broadly implemented, the risks of unintended negative effects — particularly in fragile contexts — will also increase.

To reduce fragility and prevent conflict, we need effective climate change mitigation and adaptation policies. However, if designed and implemented without considering broader impacts, these well-intentioned climate change policies could undermine economic development, contribute to political instability, and exacerbate human insecurity. As climate adaptation and mitigation policies are more broadly implemented around the world, the risks of unintended negative effects — particularly in fragile contexts — will also increase. In fragile situations, the unintended consequences may include increased insecurity of land tenure, marginalization of minority groups, increased environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity, and accelerated climate change. These unforeseen effects often arise due to the lack of cross-sectoral coordination and, in the case of fragile and conflict-affected situations, the lack of conflict-sensitive implementation of policies and programs.



These seven compound climate-fragility risks are not isolated from each other. They interact in complex ways, frustrating the development of effective responses at all levels. For example, transboundary water conflicts can disrupt local livelihoods and access to natural resources, while market instability and extreme weather events can impact global supply chains, with serious local repercussions. At the same time, local natural resource conflicts and livelihood insecurity are primarily local challenges, but they can have significant knock-on effects, such as increased migration, economic disruption, or social tensions, that can spur instability both locally and across a wider area.

Climate change is simultaneously increasing the complexity of a range of global challenges, including fragility. If strategies to address these challenges fail to take into account the interdependent and systemic nature of these climate-fragility risks, they will fail or, in the worst case, exacerbate the risks they try to address. Interdependent challenges need integrated answers.

Policy Analysis: The Need for an Integrated Agenda

The best way to diminish the threats posed by the compound climate-fragility risks is to mitigate climate change. However, climate changes are already underway, so we must take steps to manage and minimize these risks today.

We identified three key policy sectors that help strengthen the resilience of states and societies to climate-fragility risks:

- **Climate change adaptation** programmes help countries anticipate the adverse effects of climate change and take action to prevent, minimize, and respond to its potential impacts.
- **Development and humanitarian aid** programmes help states and populations build their economic, governance, and social capacities and improve their resilience to shocks.
- **Peacebuilding** and conflict prevention programmes address the causes and effects of fragility and conflict by reducing tensions and creating an environment for sustainable peace.

The compound nature of climate-fragility risks means single-sector interventions are not enough to prevent climate change impacts from exacerbating fragility or fragility from undermining climate resilience. By integrating efforts across the climate change adaptation, development and humanitarian aid, and peacebuilding sectors, the international community can mitigate the interconnected risks while realizing significant co-benefits.

Integrating efforts throughout key policy stages—early warning and assessment, planning, financing, and implementation—will be a complex, though essential, endeavour. We found a number of gaps in existing programmes that offer opportunities for developing a more cohesive policy agenda that can respond to climate-fragility risks.

→ Climate change adaptation

In countries experiencing situations of fragility, climate adaptation strategies may be important entry points for addressing climate-fragility risks since they offer pathways for responding to stresses on critical natural resources. To do this, however, these strategies need to be linked to long-term peacebuilding efforts.

The UNFCCC has been a key resource, helping countries prepare vulnerability assessments and climate change adaptation plans, as well as providing funding for the implementa-

tion of these plans. However, it can be challenging for countries experiencing situations of fragility to fully engage in UNFCCC-related activities. Climate vulnerability assessments are far more advanced today than just a few years ago, but they still lack significant discussion of the political or social impacts of climate change and information on a country's conflict history or its marginalized groups; in addition, most do not address drivers of fragility or other transboundary issues.

Climate change adaptation plans increasingly reflect a more comprehensive notion of resilience. Eight of the g7+ states—a voluntary association of conflict-affected countries that are in transition to the next stages of development and part of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States—have recognized climate-conflict risks in their National Adaptation Programmes of Action. Unfortunately, there is little guidance on how to develop adaptation plans in fragile contexts or how to address the transboundary dimensions of climate change impacts. In addition, due to the state-oriented focus of the UNFCCC, adaptation programmes generally do not take a regional approach, which could be a way to address transboundary climate fragility risks.

