

PRACTICE NOTE

CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

Climate Policy and Finance for Sustaining Peace and Security

Cairo, 24-26 September 2025

Africa Climate, Peace and Security
Knowledge and Practice Sharing Series



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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INTRODUCTION

This practice note captures the key discussions, insights, and forward-looking proposals that emerged during the first capacity building workshop of the *Africa Climate, Peace and Security Knowledge and Practice Sharing Series*, held under the theme “Climate Policy and Finance for Sustaining Peace and Security” from 24 to 26 September 2025 in Cairo, Egypt.

The Knowledge and Practice sharing series is co-convened by the African Union Commission (AUC) in collaboration with the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Climate Security Mechanism (CSM), the UN System Staff College (UNSSC), and the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCCPA), with support from the Government of Switzerland, Afreximbank, and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

The event brought together 21 representatives from 16 AU Member States¹, spanning Ministries of Environment, Climate Change, Finance, Planning, Agriculture, Civil Protection, and Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as more than 10 technical experts from the AUC, UNDP, the Global Green Growth Institute, GCF and adelphi. The workshop marked a significant step in advancing a continental platform for peer learning, technical collaboration, and practice exchange on peace-positive climate finance. It also laid the foundation for a network of Member States and experts committed to scaling up conflict-sensitive investments and strengthening Africa’s collective position in global climate and peace processes, including preparations toward COP30 in Belém, Brazil.

As AU Member States continue to advance collective efforts to align climate action with peace and security priorities and implement the Addis Ababa Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action, the Cairo workshop served as the inaugural session under the Africa Climate, Peace and Security Knowledge and Practice Sharing Series.

The series aims to translate continental priorities and frameworks into technical, programmatic, and financing action, equipping African policymakers, negotiators, and experts to embed Climate, Peace and Security (CPS) priorities within national planning, regional strategies, and resource mobilization frameworks. The workshop aimed to:

1. facilitate knowledge and practice exchange on integrating CPS considerations into climate policy, adaptation and mitigation efforts;
2. strengthen policy and institutional capacity to align national and regional frameworks with emerging climate finance opportunities; and
3. support the design and refinement of conflict-sensitive climate finance proposals through direct engagement with GCF.

¹ Including Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo (Republic of), Djibouti, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, The Gambia, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Sao Tomé & Príncipe.

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BACKGROUND

The far-reaching impact of climate change has given rise to critical issues in Africa, rendering it a '[risk multiplier](#)' that has intensified food, water, and energy insecurity while propelling competition over natural resources, exacerbating social inequalities, and driving displacement across the continent. While [climate change does not cause conflict in and of itself](#), there is growing evidence that in some African contexts and beyond, the complex interaction between a changing climate and pre-existing vulnerabilities across social, political, and economic factors makes instability, conflict and violence [more likely](#). This complex relationship between climate change, peace and security is compounded by the fact that in settings where conflict and fragility already exist, climate hazards have often aggravated or prolonged instability, rendering it more difficult to reach and sustain peace and climate resilience. Likewise, insecurity has been shown to disrupt and impede climate action, including investments in adaptation, mitigation, low-carbon development and recovery, thus increasing climate-related risks, reducing access to finance, and amplifying the chances that climate investments fail.

'There is [ample research](#) highlighting that in conflict-affected countries, accessing climate finance becomes substantially harder. And indeed, nearly three-quarters of the most climate-vulnerable countries are also amongst the most [fragile](#). From the COP27 Presidency's [CRSP Initiative](#), to the recent Baku Climate and Peace Action Hub at COP29, calls to reduce barriers to climate finance have grown. The AUC has been a strong partner and advocate for the regional momentum already growing on mobilizing climate finance for the African continent, and advancing the climate, peace and security agenda in Africa. Notable AU-led policies and initiatives that recognise climate, peace and security include the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2032, the AU Great Green Wall Initiative Strategy and Ten-Year Implementation Framework 2024-2034, the Revised AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy 2024, the New Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2035. This new capacity building series is one of several ways in which the AUC builds on these frameworks, and at the same time responds to a growing capacity building demand by its Member States on mobilizing climate finance.

