



Impact through partnerships: How international and regional organizations can advance the Climate, Peace and Security agenda

A workshop during the Berlin Climate and Security Conference 2024. Hosted by CMC Finland, European Centre of Excellence for Civilian Crisis Management (CoE), Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), and Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze (ZIF). The conference is hosted by Adelphi and the German Federal Foreign Office.

State of affairs – institutional outlooks to climate security

A summary of organizations operating in missions and their state of affairs as of today.

Questions:

- *What are the key structures and policies of your organization on climate security both at HQ and in the field?*
- *Are there concrete examples of already existing cooperation measures on climate security between your organization and other regional or international organizations?*
- *Where do you see gaps or demands of your organization that closer cooperation could close?*

UN CSM

Currently, there are eight United Nations field missions with dedicated Climate, Peace, and Security (CPS) advisors. An additional position for the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) is currently under recruitment. These field-based advisors play a crucial role in advancing work on climate, peace, and security by providing analysis, knowledge management, capacity development, and technical support. Beyond the UN field missions, seconded advisors to organizations like the Pacific Islands Forum and the Liptako Gourma Authority also make significant contributions.

Systematic partnerships on CPS are being established with regional and international organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Arab League, and the Pacific Islands Forum. To strengthen these partnerships, two workshops have been held. The first workshop served as a "show and tell" session, while the second was more forward-looking, focusing on future collaboration.

Key areas of focus include advocacy, enhancing climate literacy, and producing knowledge. The absence of language on CPS in the Pact for the Future highlights the ongoing need for advocacy and outreach with the full UN membership. Efforts are also being made to expand the Climate Security Mechanism's (CSM) donor base beyond European and Western donors to include a wider variety of contributors.

The current emphasis is on transitioning from analysis to action. Demonstrating the impact of CPS advisors and initiatives on the ground is essential. It is also important to maintain a comprehensive perspective, leveraging expertise across the UN system, including agencies like the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the United Nations University. Effective internal coordination within the UN system on CPS remains a priority.

Needs assessments conducted with local partners have helped identify priority areas, with capacity development emerging as a critical component. It is encouraging to see an increasing number of actors and organizations integrating CPS into their operations.

EEAS

The 2023 EU Joint Communication on climate and security nexus is a key policy framework in the EU, together with the Civilian CSDP Compact from 2023. In focus currently is the operationalization of the policies across EEAS and the Commission.

There is a network of contact points from EU services which functions, but it is not yet in a position to move the agenda forward across all relevant parts of EEAS and Commission services. Still, there is a need to become more concrete and action oriented with the work done.

Partnerships are crucial for the EU, including in contexts where it is difficult for the EU to engage directly. EU-UNEP partnership was also cited as a good example. The network EU group of friends on climate diplomacy and EU climate and defense network is critical for getting the MS on board.

A clear challenge is that all the delegations have a person that works with climate issues, but not all of them have a link to security. There is a need to support EU Special Representatives (EUSR) teams with capacity and resources.

A political gap is also identified. A challenge is to raise more interest and ambition among member states.

Communication can be a way to raise awareness, but the defense side could be more active and not only responsive in planning the work ahead.

CPS needs to be mainstreamed more as a topic, and feedback from the work done needs to loop back into the organization.

CPCC

The Environmental Advisor goal in the Civilian Compact is ambitious: advisors are to be deployed to all 13 civilian missions by the end of 2025. At the moment there is only 1 in Georgia but 3 more are to be deployed shortly. There is still a long way to go to reach the goal.

Environmental Focal points exist in all missions to support in guarding the topic, and they can function as a network. But they might not be trained in Climate or Environmental science and have other responsibilities.

OSCE

The organization has a team of three for the CPS topics, two experts and a project assistant.

The topic is in high demand now, but the consensus decision-making of 57 states is challenging to navigate, as well as the budget freeze, which limits the CPS work to extrabudgetary funds. However, the OSCE serves as a platform for important political dialogue where CPS has a place. The latest consensus decision of the OSCE was taken in 2021 on Climate and Security, which serves as the basis for the CPS work.