While financing for climate adaptation is expected to increase substantially in the coming years, countries with situations of fragility may be less well positioned to access these resources than other developing countries due to the limits of their internal capacity. Whereas the example of the Least Developed Countries Fund indicates that g7+ countries are able to access some climate finance, access to more complex financing mechanisms like the Adaptation Fund has been limited.

Implementation efforts have gaps as well. Since adaptation efforts will impact people's lives, livelihoods, asset base, and power dynamics, a “do no harm” approach would require that climate adaptation interventions distribute benefits and resources in a conflict-sensitive way that does not aggravate tensions between communities. However, there is limited guidance on how to “conflict-proof” climate adaptation programmes.

→ **Development and humanitarian aid**

The wide array of international development and humanitarian aid activities includes many processes that could be adjusted to better address the compound climate-fragility risks. G7 governments are increasingly emphasizing holistic, integrated, and whole-of-government approaches in their development processes.

In the field of early warning, a number of current efforts could contribute to integrated assessments of climate-fragility risks. However, the implementation of these initiatives has been limited due to financial constraints and lack of human capacity. In addition, many early warning systems do not include climate or environmental risks. Even though these challenges have not been addressed in a comprehensive fashion, the follow-up to the Hyogo Framework of Action and the recently adopted Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction offer chances to address these gaps.

The development community has made some progress in “climate-proofing” development projects by mainstreaming climate considerations into some segments of its other sectoral development programming. Applying a “climate lens” to planning and regulatory frameworks could help development and humanitarian aid programmers identify particularly vulnerable sectors and regions. In addition, support for integrated activities could help countries avoid overlooking opportunities to align their climate adaptation and national development or post-conflict recovery plans. However, this approach is not yet standard. The ongoing Sustainable Development Goals process could be a key entry point in this effort.

Countries that experience fragility often lack absorptive capacity, which can contribute to the volatility of development assistance levels. If left unaddressed, this volatility could undermine efforts to improve resilience to climate-fragility risks and build capacity. A flexible, harmonized, and integrated aid structure with a longer-term perspective could help address this problem.

It is widely accepted that implementers should engage local communities and institutions and civil society to build local ownership of development projects. By working together with local officials and leaders who have the confidence of their constituencies, implementers can strengthen governments’ effectiveness and accountability. However, implementers working in fragile situations need to allow more time to deal with unanticipated security issues, new governments, or slow responses from executing agencies.

→ **Peacebuilding**

Climate-sensitive peacebuilding activities can be informed by lessons learned from environmental peacebuilding projects. Environmental and climate risks are not yet comprehensively integrated into peacebuilding methodologies and the capacity of states experiencing fragility to transform climate-fragility risks into opportunities is limited.

While leading peacebuilding and security actors, including the UN Security Council, have called for a better understanding of the links between climate and fragility, climate change is not yet sufficiently incorporated explicitly into fragility or peace and conflict assessments. While many different assessment tools focus attention on climate change, natural resources, or conflict, very few integrate all three dimensions.

Initiatives like the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States take a multi-stakeholder approach to building resilience and are important conduits for partnering with vulnerable countries facing the greatest risks from fragility. Environmental and climate risks, however, are not prominently included in the fragility assessments and the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding goals of the g7+ countries.

To avoid overwhelming the absorptive capacity of countries facing situations of fragility, a number of pooled funding mechanisms—multi-donor trust funds (MDTF)—finance peacebuilding activities. However, the climate-fragility risks identified in this report are not systematically reflected in any of the MDTFs that focus on peacebuilding. Some

include climate change considerations in their disaster funding requirements, while others address the role of natural resources in post-conflict contexts. Few financing instruments for peacebuilding and conflict prevention specifically earmark funds for programmes that address climate and fragility risks. As an alternative, funding instruments could require that all projects consider climate change impacts.

