



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

NEW YORK, 24 JULY 2020

SECURITY COUNCIL - OPEN DEBATE

MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY: CLIMATE AND SECURITY

STATEMENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

Thank you for using your presidency of the Security Council to bring the key issue of our time to our attention today. We hope that today's Open VTC will advance the Council's consideration of the climate and security nexus, which is badly needed.

In order to understand how delayed the Council is in taking account of the climate and security nexus, it is worth considering how the UN's other principal organs have expressed themselves on this linkage. The Secretary-General's report on Climate Change and its possible security implications,¹ submitted nearly 11 years ago to the General Assembly, forecasts increased involuntary migration, intra-state conflict over water resources and territorial disputes, as well as food and water insecurity as a result of climate change. As acknowledged in the concept note for this debate, "effects of climate change can lead inter alia to food insecurity, large-scale displacement, and social tensions, exacerbating, prolonging or contributing to the risk of future conflicts." Indeed, we see these dynamics today in situations on the Council's agenda, including in Yemen, where the decreasing ability to grow food and access clean water caused by climate change is exacerbating suffering, in the Lake Chad Basin, where diminishing water supplies have

¹ A/64/350

led to conflict between farmers and herders and spurred migration, and in Somalia, where increasing droughts have led to an absence of livelihood options and to greater poverty, in turn sparking and prolonging conflicts. It is more than urgent for the Council to address the impact of climate on its work along these lines, in particular given the rapid downward spiral on climate change over the past decade. However, the Council should do more than this. It has so far treated the issue of climate inconsistently, and as a secondary factor: its resolutions that reference climate all relate to country situations on the African continent, and only as an aggravating factor or intensifier for other sources of conflict. But as the Secretary-General's report explains, climate change is not only a 'threat multiplier': it is the root cause of insecurity for hundreds of millions of people inside and outside of situations on the Council's agenda, and by no means limited to Africa. Many member states fear the mass destruction caused by extreme weather events, of which global warming has dramatically increased the probability, or sea-level rise, which at today's projections will make entire states uninhabitable or simply vanish within our lifetimes. Indigenous peoples remain at particular risk from the radical alteration of ecosystems and habitats due to climate change. The direct effects of global warming itself constitute an existential threat for many the world's states and peoples. What could be more relevant to peace and security?

Mr. President,

One argument we hear from those opposed to a systematic focus on climate and security is that the Security Council is not best placed of the UN's bodies to address it. Liechtenstein acknowledges the expertise held across the UN's bodies on this issue, and encourages the Council to make increased use of the capacities and capabilities that exist in order to improve its understanding of the climate and security nexus, notably the DPPA-UNDP-UNEP Climate Security Mechanism. However, the underlying argument to oppose Council work on climate is a security paradigm with an exclusive focus on hard security that has long been outdated - and amply illustrated to be so in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Security Council runs a concrete risk of further paralysing itself in the role as guardian of peace and security if it does not embrace a broader notion of security that reflects the reality we all live in.

The present human security threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic must be an additional reason for the Council to address climate change. Economic lockdowns may have contributed to a temporary slowing of emissions. But efforts to restart economies quickly must make use of the cleanest forms of energy generation possible, in order to avoid a relapse and possibly further setbacks. 'Building back better' in response to the pandemic also means building greener, more sustainable economies. COVID-19 has also brought to global attention the need for responsible human stewardship of global biodiversity, combined with challenges such as the illegal wildlife trade.

Mr. President,

The concept note for this debate highlights the need to pursue an approach to climate-related security risks that can inform Council decision making, facilitate climate-related security risk assessments and enable appropriate responses. A first step toward this goal could be a Council resolution on Climate and Security that establishes a reporting mechanism, making use of the considerable expertise that has already been developed within the UN system, including its specialized agencies. The Council could also consider whether a task force made up of relevant UN agencies could strengthen the Council's engagement on the climate and security nexus through regular briefings and otherwise supplying relevant expertise and information. In the interim, more systematic references to the impact of global warming on Council situations, particularly those outside of the African continent, are necessary and long overdue.

I thank you.