

**Roundtable Seminar on
Climate Change and Fragility Implications
on International Security**

January 19, 2017
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

Summary of the event

1. Overview

Government officials from the Group of Seven (G7) countries and experts from various backgrounds met at a one-day Roundtable Seminar on Climate Change and Fragility Implications on International Security on January 19, 2017 in Tokyo, to discuss and exchange views on this global issue as a follow-up to the decision made at the Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Hiroshima in 2016.

The Roundtable Seminar was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and it brought together approximately 100 participants including 19 government officials from G7 countries and their embassies, nine representatives from the United Nations organizations and development agencies, 24 from academia and research institutes, 16 from the private sector, 11 from civil societies, 11 from the media, four from Japanese government offices, and individual students from the general public.

The Roundtable Seminar consisted of three plenary sessions where a keynote speech, presentations and panel discussion were made in front of a general audience (open session) and two roundtable sessions where G7 officials discussed with 46 experts from various background (closed session).

Lively discussion enhanced understanding on the climate change fragility and its multifaceted implications, and provided G7 government officials with useful inputs for their meeting the following day.

2. Background

Since 2013, when the Expert Meeting was held under the Presidency of United Kingdom, the G7 foreign ministers have discussed climate change and fragility risks that may pose serious threats to the stability of states and societies in the decades ahead. The G7 countries have taken actions against these risks such as having established the working group (WG) and holding WG/expert meetings.

The 2015 G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting recognized that climate change is likely to have significant implications for international security and welcomed the G7 commissioned independent report *A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks*.¹ The report called for quick action to limit the future risks to the planet we share and to the peace we seek, and identified seven compound climate-fragility risks that individually and through their interactions could pose serious threats to the stability of states and societies:

- (1) *Local resource competition*: Competition over resources such as land, water, minerals and other natural resources. Climate change will increase this competition, both locally and through spill-over effects to other regions.
- (2) *Livelihood insecurity and migration*: Climate change will impact livelihoods in the climate-sensitive economic sectors and accelerate migration, especially in areas where livelihoods are closely linked to natural resources.

¹ Rüttinger, L. D. Smith, G. Stang, D. Tänzler, and J. Vivekananda. 2015. *A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks*. adelphi, International Alert, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, European Union Institute for Security Studies.

- (3) *Extreme weather events and disasters*: Climate change can bring about slow and rapid onset disasters. A slow onset disaster gradually affects food production and economic opportunities. A rapid onset disaster could occur as a result of a massive storm event. Government resources may be stretched and existing insurance mechanisms and other coping methods are likely to fall short in managing the risks.
- (4) *Volatile food prices and provision*: Existing risks to food security are associated with conflict, population growth, poverty, inequitable access to land and resources, and weak governance. Climate change could compound these problems by reducing agricultural output through loss of arable land, declines in land fertility, shifting of weather patterns and extreme weather events.
- (5) *Transboundary water management*: Millions of people live in transboundary river basins where tensions exist over the management of river systems. Climate change could lead to conflict between states, if governments adopt a unilateral approach to deciding adaptation actions in transboundary river systems.
- (6) *Sea-level rise and coastal degradation*: Sea level rise and coastal degradation induced by climate change are expected to result in mass displacement and migration, as well as massive economic losses caused by salinization of aquifers and soils that eventually become inundated.
- (7) *Unintended effects of climate policies*: Well-intentioned policies that countries implement in their efforts to adapt to climate change could inadvertently increase their fragility, if these policies are not based on sufficient understanding of climate change scenarios over the long term, or if there is a lack of cross-sectoral coordination and conflict-sensitive planning.

The report suggests an integrated response, requiring actions from three key policy sectors – climate change adaptation, development and humanitarian aid, and peacebuilding – to help strengthen the resilience of states and societies to climate-fragility risks.

The 2016 G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Hiroshima recognized the urgency of addressing climate-fragility risks and stressed the importance of aligning efforts on foreign policy towards the common goal of increasing resilience and reducing fragility risks in the face of global climate change.

3. Objectives and session structure

The Roundtable Seminar brought together government officials from G7 countries and experts from various backgrounds with the following three broad objectives:

- To share understanding on the current state of climate-fragility risks that G7 countries will be exposed to, both directly and indirectly;
- To identify specific cases for deeper understanding and addressing climate-fragility risks; and
- To examine future priorities for G7 countries.

The Roundtable Seminar started with the opening session followed by the first plenary session with two presentations. Following this open session, G7 officials and experts continued their discussions in two closed roundtable sessions. All participants got together at the final plenary session for a panel session where summaries of the roundtable discussions were shared with panellists.

4. Summary of each session

Opening Session

Opening remarks and updates on the G7 Working Group (WG) were delivered by representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the host of the Roundtable Seminar. A keynote speech and an introduction of the preceding research on the issues were also delivered.

