CLIMATE SECURITY CONFERENCE

UN CAMPUS BONN — 23-24 NOV 2023

CONFERENCE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION OUTCOMES

UNITAR Inaugural Conference on Climate Security: Peace and Security Consequences of Climate Change

The inaugural conference of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) held on 23-24 November 2023 at the UN Bonn Campus focused on the critical theme of Climate Security. The conference brought together a diverse range of participants, including policymakers, experts, practitioners, and representatives from governments, international organizations, civil society, and academia. The conference aimed to deepen understanding and explore strategies to address the complex interplay between climate change and security, and this conclusion report outlines the key outcomes and recommendations that emerged from the discussions.

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KEY THEMES EXPLORED:

Climate Change Impacts on Security

The conference highlighted the increasing risks and challenges posed by climate change to global security. Discussions centered on the linkages between climate change and various security dimensions, including conflicts, migration, resource scarcity, and social instability. Participants recognized the need to integrate climate considerations into security policies and responses for effective risk management and to embrace education for sustainable development.

Conflict Prevention and Climate Resilience

The conference emphasized the importance of conflict prevention and climate resilience as essential components of climate security. Participants discussed the need to address root causes of conflicts exacerbated by climate change, build social cohesion, and strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities to climate impacts and the vital role of education, especially the role of higher education institutions to fully integrate the SDG's (Sustainable Development Goals) from a cross pedagogical and a multidisciplinary perspective. A new educational model supported by alternative learning and teaching approaches that integrate cutting-edge research activity emerges as critical to ensure that Higher Education Institutions can support ESD's needs. The importance of plurilingualism within the educational system is critical to support students as within educational systems serves as a catalyst for effective interdisciplinary collaboration, a prerequisite in confronting challenges related to climate security. The significance of SDG 16 and its value to progress with the UN 2030 Agenda through SDG 4 was also considered. The role of early warning systems, mediation, and diplomacy in preventing climate-related conflicts was also highlighted putting forward the need for educational institutions to assess existing working models and the need to avoid working in silos that prevent the development of synergies, collaboration and the exchange of knowledge and good practices.

Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

Discussions focused on the urgent need for both adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate security. The participants emphasized the importance of investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, sustainable land management, and disaster risk reduction. Additionally, at the conference it was highlighted the role of renewable energy, low-carbon technologies, and sustainable practices in mitigating climate change and reducing security risks.

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Multilateral Institutional Cooperation and Higher Education Learning

Collaboration and Education for Sustainable Development Pogrammes and Research were identified as critical elements in addressing climate security and geo-economic challenges. Participants underscored the need for enhanced international cooperation, knowledge sharing, and capacity building to develop effective policies and strategies. The conference emphasized the importance of leveraging existing learning and research frameworks. The student voice and its importance was also subject to discussion with students, emphasing the need for better communication channels between academics, researchers and students. EDI and its broad dimension was also put forward as being crucial for higher education institutions to actively seek and communicate with their learners, showing interest in their knowledge and seeking to understand them better. Learners need to feel included in the community as learners and future professionals, as they can bring significant value to the table if given the right opportunity and place. It is essential to create an environment where learners feel welcomed and comfortable expressing their needs and ideas. It can be achieved by giving them space for free speaking, sharing their thoughts, and finding ways to improve the learning experience for themselves and others. Students highlighted the importance of owning their learning process to enable motivation, encourage participation and engagement.

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KEY OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the deliberations and insights shared during the conference, the following key outcomes and recommendations were put forward:

Strengthening Climate-Security Linkages

Enhance research, data collection, and analysis on the connections between climate change and security to inform evidence-based policies and decision-making processes.

Mainstreaming Climate Security

Integrate climate security considerations into national and international security policies, risk assessments, and planning frameworks. Foster cooperation between relevant actors, including national security agencies, climate experts, and humanitarian organizations.

Building Climate Resilience

Prioritize investments in climate change adaptation and resilience-building measures, particularly in vulnerable regions and communities. Support capacity building and knowledge sharing to enhance resilience at the local and regional levels.

Enhancing International Cooperation

Strengthen multilateral cooperation and coordination mechanisms to address climate security challenges. Facilitate dialogue, knowledge exchange, and joint initiatives among countries, international organizations, and regional bodies. In this remit, HEIs have a key role to play through their transformative and innovative educational models as they consider their contribution and approach to support ESD.

