

Strengthening Climate Action in Conflict Situations for Development

Kariuki Muigua

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Kariuki Muigua*

Abstract

The negative effects of climate change are being felt – and will continue to be felt – in some of the most extreme ways by people living in places affected by armed conflict and other forms of violence. People, communities, and countries in conflict situations are often ill-equipped to cope with and adapt to climate change. They should therefore be ideally prioritized in climate action and finance. However, they are mostly neglected in climate action and finance therefore undermining development. This paper critically discusses the need to strengthen climate action in conflict situations for development. It argues that climate change is a major threat to development in conflict situations. The paper posits that people, communities, and countries in conflict situations often lack the capacity to effectively confront climate change. As a result, the paper notes that conflict may worsen the impacts of climate change and affect development. The paper suggests measures towards strengthening climate action in conflict situations for development.

1.0 Introduction

Climate change has been defined as an existential threat to humanity¹. It affects every aspect of people's lives, both creating and exacerbating humanitarian crises around the world². Warming of the atmosphere, ocean and land – driven by human activity – is causing climate variations and extremes all over the world, with over three billion people living in places that are highly vulnerable to climate change³. Climate change is an

* PhD in Law (Nrb), FCI Arb (Chartered Arbitrator), OGW, LL. B (Hons) Nrb, LL.M (Environmental Law) Nrb; Dip. In Law (KSL); FCPS (K); Dip. in Arbitration (UK); MKIM; Mediator; Consultant: Lead expert EIA/EA NEMA; BSI ISO/IEC 27001:2005 ISMS Lead Auditor/ Implementer; ESG Consultant; Advocate of the High Court of Kenya; Professor at the University of Nairobi, Faculty of Law; Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) [April, 2024].

¹ International Committee of the Red Cross., 'The ICRC's Call To Cop28: Urgent and Ambitious Action is Needed to Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Climate Action in Conflict Settings' Available at https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/topic/file_plus_list/the_icrcs_call_to_strengthen_climate_action_in_conflict_settings_ahead_of_cop28_1.pdf (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

² Ibid

³ Ibid

undesirable phenomenon that affects realization of the Sustainable Development agenda across the world by affecting the sustainability of the planet's ecosystems, the stability of the global economy and the future of humankind⁴. Its impacts including intense droughts, water scarcity, severe fires, rising sea levels, flooding, melting polar ice, catastrophic storms and declining biodiversity are being witnessed across the world⁵.

Due to its adverse impacts, climate change has been described as the most defining problem facing humanity⁶. It is the main global challenge that is affecting both developed and developing countries in their quest towards achieving Sustainable Development⁷. Climate change has therefore risen to the top of the policy agenda, at local, national, and global levels⁸. Governments have been urged to strengthen climate action in their countries in order to respond to the threat of climate change and ensure that economies are climate resilient⁹. However, it has been noted that climate action taken to date by the international community has been insufficient to prevent or reverse the negative trends of climate change¹⁰. Urgent and transformative action is therefore required to combat climate change and promote Sustainable Development¹¹.

⁴ Climate Change., 'Meaning, Definition, Causes, Examples and Consequences.' Available at <https://youmatter.world/en/definition/climate-change-meaning-definition-causes-and-consequences/> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

⁵ United Nations., 'What is Climate Change?' Available at <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

⁶ Muigua. K., 'Achieving Sustainable Development, Peace and Environmental Security.' Glenwood Publishers Limited, 2021

⁷ Ibid

⁸ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs., 'Forum on Climate Change and Science and Technology Innovation.' Available at <https://www.un.org/en/desa/forum-climate-changeandscience-and-technology-innovation> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

⁹ Muigua. K., 'Achieving Sustainable Development, Peace and Environmental Security.' Glenwood Publishers Limited, 2021

¹⁰ International Committee of the Red Cross., 'The ICRC's Call To Cop28: Urgent and Ambitious Action is Needed to Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Climate Action in Conflict Settings' Op Cit

¹¹ United Nations., 'Goal 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts.' Available at <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change/> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

The United Nations *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*¹² seeks to strengthen climate action for development. It acknowledges that climate change is one of the greatest challenge of our time and its adverse impacts undermine the ability of all countries to achieve Sustainable Development¹³. Sustainable Development Goal 13 urges states to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts¹⁴.