Mr. Motome Takisawa, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, welcomed all the participants and noted the commitment by the G7 Foreign Ministers to address various issues related to climate change fragility risks such as natural disasters, refugees and displaced persons, and the increased demand for resources, all of which need to be incorporated into foreign policy. G7 Foreign Ministers recognize that climate change is a threat to our environment, international security and economic prosperity. It is hoped that all participants will share information and views, to deepen their understanding on serious and compound risks related to climate change and fragility risks. Special appreciation was extended to those interested members of the general public who applied for this event through the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

The Chair of the G7 WG, Mr. Tomoaki Ishigaki, presented the background and progress of the work by the WG and the objectives of the Roundtable seminar. The G7 countries have for many years included climate change on their agenda, but it is only recently that the G7 foreign ministers have discussed the nexus of climate change and security. Foreign Ministers in 2014 commissioned an independent study on risks and fragility which was published as “*A New Climate for Peace*” in 2015, with the cooperation of a consortium of research institutes and think tanks on climate change and security. A working group (WG) was established with a mandate to evaluate the recommendations in this report.

This Roundtable Seminar is to follow-up the outcomes of the 2016 G7 Hiroshima Foreign Ministers’ Meeting to further develop the discussion. The seminar has two purposes – one is to raise awareness and deepen discussion of this multifaceted and complex issue on climate change and security. The other is to reflect the discussion outcomes into policy discussions among G7 members, to try and find the missing links and duly incorporate outcomes into risk analysis, and policy decision-making processes. It is hoped that G7 members can materialize the suggestions in made in the joint communique.

The keynote speech entitled *Climate change and Political Conflicts: Connecting Two Neglected Dots* was delivered by Professor Kiichi Fujiwara, University of Tokyo, highlighting key factors that need to be considered in discussing the issues. He noted that the connection between these issues has been neglected and that there is a need to expand the realm of security beyond the traditional theories of international security. Security studies focus on hazards and how to eliminate them, whereas risk studies focus on risk as both a hazard and a benefit, and there is a need to set a balance between them. Professor Fujiwara mentioned the possible consequences of climate change, including on physical and biological system, as well as on human and managed systems, which are more directly related to security issues. He asked how climate change relates to conflicts and looked at the interlinkages between resource scarcity, group rivalry leading to state fragility and other wider political conflicts. He focused on the problem of the long chain of cause and effect, which tends to be excluded, and explained the need to set policy priorities rather than choosing to neglect issues. Professor Fujiwara outlined the global risks of highest concern, including economic, societal, geopolitical, technological, and environmental risks, with climate change being related to all and also

to only very few. Professor Fujiwara described actions for the future: prioritizing climate change as a source of national and international stability; networking on a global level when facing the political consequences of climate change; and raising public awareness by showing the price of neglect.

Mr. Alexander Carius, Adelphi (a leading independent think tank and public policy consultancy on climate, environment and development), followed the keynote speech to set the scene by introducing an independent research on climate fragility risks in G7 countries commissioned by the foreign ministers in 2014 as part of WG work. He gave an outline of the progress made since publication of the “*A New Climate for Peace*” and what kind of action can be observed on climate and fragility risks. The report looks at global pressures such as urbanization pressures, environmental degradation, uneven economic development and inequality, population growth, climate change and increasing resource demand and describes seven compound risks that threaten states and societies, namely local resource competition, livelihood insecurity and migration, extreme weather events and disasters, volatile prices and provision, transboundary water management, sea-level rise and coastal degradation, and the unintended effects of climate policies. Mr. Carius looked at these issues from the point of view of Asia and the Pacific, focusing on small island states, fisheries, and migration in the region. The report has several recommendations under a broad resilience agenda with action areas of global risk assessment, food security, disaster risk reduction, transboundary water disputes and building local resilience, by creating domestic strategies that will then influence international negotiations. Mr. Carius emphasized that environmental sustainability is now a geopolitical interest, and gave a positive outlook for multilateral system with the adoption of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. With many countries putting climate change and security on their agendas, it is important to sustain political momentum and turn policy into action.

Session 1

Ms. Shiloh Fetzek from the Center for Climate and Security (a non-partisan security and foreign policy institute with expertise on military, security and foreign policy), gave her presentation on *Impact of climate change on international security and emerging challenges*. The presentation covered some of the key intersections between climate change and security risks, with a special focus on why the US government, particularly the security community, has taken the issue seriously over the past 15 years. In describing the climate security nexus, Ms. Fetzek highlighted recent examples and potential future scenarios in the Asia-Pacific region related to sea level rise, disasters, migration, food security and geopolitics/geoeconomics, focusing on how these might scale up into foreign policy and defence concerns. This supports the assertion that climate change should be dealt with as a high-probability, high-impact strategic and security issue by all governments, including Japan, other G7 countries and countries in Asia-Pacific. The presentation also addressed how the incoming US administration might approach climate action generally, and how this might affect the US's Asia-Pacific rebalance and the climate-resilience component of US Pacific Command's activities in the region (e.g. supporting HADR capacity building). Ms. Fetzek suggested a minimum set of responses that all countries' security communities and foreign affairs ministries should have in place to manage climate security risks.

