Climate Policies and Financing for Conflict and Displacement-Affected Contexts: Closing the Capacity and Education Gaps

Catherine Wong
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

New data streams highlight the low levels of access to climate finance by the most climate-vulnerable countries, which struggle with conflict and displacement and call for more effective financing mechanisms. While such measures are urgent, their effectiveness and impact depend on investments in capacity development and education. In exploring recent international policy trends in climate, conflict, and displacement, this article argues for greater attention to endogenous capacities and implementation of science-informed approaches. It highlights the key role academia and the education sector can play in addressing these gaps. In contexts where conflict and displacement are ongoing, and climate and insecurity jeopardize sustainability, this paper argues that strengthened capacities can represent a critical adaptation measure and a no-regrets investment opportunity.

Keywords: Climate change, conflict, displacement, migration, capacity development, education.

Introduction

The tenth anniversary year of the Paris Agreement takes place in 2025, against the backdrop of the highest levels of conflict[1] and displacement[2] since the inception of the UN and record levels of global warming. With third-generation Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement due in 2025, a new opportunity arises to revisit progress on climate change. Going beyond the established and prosaic understanding of poverty and development interlinkages, to the intersections of climate with conflict and insecurity, increasingly recognized as "Climate, Peace and Security" on the one hand, and with migration and displacement on the other. Recent developments include a marked recognition of conflict and displacement as relevant to climate change. The 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) of the UN Framework Convention on

[1] The Institute for Economics and Peace's (IEP) 2024 Global Peace Index reports that there were 56 ongoing conflicts, the highest number of concurrent conflicts since World War II, with the second highest annual level of conflict-related deaths in the last 30 years.

[2] UNHCR reported that displacement reached record levels in 2024, at 120 million in May 2024, with 12 years of consecutive increases in displacement witnessed.

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Climate Change (UNFCCC) gave attention to the interactions between climate, conflict, and displacement.

New streams of data highlight the low levels of access to climate finance by the most climate-vulnerable countries, which struggle with conflict and displacement and call for more effective financing mechanisms (UNDP, 2021; Overseas Development Institute [ODI], 2021; Wong, 2023; World Bank Group, 2024). While such changes are urgent, effectiveness and impact will depend on investments in capacity development in education. In exploring recent trends in climate, conflict, and displacement, this article argues for greater attention to strengthening endogenous capacities, the academia and the education sector can play a key role (Juckett et al., 2022) in addressing these gaps. In contexts where conflict and displacement are ongoing, and climate and insecurity jeopardize sustainability, this paper argues that strengthened capacities can represent a critical adaptation measure (Cid & Lerner, 2023) and a 'no regrets' (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 1996) investment opportunity in education.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Capacity Development for Climate, Conflict, and Displacement

The literature on capacity and capacity development in the case of climate, conflict, and displacement is sparse. Definitions vary and have evolved, informed as much by the epistemology of education and research as by development practice. Tangential references can be drawn from the climate field. The 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development made the case for capacity building, which strengthens "endogenous capacities in developing countries" (UN, 1992). The UNDP (2002) *Capacity for Development* explored the nature of capacity and capacity development, defining capacity as "the ability to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives" (p. 8).

Noting the ambiguity in defining capacity development in international climate change negotiations, Nautiyal and Klinsky (2022) stress that a departure is needed from a narrow short-term project-based focus on techno-managerial aspects to approaches that are transdisciplinary, holistic, and engage diverse groups of stakeholders (see Susskind & Kim, 2021). In countries affected by ongoing conflict and insecurity, Brown and colleagues (2013) found that tackling climate change is understood as a priority. Institutions, networks, and inter-institutional linkages focused on learning and knowledge promote adaptive capacity and peacebuilding. Higher education establishments are recognized as some of society's most enduring institutions (Dodgson & Gann, 2018), including in conflict-affected countries (Bukaie et al., 2025; Milton, 2020) and as establishments that build the capacity of climate change professionals in developing countries (Huq, 2016). Displacement-related brain drain is an issue

impacting capacities to respond to climate change (Buhaug & von Uexkell, 2021). Greater efforts are needed to overcome the systematic challenges of multi-stakeholder approaches to capacity development (Miquelajauregui, 2021). Focusing on North-South collaboration and dynamics in academia, Ishengoma (2016) emphasizes the role of equitable partnerships in advancing institutional and personal capacity building.

