

Geneva Dialogue on Environment, Climate, Conflict, and Peace Information for Participants 2020-2021

Summary

As part of its mandate on community management, the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform aims to strengthen networking and community building in different topics within the peacebuilding sector. The Geneva Dialogue on Environment, Climate, Conflict, and Peace aims to improve and expand the reach of both peacebuilding projects towards environmental and climate sensitivity, and also environmental and climate projects towards peacebuilding sensitivity by fostering inter-institutional collaboration and dialogue, promoting learning and innovation, and mainstreaming these topics across the board. These goals are achieved through three primary activities: briefings and convenings, the development of a White Paper on Environmental Peacebuilding, and the Geneva contribution towards the Environmental Peacebuilding Association's *Road to Geneva*.

This document summarizes the aims and activities of the Geneva Dialogue, providing specific avenues of collaboration and engagement for interested participants.

(I.) Rationale and Goals

Environmental peacebuilding is not a new topic, though there is a recent and clear trend demonstrating new actors and organizations joining the conversation. It is a meta framework through which we can better understand the relationships between natural resources, climate change, biodiversity, security, armed conflict, and peace, as well as a set of tools to support strategies and activities for peacebuilding, environmental and climate adaptation, and community cohesion.

Though research and practice at the intersections of environment, climate, conflict, and peace are by no means new or unique, their profile is growing among traditional and non-traditional actors alike. Geneva itself is a microcosm for environment, climate, conflict, and peace, hosting offices of major international organizations dedicated to each topic, as well as an active and dynamic civil society sector. Each year, more actors allocate resources towards advancing an environmental peacebuilding agenda, increasing the size and scope of the community and increasing potential for collaboration or coordination. The Platform draws on its format, function, and existing relationships to facilitate this Geneva Dialogue.

The overarching objective of the Geneva Dialogue's activities is to improve and expand the reach of both peacebuilding projects towards environmental and climate sensitivity, and also environmental and climate projects towards peacebuilding sensitivity.

In service of this objective, the GPP's Geneva Dialogue on Environment, Climate, Conflict, and Peace (ECCP) builds towards three specific goals:

- 1) To foster inter-institutional collaboration and dialogue on ECCP topics and projects.
- 2) To promote learning and innovation, recognizing that each actor has a unique angle to bring to the table.
- 3) To harness the joint reach of all participants to mainstream ECCP into organizations and institutions in Geneva.

(II.) Activities

The activities of the Geneva Dialogue can be divided into three categories: briefings and convenings, the development of a White Paper on Environmental Peacebuilding, and the Geneva contribution towards the Environmental Peacebuilding Association's *Road to Geneva*.

1. Briefings and Convenings

Following a successful pilot season in spring 2020, the GPP will facilitate a series of briefings, events, and convenings throughout the remainder of 2020 and into 2021. To foster inclusion from actors outside of Geneva, these sessions will all be held online. There are different types of possible events:

- GPP will host 1-hour briefings online, based on speaker and topic suggestions from participants, which comprise a 20 minute presentation from an expert, policy-maker, or practitioner, and about 40 minutes for group discussion. These will be held every 2-4 weeks.
- GPP will host regular 1-hour Geneva Dialogue meetings every 6-8 weeks. These meetings offer a chance for participants to connect, exchange information, and receive updates on projects in and out of Geneva.
- Participants can propose their own briefings, webinars, coffee chats, or other online events to participants. These events may be part of the regular work streams of participants, and the Geneva Dialogue will facilitate an expanded reach of existing programming.
- Participants can also request support in facilitating the formation of smaller topical, regional, or thematic groups to further promote collaboration and dialogue on subtopics related to Environment, Climate, Conflict, and Peace.e

These activities work to serve the overall goals of dialogue and learning.

Participation

- Propose speakers or topics
- Add briefings, coffee chats, or webinars to the calendar
- Propose topics for subgroups and host small meetings (online)

Outputs

The primary output of the briefing series are the session reports or papers authored by hosting organizations, including the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform. These summaries are hosted on the Platform website: gpplatform.ch.

