

**Geneva Dialogue on Environment,
Climate, Conflict, and Peace:
Meeting 10**

8 December, Zoom

Participants: 15 individuals from institutions and organizations around Geneva and beyond

Briefing from Serge Stroobants, Director of Operations for Europe & MENA of the Institute for Economics and Peace

- [Link to PPT here](#)
- IEP is a nonpartisan think tank
 - Sydney, New York, Brussels, The Hague, Mexico City, Harare
- Ecological Threat Register 2020
 - Covers 157 countries and 97% of the world pop
 - 8 areas of ecological threats
 - Food, water, population growth, droughts, floods, sea levels, cyclones, rising temperatures
 - The report also measures resilience using the IEP's Positive Peace framework
 - A society's ability to absorb the shocks of these ecological threats
 - Projections until 2050
- Key findings
 - 141 countries are exposed to at least one ecological threats (only 16 not facing a threat before 2050)
 - 19 of the countries with the most threats are home to 2.1 billion people
 - 10 of these are in the 40 least peaceful countries
 - 6.4 billion people live in countries which are exposed to medium to high ecological threats
 - Three clusters of ecological hotspots are susceptible to collapse
 - The Sahel-Horn belt of Africa
 - The Southern Africa belt
 - The Middle East and Central Asian belt
 - Only 2 countries most at risk are amongst the 10 largest recipients of climate aid
 - Large discrepancy to be addressed
 - Three major immigration routes due to ecological threat are:
 - Latin America to US and Canada
 - Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe
 - South Asia and Middle East to Europe
 - 1.2 billion in high risk, low resilience countries face displacement by 2050
 - Even without climate change, ecological threats will lead to failed states
 - Climate change as an accelerator and reinforcer of ecological threats
 - Systemic flow

- Resource degradation leading to conflict which leads to resource degradation and so on
- Resilience and Positive Peace
 - Creates the optimum environment for human potential to flourish, and associated with
 - Higher per capita income
 - Better ecological performance
 - High measures of well being
 - Better inclusion
 - 8 pillars of positive peace
 - Roughly 3 out of every 4 countries has improved its positive peace in the last decade
- Resource scarcity
 - 746 million people live in countries with very low capacity to deal with resource depletion threats such as rapid population growth, water stress and food insecurity
 - Countries with low measures of positive peace are most impacted by ecological threats
 - Worst shocks and low resilience
 - Global population projected to reach 10 billion by 2050
 - The 40 least peaceful countries will have an additional 1.3 billion people and will be home to more than half of the world's population
 - Water stress
 - 2.6 billion people live in 46 countries experiencing high or extreme water stress
 - Now 60% less freshwater available per person today than there was in the early 1960s
 - By 2040, 5.4 billion people will live in the 59 countries experiencing high or extreme water stress, including India and China
 - The number of water-related conflicts and violence incidents increased by 270% worldwide in the last decade. Yemen and Iraq had the most incidents.
 - The combined effects of rising temperatures, population growth and increased rainfall variability will reduce future water availability.
 - Global fresh water use will increase by 50% by 2050 (has increased 60% in past years)
 - Food security
 - Food insecurity means not having enough food for a healthy life - can be intermittent or irregular
 - An estimated 2 billion people currently facing food insecurity
 - This number is expected to double by 2050
 - 58% of the people in sub-Saharan Africa face food insecurity
 - 65% of the population in each of the world's least peaceful and low income countries (13 countries) experience food affordability problems
 - Covid19 is expected to have a negative impact on food security
 - Food insecurity has increased since 2014, with an additional 300 million people facing food insecurity.

- Natural disasters
 - More than one billion people live in countries with high exposure to natural disasters and very low resilience
 - The number of natural disasters has quadrupled in the last four decades
 - One billion people live in areas that combine high frequency and intensity of natural disasters with low and stagnant levels of positive peace
 - Floods and storms account for 72% of natural disasters from 1990 to 2019
 - They displaced 25 million people in 2019, 3x higher than the 8.6 million people displaced by armed conflict
 - A 2.1-metre rise in sea levels would permanently cover land that is currently home to 200 million people around the world.
- Development Assistance and Resilience
 - Countries receiving the most climate-related aid
 - India received significantly more climate-related aid than any other country in 2018
 - Only three of the 22 most vulnerable countries are in this list
- [Please see the PPT presentation](#) for many graphics and charts with data
- Ecological Threat Register and interactive map: <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/ecological-threat-register/#/>
- Positive Peace Report: <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/PPR-2019-web.pdf>

Discussion Notes:

- What sources are you using, particularly when it comes to environmental data? What's your process to compile it? There is an inequality on quality of data across the world, particularly in the most fragile and conflict-affected states.
 - You can find the sources in the ETR itself.
 - The figures are global and up to date, annually
 - Data available per country on the website
 - Data sources include (in no particular order): FAO, World Resource Institute, World Population Prospects, Berkeley Earth, INFORM rise index, UNDESA, World Bank, International Food Policy Research Institute, UN Environment, etc.
 - 25-30,000 datasets across IEPs work, so much of their work is to harmonize across many different kinds of datasets
 - Related from UNEP - UNEP's new work on STRATA is a geospatial platform, analysing satellite images to look at different environmental and socioeconomic security risks
 - It's not an index, but rather a tool to identify trends on the highly local level
- With your emphasis on population rise, corruption and environmental destruction in your presentation, at what level of priority do you hold the empowerment of women - including educating girls, access to family planning and access to decision making positions - in building positive peace?

- Family planning and managing population growth requires a systemic approach and is essential to the conversation.
- Gender inclusion is not an indicator because of lack of access to good data
 - They are starting to find accessible annual data on the role of women, but can still work to expand it
 - Inclusion and gender equity are necessary parts of just societies
 - Clear that women (and youth) are peacebuilders - sustainable solutions often flow through women
- I'm interested in the concept of resilience to ecological threats and how you prioritise social and ecological factors. It strikes me as a difficult thing to do reliably.... For example, the region of Tigray successfully regreened and regrew trees after famine in the 1980s but was successful partly because of strong volition and capacity to mobilise at local level linked to their experience of and capacity for military mobilisation and independent-mindedness....?
 - Systemic problems asking for systemic solutions, which goes to the many pillars of positive peace outlined in the presentation
 - All 8 pillars of positive peace should be addressed, otherwise you will have a greener, violent environment
 - There are examples of how positive peace has played out in the past in the above positive peace report
- What are the impacts of Covid19 on the confluence of these threats & social cohesion? Do you have data on this already?
 - The concepts of solidarity are facing a strain in our very individualistic societies.
 - We didn't have the infrastructure to deal with this dual health-security crisis.
 - A report on covid19 and peace <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/COVID19-and-Peaceweb.pdf>
 - Lockdown has led to a decrease in some forms of violence, but likely not a permanent impact or to resolve certain conflicts
 - Emergence of other forms of violence: self-harm, violence against women and families, etc.
 - Impact of the economic downturn - a permanent impact expected on the levels of positive peace
 - Includes a prediction of countries most at risk
 - Looking at economic preconditions, mapped against positive peace
 - Brazil, South Africa
 - Should not only concentrate on saving our economies, but also to take along the entire society and do not push people to the margins
 - Socioeconomic factors leading to social unrest
 - Violence goes alongside social unrest in a number of places
 - Already seeing signs of this in data
 - Aid funding is expected to decrease
 - Comment from UNEP - Indeed we are already seeing fairly significant divestment from climate change adaptation programmes on the ground in the name of COVID 19.

- 75% of countries have progressed along the positive peace index. Can you speak to that?
 - 3 baskets of indicators
 - Conflict has increased, fragmented, and the types of actors have really evolved over time from state-state to the greater inclusion of non-state actors. It has also become more volatile.
 - Levels of militarization (via military expenditures) have decreased in the last decade.
 - Countries have been invested greater across the board in sustainable development, in part prompted by the SDGs
- After the IEP presentation during Geneva Peace Week I shared the high threat status of Namibia with a Namibian friend closely connected to ecological conservation there. She was surprised - although we noticed that in terms of resilience, Namibia scores high. Could you share a bit more about the case of Namibia, please?
 - Not one of the hotspots, facing 4 or 5 ecological threats, but yes increasing the levels of resilience. At the moment, they are able to cope with it fairly well.
 - It scores number 63 out of 163 countries. It scores particularly high on the following indicators: High Levels of Human Capital, Sound Business Environment and Equitable Distribution of Resources
- Does the ETR find some difficulties in identifying and reporting ecological threats to state borders as some or the dynamics don't match with them?
 - Yes, there are more broadly zones and not just state-based. For example, looking at the systemic issues in the Sahel region. There is definitely a look at supranational impact in the indices.
- Did you look a bit more detailed into some 'counter-intuitive' figures and what's behind it? The slide of the natural disasters, for instance, showed that between 1992 and 2006 there was hardly an increase, while it kind of exponentially grew afterwards...
 - Positive intentions can surely lead to negative evolutions or impacts. For example, a green and digital future will have a massive impact on ecological threats, development, security, etc. Increases across mining for rare metals, which has enormous impacts in areas and countries impacted by violent conflict. How can you achieve a digital revolution without activating even further problems?