Reflecting on the impetus for capacity development initiatives, Sokona (2021) advocates a perspective of capacity development rooted in local context, partnerships, and networks of research. He stresses self-determination in capacity development, as "the ability to set and pursue your own agenda" (p. 2). Juckett and colleagues (2022) discuss the need for "implementation practice capacity building interventions" to fill a vital gap between research and practice. They note a disconnect in the pace at which implementation science evolves, a gap where capacity development initiatives tend to target the research community, instead of practitioners, and that academic institutions and the education sector play an important role in connecting research and practice.

Drawing from the perspectives of capacity, capacity development, the role of research and academia, and the education sector in addressing climate, conflict, and displacement, this article analyzes the latest developments. It makes use of Lusthaus et and others' (1999) conceptualization of capacity development as four approaches. These are: **organizational**, which focuses on individual entities; **institutional**, referring to the norms and values that shape them; **systemic**, which concerns the inclusivity of actors at all levels; and **participatory**, underpinned by empowerment and ownership. In assessing progress, it identifies institutional capacity as a key aspect of adaptive capacity (Cid & Lerner, 2023) in the context of addressing climate, conflict, and displacement.

Climate, Conflict and Displacement: The Literature and the Limitations of Capacity

Hobbes' (1668) *Leviathan* explains inevitable conflict arising from resource scarcity as a 'natural' state and that to avoid it, and civil war, a strong social contract and state are necessary. This sentiment is evident in Malthus's (1798) seminal work, *Essay on the Principle of Population,* which connects population growth, resource scarcity, and resulting hunger and famine to eventual war and state failure. The intellectually dystopian debate, linking resource scarcity to societal collapse, is continued by Neo-Malthusians, including in the works of Homer-Dixon (1994), Gleditsch (1998), Myers & Kent (1995), and Mathews (1989). Much research has been devoted to discerning the relationship between climate change and the causes of violent conflict and/or insecurity, in an attempt to establish a causal relationship (Burke et al., 2015; Hsiang et al., 2011; Mach et al., 2019; Miguel et al., 2004). The mainstream consensus in the literature, however, shows, contrarily, no direct causal relationship between climate change and violent conflict. Climate change is recognized as an exacerbating factor, a 'threat multiplier,' a term first coined by the Center for Naval Analysis in 2007. More

recent thinking has drawn on 'risk multiplier' effects, systemic risk, and/or causal pathways, which can give rise to the prolongation or exacerbation of conflict dynamics.

Country case studies have aimed to examine interactions between climate and drivers of conflict and insecurity in such climate and security hotspots, as Somalia, Afghanistan, Lake Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Yemen. Their selection has involved overlaying indices that correlate the high levels of armed conflict and climate hazards. Some scholars argue that such methods risk overstating the case and are criticized for the resulting 'streetlight effect,' i.e., where data is sought where it is most easily found (Hendrix, 2017). Alternative avenues of investigation, under the theoretical umbrella of environmental peacebuilding (Conca, 2024; Conca & Dabelko, 2002; Ide et al., 2021), aim to uncover cooperation around the environment and climate as the basis for building and sustaining peace. From this, an understanding has emerged among scholars and policymakers of the impact of climate on peace and security, the application of peacebuilding approaches to climate and the environment (Abrahams, 2021), and the potential unexpected negative social or environmental etc. impacts or backdraft effects of climate policies (Dabelko et al., 2013).

The effects of climate change on migration go beyond established patterns (Glantz, 1991). Scholars stress migration is the combination of multiple factors, of which demographics and political economy are the 'most salient factors,' and the environment is the 'proximate cause' (Suhrke, 1992). Migration is, at times, rightly considered to be a form of adaptation (McLeman & Smit, 2006; Gemenne & Blocher, 2017), where mobility enables livelihood diversification (Vinke et al., 2020). However, with the resulting increased food insecurity, welfare losses, and labor shortages that accompany migration in some cases, arguments persist as to whether migration is actually "maladaptation" and an effective "climate-induced poverty trap" (Jacobson et al., 2018). An abundance of outcomes can thus be evidenced in a myriad of different combinations of place of origin, destination, and host communities. Responses to climate impacts are noted as having the potential to drive or exacerbate displacement (Kramarz, Park & Johnson, 2021).