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the negative effects of climate change are being felt – and will continue to be felt – in some of the most extreme ways by people living in places affected by armed conflict and other forms of violence¹⁵. People, communities, and countries in conflict situations are ill-equipped to cope with and adapt to climate change¹⁶. This vulnerability and severe capacity constraints of people, communities, and countries in conflict means that they should ideally be prioritized in climate action¹⁷. However, it has been noted that in practice, they are among the most neglected when it comes to climate action and finance¹⁸. It is therefore vital to strengthen climate action in conflict situations for development.

This paper critically discusses the need to strengthen to strengthen climate action in conflict situations for development. It argues that climate change is a major threat to development in conflict situations. The paper posits that people, communities, and countries in conflict situations often lack the capacity to effectively confront climate change. As a result, the paper notes that conflict may worsen the impacts of climate

¹² United Nations General Assembly., ‘Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.’ 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1., Available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ International Committee of the Red Cross., ‘The ICRC’s Call To Cop28: Urgent and Ambitious Action is Needed to Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Climate Action in Conflict Settings’ Op Cit

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

change and affect development. The paper suggests measures towards strengthening climate action in conflict situations for development.

2.0 The Climate Change and Conflict Nexus

People, communities and countries enduring conflict are among those most vulnerable to growing climate risks because of the devastating effects of conflicts on societies¹⁹. Conflicts threaten people's lives, damage essential services, disrupt institutions, the economy, and community cohesion, and shrink the capacity of people, communities, and countries to cope with all types of risks²⁰. It has been observed that more than half of the countries considered most vulnerable and least ready to respond to climate change are countries enduring conflict, most of which are also among the world's least developed countries²¹. This vulnerability is not because climate change directly causes conflict²². Rather, the vulnerability arises since conflict increases the fragility of institutions, essential services, infrastructure, governance and other capacities that are critical to help people cope with and adapt to climate change²³.

Climate change also impacts development and social progress in conflict situations by hindering access to human needs including food, health, water, and energy²⁴. The nexus of hunger, conflict, and climate change has resulted in over 330 million people facing acute food insecurity²⁵. Climate and conflict have been identified as the main causes of

¹⁹ Grayson. C-L., & Khouzam. A., 'Responding to Climate Risks in Conflict Settings: In Search of Solutions' Available at <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2023/11/23/responding-to-climate-risks-in-conflict-settings-in-search-of-solutions/> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ International Committee of the Red Cross., 'The ICRC's Call To Cop28: Urgent and Ambitious Action is Needed to Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Climate Action in Conflict Settings' Op Cit

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Reliefweb., 'Climate Action Can Help Fight Hunger, Avoid Conflicts, Official Tells Security Council, Urging Greater Investment in Adaptation, Resilience, Clean Energy' Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/climate-action-can-help-fight-hunger-avoid-conflicts-official-tells-security-council-urging-greater-investment-adaptation-resilience-clean-energy> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

²⁵ Ibid

acute food insecurity²⁶. The United Nations notes that where wars rage, hunger reigns as a result of displacement of people, destruction of agriculture and food systems, damage to infrastructure, disruption of supply chains, or deliberate policies of denial²⁷. It has further been noted that climate change, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss are exacerbating conflict, contributing to global food insecurity, and threatening international peace and security²⁸. In addition, it has been noted that climate change, insufficient access to water, and conflict interact to harm local communities²⁹. Higher temperatures and evapotranspiration decrease availability of water resources for people's livelihoods and economic activities, leading to increased tension sometimes resulting in or worsening existing conflicts³⁰. Regions such as the Lake Chad Basin have been identified as being caught in a conflict-climate risk trap³¹. Political, social, and security stressors are overwhelming governments on one hand; while on the other hand, climate change impacting weather variability, including changes in rainfall patterns and greater uncertainty, increases the risk of conflict around natural resources³². Conflicts in such situations hinder water security and the ability of people to respond to climate risks including drought and unpredictable rainy seasons that often result in flooding³³.