To develop an integrated agenda, we do not need to reinvent the wheel, given the existing efforts. However, to break down the sectoral barriers that hamper efforts to address climate-fragility risks, a number of key policy and institutional gaps need to be addressed.

Early warning and assessment

While we don't know everything about climate-fragility risks, we already have a substantial amount of information about the links between climate change and fragility. By integrating existing efforts, we could improve early warning systems and assessments. Currently, these assessments often ignore other dimensions: Climate vulnerability assessments do not include transboundary issues or fragility considerations; fragility, peace, and conflict assessments generally do not include climate change vulnerability or analysis of the co-benefits of climate change adaptation. There are few assessment methodologies that focus on both climate and fragility. And even when such assessments are conducted in a way that integrates attention to both issues, the findings are often not used effectively in planning or implementation.

Planning

While there are many strategies and plans to address climate change, development, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding, there is little integration. Comprehensive planning processes could avoid duplication, prevent maladaptation, and bolster sustainable development. For example, national climate adaptation strategies and implementation processes could enhance perceptions of political legitimacy, if conducted transparently, inclusively, and equitably. In addition, such strategies could proactively identify and promote the co-benefits of effective climate adaptation, such as peace, health, and employment.

But to date, there are few examples of integrated planning approaches that incorporate conflict sensitivity and follow the “do no harm” principle. And at the regional level, there is currently no political process that systematically supports the development of integrated approaches to adaptation, development, and peacebuilding challenges.

In fragile situations, key institutions should be strengthened so they are able to manage competing interests constructively and peacefully. However, countries experiencing situ-

ations of fragility often lack the tools to identify and build the institutional capacity they need, which includes the ability to conduct integrated planning across relevant government departments and in consultation with stakeholders and civil society. For example, increasing awareness of a country's vulnerability to climate change and the benefits of investing in adaptation could be an entry point for building this capacity.

Financing

Financial support—especially longer-term financing—for states experiencing situations of fragility is challenging. Although the amount of global climate funding is expected to increase substantially, it is not yet clear to what extent these states will be able to benefit due to their limited capacities. Financing—including private finance, development assistance, and peacebuilding funds—plays an important role in building institutional resilience and fostering peace. Unpredictable funding, lack of donor coordination, weak institutions, and siloed agendas are key challenges for many countries but especially for those experiencing situations of fragility.

The global agendas on climate, sustainable development, peacebuilding, and other environmental issues are largely conducted through separate policy processes, fostering a proliferation of negotiation fora and sectoral funding streams, each with different operational procedures, fiduciary standards, and reporting requirements. This proliferation burdens already overstretched states with weak institutional capacity. Additionally, traditional aid delivery mechanisms are especially difficult for countries with weak institutions to manage.

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Implementation

There are many pilot programmes, but very little guidance on lessons learned and best practices to inform programme design and implementation. Adaptation, development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding programmes need to be built on a thorough understanding of climate-fragility risks, including cross-sectoral integration of conflict-sensitivity and climate change considerations. As a first step, policymakers need to use a conflict-sensitive approach when implementing climate change adaptation measures and include climate change considerations when designing peacebuilding strategies and projects. Unfortunately, there is very limited guidance on how to apply a “conflict sensitivity” check on climate change adaptation policies or projects. Similarly, there is little practical guidance on integrating climate-change considerations into peacebuilding policies and programs. Principles and best practices are essential at the policy level, and field-based guidance is especially needed at the project level.

In fragile and post-conflict contexts, social networks and institutional relationships are generally weak or have completely broken down. The results of the few integrated climate-fragility programmes that have been piloted in these contexts indicate that involving stakeholders in implementation is critical to success as well as to preventing maladaptation or unintended consequences.

Recommendations: A New Commitment for Resilience

The vicious cycle of climate change and fragility, which interact in ways that reduce the ability to improve outcomes, will not be broken by piecemeal reactions to individual crises. Instead, we need to build integrated, responsive systems that are resilient to a broad range of shocks and stresses. It is time for a new approach and new leadership from the highest level.