In terms of the role of capacity and capacity development, there is little in-depth examination. References are limited to adaptive capacity (Brown et al., 2013; Chapagain et al., 2025; Gupta et al., 2010), particularly at a local level (Susskind & Kim, 2021), as well as coping capacities, where Williams and colleagues (2015) explain it as key to breaking the cycle of climate, insecurity, and migration. Black, Bennett, Thomas et al. (2011) describe the environment both as an incentive for mobility and also a limiting factor on capacity, observing that many may migrate to places with high environmental vulnerability. In their endeavor to examine adaptive capacity in a post-conflict context with the Central African Republic as a case study, Brown and colleagues (2013) highlight that the lack of adaptive capacity was effectively mitigated by leveraging networks and connectivity. In turn, this fostered inter-institutional linkages which helped deliver on

the National Adaptation Programme of Action and REDD+ (Brown et al., 2013). While capacity is an enabling factor for adaptive capacity, only its absence is noted.

Policy and Practice: The Challenges and Opportunities

The UN and Climate, Conflict, and Displacement

The Security Council has garnered the attention of scholars and practitioners and has shaped the climate, peace, and security agenda. The Council addressed the implications of climate change for international security in a United Kingdom-led ministerial open debate in 2007, highlighting unprecedented levels of migration due to flooding, disease and famine as a result of climate change, in addition to greater competition for food, water and energy, and potential impacts on large-scale global economic disruption. A subsequent resolution (63/281) by the UN General Assembly in 2009 then called attention to the issue and paved the way for the first UN Secretary-General's report (2009), *Climate Change and its Possible Security Implications* (A/64/350,) which noted the interdependence between human vulnerability and national security. The Peacebuilding Commission, which serves as an advisory body to the UN Security Council and General Assembly, has addressed Climate, Peace and Security in various geographies, including the context of the Lake Chad basin, the Sahel, and the Pacific.

Recent scholarship recognizes the creation of the UN Climate Security Mechanism as an 'institutional home' (Modeer, 2022) for Climate, Peace and Security in the UN system. The UN inter-agency initiative is recognized for providing dedicated capacities in the form of Climate, Peace and Security Advisors to field missions and regional organizations in the Global South (UN, n.d.b). An external evaluation of its work demonstrated that Climate, Peace and Security Advisors have played a key role in supporting the capacities of the UN and its partners, including at regional and sub-regional levels, and in collaborating with academia. In terms of responding to requests for support by affected countries, potential constraints are noted due to the limited pool of expertise (Brusset, 2022).

Various UN entities now offer training on climate, peace, and security: the UN Staff System College and UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The work of the UN University, including in collaboration with the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund, is well-known in the Climate, Peace and Security field. UNDP's Climate, Peace and Security Experts Academy, launched at the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27), provides dedicated training to policymakers, climate negotiators, and regional organizational officials from countries and regions affected by conflict and displacement. Wider-reaching impacts can be realized through more systematic collaboration with education and academia.

As an effective counterpoint to a state-driven security rubric, the concept of "human security" was popularized through UNDP's (1994) Human Development Report, entitled *New Dimensions of Human Security,* which offered a people-centred security framework, focusing on the aspiration of freedom from fear, want, and indignity. Over the years, this theory has been modernized iteratively, including in the 2022 recapitulation, *Human Security in the Anthropocene: A New Base for Action,* which revisited this concept following the COVID pandemic, to examine interactions between climate change and environmental factors, with human security. The report addresses political unrest, conflict over critical minerals (including rare earth elements) needed for the production of green technologies, and internal displacement. The IPCC's (2014) Fifth Assessment Report delivered a first-ever dedicated chapter on human security (Adger et al., 2014) and the concepts of violent conflict and fragility, tackled in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) 2022 Sixth Assessment Report. Importantly, it reaffirms the consensus that climate is not the direct cause of conflict, but solutions targeting climate-sensitive livelihoods and women's empowerment can reduce risks posed to peace. Other findings are salient to the examination for climate risks for conflict and insecurity, including that maladaptation can occur when addressing one set of risks in isolation, and other risks are then inadvertently exacerbated (IPCC, 2022).

