

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 5 June 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to inform you that the United Arab Emirates, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of June 2023, intends to convene a ministerial-level open debate on the theme “Threats to international peace and security: climate change, peace and security”, to be held on Tuesday, 13 June 2023, at 10 a.m. in the Security Council Chamber.

In order to guide the discussions on this topic, the United Arab Emirates has prepared a concept note (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Lana **Nusseibeh**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Representative

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\* Reissued for technical reasons on 9 June 2023.



**Annex to the letter dated 5 June 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

**Concept note for the ministerial-level open debate of the Security Council on the theme “Threats to international peace and security: climate change, peace and security”, to be held on 13 June 2023**

**Overview**

Climate change is the defining challenge of our time. Its interconnected consequences – intensified extreme weather, rising sea levels, food and water insecurity, biodiversity loss and heightened health risks – jeopardize human life, livelihoods and ecosystems and have an adverse impact on national, regional and global stability. Such a multidimensional challenge is unprecedented. An effective response requires distinct but complementary responses by the various pillars of our multilateral system, consistent with their respective mandates. In this Security Council open debate, participants will consider the implications of climate change on international peace and security under the item entitled “Threats to international peace and security”. They will explore how climate change-informed Security Council mandates can contribute to overcoming fragility, to reducing vulnerabilities and humanitarian needs and to promoting resilient societies.

**Objective**

The meeting is aimed at exploring how climate change affects the capacity of United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions to implement their mandates, from basic access to at-risk populations and their protection, to managing tensions and supporting peace processes and sustainable peace. The discussion will draw on insights from conflict and post-conflict settings in which United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions have been deployed. Moreover, the discussion will showcase, through concrete cross-regional examples, how climate action can provide entry points for conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It will also underscore the potential for synergies between security, humanitarian, development and climate actors that can reduce, and eventually eliminate, instability and fragility.

Building on that foundation, in their discussion, participants will explore how the Security Council can support the development of a collaborative and responsive approach to climate change and peace and security and how to target and tailor climate action to complement the Council’s responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

**Background**

The Security Council first convened to discuss climate change and peace and security in 2007. Since then, a growing body of evidence has demonstrated how climate change systemically reshapes international peace and security, contributes to human suffering and exacerbates political volatility, economic stress, forced displacement and resource competition, especially in fragile and conflict-affected areas. As a “risk multiplier”, climate change can also generate new security risks, including intercommunal and potential cross-border conflicts over scarce resources and human mobility.

Climate change has implications for the entire peace continuum. The impacts of extreme weather events exacerbate competition over resources, a situation observed in the Central African Republic, Colombia, Iraq and Mali, among other countries. Climate impacts have also challenged efforts to resolve conflicts. In Darfur, desertification drove violence and exacerbated longstanding political grievances, while in Somalia, a weakened State could not respond effectively to prolonged and unprecedented drought, which has been exploited by the terrorist group Al-Shabaab. Climate change further complicates peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, as evidenced in multiple contexts – from South Sudan, where the United Nations mission struggled to address climate-induced displacement and conflict, to Haiti, where the increased frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters are worsening the current humanitarian, political and security crises.

In addition, the gendered impact of climate change has significant implications for international peace and security. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the adverse effects of climate change, including food insecurity, displacement and increased rates of conflict-related sexual violence. Moreover, women are often excluded from decision-making processes related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Evidence shows that, by leveraging the role of women as agents of change, gender-sensitive work on climate change and peace and security can serve to advance both stability and gender equality.

In response to those various challenges, regional, national and local actors have taken the initiative to address climate-related risks to international peace and security. The following are some examples: according to the African Union Master Road Map of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, addressing environmental degradation will reduce the risk of conflict; the Pacific Islands Forum developed a regional strategy on climate change and security with a gendered lens; numerous national action plans have incorporated climate impacts on peace and security; and local communities and civil society organizations in Colombia developed community-based approaches to conflict prevention that consider the impact of climate change on resource competition and political instability.