We recommend that the G7 governments commit to designing and implementing integrated responses to climate-fragility risks.

We identified four recommendations including concrete goals and entry points at different levels:

1. Within G7 member governments;
2. Coordination among G7 members;
3. By informing global and multilateral processes; and
4. Working in partnership with a wide range of actors.

Building on these four recommendations we propose five initial action areas for this new cooperative approach.

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Recommendation 1

Integration begins at home: Make climate-fragility risks a central foreign policy priority

G7 governments are well placed to take the lead in identifying, understanding, monitoring, and addressing the climate-fragility risks described in this report. While a significant body of information about these risks already exists, an integrated approach is not implemented for four reasons: this information is not disseminated to the right people; integration is not mainstreamed; actions are not coordinated; and funding streams are not flexible enough to incentivize cross-sectoral outcomes. Translating this information into constructive policy action will be most effective if integrated responses to climate-fragility risks are mainstreamed into existing planning, implementation, and evaluation processes and indicators across government departments.

This effort requires developing capacities within departments and creating cross-sectoral and inter-agency working groups and policy processes. Dedicated coordination units, for example, could help address these complex interconnected risks in an integrated

manner. In particular, integrated risk analyses at global, regional, and country levels could bring together different policy units and serve as a springboard for developing integrated responses. The development of common implementation guides, checklists, and trainings can also help build wide recognition of the risks and encourage integrated responses. Finally, bilateral aid agencies (where appropriate) could pilot integrated approaches—such as conflict sensitive adaptation projects—to address the compound risks.

Recommendation 2

Come together for a new dialogue: Enhance G7 cooperation

Problems that do not respect national borders can best be addressed by concerted inter-governmental action. Their scale and scope require an injection of new energy in the short term, translated into sustained commitment in the longer term. The G7 is uniquely qualified to provide this leadership, because of its global status, the nature and breadth of its policy remit, and its shared commitment to these issues.

The G7 could begin with a strong political statement during the German G7 presidency, opening the way to an action-oriented task force of senior officials. The creation of the task force would jump-start closer coordination between G7 members, leading to shared accountability and facilitating concrete common actions, including:

- Mandating annual reviews of integrated policies and programmes
- Holding technical sessions on best practices and lessons learned
- Investing jointly in shared data sources and new research
- Identifying gaps and new opportunities for joint responses
- Jointly developing and using a global risk assessment methodology

Making this task force part of the annual G7 process would maintain its visibility and priority and thus provide G7 governments a regular opportunity to exhibit leadership and further advance these efforts. To collect and disseminate the annual reports, highlight best practices, and share new data sources, the G7 task force could build on the knowledge platform on climate and fragility risks commissioned by the G7 (www.newclimateforpeace.org).

Recommendation 3

Set the global resilience agenda: Inform multilateral processes and structures

The global strategic threat posed by climate change relates to a multitude of international processes in which the relationship between climate and fragility is currently treated as a marginal topic. G7 governments have the collective weight to help break down the sectoral barriers and siloed approaches that have prevented many of these processes from addressing climate-fragility risks.

The G7 can help realize the co-benefits of integration by promoting greater coordination between climate, development, and peacebuilding processes. However, they must avoid overburdening governments, especially those in fragile situations, with duplicative planning and reporting requirements. An integrated response should lead to streamlining.

Multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and UN organizations should be encouraged to increase their focus on climate change and fragility, conduct integrated climate and fragility risk assessments, and develop operational guidance for climate-sensitive and conflict-sensitive policies and programmes. Multilateral efforts on the post-2015 agenda, the Sendai Framework, and climate change adaptation policies can be explicitly cross-referenced, focusing on synergies for planning, monitoring, or reporting among the different frameworks.

Those countries deeply affected by fragile situations will require additional assistance from multilateral processes to respond to climate-fragility risks. Coordinated international action would help these states prepare integrated climate change adaptation plans and implement climate resilience-building initiatives. Their own efforts will also benefit from less volatile and more evenly distributed funding, and from improved access to multilateral financing mechanisms for climate change adaptation, development, and peacebuilding.