Conflicts therefore hinder effective climate action. Violent clashes disrupt food production and security, administrative capacity, and access to markets and services that

²⁶ United Nations., 'Climate Change and Conflict' Available at <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15589.doc.htm#:~:text=Climate%20and%20conflict%20were%20the,the%2014%20countries%20most%20at> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Trevino. J., & Davy. T., 'Water Security is the Way out of the Conflict-Climate Risk Trap in Lake Chad Basin' Available at <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/water/water-security-way-out-conflict-climate-risk-trap-lake-chad-basin#:~:text=Banseka%20explained%20how%20climate%20change,tension%20sometimes%20resulting%20in%20conflict>. (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid

are vital in responding to climate change³⁴. In addition, conflict prone states are often plagued by poor governance, lethargic development, and a lack of social investment in key elements such as education, health and the rule of law, are also unlikely to be able to put in the necessary investment to protect the environment and respond to climate change³⁵. It has also been noted that conflict prone states are unlikely to be able to support preparedness and adaptation programmes, particularly for those on the margins of society³⁶. Strengthening climate action by adapting to, and mitigating the impacts of climate change can therefore play an important role in addressing many drivers of conflict and building peace³⁷.

Further, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), forcibly displaced people are often on the frontlines of the climate crisis³⁸. It notes that refugees and other forcibly displaced people, regardless of the reason for flight, often reside in places prone to hazardous weather events and in harsh environmental conditions³⁹. UNHCR further points out that climate-related shocks and stresses including floods, cyclones, wildfires and droughts pose significant risks to refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs)⁴⁰. Climate change also limits their access to livelihoods and work opportunities⁴¹. Climate change is therefore a major threat to development for refugees and IDPs. In addition, the strain on limited local natural resources, such as water or arable farming land as a result of climate change can contribute to tensions between displaced populations and host communities worsening

³⁴ Toulmin. C., & Barrett. S., 'Climate Action and Conflict' Available at <https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/2023-11/22131g.pdf> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

³⁵ United Nations Climate Change., 'Conflict and Climate' Available at <https://unfccc.int/news/conflict-and-climate> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees., 'Strengthening Climate Adaptation and Resilience' Available at <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/climate-change-and-displacement/strengthening-climate-adaptation> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Ibid

conflicts and undermining development⁴². It is therefore necessary to ensure that refugees and IDPs and their host communities living in highly climate-vulnerable conditions can withstand, recover and be protected from new or worsening threats to their lives and livelihoods that climate change is fueling⁴³.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation place additional demands on fragile and conflict -affected contexts which are already struggling to cope with multiple pressures, crises and shocks⁴⁴. OECD notes that fragile and conflict-affected contexts harbour some of the world's biodiversity hotspots, which are critical to regulate the world's climate⁴⁵. Therefore, climate and human-induced disruptions affect the root causes, drivers and risks factors of multidimensional fragility and conflict⁴⁶. Similarly, conflicts can cause extensive damage to the environment, cause biodiversity loss and amplify the effects and impacts of climate change with a consequent increase in fragility⁴⁷.

Climate change is therefore a key concern in conflict settings⁴⁸. It has been noted that the impacts of climate change have already increased the physical insecurity of vulnerable communities, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings where governance is limited or ineffective⁴⁹. In such contexts, the effects of climate change can adversely affect

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., 'INCAF Common Position on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Fragility' Available at <https://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/conflict-fragility/INCAF-Common-position-climate-change-biodiversity-environmental-fragility.pdf> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ United Nations Environment Programme., 'Addressing Climate-Related Security Risks' Available at https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/40330/security_risks_guidance.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

⁴⁹ Ibid

political stability, food security, economic growth, and human mobility⁵⁰. It has been noted that in conflict situations, climate change interacts with other political, social, and economic stresses to compound existing tensions, which could escalate into violence or disrupt fragile peace building processes⁵¹. In turn, violent conflict and political instability leaves people and communities poorer, less resilient, and ill-equipped to cope with the consequences of climate change⁵². Strengthening climate action in conflict situations is therefore necessary for development. ICRC notes that strong climate action in places affected by conflict, and the finance to support it, is critical to reduce humanitarian needs, preserve development gains, avoid systemic breakdowns and lasting fragility⁵³.

