

POWERING PEACE: SHIFTING TO CLEAN ENERGY OPTIONS IN UNITED NATIONS FIELD OPERATIONS

An Initiative of The Stimson Center and Energy Peace Partners

Summary

The Stimson Center and Energy Peace Partners are launching “Powering Peace,” an initiative to leverage greater use of economic and climate solutions to support peace in the world’s most fragile regions through a shift to clean energy options. The project will focus on crisis regions that host international peace and humanitarian field operations. These missions spend roughly a billion dollars annually on energy – principally through diesel-powered generators in off-grid settings – in some of the least electrified countries in the world. That investment represents an opportunity to leverage new strategies to enhance energy efficiency, emphasize clean practices, modernize peacekeeping and look at new energy sources for conflict-affected communities.

With increasing institutional commitments and promising efforts to shift to renewable energy in individual field missions, this is the time to accelerate the transition to using renewables in the field. *Powering Peace* will focus on how to support the United Nations and international agencies in facilitating a clean energy transition in a timely and predictable manner, a shift that could deliver important benefits:

- Provide cost savings and increased efficiencies at a time when the demand for peacekeeping and humanitarian operations is outpacing resources.
- Offer clean energy generation to reduce pollution, decrease carbon emissions and mitigate the environmental impact of field operations.
- Introduce long-lasting energy infrastructure in some of the least electrified places, provide local communities with improved energy access and related benefits, and create new building blocks for sustainable peace in fragile settings.
- Enhance security for missions and communities by reducing dependency on diesel fuel and reliance on treacherous supply chains.

Through a combination of research, analysis, data-collection and advocacy, the *Powering Peace* project will pursue two complementary tracks: one, focused on identifying opportunities and challenges within the United Nations system, and another, focused on country-specific analysis, options and field pilots to help make the contextualized case for clean energy transitions in a given country.

The Problem

Climate change impacts countries worldwide, with consequences for fragile states and human security. From South Sudan to Syria, the international community spent roughly \$35 billion in 2016 on humanitarian aid and UN peacekeeping missions, the highest level of annual expense recorded. Yet those efforts are just beginning to benefit from more

sustainable practices and address the link to climate change, which contributes to these crises. Renewable energy offers one such opening; investment in this sector represents roughly 75% of all global climate financing, yet little of that investment reaches fragile countries, which are often the most vulnerable to climate change, conflict and energy poor. Over 850 million people live in 27 countries that are most affected by these three phenomena, primarily in Africa, the Middle East and Southern Asia. There is a better alternative.

The Powering Peace Initiative

While global energy trends support greater use of renewable, sustainable power, much of the UN system is not yet able or designed to make that shift. This project will work with key partners in the United Nations and outside to research and identify the current system of energy provision to field missions, articulate the benefits and challenges of a transition, and propose a roadmap to support shifting energy provision in missions. The aim is to help take full advantage of resilient, sustainable power technologies and the commitment of many countries to modernizing energy use. Building on decades of experience and expertise, the project team will work with experts and decision-makers from the United Nations, key member states, non-governmental organizations and the commercial sector to map a way forward. The project will research UN policy and practice around energy provision in field missions, as well as country-specific analyses and case studies.

First, the project will review policy and guidance for the use of renewable energy, support for innovation, and deployment of renewables to United Nations field missions, as well as the obstacles to their use, and current system of energy provision, including logistics, costs, and decision-making processes. The project will host discussions with policymakers and experts – including within the UN, with the key member states, and with policy leaders – to identify areas for policy alignment across the UN system with regard to renewable energy and its use in field operations. The project will analyze and share its findings, publish a report identifying options to move forward, and launch a dialogue on the path to renewable resources, including near-term and longer-term potential benefits and challenges.

Second, *Powering Peace* will examine country-specific conflict situations, using field studies to assess the cases for clean energy transitions in specific regions. The project will publish research papers for country-specific cases, with options for a shift in energy sources in each setting. The project will seek support for a few proof-of-concept systems by 2019, and development of clearer UN targets and policy goals toward a more sustainable, climate-sensitive approach, with validated prototypes. This approach could be facilitated by a range of technical and financial innovations, including projects supported by the Peace Renewable Energy Credit (PREC), a new financing mechanism being developed by Energy Peace Partners to catalyze renewable energy development in fragile settings.

Together, these efforts could expand the tools for supporting peace and development, and extend the renewable energy revolution to some of the most vulnerable populations in the world.

Powering Peace is a project of the Stimson Center, a Washington-based think tank, and Energy Peace Partners, a California-based organization. The project brings together a team of world-class experts in climate change, peace operations and peacebuilding, conflict prevention/resolution, and renewable energy finance.

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