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KEY THEMES AND DISCUSSIONS

CLIMATE, PEACE AND SECURITY POLICY AND POSITIONING IN AFRICA: MEMBER STATE'S PERSPECTIVE

With the 16 Member States bringing a diverse mix of representatives, including climate and environment experts, disaster risk and civil protection practitioners, development planners, and humanitarian experts, the workshop opened with a focus on the evolving climate, peace and security policy context (such as the Bamako Declaration on CPS and overview of AU led policies), and Africa's positioning within continental and global processes. Discussions centred on how cooperation between Member States and partners can be facilitated, and how shared initiatives and ideas can be practically advanced. Participants emphasized that sustained collaboration, grounded in knowledge exchange and shared experience, is critical.

The AUC presented the progress on the Common African Position (CAP) on Climate, Peace and Security, building on the COP 27 Sharm el Sheikh call for a stable and climate-resilient Africa and acknowledging climate change as a conflict risk multiplier. The AUC outlined next steps to conclude and operationalise the CAP after its formal adoption, including the role of climate finance in implementation and the central coordination role of the African Group of Negotiators, the CAHOSCC, and the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC). The AU also referenced the Africa Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy (2022-2032) as a key policy anchor recognizing climate- and conflict linkages and the need to address their underlying drivers. Reference was made to the 2025 Addis Ababa Leaders' Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action, which explicitly acknowledged the destabilising impacts of climate change and stressed the need for increased climate finance, particularly for losses and damages in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

RIISING CLIMATE, PEACE AND SECURITY RISKS IN AFRICA

The session on concepts and evidence highlighted that natural disasters cause more internal displacement in Africa than violence and conflict combined. Participants noted that the continent continues to experience high levels of conflict-driven displacement, with countries most vulnerable to conflict also ranking among those most exposed to climate risks. The presentation on the Africa Climate Security Assessment was welcomed and cited as showing that climate and conflict are increasingly co-located, with transboundary water, food and energy insecurities serving as potential triggers of political instability. Non-state armed groups were reported to exploit climate-related pressures in the Sahel, Horn of Africa and Central Africa, while social exclusion and limited participation increase vulnerability to climate-security risks. The specific exposure of African Small Island Developing States and coastal countries was underlined, given the growing frequency of extreme weather events and the additional pressure of rising sea levels and coastal erosion. Several participants from relatively stable regions warned that many contexts remain "boiling pots," underscoring the imperative of embedding social cohesion, prevention, and peace dividends within climate finance proposals – not only for countries in conflict but across all African regions. Challenges remain with regard to the availability of data on climate and peace-positive indicators. The importance of indigenous knowledge systems data and information was underscored.

INTEGRATING CLIMATE, PEACE AND SECURITY INTO CLIMATE POLICY AND PRACTICE

Participants observed that integrating climate, peace and security into policy and practice is a dynamic and evolving process that has already begun reshaping the continent's climate governance architecture. They emphasized the importance of embedding climate, peace and security linkages within national frameworks and turning high-level commitments into practical outcomes. The need for bottom-up approaches and inclusive design was repeatedly highlighted, ensuring that communities and local institutions shape design and implementation. Youth inclusivity was considered important, as the continent's overwhelmingly young population can be an immense resource. Participants also highlighted challenges of young people participating in violence, especially in areas where climatic changes already reduced economic opportunities. To advance peace-positive climate programming, discussions underscored the integration of climate, peace and security considerations into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptations Plans (NAPS) and Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDS) in line with the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) and Global Stocktake (GST). UNDP experts outlined ongoing support to African countries revising their NDCs and highlighted that the existing global climate finance architecture remains ill-suited to conflict-affected contexts. UNDP experts also emphasized the fact that all climate change adaptation and mitigation investments in fragile settings should begin with a Conflict Sensitivity Analysis. This ensures projects do not unintentionally fuel conflict and instead contribute to resilience and trust-building.

Participants called for climate finance to become flexible, adaptive and conflict-sensitive, rejecting superficial inclusion and urging proactive, transformative approaches. The AU and Member States encouraged collective packaging of proposals to improve access. Kenya's participatory model, where grassroots communities are consulted in national planning was presented as good practice, showing how inclusivity can build credibility and ownership. With over 60 percent of Africans living in rural areas, participants stressed that integrity and equity must be core principles in designing carbon markets and finance mechanisms.