Formative Praxis in Addressing Climate and Mobility

Praxis in recent years shows advances in assessing climate impacts on human mobility to varying degrees in different frontiers, including policy fora, international law, and data and analytics. However, innovation toward capacity development and relevant education has not kept pace. Namely, heightened displacement in the context of climate policy leaves gaps that capacity development and education have yet to fill. As the vision of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and the first major international forum of its kind on the subject, the inaugural Global Forum on Migration and Development took place in 2007 and tackled environmental degradation, climate change, and disasters from the onset (GFMD, 2007). Successive iterations have included leadership from Global South nations (Colombia serves as chair for 2024-2025)and addressed climate mobility. Key milestones are the negotiation of the Global Compact on Migration (A/RES/73/195), adopted by UN Member States in 2018. Though non-legally binding, it broke new ground as the first Member State-negotiated agreement of its kind. Initiatives like the UN Secretary-General's appointment of the High-Level Panel and Office of the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement, a role first created in 2022, encumbered by Robert Piper up to year-end 2024, have continued to bring attention to the issues. There are similar calls for a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Climate, Peace and Security. At large, there are insufficient institutional capacities to address the intersections between climate change, conflict, and climate displacement. Education is essential to develop such capacities.

Despite progress in the policy spheres, the legal status and rights of so-called "climate migrants" or "refugees" are hotly debated vis-à-vis those formally recognized as refugees under the Rome Convention (Draper, 2024). The term "environmental refugee", first coined by the environmental activist and founder of Worldwatch Institute, Lester Brown (1976) and Essam El-Hinnawi (1985), tackled the subject in 1985 for the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), remains contentious. The term is often considered a misnomer as climate displacement is still primarily an internal phenomenon (as recognized in IPCC, 2022, etc.). However, in 2020, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees updated its guidance, making a broader case for the protection of those facing environmental risks. It has been argued that there are instances where the Geneva Convention should apply to those displaced by climate, in the case of drought-related famines which have triggered conflict and displacement (UNHCR, no date).

Much effort has been devoted to quantifying the future impacts of climate change on forced migration, displacement, and relocation (see, for example, The Government Office for Science, 2011). Describing it as one of the "foremost human crises of our times", Myers' (2002) estimate of 200 million climate migrants by 2050 drew much attention and has been one of the most frequently cited figures. This includes the Stern Review (2007) on the *Economics of Climate Change*, duly noted as one of the most comprehensive assessments of climate impacts at the time, which outlines the costs and benefits, and makes the case for climate investments.

Projections of future climate displacement impacts vary greatly. The Institute for Economics & Peace (2020) estimated, in its inaugural iteration of *Ecological Threat Register*, that some 1.2 billion people would be displaced due to ecological disasters by 2050, of which 20% would be "beyond their borders." The World Bank's (2018) *Groundswell - Preparing for Internal Migration* stresses the limitations of in-situ adaptation, in finding that in a pessimistic scenario, more than 200 million people would potentially be internally displaced in six sub-regions by 2050, including Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, North Africa and South Asia.

Apart from longer-term predictions, annual tracking of displacement has offered striking perspectives. Since 1998, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) has compiled data and tracked trends on displacement, by violent conflict and natural disasters. While in 2024, IDMC estimated total cumulative internal displacement at 75.9 million, of which 68.3 million were displaced by conflict and 7.7 million by disasters, climate outpaces conflict as the number one driver of new displacements year after year. This was still the case even with ongoing conflict in the DRC, Gaza, Sudan, and Ukraine.