CPS also serves as a functional entry point for cooperation and to foster cooperation related to security issues, between participating states, at high level and at the operational level.

A Climate Security Fund is to be established (supported by Germany). But further funding is needed, and fund-raising for projects is also a daily task for the team.

CPS projects include risk assessments and pilot activities around topics such as fire management, and illegal logging in geographical areas in the Balkans, Central Asia, and South Caucasus. There are cross-regional networks, for example among Central Asia and Southeastern Europe, where the involvement of youth is included.

It is important to focus and not stretch the resources too much. The CPS topic is in high demand, but resources are limited, therefore partnerships are much needed.

NATO

CPS is a relatively new topic for NATO. The climate security strategy was introduced in 2021. The focus is currently on adaptation so far, other areas have been more challenging, especially migration. Partnerships are mainly bilateral at the moment, and e.g. EU, and UN partnerships are at a fact-finding stage. Further cooperation areas are being identified.

A flagship publication from NATO is the [Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment](#) (2022).

Building bridges is a priority in CPS work at the moment. Foresight, analysis and data is still needed to deepen the understanding of the links between climate and security.

There is one CS advisor in a mission now.

The language of climate communication needs to be adjusted for the military side.



Workshop: Subgroup dialogues - The organizations' priorities for more effective cooperation and initiatives.

The participants are divided into three subgroups with different guiding questions.

Subgroup 1: Building institutional capacity on climate security

Guiding questions:

- *What has worked to build institutional capacity on climate security, including through training?*
- *How to create buy-ins at institutional level and increase the level of ambition? What represents opportunities and what are potential obstacles, and how have they been addressed?*
- *How can partnerships be used to increase institutional capacity?*

More **awareness-raising** is needed, based on knowledge and political will. Climate change in human displacement is an important topic with lots of interest where the UN Climate and Security Mechanism plays a role. Mainstreaming and awareness raising are two key terms for institutional capacity building in all foreign policy areas. Constant advocacy and finding a proper common language to address the climate issue is needed. Climate change sounds disruptive and big, it craves a big change in how we do things. But talking about it as a new innovative way of discussing security might create more buy-ins. Be serious with the partnerships and the capacity to engage.

Climate literacy training for senior management is good practice. Link between policy and what is needed. We need to build allyships on different levels. The short-term financial cycles are not fit for the long-term perspectives and responses.

A **concrete mandate** is very important. It takes a while to implement a new policy and to staff needed expertise, but a policy is a foundation. Then training is needed. But also, experts are needed to formulate a clear policy. **A policy-practice loop.**



Build **clear narratives** to attract donors and interest. Identify good and clear examples. If donors like the issue it is easier to get the ears of the senior management. Awareness and a drive from donors create momentum. People need clear examples on how climate effect mitigation will change things. How much more expensive will it be in the future, how many acres of land will be spared etc. Describe the significant impact the climate has on other areas and fields. Clear messages and consistency.

Geographically based discussions that outline where partnerships have worked well can be used as a good narrative. The climate, peace and security fact sheet on [Afghanistan](#) was successful in buy-in from senior management. There is also a need to show identified gaps in the practical implementation of CPS initiatives. Integrating climate into the security discussions and using a common language, remains a key priority.

Many people work with climate, peace and security but they do not understand it. Good to take the opportunity to add climate to existing training. The European Security and Defense College (ESDC) training platform is a good example where **climate and security are mainstreamed into the training**. Information and data need to be spread and accessible.

The UN has identified focal points across the board, to use where the momentum is. We need to use the **expertise in local settings** and adapt their expertise to the conflict setting rather than building new capacity. Also, make sure to understand the attitudes of states and actors on the climate issue. We have pockets of strong capacity and wide-open spaces where we

have less expertise. Important to tie in with local experts and find ways to close the expertise gaps. Include more diverse environments in the analyses.

Start planning ahead and look into a **new way of policy making** to address the bigger cross cutting issues. Local organizations can be focused on reactive responses, not long-term responses.