Promoting Sustainable Development

Recognize the interconnectedness between climate security and sustainable development. Foster integrated approaches that promote sustainable practices, renewable energy, and inclusive growth to mitigate climate risks and enhance security.

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CONCLUSIONS:

The UNITAR inaugural conference on Climate Security held at the UN Bonn Campus provided a platform to deepen understanding and explore strategies to address the complex challenges at the intersection of climate change, economic and business development, higher education, and security. The conference emphasized the urgent need for collaborative, multilateral action to strengthen resilience, prevent conflicts, and promote sustainable development in the face of climate change impacts. The outcomes and recommendations outlined in this conclusion report, have the aim to be used as a roadmap for UNITAR, TU Dublin, and EUT+ to inform the 2nd edition of the conference in 2024 targeting policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders to guide their efforts in tackling the nexus of climate security challenges, economic and business growth, and human security and development effectively. In terms of the research collaboration, UNITAR, TU Dublin, and EUt+ would focus on:

Define the Research Objectives

Clearly articulate the specific objectives of the applied research, ensuring they align with SDGs 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Identify the research questions or problems that need to be addressed within these goal areas.

Conduct a Literature Review

Review existing literature, reports, and policy documents related to SDGs 4, 8, 16, and 17. Identify gaps in knowledge, policy implementation, or guidelines that need to be addressed through your research. Consider the intersections and interdependencies among these goals to identify synergies and opportunities for integrated approaches.

Identify Stakeholders

Identify key stakeholders who are involved in policy formulation, implementation, or guideline development related to the target SDGs. This may include government officials, policymakers, international organizations, NGOs, academic experts, business leaders, and civil society representatives. Establish connections and engage with these stakeholders throughout the research process.

Research Design and Methodology

Develop a rigorous research design and methodology that aligns with the research objectives. Determine the appropriate data collection methods, such as surveys, interviews, case studies, or data analysis. Consider using interdisciplinary approaches to address the complex and interconnected challenges across multiple SDGs.

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Data Collection and Analysis

Collect relevant data through primary and/or secondary sources. Analyze the data using appropriate analytical techniques and tools. Ensure the analysis provides actionable insights and evidence to support policy formulation and guideline development within the domains of SDGs 4, 8, 16, and 17.

Identify Key Findings

Summarize the key findings of the research in a concise and accessible manner. Clearly articulate how these findings relate to SDGs 4, 8, 16, and 17. Highlight the implications of the findings for policy development and guideline formulation within each goal area and explore potential synergies and trade-offs across goals.

Policy Recommendations and Guideline Development

Based on the research findings, develop specific policy recommendations and guidelines that address the identified gaps or challenges within SDGs 4, 8, 16, and 17. Ensure the recommendations are practical, evidence-based, and feasible for implementation. Consider incorporating input and feedback from stakeholders representing different sectors and goal areas to enhance the relevance and applicability of the recommendations.

Dissemination and Engagement

Develop a comprehensive dissemination plan to share the research findings, policy recommendations, and guidelines with relevant stakeholders. This may include publishing research papers, organizing seminars or workshops, presenting findings at conferences, or engaging directly with policymakers, practitioners, and civil society representatives. Actively seek opportunities to engage stakeholders in discussions and dialogue to foster buy-in and increase the likelihood of policy uptake.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Establish a framework for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the research on policy formation and guideline development. Track the adoption and implementation of the recommendations and guidelines and assess their effectiveness in advancing SDGs 4, 8, 16, and 17. Use feedback and lessons learned to refine future research and engagement strategies.

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Continuous Engagement

Maintain an ongoing relationship with policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders across the four SDGs to sustain the influence of the research beyond the initial phase. Provide ongoing support, updates, and additional research or evidence as needed to inform policy decisions and enhance the implementation of the developed guidelines.

By following these steps, our applied research and education for sustainable development focus can effectively influence policy formation and guideline development, contributing to the advancement of SDGs 4, 8, 16, and 17 while considering their interlinkages and promoting integrated approaches to sustainable development.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to all participants, guest speakers, contributors, and the organizing team for their invaluable contributions to the inaugural UNITAR Research Conference on Climate Security.

This conference was brought to you by:

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HOW TO CITE THIS BRIEF:

Coetzer, J-H., Rajmil, D., and Morales, L. (2023). "Climate Security: Peace and Security Consequences of Climate Change". The 1st International UNITAR Research Conference; No. UNITAR 01. Bonn, December 2023

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