The need to strengthen climate action in conflict situations for development was recognized at COP 28 via the *Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace*⁵⁴. According to the Declaration, many of the people, communities, and countries threatened or affected by fragility or conflict, or facing severe humanitarian needs, are on the frontlines of the climate crisis, and are among the least resourced to cope with and adapt to associated shocks and stressors⁵⁵. It acknowledges that fragility and conflict increase people's vulnerability and exposure to climate hazards and impede coping capacity and adaptation options, and that, at the same time, climate change adversely affects lives, livelihoods, infrastructure, water, human capital, food, health, cultural identity, education, and human settlements, among other spheres, exacerbating humanitarian needs and constituting a significant and growing challenge to stability⁵⁶. The Declaration calls for bolder collective action to build climate resilience at the scale and speed required

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ International Committee of the Red Cross., 'The ICRC's Call To Cop28: Urgent and Ambitious Action is Needed to Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Climate Action in Conflict Settings' Op Cit

⁵⁴ COP 28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery, and Peace., Available at <https://www.cop28.com/en/cop28-declaration-on-climate-relief-recovery-and-peace> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Ibid

in highly vulnerable countries and communities, particularly those threatened or affected by fragility or conflict, or facing severe humanitarian needs, many of which are Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States⁵⁷. It recognizes that an ambitious, immediate scale up of enhanced support is urgently needed in such situations, including financial resources; technical and institutional capacities; local, national, regional partnerships; and data and information on the basis of complementarity and predictability⁵⁸. According to the COP 28 Declaration, strengthening climate action in conflict settings is possible and if managed properly, can offer avenues for Sustainable Development, conflict prevention and inclusive peace building⁵⁹.

Actualizing the COP 28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace is vital in strengthening climate action in conflict situations for development. The COP 28 Declaration is a non-binding call to action outside the formal United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations that reflects the concerns, common positions and solutions of countries and institutions from humanitarian, development, climate, and peace communities to urgently foster climate action and resilience in the most vulnerable and conflict situations⁶⁰. It recognizes that climate action is urgently needed, possible and effective in these settings, and that inaction comes with high cost to human development and stability⁶¹. Implementing the COP 28 Declaration can galvanize support for accelerated climate action and resourcing in countries experiencing multifaceted crises including conflicts which makes them highly vulnerable to climate change⁶².

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Yousuf. H., 'COP 28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace' Available at <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/climate-warrior-pakistani-youths-clamor-transpires-200-yousuf-mmvtf/> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Ibid

Despite the importance of climate action in conflict situations, it has been noted that national, regional, and global support to help people adapt to a changing climate is particularly weak in places enduring conflict because of the challenges associated with long-term programming in these settings⁶³. Similarly, the most fragile countries tend to receive the least funding for climate action⁶⁴. ICRC further notes that conflict-affected areas within a country – particularly when such areas are not under state control – are often excluded from climate finance to mitigate risks, thus excluding millions of people from receiving support⁶⁵. The COP 28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace also notes that global efforts to build climate resilience remain insufficiently tailored or targeted to the specific needs and challenges of people, communities and countries threatened or affected by fragility or conflict, or facing severe humanitarian needs, including due to real and perceived risks and barriers associated with working in such settings⁶⁶. It is therefore necessary to address these challenges in order to strengthen climate action in conflict situations for development.