INNOVATIVE AND CONFLICT-SENSITIVE CLIMATE FINANCING

The Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) presented innovative mechanisms such as peace bonds and carbon market instruments that merge development, adaptation and peace dividends. It was underlined that peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity must be mainstreamed in climate programming through policy innovation, flexible financing and capacity building. Examples from Ethiopia – including Agroforestry for People, Peace and Prosperity in Southern Ethiopia, Conservation and Sustainable Management in Forested Landscapes in Southwestern Ethiopia, and the Ethiopia Climate Resilience and Landscape Restoration Programme – demonstrated how food security and landscape restoration can reinforce peace outcomes. Lessons from Colombia illustrated how institutional and judicial reforms can address deforestation-related conflicts, while participants discussed how carbon market projects could integrate peace co-benefits – such as inclusion of women, youth and social cohesion – as key performance indicators.

Participants identified institutional capacities, coordination and partnerships as core enablers for scaling these models, calling for the AU, UN and partners to develop technical support for conflict-sensitive carbon and peace-bond finance. Several noted that carbon projects are often avoided by developers in conflict-prone or border regions; “de-risking” through rewarding peace dividends was proposed to direct investment toward these fragile areas.



DESIGNING PEACE-POSITIVE CLIMATE FINANCE FOR FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED SETTINGS

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) reaffirmed that investments in fragile and conflict-affected contexts now among its core priorities. The Fund has revamped its approach to provide greater flexibility, including higher management-cost allowances and contingency budgets to adjust to evolving contexts. Country ownership was stressed, supported by a revised accreditation process to expedite access. Participants discussed persistent challenges such as risk perceptions, long approval timelines, and the need for stronger climate and peace rationales in proposals.

Practical examples were shared from Somalia, Chad, Kenya, Burundi, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – each highlighting different strategies for conflict-sensitive design, from community-based risk mapping and institution-building to green livelihood rehabilitation. Somalia's project focussed on nature-based solutions in the vicinities of the Shabelle and Juba rivers, while simultaneously addressing community conflict drivers. The DRC project aimed at working with those at risk of recruitment by armed groups, linking conservation and peacebuilding. Presentations from Kenya, Congo, Burundi and Chad also reflected strong climate, peace and security rationale.

The GCF encouraged countries without direct-access entities to partner with regional institutions such as RECs, Climate Commissions, or the AU to develop multi-country proposals. The AU cited an ongoing Multi-Country GCF Water Pipeline as an example to be mirrored for FCAS multi-country project pipeline. It reiterated that projects must present both a strong climate rationale and a clear “peace-positive” theory of change. Experts also stressed the importance of Climate, Peace and Security risk assessments to build on, while specifically for GCF the climate narrative itself must also be explicit. GCF representatives invited participants to liaise directly with their dedicated country teams and to convert concept notes into mature funding packages.

TRANSLATING IDEAS INTO REGIONAL AND LOCALLY LED PROGRAMMING

Working-group sessions demonstrated that peer exchange and multi-country collaboration provide an effective entry point for addressing shared climate, peace and security challenges. Country teams discussed proposals focusing on food and water security, transboundary resource management, and climate-induced mobility as practical entry points for integrated CPS programming. Several countries requested follow-up support through targeted roundtables, a capacity-building workshop to refine concept notes, and a practical CPS Toolkit under AU leadership to guide proposal design and CPS Policy mainstreaming guideline citing ongoing NAP, NDC and GCF Country investment strategies as low hanging fruits for integration. GCF, AU and UN counterparts encouraged alignment with NDAs, sectoral ministries, and national priorities to ensure institutional traction. The meeting concluded with broad consensus that the ideas developed in Cairo should evolve into implementable projects and partnerships, and that the outcomes of this workshop should be showcased at COP 30 to raise awareness, highlight Africa's innovative tools, and mobilise partner support through the African Union.

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HIGHLIGHTS AND TAKEAWAYS

The workshop reaffirmed Africa's commitment to advance conflict-sensitive climate finance and move from analysis to implementation through practical cooperation, policy coherence, and sustained learning. Key highlights and takeaways include:

KNOWLEDGE, CAPACITY AND TECHNICAL FOLLOW-UP

Participants agreed that knowledge exchange, technical capacity and continuous peer learning are critical to sustain momentum beyond the workshop. The AU was requested to coordinate regional roundtables, support country consultations, targeted trainings and readiness clinics. A toolbox on climate finance programming and policy was requested, specifically a guideline for Conflict Sensitive GCF proposals and a CPS Policy Mainstreaming Guideline to assist Member States in national climate policy processes.