2. White Paper on Environmental Peacebuilding

The White Paper on Environmental Peacebuilding aims to articulate a crosscutting operational agenda as a contribution to the United Nations Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment (“Stockholm +50”) to be held in June 2022. This conference offers a unique opportunity to stake stock of, reflect on and look to the future elements of an environmental agenda. The White Paper leverages the comparative advantage of Geneva as a hub for policy, know-how and research in order to articulate the elements of a cross-cutting environmental peacebuilding agenda that is adapted to the challenges of an ever more complex and rapidly changing world. The White Paper articulates the patterns of consent and disagreement on key questions gathered through a literature review, a survey and regional background papers. Through the regional perspectives, the White Paper also responds to the need for regional solutions and ownership of policy and practice in a multi-polar world. The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform builds this project on the successful experience of the White Paper on Peacebuilding that it facilitated in the run-up of the 2015 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, including a unique methodology for a more bottom-up, inductive research process.

The White Paper on Environmental Peacebuilding will work together, feed into, and benefit from insights surfaced in both the briefings (described above) and the *Road to Geneva* (described below). This project works to serve the overall goals of innovation and collaboration.

Participation

- Participate in the consultations for the White Paper
- Join the group stewarding the intellectual development of the White Paper

Outputs

The outputs of this process will be a White Paper on Environmental Peacebuilding, to be launched in late 2021 or early 2022. In addition, a number of background papers, documents, and survey data will be collected and can be disseminated throughout the process to support the overall advancement of the environmental peacebuilding agenda.

3. The *Road to Geneva*

The Second International Conference on Environmental Peacebuilding will be hosted in Geneva in February 2022 with a consortium led by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. Together, the Environmental Peacebuilding Association (EnPAX) and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform have launched the "*Road to Geneva*," an inclusive and consultative process to elevate diverse voices in environmental peacebuilding work and learn from regional insights in preparation for the Second Conference. The *Road to Geneva* invites institutions around the world to host national, regional, or thematic dialogues and events over a one-year period from 2020-2021. This *Road to Geneva* intentionally contributes to the thematic and intellectual development of the White Paper, described above.

The proposed Geneva contribution to the process consists of a series of sessions, conversations, and trainings on environmental peacebuilding at Geneva Peace Week (GPW) 2020. The Platform received 19 applications for sessions from 45 different institutions, both in Geneva and beyond. The diverse range of subtopics runs from meaningfully engaging local actors in environmental peacebuilding work, to the development of digital technology and early warning systems in climate risk assessment and security frameworks. The environmental peacebuilding conversations at GPW20 will culminate in one large event that launches the White Paper process.

This project serves to advance the overall goals of collaboration, dialogue, and to mainstream these topics into multiple institutions and actors.

Participation

- Join the conversation by attending Geneva Peace Week 2020 (online and in Geneva)
- Propose an event for Geneva Peace Week 2021

Outputs

The output of the *Road to Geneva* project will be session reports and media coverage of the Geneva Peace Week activity, as well as intellectual inputs to the White Paper process. The *Road to Geneva* is designed in such a way as to maximize intellectual output and idea-capture for the field to learn from and exchange on.

(III.) Geneva Dialogue Participants

Participation in the Geneva Dialogue is flexible and voluntary. Participants choose to engage on the topics of their interest to the degree that they prefer, across all activities. There is no minimum activity requirement to participate, and participants do not officially represent their organizations. The Geneva Dialogue is committed to remaining an open and inclusive forum for discussion on environment, climate, conflict, and peace.

Participants from the following institutions and organizations have joined in 2020:

- Bread for the World
- Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
- Centre on Conflict, Development, and Peacebuilding, Graduate Institute
- Chatham House
- Clingendael Institute
- The Conflict and Environment Observatory
- EarthJustice
- Environmental Peacebuilding Association
- Geneva Centre for Security Policy
- Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
- Geneva Environment Network
- Geneva Water Hub
- Graduate Institute for International and Development Studies
- Initiatives of Change Switzerland
- International Labor Organization
- Interpeace
- Kofi Annan Foundation
- Lutheran World Federation
- MAVA Foundation
- Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations in Geneva
- Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
- PeaceNexus Foundation
- Quaker United Nations Office
- Swedwatch
- United Nations Environment Programme
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- Université de Montpellier
- University of Geneva
- World Meteorological Organization
- World Resources Institute
- Zoi Environment Network

Interested participants should contact the group facilitator, Annika Erickson-Pearson, at annika@gpplatform.ch.