Subgroup 2: Operational responses to climate-related security risks

Guiding questions:

- *What are your experiences of operationalizing and implementing CPS within your different organizations? In your experiences, what could be fruitful ways forward and what has been challenging?*
- *From analysis to action: How do we increase the level of ambition in our operational responses to the challenges of climate, peace, and security? Have you, from what you have heard today, ideas or suggestions of synergies, partnerships or collaborations that could be helpful in this advancement?*

On operational responses, new research undertaken by the Centre for Civilians in Armed Conflicts identified **gaps between CPS and Protection of Civilians** in contexts such as Iraq, Yemen and South Sudan where effects of climate change have been investigated from a POC perspective in relation to conflict dynamics and, in the case of South Sudan, the operational capacity of the UN mission to implement its POC mandate.

In the case of UNMISS, the rather vague language on CPS in the mandate has been helpful from an operational dimension. As the **only UN mission with a CPS team**, there has been engagement on analysis, assessments, collaboration between mission and UNCT as well as engagement with national actors. Having the support from mission leadership has been key and from an operational perspective, having coordination mechanisms between the UN mission and UNCT in place has proven very helpful. At the regional level, the cooperation with IGAD was highlighted.

From the perspective of the EU, **including open language** on environment and climate in operational plans has been a first step. The aim is to become more concrete later on when there is more capacity and resources in the mission to act. The support from mission leadership was highlighted as crucial also in the case of the EU, but it is varying across missions. Work remains to be done to institutionalize the topic in missions.

For both the EU and UN, the need to **differentiate between processes and programming** was emphasized.



For NATO, the focus has been on **integrating climate perspective into defense and security** and on finding ways to meaningfully integrate this perspective in missions, particularly beyond the civilian parts of missions. There is still a need to get the military leadership on board. The focus has been on adaptation and ensuring operational capacity for missions considering the effects of climate change, which are outpacing the institutional adaptation capacity. Beyond the need to find ways to address mitigation in addition to capacity, another question at operational level is how the military missions should deal with the increasing demands to engage in natural disaster relief work without undermining civilian institutions.

From an operational perspective for the OSCE, working with **national stakeholders and networks** has been crucial. It has helped identify the OSCE's value add without risking the consensus on CPS. In many cases, CPS is addressed indirectly as part of larger processes.

Participants highlighted the continued need to improve operational responses that are based on **proper analyses and to learn from experiences**, including related fields such as natural resource governance.

Subgroup 3: Strengthening institutional partnerships on climate security

Guiding questions:

- *What do you think is missing in current institutional partnerships on climate security (both at the headquarters and operational level)? For example political momentum, resources, diverging priorities among organizations.*
- *What are your wishes for the future of partnerships on climate security? For example, within geographical areas, thematic focus, different levels (strategic, operational). Do you have any concrete institutional partnerships in mind?*

- *What would be needed for organizations to make this happen? For example, individual champions within organizations, coordinating bodies, additional funding.*

Between and within organizations, the key to successful partnerships is **creating incentives** for coordination. At a more **operational level, expertise is critical**, to foster initiatives on emerging topics.

Institutionalization of cooperation, also with regional organizations and partner countries:

While advisors are present in missions, the goal is to move beyond this and establish something more institutional. There are challenges with high turnover in advisors and focal points, as well as the need to manage multiple contacts across various organizations. This is a key focus area. Some organizations rely on relationships with national ministries when internal cooperation is lacking. This creates an ecosystem of longer-term support for the country, even as organizational personnel change.

There is a community of practice in certain regions, which fosters more, and much needed **context-specific discussions**. The technical advisory role is valuable not only to member states but also in sharing knowledge and fostering exchange to **create synergies**. This involves **knowledge management and advocacy**.

There is a need to **leverage existing frameworks**, including those established by other organizations (e.g. on capacity building and training). Additionally, there is the need for a **donor coordination framework**.

Flexibility vs Institutionalization through the mandate: While the lack of a detailed mandate allows for creativity, there is also a need for institutionalization of existing initiatives to ensure sustainability.

At the national level, there are significant gaps stemming from **gaps in political frameworks** like the Paris Agreement and UNSC. Those gaps hinder advancing details for action.

At the country level, competition for resources can undermine incentives for cooperation. Resource competition can exacerbate political power dynamics, sometimes leading to conflict.