SCALING CLIMATE FINANCE FOR FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED CONTEXTS:

Participants stressed the need to scale access to multiple financing windows, including the GCF, Global Environment Facility (GEF), Adaptation Fund and the Loss and Damage Fund to support countries affected by fragility, conflict and climate shocks. The GCF's prioritisation of FCAS and flexible financing modalities was welcomed, but participants underscored the need for handholding to submit their first batch of conflict sensitive climate finance.

DESIGNING INNOVATIVE AND BLENDED FINANCING INSTRUMENTS:

Discussions highlighted the potential of innovative tools such as peace bonds, carbon markets and blended public-private finance to mobilise resources for adaptation and stability. Participants encouraged the AU, UN and partners to support de-risking mechanisms that reward peace dividends and enable investment in fragile and border regions.

BUILDING REGIONAL AND MULTI-COUNTRY COORDINATION MECHANISMS:

Multi-country collaboration was identified as a powerful entry point for addressing shared CPS challenges. Opportunities for multi-country proposals were presented, with other countries remaining open to participate. The GCF and Participants underlined that regional cooperation, local ownership, coherent in-country consultations and readiness support are essential to maturing these ideas into implementable pipelines aligned with AU and REC frameworks.

INTEGRATING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND GLOBAL ADVOCACY:

Member States reaffirmed that continental policies provide the foundation for unified engagement but now requires targeted financing and institutional support, especially at UNFCCC. The need for advancing CPS in negotiation tracks was emphasized. The AU and partners were encouraged to translate this policy into bankable programmes and to ensure that outcomes from Cairo feed directly into Africa's positioning for COP30. Participants agreed to use COP30 as a platform to showcase Africa's leadership in conflict-sensitive climate finance, mobilise partners, and attract new investments for peace-positive climate action.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED

The workshop underscored that advancing conflict-sensitive climate finance in Africa requires navigating structural, institutional, and operational constraints while capitalising on emerging windows of opportunity.

FRAGMENTED INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE:

A persistent challenge remains the fragmentation of mandates between climate, peace, and finance institutions. Participants noted that while numerous frameworks exist, coordination across ministries, regional bodies, and partners remains weak. However, the ongoing finalisation of the Common African Position on Climate, Peace and Security offers a unifying framework to align national, regional, and multilateral efforts. This momentum provides an opportunity to institutionalise coherence through the AU, RECs, and UN coordination platforms.

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO ACCESS CLIMATE FINANCE:

Access barriers to climate finance include lengthy approval timelines, complex eligibility criteria, and the absence of conflict-sensitive derisking provisions which continue to constrain proposal development. The policy shift within the Green Climate Fund signal new opportunities to tailor financing to fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Africa's challenge is now strategic readiness: building the technical and institutional capacity to convert these opportunities into measurable results.

PROJECT-LEVEL INNOVATION VS. SCALING CONSTRAINTS:

While innovative concepts such as peace bonds, de-risking mechanisms, and carbon projects with peace co-benefits are emerging, piloting scaling them remains difficult due to risk perceptions and lack of tailored financial instruments. The need for a convergence of private-sector interest, philanthropy, and Africa's institutional innovation under the AU's leadership creates a timely opportunity to mobilise blended finance models that can shift from pilot to portfolio scale.

GROWING POLITICAL WILL:

Participants agreed that political support for the CPS agenda has grown substantially, but operational follow-through remains inconsistent. The opportunity lies in embedding CPS into the implementation of national climate plans – NDC's, NAPs, and LT-LEDS so that political declarations translate into financeable action. Strengthening AU-UN collaboration and anchoring outcomes in the lead-up to COP30 were seen as critical to sustaining this political momentum.



NEXT STEPS AND FOLLOW-UP

In the months ahead, participating Member States will continue developing and refining their country project concepts, with technical input from GCF country teams and the workshop coordination team. Several countries are planning national consultations to align Climate, Peace and Security (CPS) priorities with national entities and policies, including NDCs, NAPs, and national development frameworks. Another group of MS will internally review the live GCF project-proposal pipeline and then integrate peace-positive elements into new proposals and explore opportunities for multi-country collaboration. The practice note and findings will also be shared with participants to inform national briefings and partnership discussions. At the regional level, the African Union Commission, together with partners, will take forward the development of a practical CPS toolkit to guide integration into national and regional planning and climate finance proposals. Continued coordination and technical support are envisaged through the next iterations of the *Africa CPS Knowledge and Practice Sharing Series*, including virtual follow-up dialogues, peer exchange, and preparation for the next iteration of the Series in 2026.

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