While it took the IPCC several iterations to address the peace and security implications of climate change (as addressed in the previous section), climate mobility, on the other hand, is acknowledged from the very first iteration. Displacement has featured more

prominently and consistently in the Assessment Reports, but Special Reports, including *Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* and *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation* (known as SREX). Climate hazards, sudden and slow onset, are recognized by the IPCC (2022) as increasingly exacerbating displacement and involuntary migration, as well as vulnerability to climate change across different global regions. The lack of adaptive capacity underpins this. Other gaps are highlighted, including: modelling for out-migration in coastal regions, projections of movements related to slow-onset events, as well as a need for more nuanced research. It is stressed that greater adaptive capacity can address involuntary migration and immobility and "the degree of choice under which migration decisions are made" (IPCC, 2022). Data and monitoring initiatives are critical to informing policy. Readiness to respond to future increased levels of climate and environmental-related displacement depends on investments in capacities and education.

The State of Ambition in the international climate change negotiations for conflict and displacement-affected populations

The treatment of conflict and migration has varied at the COP on climate change, which may speak to a lack of awareness and capacity gaps. While neither is a negotiated outcome, language on conflict has yet to successfully make the final cut in negotiated texts; the latter, on migration, has received far greater attention across different work streams. It was at COP27, in Sharm el-Sheikh, that the so-called 'Africa COP' paved the way for key breakthroughs in the climate change negotiations, including agreement for the first time on the operationalization of the loss and damage fund. The Egyptian Presidency highlighted the concept of 'sustaining peace' for the first time in the context of the climate change negotiations through its *Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace* initiative, developed by the Cairo International Centre for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding with the African Union Commission and UNDP. The initiative focused on four pillars: the climate adaptation and peacebuilding nexus, climate-resilient food systems for sustaining peace, durable solutions to the climate-displacement nexus, and accelerating climate finance for sustaining peace (Embassy of Egypt, 2022).

While not a negotiated outcome, *Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace* drew attention from a diverse range of stakeholders. This momentum was continued by the United Arab Emirates, with the COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace, which garnered the support of more than 90 Member States and institutional partners, including the UN, multilateral development banks, and non-governmental organizations. In COP29, the Baku Call on Climate Action for Peace, Relief and Recovery followed suit from COP28, recognizing themes of relief, recovery, and humanitarian need. It highlighted climate mobility as a cross-cutting issue, across three identified pillars of work: food security, water scarcity, and land degradation (UNFCCC, 2024,

November 6). The increased efforts of UN humanitarian actors at COP are also notable. The Global Refugee Forum addressed climate action and finance in a 2022 call for action for increased financing for displacement-affected contexts, and UNHCR launched its Refugees for Climate Action network at COP29 to give a platform to those suffering from displacement and climate change at international negotiations (UNHCR, 2024).

Only displacement and migration have been referenced in official negotiations. The New Collective Quantified Goal (UNFCCC, 2024, November 24) does not refer to conflict or fragility-affected groups; it does reference "migrants" among other vulnerable groups. The first Global Stocktake (assessing progress toward the Paris Agreement) references displacement, relocation, and migration in the context of loss and damage. Policy and planning are addressed, including planned relocation and the needs of migrants and other vulnerable groups (UNFCCC, 2024). Negotiators had agreed to develop a maximum of 100 indicators for operationalizing the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), but thousands of suggestions were received. Negotiating groups had proposed indicators on conflict and displacement. COP30 is expected to determine the final list.

Regarding loss and damage, migrants are referenced in the operationalization of new funding arrangements (UNFCCC, 2023). Climate impacts on forced displacement and relocation are addressed by UNFCCC, in driving and exacerbating climate change vulnerability, and economic and non-economic losses and damages. Challenges are noted about adaptive capacity, institutional, and analytical capacities. Other obstacles include the lack of definition of displacement under the Convention. Displacement is still recognized as "the clearest case" of loss and damage, as evidence of the limits of adaptation, and resulting in physical harm (UNFCCC, 2013). The Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for Loss and Damage in 2013 was launched to strengthen knowledge, dialogue, and coordination, including on finance, technology, and capacity building, and gives credence to climate-related mobility and displacement.[3] The Santiago Network for Loss and Damage, established at COP25, under WIM, to "catalyze the technical assistance" of key stakeholders, emphasizes long-term capacities and the participation of diverse stakeholders (UNFCCC, 2022). While capacity is considered at different levels, the need to invest in education and capacity development is overlooked.