Development partners should work together to improve the guidance for national adaptation planning through the relevant UNFCCC processes, and ensure that countries experiencing situations of fragility are systematically supported. These countries would benefit from assistance in preparing integrated climate change adaptation plans that reflect relevant risks and from access to the Green Climate Fund and other relevant financing mechanisms.

Recommendation 4

Partner for resilience: Engage widely to ensure global actions produce local results

The G7 can also lead the way by improving coordination with partner states, local governments, and non-state actors. Too often, global initiatives have squandered their potential by assuming that global actions will trickle down to create local results. Strengthening links between partners and initiatives at international, regional, national, and local levels will help ensure that global initiatives improve local resilience to climate-fragility risks.

This work can be led by the G7 task force and pursued in global fora such as the UN General Assembly, the World Economic Forum, UNFCCC meetings, the World Bank's Fragility, Conflict, and Violence Forum, Habitat III, and regional organisations. All of these have a place in a new international discussion on climate change and fragility and developing a new community of practice on climate-fragility risks and responses.

In particular, the G7 should reach out to national governments, local administrators, and NGOs in countries facing fragile situations, partnering with states that have

endorsed the New Deal for Fragile States principles. These partnerships can involve both financial support and technical training on issues such as addressing climate risks in fragility assessments, using fragility assessments to inform National Adaptation Plans, responding to environmental indicators and warnings, and improving risk assessment processes.

Five action areas: Make progress on five key tasks for building resilience against climate-fragility risks

We propose five specific action areas for this new multi-dimensional national and international cooperative approach:

Action Area 1

Global Risk Assessment

Governments carry out many different risk assessments, often of high quality, but these efforts are disjointed and often not coordinated within governments, let alone between them. G7 governments, via the G7 task force, can establish a unified, shared, and accessible risk assessment methodology for identifying climate-fragility risks and generating actionable conclusions.

A whole-system approach to measuring compound climate-fragility risk would integrate four forecasting segments: greenhouse gas emissions; the climate systems' response; the knock-on consequences on society, economy, and politics, and the conflict and fragility risks that arise from them; and the consequences of actions taken to mitigate those risks. It will need to engage governments in the process of collecting and analysing this data. Actionable conclusions based on this evidence would be provided to individual governments, especially those at high risk or lacking their own capacity for compound risk assessment.

Action Area 2

Food Security

This report highlights the need to understand the intersection between climate-related food insecurity, economic and social grievances, and marginalization, which can contribute to fragility and instability. Especially in countries marked by poverty, poor governance, and fragility, food insecurity can be explosive. In the long term, national governments will need to take the lead on improving their food policies while donors can assist with building resilient food systems. But in the short term, we recommend five steps to mitigate the risks posed by food insecurity:

- Strengthen access to timely and accurate data and analysis to ensure a solid evidence base for policy decisions.
- Limit critical food price fluctuations by improving access to markets, reducing trade barriers, and enhancing market information.

- Ensure that adequate reserve food stocks are available to provide food security.
- During food price crises, keep markets operating both internationally and domestically.
- For longer term resilience, enhance established strategies that promote the use of local supplies and boost local markets, including cross-border trading.

Action Area 3

Disaster Risk Reduction

The global humanitarian workload has increased and will likely continue to grow under the impact of climate change and climate-fragility risks. Although we have made significant progress in reducing disaster risks, we need to shift the emphasis of our efforts from managing crises to managing risks. Rather than hiking expenditures as crises erupt and cutting back when they pass, development partners should work together to consistently invest in crisis prevention. Investments in disaster risk reduction activities have been proven to reduce the cost of responding to disasters.

Integrating disaster risk reduction, peacebuilding, and climate change adaptation support for developing countries should be an explicit foreign policy goal of the G7 governments. In particular, the implementation of the newly adopted Sendai declaration and framework and of a new global climate agreement should be aligned with each other in order to realize synergies and avoid duplicating efforts.

