

## Remarks to Security Council Open Debate

### The Impact of Climate-Related Disasters on International Peace and Security

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[Mr. Secretary-General], Mr. President, Excellencies, it is an honor to address the Security Council. Thank you to the Dominican Republic for convening this debate.

I am here as a young person to demand action because it is my generation and those that come after me who will bear the consequences of climate change. We are dedicated to finding solutions to this issue so that we can live in a world that is more secure, more peaceful, and more prosperous.

I will lay out three concrete steps that the Security Council can take to reduce the security impacts of climate change.

First, the Security Council should adopt a resolution that formally recognizes climate change as a threat to international peace and security.

Second, deployed UN missions should assess how climate change will impact local youth and how youth can be involved in building resilience and sustainability.

Third, deployed UN missions need to transition to use clean energy in the field, which will help mitigate climate change as well as build more sustainable communities.

The Security Council is long overdue to adopt a resolution that formally recognizes climate change's threat security. While I applaud the Security Council for discussing climate change's security impacts, it has been ten years since its first debate on this issue without a resolution that affirms that climate change constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

There is no question that climate change is a security issue. At the Stimson Center, an international security policy research institute in Washington DC where I work, we are doing innovative research on how social and economic vulnerabilities, poor governance, migration, and a decline in fisheries will impact the stability of coastal cities in the Caribbean. By overlaying these factors, we are identifying the most at-risk places for instability as a result of climate change in order to better target policies, investment, and aid.

It is clear to everyone in this room that climate change is a security threat. Today, we know that [18 million people](#) were displaced in 2017 alone as a result of storms, drought, flooding, and heat

waves. As we've seen in just the last few Atlantic hurricane seasons, which have ravaged the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, local governments simply cannot handle the increasingly severe weather that is becoming more common. When local government cannot provide basic services to their people, the result is displacement, poverty, political instability, and violence. Climate change is also harming the food and economic security of millions of people. There is an increasing consensus that more extreme and longer droughts in Africa and the Middle East are connected to conflict there. And as oceans warm and marine ecosystems shift, coastal communities, particularly in island nations, will lose the source of food and livelihood they have relied on for generations.

Simply put, climate change makes people less safe, forcing them to leave their homes and abandon their livelihoods as they lose access to their income, food, and ways of life. This clearly impacts political and social stability. Importantly, young people are particularly vulnerable, be it through human trafficking, unemployment, poverty, or simply not knowing where their next meal is coming from.

While the UN has incorporated climate change into the mandates of missions in Somalia, Darfur, Mali, the Central African Republic, and the Lake Chad region, a Security Council resolution that recognizes the security impacts of climate change must also require climate sensitivity be part of the mandates of all peacekeeping missions and special political missions.

The next step the Security Council must take will be to recognize both the disproportionate impact climate change has on young people and young people's unique role as innovators, bringing new ideas to the table to solve this global problem. The Security Council should require the Special Representatives of the Secretary General of each deployed mission to assess climate change's impact on local youth, particularly through displacement, unemployment, food security, and recruitment into armed groups—insecurities we know drive continued conflict. The Special Representatives should brief the Security Council on their findings. The assessments would function as an early-warning mechanism to alert the Council to areas where climate change will hamper the ability of UN missions to carry out their conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities

Deployed missions must also engage young people in finding solutions to build climate resilience in their communities. As just one [example](#), in Saint Lucia, a local young person, Mr. Johanan (Jo-han-an) Dujon (Du-Jon) saw how climate-induced blooms of harmful seaweed damaged the local fishing industry, and he created a fertilizer using the seaweed that had washed ashore. This improved the resilience of local fishers to climate change and improved local gardening and agriculture. In the three years since Mr. Dujon started his business, he has removed almost 300 tons of seaweed from the shores of Saint Lucia. More of these innovate solutions are needed to address climate change around the world, and the UN and its newly launched Youth2030 Strategy can act as platform where young people can share their ideas and find support for their initiatives.

Finally, the UN must live up to this body's long-stated goal to reduce reliance on fossil fuels in field missions. By reducing the energy footprint of its deployed missions, the UN can reduce its greenhouse gas pollution while building sustainable infrastructure in the communities they serve. Through sustainable energy, the UN can prevent reliance on the fossil fuels market and build a more self-sufficient community. According to an [Environmental Study](#) conducted by the UN Department of Field Support, as of April 2017, renewable energy accounted for less than 1% of electricity generation in deployed missions, meaning that missions rely almost entirely on fossil fuels, particularly diesel. The Security Council should pass a resolution to commit to 50% of energy from renewables by 2025 and use regular reports from the Secretary General to track progress.

There is no question that climate change is a security threat both in its direct impacts and as a threat multiplier. The UN and the Security Council must live up to their words and act now to mitigate and adapt to climate change. While I am heartened by multilateral frameworks like the Paris Climate Agreement, there is much more to be done. Those commitments are important, but they are not nearly good enough if we are to prevent warming above one and a half degrees Celsius.

Young people must be central to finding and sustaining solutions. [Almost two billion](#) young people around the world do not have the luxury of choosing not to care about this issue. And with the help of the UN and its member countries, we will find solutions—otherwise it is us, our communities and our future that will face the consequences.

Thank you very much.