



Regional Stakeholder Dialogue

Towards an Integrated Climate Security Framework for the Arab Region

Zoom Platform

December 6-8, 2020

Concept Note

Background

Climate change impacts are complex and shaped by many interactions between natural resources and socio-economic aspects. These interactions need to be properly understood in order to conduct appropriate planning for climate security and sustainable development. If not properly understood, this complexity of interactions could become a challenge for climate security planners and decision-makers, as it involves many cause-effect relations.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction have emphasized that for development to be sustainable and resilient to shocks, it must integrate climate change and disaster risk management into short-term responses and long-term planning. Likewise, the Roadmap for Financing Agenda 2030 calls on stakeholders to scale-up climate finance, and to enhance sustainable financing strategies and investments at all levels, and across the different, yet interlinked, spheres of work.

Against this background, in 2019, the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Arab Water Council (AWC), together with multiple UN agencies (UNDP, UNEP-FI, WFP, UN-Habitat, UNDRR) have initiated a regional project: “**The SDG-Climate Facility Project: Climate Action for Human Security**”. The Project aims at enhancing the capacity of regional and national institutions to address climate change in a way that brings benefits across multiple goals, such as enhancing gender equality, tackling youth unemployment and eradicating poverty, meanwhile also reducing the impacts of, and potential for, conflict and crises. The program was launched in January 2019 under the LAS Climate Risk Nexus Initiative (CRNI) to be terminated in December 2022. Through joint actions, the project is working towards a) promoting integrated solutions for climate action that brings benefits across the SDGs, and enhancing crisis prevention and recovery efforts; and b) scaling-up local and regional partnerships and finance mechanisms towards such efforts.

Under the framework of this project, a Regional Climate Security Network (RCSN) will be established as a think tank, and as a regional platform that enables institutions across the Arab world – including government institutions, organizations and NGOs, UN, private sector, academia, research institutions, donor agencies and other strategic partners – to develop an Integrated Regional Climate Security Framework (IRCSF) for the Arab Region. Through the RCSN network, integrated technical solutions and research agendas will be developed to help countries produce innovative ideas to address multi-dimensional risks and build resilience. Additionally, through the network systematic regional meetings, technical perspectives will be discussed to serve the SDG-Facility project activities with respect to data sharing, validation of results, and participation in technical surveys, to help better understand the regional context and facilitate building the different countries' risk profiles. On the operational side, a series of regional dialogues with multiple stakeholders will be organized as part of the network capacity building activities, to help develop a shared vision on how climate security, in practice, is expected to cope with emerging trends and what type of institutional arrangements and management instruments may be needed in this regard.

Objective

The main aim of the **1st Regional Stakeholder Dialogue (RSHD)** is to bring relevant key actors together to discuss current operational challenges associated with climate security related policies on the national and regional levels. The event will be an opportunity to exchange views and information among the different stakeholders on how to integrate climate security considerations in planning and budgeting and how to generate agreed strategic priorities to act on climate security related challenges in a more sustainable and coordinated manner.

The event is expected to be attended by senior governmental officials, policy-makers, development partners, as well as experts from multi-lateral regional and international organizations in pertinent fields. Country representatives from crisis-affected member states will also be present to discuss the operationalization of the climate security concepts to support crisis recovery efforts in maintaining sustainable societies based on peace and sustainability.

Thematic Task Forces

There are many interactions between human security and natural resources that need to be integrated for appropriate planning for climate security (CS) and sustainable development. Therefore, without comprehensively addressing the inter-related aspects, Stakeholder Dialogue goals will be less effective and ensuring sustainable development may be hindered. Efficient planning for CS cannot be undertaken without careful consideration of the cross-cutting nature between human security and natural resources. Unless considered, plans could be less effective, sub-optimal in terms of their costs and benefits, or lead to unintended results.

Taking into consideration the climate change impacts on natural resources and their inter-linkages with human security systems and DRR, an integrated framework is needed to develop a shared vision to operationalize Climate security, considering the different operational challenges that could be faced on the policy, governance, capacity building, financing and technical levels and to discuss the different dimensions in an integrated way, stakeholders will be organized into thematic task forces (TF) to actively contribute to discussions and interactive planning during - and potentially after - the dialogue activities. Accordingly, the following potential TF are proposed in this context of the RCSSHD:

Climate Security & Water Stress
Climate Security & Food Security
Climate Security & Energy Security
Climate Security, Social Cohesion and Gender Equity

Throughout the workshop, these TFs will be working in separate breakout groups to assess challenges and define action items based on their thematic area of expertise. Interactive group sessions throughout the program will target the following action items:

- Formulating a shared vision for a regional integrated climate security framework, based on the identified challenges;
- Defining strategic priorities to overcome the identified challenges and advance climate action for human security;
- Identifying priority areas, proposed actions and activities to advance climate action for human security using a nexus approach;
- Integrating the identified vision, objectives, and proposed activities into a draft document that represents a starting point towards the initiation of regional integrated framework for Climate security in the Arab Region.

Our group facilitators invite TF member's active participation and expert contribution to the listed action items. The TF's results will be communicated back to the Dialogue on a regular basis throughout the event to allow for continued cross-referencing, discussions and an integrated, nexus-based evaluation of the proposed topics and action areas.

Expected Outcomes

The Dialogue's expected outcome is mainly to enhance the understanding of the concept of climate security while providing strategic policy guidance on how to join forces to initiate a regional integrated climate security framework for the Arab region. The event is expected to enhance the understanding of the executed regional and national adaptation and mitigation policies and measures to cope with or avoid future risks associated with climate changes on human and natural systems. Based on the Dialogue deliberations and activities, the following outputs will be generated:

- A clear definition of the concept of Climate Security and what it really means for the Arab region.
- Identification of the main challenges hindering the proper operationalizing of an integrated framework for Climate Security in the MENA region, with respect to technical, institutional, and political challenges.
- A list of strategic objectives and action items required to address the current operational challenges using an integrated nexus approach.
- A shared vision developed among relevant stakeholders on the main elements needed to initiate an integrated strategic framework to advance climate action for human security in the Arab region, and mainstream climate security considerations in development planning and risk reduction policies.
- Regional Climate Security Network is operationalized.

The strategic policy framework, developed as part of this workshop, will serve as an important and innovative tool for developing, operationalizing, and implementing climate security policies and activities on the regional level across the MENA region. The framework represents an important first benchmark that will inform the future work of the Climate Security Network.

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