Following this, Dr. Malin Mobjörk, from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament), gave her presentation *The UN Security Council and the integration of climate security risks*, looking at how policymakers should incorporate climate change into their consideration of security policies. Dr. Mobjörk mentioned that climate change is widely recognized as one of the major forces shaping the future. It affects the basic physical processes of the world, with far-reaching, and in worst case, potentially disastrous consequences for human societies. Climate risks can be characterized as being multifaceted (involving different consequences), multidimensional (ranging from local to global), and having short- medium- and long-term implications. Because of the compound character of climate risks, different policy- and issue-areas are affected simultaneously. There is broad agreement that successful, and sustained, responses demand an integrated approach; an approach that was explored in a recently launched report funded by the Swedish Ministry for

Foreign Affairs. The presentation focused on how the UN Security Council can adopt a more proactive role aiming towards reducing risks posed by climate change. Critical mechanisms for this change are: a) the formation of an institutional location within the UN-system for coordinating the work on climate-related security risks, b) a systematic change in how risk assessment is made and reported to the UN Security Council. Dr. Mobjörk highlighted some key aspects for integrating climate risks in the risk assessment and risk management, which provides the ability to strengthen the UN Security Council's work on conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

In the subsequent open discussion, questions and comments were raised on the timeline for discussions on this topic, and how to create synergy for an integrated approach. There were also questions related to seawater acidification, whether adaptation or mitigation is more resource-effective, and the involvement in local governments and cities on this issue. Speakers shared their views including that the US hopes to continue with the progress made so far, and how it is necessary to interlink research-driven research and policy-oriented analysis. Speakers also noted that marine food production is linked to international security, and all global phenomena are expressed in a local context, with cities playing a crucial role on resilience.

Plenary Panel

The moderators from the two closed roundtable sessions on some of the points raised in the presentations and discussions from Sessions 2 and 3, which was held with G7 officials and experts prior to the Plenary Panel.

Mr. Naoyuki Yamagishi, WWF Japan, who served as moderator for Session 2 spoke of the rich discussion on possible climate impact on migration, infectious disease and maritime issues. Mr. Yamagishi emphasized that climate change is a threat multiplier and multi-compound risk, and trying to establish a chain of causality may delay efforts. Efforts should be on an operational level rather than waiting for all evidence. It was pointed out the G7 may play a major role to set up a framework for international organizations to cooperate on finding the nexus on a possible future issue between climate change and security and to break down the silos.

Dr. Daisuke Sano, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), who served as Session 3 moderator presented the main topics in the session, which was on the broad theme of climate change impacts on agriculture, disaster management and the role of the private sector. A few key points raised in the session were: (i) importance of science-based approach that can induce research and development and actions by the business sector and communities; (ii) sharing good practices to develop projects in addressing the issue; and (iii) incentives to encourage business sector to engage in the climate change issues. Dr. Sano shared a few keywords found in table discussion facilitators' notes such as supply chain risk management, adaptation and resilience building, cost of inaction and cost of without adaptation measures, education, and noted that it requires inter-agency coordination. He concluded that more dots were connected and their connections had become more explicit.

The Plenary panellists from a UN agency, a development organization, research and science community, and from a governmental organization, then gave their responses to the discussions.

Ms. Kaoru Nemoto from the UN Information Centre, looked at how the UN is addressing or planning to address climate change implications for migration and development and its related programming through introducing a video letter from Mr. Guterres, the Secretary General of the UN and some examples of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Mr. Patrick Safran, Asian Development Bank (ADB), asked how development assistance agencies can integrate these concerns into their development assistance to generate positive outcomes for donor and recipient countries.

Dr. Yasuko Kameyama, National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES), looked at what roles science and research organizations can play in addressing climate-fragility risks, including raising public awareness and providing guidance to public and private responses.

There were various questions and comments, including the way of risk management and the importance of considering how to connect this discussion to future actions by G7 Foreign Ministers, as well as a practical recommendation to include these interpretations of risk and resilience into nationally determined contributions (NDCs), and whether G7 can play a role to integrate this issue. Panellists noted that risk resilience management could be reflected into countries' NDCs, and that globalization must be kept in mind when talking about climate change. There was a comment on the UN Global Compact, showcasing good examples of businesses working together with UN on climate change and SDGs. Financial institutions should support governments for win-win situations and there was a comment on the need for climate proofing.

Dr. Rajib Shaw, Plenary Panel moderator and IGES, wrapped up by emphasizing the need to connect the dots, and prioritize needs, linking global policymaking to local level actions.

Closing Remarks

The Roundtable Seminar was concluded with remarks by the representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Tomoaki Ishigaki, Chair of the G7 Working Group, stating key points to take away from the seminar, including how to connect the dots, an integrated approach and how to find the nexus. Mr. Ishigaki also pointed out that the seminar covered much ground, including agriculture, migration, water, disaster risk reduction and urbanization. He stressed the importance of involving many stakeholders, which reinforces work of G7, particularly on enhancing dialogues with international organizations, including UN system and international financial organizations. In conclusion, Mr. Ishigaki expressed his hope that participants will stay connected and continue to address this issue of climate-fragility in their respective field of specializations.