3.0 Way Forward

In order to strengthen climate action in conflict situations, there is need to achieve climate security⁶⁷. It has been acknowledged that in settings where conflict already exists, the impacts of climate change can aggravate or prolong it, making it more difficult to reach and sustain peace⁶⁸. Further, conflict can in turn disrupt or impede climate action, either through the active destruction of energy, water, and agricultural assets, or by delaying or blocking mitigation and adaptation interventions⁶⁹. Therefore, in order to achieve climate security in conflict situations, responses to climate change should align with conflict

⁶³ International Committee of the Red Cross., 'The ICRC's Call To Cop28: Urgent and Ambitious Action is Needed to Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Climate Action in Conflict Settings' Op Cit

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ COP 28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery, and Peace., Op Cit

⁶⁷ United Nations Development Programme., 'What is Climate Security and Why is it Important?' Available at <https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/what-climate-security-and-why-it-important> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Ibid

prevention and peacebuilding initiatives⁷⁰. It has been noted that investing in climate action is critical in fragile and conflict-affected settings and, if seized upon can be a valuable opportunity to strengthen cooperation, rebuild trust, and mend the social fabric therefore fostering peace, security, and development while confronting climate change⁷¹. Climate security enables the development of tailored analyses, response strategies, and programmes to the compounded challenges presented by the climate crisis on conflict-affected populations, communities, and countries⁷². It is therefore a key tool of conflict prevention, community stabilization and environmental peacebuilding⁷³. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), climate security offers opportunities for promoting inclusive climate action, conflict prevention and peacebuilding⁷⁴. It is therefore vital to enhance climate security in order to strengthen climate action in conflict situations for development.

In addition, it is imperative to widely acknowledge the nexus between climate change and conflicts in order to develop adequate responses to these two related challenges⁷⁵. Climate change has been described as a conflict multiplier, rather than as a major direct cause of conflict in itself. It may aggravate and extend the scope of existing conflicts, or trigger underlying and latent conflicts to break out into the open⁷⁶. Climate change may contribute or worsen conflicts in areas such access to natural resources including land and water⁷⁷; food security as a result of reduced rainfall and rising sea levels which may

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² International Organization for Migration., 'Climate, Peace and Security' Available at <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/climate-and-security> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ United Nations Environment Programme., 'Climate Security Mechanism (CSM)' Available at <https://www.unep.org/topics/fresh-water/disasters-and-climate-change/climate-security-mechanism-csm> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

⁷⁵ International Committee of the Red Cross., 'The ICRC's Call To Cop28: Urgent and Ambitious Action is Needed to Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Climate Action in Conflict Settings' Op Cit

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Danish Institute for International Studies., 'Addressing Climate Change and Conflict in Development Cooperation' Available at https://www.diiis.dk/files/media/publications/import/extra/rp2012-04-addressing-climate-change_web.jpg_1.pdf (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

lead to a decline in agricultural production and a substantial loss of arable land reducing yields and increasing domestic food prices a situation that may result in civil unrest, and competition over access to land⁷⁸; and migration and displacement as a result of scarcity of natural resources and climate disasters such as droughts and floods resulting in conflicts between host communities and displaced populations⁷⁹. Conflicts on the other hand cause extensive damage to the environment, cause biodiversity loss and amplify the effects and impacts of climate change with a consequent increase in fragility⁸⁰. Conflict hinders climate action as a result of breakdown of institutions and lack of access to critical climate services⁸¹. Therefore, the converging crises of conflict and climate change can be mutually reinforcing, with climate impacts potentially exacerbating the conflict cycle while conflict weakening the governance structures and institutions needed to build climate resilience⁸². As a result of these linkages, communities and countries in conflict situations are highly vulnerable to climate risks due to their limited adaptive capacity therefore being exposed to the worst impacts of climate change which could exacerbate underlying conflicts⁸³.

It has been noted that acknowledging and drawing attention to the high vulnerability to climate risks of countries and communities enduring conflict is essential to ensure adequate climate action in these settings⁸⁴. It can lead to better responses to both climate change and conflict by aligning peacebuilding, development, and climate change

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., 'INCAF Common Position on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Fragility' Op Cit

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² International Institute for Sustainable Development., 'Building Peace and Climate Resilience: Aligning Peacebuilding and Climate Adaptation in Fragile States' Available at <https://www.iisd.org/articles/deep-dive/building-peace-and-climate-resilience-aligning-peacebuilding-and-climate> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

⁸³ International Committee of the Red Cross., 'The ICRC's Call To Cop28: Urgent and Ambitious Action is Needed to Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Climate Action in Conflict Settings' Op Cit

⁸⁴ Ibid

adaptation strategies in National Adaptation Plans⁸⁵. For fragile states and communities in conflict situations, National Adaptation Plans provide governments struggling with conflict, instability, and climate change the opportunity to align their peacebuilding, development, and adaptation agendas and lay the foundation for lasting peace⁸⁶. It is therefore necessary to acknowledge the interlinkages between climate change and conflict in order to integrate conflict dynamics into climate action for peacebuilding and development⁸⁷.