Regional Approaches to Climate, Conflict and Displacement

Arguably, the most-affected regions and countries have made the most notable advances in climate change policy. The 2009 African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa addresses internal displacement by

[3] WIM makes references in its second five-year rolling work plan to migration, displacement and relocation and more broadly to building capacity. The UNFCCC Task Force on Displacement was created at COP21 to support implementation of WIM. For more information see Annex I, Second five-year rolling workplan of the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism, FCCC/SB/2022/2/Add.2.

armed conflict, as well as climate and environmental factors, natural disasters, and development projects. The Convention sets a precedent as the first and only legally binding agreement of its kind protecting those internally displaced by violence, conflict, natural disasters, and climate change (UNHCR, 2022). With regards to connections to peace and/or security, the African Union Commission has consistently addressed climate interconnections in resolutions of the Peace and Security Council. It launched its Common African Position on Climate, Peace and Security at COP29. Sub-regional efforts culminated in the Bamako Declaration on Climate Security in 2022. The Pacific Island Forum Secretariat has consistently recognized climate as the greatest threat to regional security, including in its Boe Declaration on Regional Security.

Pacific Small Island Developing States, like Fiji (2022), Vanuatu (2018), and the Solomon Islands (2022), are amongst the first globally to develop national guidance documents on climate-related relocation. Apart from "reducing the triggers of displacement," Vanuatu's National Policy on Climate and Natural Disaster-Induced Displacement identifies challenges, including the risk of forced evictions and violent conflict due to relocation, while stressing the need to prepare for different displacement scenarios. In terms of "systems-level interventions," the need to "invest in capacity-building and training for all stakeholders to promote understanding of the policy and increase sensitivity to displacement issues" is identified as one of four overall strategic areas (Government of Vanuatu, 2022, page 29). Noting that mobility, in all its manifestations, is not an unfamiliar phenomenon to the archipelago, the Solomon Islands (2022) stresses the application of Standard Operating Procedures, the availability of information, while highlighting such risks as social tensions and preservation of Indigenous knowledge.

The publication of Fiji's (2022) Planned Relocation Guidelines was quickly followed by Standard Operating Procedures a year later, which covered extensively aspects of procedure, implementation, and financing. Recognizing relocation as a traumatic experience, capacity building of communities is stressed in the context of relocation planning and for the effective implementation of the processes outlined. Other developments in the region include Tuvalu's groundbreaking agreement with Australia, the Falepili Union, which includes climate change resilience and mobility with dignity, and safeguarding security.[4] The treaty opens a "special migration pathway" whereby up to 280 Tuvaluans may live, study, or work in Australia. As new policy breakthroughs address increasing climate mobility impacts overcoming gaps in capacity is critical to success. Capacity development and education should adapt in response.

[4] For the full text, see: Australia Government – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (no date). Tuvalu - Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union.
https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/tuvalu/australia-tuvalu-falepili-union

Policy Recommendations

An Examination of Capacity and Capacity Development in the Realms of Climate, Conflict, and Displacement

Climate is largely rejected as the primary cause of conflict and displacement in policy and research. However, given the "multiplier" effects (CNA, 2007) of climate change on conflict in many geographies around the world, there is a need to consider climate responses as they relate to these social phenomena and vice versa. With increased levels of conflict and global warming, the capacity for climate policymaking needs to reflect the different realities of conflict and displacement-affected contexts. Experts acknowledge that migration and displacement will likely increase with climate change, either pre-emptively to avoid harm or post-facto, as a coping strategy, and the need to avoid the adverse outcomes related to ad-hoc resettlements (Walelign et al., 2021). Addressing capacity gaps at all levels (Lusthaus et al., 1999) in climate policymaking is critical to the adaptive capacity of conflict and displacement-affected countries and remains a hurdle to overcome in addressing their access to climate finance. In this regard, the following recommendations are made:

To understand the need for differentiated climate capacities in developing countries vis-à-vis conflict and displacement-affected settings. Capacity development in the context of climate policies and financing has been consistently tackled over the years, *but* without addressing conflict and displacement. When the two are addressed, it is often in a siloed manner, i.e., climate-related displacement vis-à-vis that which is conflict-related. Capacity development and education play an important role in addressing these gaps. There is a need to consider those who are multiply displaced, i.e., by a combination of climate and conflict. The argument of climate, development, and poverty impacts is well-established. However, a distinction can be drawn between low-income countries and those affected by conflict and/or fragility. An estimated 70% of fragile states are Least Developed Countries (LDCs); some 50% of LDCs are included in the World Bank's Harmonized List of Fragile Situations (UNDP, 2021; Wong, 2023). Conflict has been found inter alia by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to cut across all income levels, including high-income countries in the Middle East and middle-income countries in other regions.

Greater investments in dedicated climate capacities, climate education, and climate capacity assessments in conflict and displacement-affected countries. In response to increasing climate threats, an analytical paper on "Institutional Capacities for Climate Action" developed by OECD (2003), key recommendations: the need for a coherent view of institutional capacity, a minimum level of specific capacities for climate policy, and detailed national capacity assessments. While country specificity is mentioned, there is no specific argument given concerning fragile and conflict-affected countries and territories. However, the authors do assert that "all dimensions of institutional capacity

deserve attention." As an extension of this argument of minimum levels of capacity for climate policy, the case for greater investments in climate-specific capacities and climate education could be made in the case of contexts affected by conflict and fragility. Particularly, as the World Bank Group and UN (2018)'s *Pathways for Peace* notes, the prolongation in the duration of conflicts since the 1970s and the findings of recent research by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (2020) establishes the average duration as having increased from 16 years in 1990 to 30 years in 2020, with increased recurrence noted, as opposed to new conflicts. It is recognized by scholars that peacebuilding is a complex and lengthy process, frequently spanning many years (Vivekananda et al., 2014) and that the impacts of conflict continue to reverberate long after violence ends (Krampe et al., 2021). A greater understanding and investments are needed for effective capacities in climate policy in the contexts affected by violent conflict, as well as post-conflict situations.

Investing in capacities and climate education in conflict and displacement-affected contexts to help address some of the chronic issues related to their access to climate policy and finance. Recent research, including that of UNDP and the Climate Security Mechanism (2021), addressed for the first time trends in access to climate finance in conflict-affected and fragile contexts and gaps and recommendations to make climate finance work more effectively in contexts affected by conflict and fragility. The metadata analysis of 955 projects (US$14.4 billion) implemented in 146 countries, including 56 fragile states, revealed that conflict and fragility may affect access to and implementation of climate finance. From 2014-2021, it identified that of the top 20 fragile state recipients of vertical fund climate financing, just two were extremely fragile, the DRC at 15th, and Haiti at 19th. Projects supported by the vertical funds in extremely fragile states were far smaller than in fragile or non-fragile states (UNDP, 2021; Wong, 2022). Access to financing mechanisms should be strengthened, but may not be effective without the strengthening of endogenous capacities in tandem. Investments in capacity and education need to be part of the longer-term solution to close gaps.

Maximizing opportunities in the climate change negotiations to address climate impacts on displacement and conflict in existing capacity building outcomes. The climate change negotiations did not include gender or adaptation at the outset, but have evolved continuously to encompass both, along with a wider range of issues as they relate to climate. This, after 27 years of loss and damage financing. The 2001 Marrakech Accords saw the creation of a framework for capacity development and COP21, the Paris Committee on Capacity-Building. Capacity development features as a key component of the *Paris Agreement* (Article 9.4), which recognizes that LDCs and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have "significant capacity constraints" and are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Capacity is highlighted together with finance and technology as one of the Means of Implementation (MOI) of the Paris Agreement. Article

11 of the 2015 *Paris Agreement* commits Parties to the broad objective of "enhancing the capacity and ability of developing country Parties, in particular countries with the least capacity, such as the least developed countries" (UNFCCC, 2015, page 15). Various NDCs already address conflict and displacement (UNDP, 2020). There are opportunities to strengthen climate outcomes in conflict and displacement-affected countries through existing capacity initiatives.