Coordination within the United Nations has played a crucial role in addressing the climate change and peace and security nexus, as exemplified by the climate security mechanism, an interagency initiative of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In 2021, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel launched the United Nations Regional Working Group on Climate Change, Security, Environment and Development in West Africa and the Sahel.

In principle, the Security Council has recognized that the adverse effects of climate change may threaten international peace and security. The Council has also increasingly acknowledged the impact of climate change in the context of its decision-making on specific files, such as Iraq, Somalia, South Sudan and West Africa and the Sahel. It has also recognized the need for comprehensive risk assessments and risk management strategies associated with climate change. However, the Council has taken a piecemeal approach and is yet to develop a holistic strategy to address climate change and peace and security. This is in part owing to the unprecedented scale and complexity of the problem and the challenges associated with defining its role alongside the mandates of other United Nations bodies, especially the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which is the United Nations entity tasked with supporting the global response to the threat of climate change.

Strategic and operational frameworks across the climate change and peace and security spectrum are needed to deliver effective solutions. Different mandates

notwithstanding, no actor or sector alone is equipped to address climate change and its related security risks on its own.

Looking forward, the Security Council must adopt a collaborative approach to effectively develop and support climate-sensitive conflict resolution and peacebuilding while emphasizing complementarity with the work of the Framework Convention and other climate-focused entities and agencies. Furthermore, the Council can improve transparency and inclusivity by actively engaging non-Council members and various stakeholders in discussions on climate change and peace and security.

### **Guiding questions**

1. How can the Security Council better integrate the impact of climate change on peace and security into its conflict-prevention, conflict-resolution and peacebuilding efforts?
2. What are some of the best practices and policy interventions, alongside the peace continuum, for addressing climate-induced fragility in conflict-affected countries? What integrated solutions can be scaled up, accelerated or replicated to overcome fragility, advance conflict resolution and sustain peace?
3. How can the Security Council best use the findings of the risk management strategies that missions in climate-fragile settings have been mandated to carry out, in order to inform its work? How might peace operation mandates be refined in light of those findings, and how can including climate fragility in the reports of the Secretary-General contribute to that?
4. What mechanisms can be developed to monitor and assess the effectiveness of climate-sensitive conflict-resolution and peacebuilding initiatives, including regular reporting, evaluation and the use of indicators and benchmarks to measure progress and ensure accountability?
5. How can we strengthen collaboration between the Security Council and local and regional initiatives that address the impact of climate change on peace and security?
6. How can the Security Council develop transparent and inclusive mechanisms to engage on climate change and peace and security with Member States, the broader United Nations system, civil society and other relevant stakeholders? How can it better promote the perspectives and voices of those most affected, particularly women and children, in order to inform inclusive, gender-sensitive approaches to climate change and peace and security?

### **Briefers**

- Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations (to be confirmed)
- Former President of Colombia, Nobel Peace laureate and member of The Elders, Juan Manuel Santos
- Civil society briefer

### **Format**

The ministerial meeting will be held in an open debate format and chaired by the Minister of Climate Change and Environment of the United Arab Emirates, Mariam Almheiri. Participation is encouraged at the ministerial level. All participants are encouraged to be succinct and focused in their interventions. The United Arab

Emirates encourages joint statements by both Security Council members and other Member States, where possible.

Member States wishing to participate in person should inscribe their names on the list of speakers through the eSpeakers module of e-deleGATE. A letter addressed to the President of the Security Council, duly signed by the permanent representative or the chargé d'affaires a.i. and containing a request to participate in accordance with rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council must be uploaded to the eSpeakers module of e-deleGATE. Inscription for said meeting will open on Thursday, 8 June 2023 at 9.30 a.m. Delegations are reminded that, shortly before the start of the meeting, the list of speakers will be e-mailed to those delegations who have inscribed, along with the link to the live list of speakers.

The list of speakers will be determined by the order in which requests are received. Delegations are kindly requested to limit their statements to no more than four minutes.

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