Further, it is imperative to foster effective conflict management by addressing the root causes of conflicts⁸⁸. It has been noted that in order to strengthen climate action in conflict situations, conflicts need to be addressed when planning climate actions⁸⁹. Effective conflict management strengthens climate action by reducing vulnerability, ensuring the availability of strong institutions and governance mechanisms, and allowing access to climate-sensitive areas for appropriate responses⁹⁰. Climate action cannot be effective in conflict situations as a result of breakdown of institutions and lack of access to critical climate services⁹¹. Effective conflict management is therefore necessary in order to strengthen climate action in conflict situations for development. It has been noted that for effective conflict management in such settings, interventions need to recognise past patterns of conflict and reconciliation by monitoring warning signs, defusing tensions and addressing grievances at the earliest⁹². This can be achieved by applying collaborative approaches towards conflict management⁹³. Collaborative conflict

⁸⁵ International Institute for Sustainable Development., 'Building Peace and Climate Resilience: Aligning Peacebuilding and Climate Adaptation in Fragile States' Op Cit

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Toulmin. C., & Barrett. S., 'Climate Action and Conflict' Op Cit

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., 'INCAF Common Position on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Fragility' Op Cit

⁹² Toulmin. C., & Barrett. S., 'Climate Action and Conflict' Op Cit

⁹³ Muigua. K., 'Applying Collaborative Approaches towards Conflict Management' Available at <https://kmco.co.ke/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Applying-Collaborative-Approaches-towards-Conflict-Management-.pdf> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

management refers to the use of a wide range of informal approaches where competing or opposing stakeholder groups work together to reach an agreement on a controversial issue⁹⁴. This style of conflict management encourages parties to conflicts to work through disagreements through empathy, listening, and mutually beneficial solutions⁹⁵. It has the potential to identify the root causes of conflicts, pinpoint the underlying needs of the parties involved, and come to a win-win outcome for everyone⁹⁶. Collaborative conflict management envisages the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) processes such as mediation, negotiation and facilitation which are non-coercive, non-power based and focus on the needs and interest of parties⁹⁷. ADR processes are therefore ideal in strengthening climate action in conflict situations for development by promoting collaboration in the management of vital natural resources such as land and water while simultaneously ensuring conflict resolution and prevention⁹⁸. These mechanisms should therefore be embraced.

Finally, it is vital to unlock climate finance in conflict situations⁹⁹. It has been noted that international support in form of climate finance to help people adapt to a changing climate is particularly weak in places enduring conflict because of the challenges associated with long-term programming in such contexts¹⁰⁰. In addition, it has been observed that the most fragile countries tend to receive the least funding for climate action¹⁰¹. According to ICRC, conflict-affected regions are often excluded from climate finance to mitigate the impacts of climate change therefore excluding millions of people

⁹⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization., 'Collaborative Conflict Management for Enhanced National Forest Programmes (NFPs)' Available at <https://www.fao.org/3/i2604e/i2604e00.pdf> (Accessed on 17/04/2024)

⁹⁵ Ibid

⁹⁶ Ibid

⁹⁷ Muigua. K., 'Alternative Dispute Resolution and Access to Justice in Kenya.' Glenwood Publishers Limited, 2015

⁹⁸ Toulmin. C., & Barrett. S., 'Climate Action and Conflict' Op Cit

⁹⁹ International Committee of the Red Cross., 'The ICRC's Call To Cop28: Urgent and Ambitious Action is Needed to Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Climate Action in Conflict Settings' Op Cit

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ Ibid

from receiving support¹⁰². In order to address this gap, it has been recommended that the criteria for accessing funding particularly for adaptation and loss and damage needs to be tailored to the specific challenges of places that are extremely fragile in order to enable affected populations to access climate finance that is key in strengthening climate action for development¹⁰³.