Often specific knowledge is needed that might be overwhelming when aiming for a broad policy agenda.

Strategic thinking is needed around secondments. Are there strategic positions that need to be filled to complete the institutional map? Additionally, there should be a focus on **climate literacy among decision-makers**, not just secondments. The concept of **peer-to-peer networking** amongst (senior) decision makers was referred to as a promising practice. While

there is expertise in CPS, **knowledge of the peace and security** field, including technical terms/jargon remains limited.

There is a significant **knowledge gap** regarding the **role of CPS advisors in missions**. Also, in many cases, having a dedicated advisor leads to the assumption that nothing more is required, e.g. WPS/Gender advisors, but also DDR/DRM. Take these learnings into account.

The challenges are significant, requiring an **integrated response** with local structures and ownership. Specific expertise is still needed, since addressing root causes often goes beyond the traditional hard-security toolkit. Different organizations tackle different aspects, but what happens after integrated analysis?

There's a **need to link actions**, particularly how to engage with banks and other funding sources. The work often happens in silos, and there is a need for greater **coordination on broader issues**. Political-level analysis needs to lead to **actionable plans**, with development financing linking various parts together.

Partnerships need to be elevated both at the strategic and working technical levels to become more concrete. E.g. Pilot program for leadership engagement. **Specific training** on CPS is further a key element of partnerships.

Importance of **location-specific knowledge sharing** between international organizations and exploring ways to learn from one another.

There was a suggestion to approve several posts not tied to specific missions to increase flexibility (gratis personnel). Given that this is an emerging field, **flexible staffing** could be one solution and an entry point for cooperation with partners.

The focus should be on **strengthening and exploiting existing structures** rather than creating new ones. Exploring synergies and pooling resources.

Monitoring macro-trends: The development of political and peace-building missions due to funding cuts is a concern – missions are becoming smaller. The global landscape is shifting towards ad-hoc coalitions, moving away from multilateralism. This has diluted the purpose and changed the role of missions. How can we adapt to this?

Analysis and research need to go beyond factsheets and brief/summarized data to provide actionable insights for specific regions.



A **platform is needed** to better understand how to draw from others, create partnerships, and engage. There should be a manual on how to reach out and leverage capacities.

The focus should be on practical actions that can continue regardless of political changes. The goal is to **move from analysis to action**.

Summary and way forward

What is on the agenda, what is missing? Missing is to institutionalize the agenda on CPS. How to move from the personal engagement to the bigger picture? Does it start with a clear policy or with the expertise to present policies?

We need champions to advocate for donors and to high level leadership. Allies needed on all levels of management. We see some skepticism and climate action does not always fit into short term responses. Longer term strategy is needed for resource management.

Mainstreaming the topic into all areas is important, make sure to mainstream the targets and challenges but be clear with what exactly needs to be done. We have a lot of good examples to share and make narratives from. Interesting examples with cooperation between the UN and regional organizations.

To build partnerships we have to have a consistent language and authenticity and shared responsibilities. Mandate language, vague language allows adaptability and flexibility. Non-binding guidelines can guide in the field.

We need better analyses from all the available data! Acknowledge the complexity and add local solutions and expertise. The packaging of the analysis of data also plays an important role. Risk analysis and how to incorporate them in funding and policy making.

We see a lack of understanding on all levels. Training is really important and effective, to cultivate champions or allies. Broader training to all experts and staff in missions needed. CPS advisors need security training. We know our climate topic, we need more of a security perspective.

Military plays a role in planning institutional responses.

Leveraging expertise. Peer networks are very important. Small network with dedicated advisors to offer support can make a big difference in the work we do. Peer coaching is invaluable. Could we look into a pilot in coaching?

We share a fear of dwindling the CPS capacity. Make sure to connect on the action level.

Final questions and remarks

- *How can we institutionalize the work we do?*
- *Resources and priorities are lacking.*
- *We need to learn from success stories from other fields.*
- *We have to keep repeating the message. Conduct the symphony repeatedly, sing the same song, and be consistent to have impact.*

Notes: Ida Eriksson, Jannis Ruoff, Julia Evans, Christian Altpeter

Photos: Niamh Punton