The existing international architecture of disaster risk reduction is well developed. Supported by adequate and flexible human, natural, financial, and legal resources, its positive impacts could be further enhanced by linking existing structures more closely to comprehensive risk assessment and integrated strategies for development.

This includes, for example:

- Partnering with existing organizations, such as the World Bank or regional development banks, to develop operational guidance and lessons learned for climate-sensitive and conflict-sensitive disaster risk reduction policies and programs.
- Calling on existing sectoral organizations such as the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to integrate climate-fragility considerations into their work.

Action Area 4

Transboundary Water Disputes

Systematic engagement can help ensure that transboundary waters become points of peaceful cooperation rather than conflict. Diplomatic initiatives already in place could serve as starting points for establishing and reinforcing risk management and conflict resolution institutions before climate-induced water scarcity and volatility start to bite.

Three pillars of work are recommended:

- Strengthen existing local and national water management institutions.
- Improve cooperation on knowledge management, supporting the dissemination of good examples, best practices, and lessons learned. Experiences with existing legal arrangements may provide useful guidelines for approaching conflicts, while (joint) vulnerability assessments could be initiated to help build shared understanding of future challenges.
- Build on existing efforts to foster cooperation between governments in transboundary river basins. G7 governments could convene a global conference on transboundary basins, with a view to assessing how existing frameworks could be amended to secure greater buy-in. These frameworks should ensure that transboundary water management is systematically linked to climate adaptation and resilience, so that risks related to political challenges and hydrological changes can be addressed in an integrated fashion.

Action Area 5

Building Local Resilience to Climate-Fragility Risks

G7 governments can embed support for community resilience to climate-fragility risks throughout their aid programmes and use their influence in donor forums to encourage others to do the same. Building resilience to climate-fragility risks must be part of the thematic tone of development assistance, not an optional add-on kept separate from the main agenda. Adaptation to climate change and resilience to a range of threats can be fostered by a plethora of coordinated small-scale adaptation, development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding efforts. These actions work best with local entrepreneurship, engaged national leadership, and consistent international support.

Accordingly, local engagement and responsive governance must be at the heart of new national partnerships for resilience. Local actions require coordination and support in the form of training, equipment, information, and infrastructure, as well as support and direction from national governments. In situations of fragility and in other low-income countries, they require international financial and/or technical support.

This effort could include a wide range of initiatives, such as:

- Provide information on climate-fragility risks and pressures, help explore the range of traditional and modern methods to mitigate risk, and offer advice on available assistance.
- Help improve food security through investment in food systems and social protection mechanisms to mitigate the compound climate-fragility risks.
- Provide technical expertise and training on new practices such as conflict-sensitive program design and management, climate-smart agriculture, climate-smart infrastructure, and improved water, energy, and ecosystem management.

The Foundation for a More Peaceful and More Resilient Future

These recommendations will only be effective in tandem with joint efforts to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. But even with an ambitious emissions agreement, climate-fragility risks will persist, so the preventive response must continue.

Responding to the global strategic threat posed by climate change is too great a task for any single government. This diverse set of recommendations outlines direct opportunities for G7 member states, as well as for the G7 as a group, and in coordination with their international partners, to confront climate-fragility risks with integrated responses. Over time, G7 governments and partners may find that more explicit collaboration and more formal coordination through new arrangements and institutional structures could enable them to better capture synergies and achieve greater impact.

Climate impacts know no bounds. They cross all boundaries, whether of nation, sector, or agency. The G7 does not alone bear the responsibility to act on climate change and climate-fragility risks. But this year, the G7 has a singular opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to tackling climate change. The G7 foreign ministers can begin by articulating and acting on a new commitment to respond to one of the great challenges of our time: building resilience to climate-fragility risks.

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International Alert is Europe's leading peacebuilding organization, with almost 30 years of experience laying the foundations for peace across Asia, Africa, Eurasia, Middle East, and Latin America. It was one of the first NGOs to research, analyse, and lead innovative thinking on the security implications of climate change, particularly in fragile states.

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