The COP 28 *Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace*¹⁰⁴ seeks to enhance financial support for climate adaptation and resilience in conflict situations through measures such as continuing to substantially scale-up financial resources for climate adaptation and resilience building in such situations, emphasizing the need for public and grant-based resources, as well as mobilizing a variety of financing sources, while recognizing the importance of environmental and social safeguards¹⁰⁵; improving access to all relevant financial resources, including by enhancing predictability, flexibility, disbursement, speed, and simplicity, and working to reducing transaction costs, including by streamlining application, accreditation, procurement, and monitoring and evaluation procedures¹⁰⁶; strengthening the technical and institutional capacity of national governments and local actors, to absorb, account for, report on, allocate, and leverage climate finance effectively; prioritizing local ownership, impact, and results where possible, including through channeling finance at the local level to respond to local needs and priorities and working with affected communities and both local government and non-government partners¹⁰⁷; and leveraging financial and technical support from the private sector and adopting tailored financial instruments to mobilize new sources of finance in support of national and local responses¹⁰⁸. It is therefore necessary to implement this Declaration in order to unlock climate finance necessary for strengthening

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁴ COP 28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery, and Peace., Op Cit

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

climate action in conflict situations for development. Climate finance plays a crucial role in strengthening climate action in conflict situations for development¹⁰⁹.

4.0 Conclusion

People, communities and countries enduring conflict are extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as result of the devastating effects of conflicts on societies¹¹⁰. Conflicts increase the fragility of institutions, essential services, infrastructure, governance and other capacities that are critical to help people cope with and adapt to climate change¹¹¹. Conflicts therefore increases climate vulnerability and undermine development¹¹². As a result of the vulnerability and severe capacity constraints of people, communities, and countries in conflict situations, it is necessary to strengthen climate action in such contexts for development¹¹³. However, climate action in conflict situations is often undermined by limited climate funding, challenges associated with long-term programming in these settings, and real and perceived risks and barriers associated with working in such environments¹¹⁴. Strong climate action in places affected by conflict, and the finance to support it, is critical to reduce humanitarian needs, preserve development gains and avoid systemic breakdowns and lasting fragility¹¹⁵. This can be achieved through fostering climate security¹¹⁶; acknowledging the nexus between climate change and conflicts¹¹⁷; fostering effective conflict management by addressing the root causes of

¹⁰⁹ International Committee of the Red Cross., 'The ICRC's Call To Cop28: Urgent and Ambitious Action is Needed to Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Climate Action in Conflict Settings' Op Cit

¹¹⁰ Grayson. C-L., & Khouzam. A., 'Responding to Climate Risks in Conflict Settings: In Search of Solutions' Op Cit

¹¹¹ International Committee of the Red Cross., 'The ICRC's Call To Cop28: Urgent and Ambitious Action is Needed to Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Climate Action in Conflict Settings' Op Cit

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ Ibid

¹¹⁴ COP 28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery, and Peace., Op Cit

¹¹⁵ International Committee of the Red Cross., 'The ICRC's Call To Cop28: Urgent and Ambitious Action is Needed to Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Climate Action in Conflict Settings' Op Cit

¹¹⁶ United Nations Development Programme., 'What is Climate Security and Why is it Important?' Op Cit

¹¹⁷ International Committee of the Red Cross., 'The ICRC's Call To Cop28: Urgent and Ambitious Action is Needed to Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Climate Action in Conflict Settings' Op Cit

conflicts¹¹⁸; and unlocking climate finance in conflict situations¹¹⁹. Strengthening climate action in conflict situations for development is necessary and should be realized for peace and prosperity.

¹¹⁸ Toulmin. C., & Barrett. S., 'Climate Action and Conflict' Op Cit

¹¹⁹ International Committee of the Red Cross., 'The ICRC's Call To Cop28: Urgent and Ambitious Action is Needed to Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Climate Action in Conflict Settings' Op Cit

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