Opportunities for academia and the education sector in climate, conflict, and displacement capacity development. In the case of climate and conflict policy and practice, a focus on institutional capacities is still fairly recent, as are capacity development initiatives in multilateral spaces. Whereas there are clear gaps in institutional capacity, as evidenced by lower access to climate policy and finance by countries affected by conflict and displacement, and a key role where academia can be better engaged. Countries and regions most affected by climate, conflict, and/or displacement arguably show key advantages, and participatory approaches to capacity development remain key to advancing implementation science. In this regard, Hugo (2008) attributes the lack of research to challenges of interdisciplinary approaches and argues greater understanding is needed of future trends. In countries suffering from climate, conflict, and displacement, universities and the education sector - "as some of the most sustainable institutions in the world" according to Huq (2016) - can serve as key partners from perspectives of institutional and participatory approaches to capacity building. As policy and practice have moved beyond addressing climate and development interlinkages to climate interlinkages with sustainable development, climate and environmental education arguably need to make similar advances. With their networks rooted in local contexts, they can help fulfil the aspiration of domestically driven capacity development.

Conclusion

This article reviews literature and practice from the Climate, Peace and Security field, comparing and contrasting with that on climate mobility and displacement, to examine how capacity development and education are treated and to offer practical recommendations for policymakers, donors, and climate finance institutions. When considering capacity and capacity development for climate, an argument of difference needs to be made in conflict-affected and post-conflict contexts, as well as those affected by displacement. In the literature on climate, conflict, *and* displacement connections, the theme of capacity is referenced recurrently. This is often in a static and limited manner, although limited capacity to adapt to climate change, and/or weak coping capacities, are referenced in response to climate shocks and stressors. While the literature stresses capacity development, it does so by focusing primarily on the capacities of vulnerable communities, where investments are most critically needed. However, without

investments in institutional and systemic changes, as well as education in tandem, impacts may often be unsustainable in the face of climate change. While changes in global climate governance and finance are needed, they will not be effective without investments in dedicated investments in capacities.

In the Climate, Peace and Security and the climate displacement fields, the subjects of capacity and education are largely neglected. There remains a limited systematic understanding of capacity and institutional capacity development in the Climate, Peace and Security field, and sparse references to education. Addressing capacity development needs is a critical adaptation that can serve as a lever to close gaps in access to climate finance. At the level of the UN, in practice and the *Paris Agreement*, understanding of climate impacts on displacement arguably exceeds that of conflict and insecurity, and there persists a lack of specific attention to the capacity development needs of conflict and displacement-affected contexts. Capacity is sorely needed but remains underinvested in developing countries, without taking into account the needs of those affected by displacement and conflict. While the IPCC addresses the two other MOIs of technology and finance in its *Sixth Assessment Report*, capacity development is missing, though many, including Klinsky and Sagar (2024), argue that it is foundational to the other two MOIs and can explain persistent implementation gaps.

In the climate field, the challenges of avoiding the two extremes of determinism and reductionism (Hulme, 2011) are manifestly obvious in the parlance of policy spheres. While there is increased intensity in debate on climate as it relates to conflict and displacement, much of the discussion still relates to proof of concept. It is largely driven by investments in data, analytics, and assessments, or the hot topic of finance, without addressing root causes, including capacity needs and climate education shortfalls.

Catherine Wong *is UNDP's Global Team Leader for Climate and Security Risk and its principal technical advisor on Climate, Peace and Security. She is matrixed to UNDP's Climate Hub and Crisis Bureau. Catherine possesses more than 15 years' experience working on climate change and the environment at HQ and in the field. She serves as UNDP's focal point on the Climate Security Mechanism, the UN Water-led core group on Leveraging Water for Peace, and on the Steering Committee of the Shared Waters Partnership. She was recognized as one of 25 Young Leaders by the Munich Security Conference and is an observer of the International Military Council for Climate and Security.*

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