

**Geneva Dialogue on Environment,
Climate, Conflict, and Peace:
Meeting 45**

9 May, Zoom
9 participants

Meeting participants were invited to introduce themselves, their work, and to share how their institution, if at all, is working on or thinking about diversity, equity, inclusion, and decolonization.

Introductions

- USIP
 - Program on Climate, Environment, and Conflict
 - Working on transboundary water governance, transition to a green economy, and a partnership with US Africa Command to evaluate security implications of climate change
 - Upcoming event on 17 May:
<https://www.usip.org/events/preventing-social-unrest-economic-transitions>
- ICT4Peace
 - Geneva-based foundation working at intersection of peace, human rights, and technology
 - Exploring - how might environmental peacebuilding benefit from technology?
- Principles for Peace
 - Geneva-based foundation that established common principles for peace over a multi-year global consultation: <https://principlesforpeace.org/principles/>
 - Climate change was identified as a “new frontier” for peacebuilding, so looking how their principles can contribute
- MEDRC
 - Work on transboundary peace processes using the “MEDRC model”
 - It was established in 1996 as a part of the Middle East Peace Process
 - Stabilization Mechanism uses environmental issues in service of peace
 - www.medrcstabilization.org
 - Have an upcoming webinar on confidence measures in environmental peacebuilding on 22 May:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YSV-1larQ1OstJdRvRtL4A#/registration
- World Bank
 - Environment support to conflict and violence-affected states
 - Work hard on the strategy and rationale for this kind of work, as well as operations, accountability to do no harm
 - Second phase of work now - conflict sensitivity and MEL
 - <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099520010272224660/p1771510b38fda01e0afec01edd810d8cde>

- PAX
 - Research on and advocacy around the issues of climate and environmental impacts on conflict-affected countries.
 - <https://paxforpeace.nl/>
 - Getting prepared for the 2024 UN Environmental Assembly (UNEA) to make sure that conflict dimension of climate change and environmental degradation are included in political communications and conference outcomes
 - Collaborating with other NGOs on this - get in touch if interested.

How, if at all, does your institution work on diversity, equity, inclusion, and/or decolonization?

- Inclusion is the core business of peace. Eliminating internal inequity within our own organizations should be a prerequisite to doing that work externally.
- Resource extraction is a continued form of neocolonialism. Engaging actively in natural resource governance and trying to support governments to manage their resources in a way that engages their own populations is a form of both environmental peacebuilding and decolonization.
- There’s a clear sense of urgency around these topics, but progress varies from institution to institution.
 - Some institutions started working on DEI/decolonization in 2020, while some have been working on it for a very long time.
 - Some have formal programs and policies, while others have no formal policy.
 - In some cases, institutions may have ongoing “conversations” about these topics that don’t necessarily translate into policy or functional change.
- Institutions that work on DEI/decolonization have different approaches. They include:
 - Focus on inclusion / participation through capacity-building with actors in the global south, and particularly including government actors in discussions.
 - Through research and advocacy, work with local partners in conflict-affected regions to make sure the environmental problems there, as experienced by local populations, are highlighted and discussed in the international fora.
 - Intentionally spending time looking for and hiring local consultants from conflict-affected regions, mentoring, coaching, and investing in them - as opposed to hiring the “easier to find” folks in global north professional networks.
 - Grounding work and research in country consultations and Subsidiarity - leadership by the people who are most affected.
 - A large internal program for internal certification on DEI / apprenticeship program in which employees can take time on a series of courses to get a certificate.
 - Internal working group in the institution, created by demand within the organization itself to see how it “walked the talk” of its values. This included:
 - Self-examination process with survey, focus groups, and an external consultant
 - Collectively self-defining what DEI means internally
 - Evaluate how it manifests across the org, existing challenges, and ideas for improvement

- There are lessons learned that some wanted to share:
 - Need to more carefully think through what meaningful engagement looks like for ‘community-led work ‘ - just inviting individuals into global-north-designed-structures doesn’t necessarily reach our goals. In many cases, these institutions perpetuate global inequality.
 - Don’t overreach to include endless multitrack conversations if you aren’t actually going to listen or include - hearing doesn’t necessarily translate to meaningful inclusion.
 - We need to know, as individuals, when “not engaging” could be better than engaging brashly or in a hurry.
 - **Sometimes it's better to take better, smaller steps than empty giant leaps.**
 - We focus so much on top-down or bottom-up approaches that we forget to meaningfully weave the two together in the middle.
- Attendees recommended [PeaceDirect’s work on decolonizing aid](#) as a good resource.
- Attendees also agreed that they would like to continue this particular conversation.