

Report: The Hague Roundtable on Climate & Security

6th meeting hosted by IHE Delft Institute for Water Education
21 September 2017

Representatives from 20 countries and 15 organizations came together for a half-day meeting to discuss cooperation in adapting to impacts of climate change related to water and migration on regional stability. Some 60 participants shared concerns and ideas on issues including too much water (flooding and sea level rise), too little water (droughts with rising temperatures), and the political and logistical factors surrounding resulting migration. Water diplomacy and new water technology were discussed as ways to lower the potential of conflict – both national and international – and to increase cooperation over changing natural resources.



The importance of water resources to security at a global level was examined in the context of the UN Security Council, with emphasis on regional cooperation to reduce threats to stability. “Climate impacts have changed everything and it’s increasingly crucial to connect scientific researchers and policy makers,” said Alexander Verbeek, who led a brainstorming session on responding to climate crises.

Embassies, Ministries and Organizations represented

- Algeria
- Argentina
- Australia
- Bangladesh
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Chile
- France
- Germany
- Iran
- Iraq
- Kenya
- Morocco
- The Netherlands
- Nicaragua
- Panama
- Saudi Arabia
- Sri Lanka
- United States
- Vietnam
- Asser Institute
- Clingendael
- Cordaid
- Deltares
- German Inst for Intl & Security Affairs
- Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS)
- IHE Delft Institute for Water Education
- Institute for Environmental Security (IES)
- Global Military Advisory Council on Climate Change (GMACCC)
- NL Army Civil Relations / Ranger Campus
- World Resources Institute (WRI)
- Red Cross Climate Centre
- Wageningen University

Moderated by [Matt Luna](#) and [Wouter Veening](#)

Excerpts from welcome remarks by IHE Delft Rector [Dr. Eddy Moors](#)

The mission of [IHE Delft Institute for Water Education](#) is to contribute to the education and training of professionals, to expand the knowledge base through research and to build the capacity of sector organizations, knowledge centres and other institutions active in the fields of water, environment and infrastructure, with a special focus on developing countries and countries in transition. IHE Delft's institutional strengthening activities, together with its research and education, which engage researchers and students from a mid-career background in the water sector, meet a solid demand, using a problem-driven approach.



The wide range of disciplines of its researchers, along with the engagement with numerous guest lecturers, allows for an integrated and holistic perspective on these problems. As conditions continue to change, current and tomorrow's solutions have their expiry date. Therefore, IHE Delft sees a strong need to create local capacity, capable to innovate, supported by lifelong learning.

The present state of water resources should already be a major concern in large parts of the world because of too little, too much water or water being of the wrong quality – but with the increasing pressures of population growth, climate change will magnify these problems. Besides the direct physical impacts, such as sea level rise for small island states and floods in low lying areas such as deltas, indirect impacts are expected, because of increased water scarcity. As agriculture depends heavily on water availability – and is the main source of income and livelihood in a large part of the world – deterioration of the quality of life conditions is to be expected in vulnerable regions.

These changes may trigger migration. Often migration is connected to transboundary movements, however if we want to understand what is driving migration, it is important to look at what is happening at a much lower scale, e.g. at the province, district or community scale. At this scale, changes in water availability and consequently, decreases in the livelihood of farmers, may be the push, together with the pull of better prospects in cities for example, that may trigger migration. At present, it is not really clear when migration starts to take place and especially how we can change the conditions, such that people will not migrate.

It is necessary to place these issues related to climate and security on international agendas, so every nation and all individuals can have a better understanding and plan effective action to improve quality of life and reduce potential for conflicts.

Roundtable presentations (in PDF)

Responses to emerging climate impacts at a global level: brainstorming for action
[Alexander Verbeek](http://gmaccc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Presentation-Alexander-Verbeek--Warnings-to-Action.pdf), founder of the Planetary Security Initiative, drew upon experience of attendees to tackle questions related to emerging climate impacts: Who can we call for climate-impact help? What can the UN Security Council do to mitigate threats to security and stability?
<http://gmaccc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Presentation-Alexander-Verbeek--Warnings-to-Action.pdf>

Mr. Verbeek is an independent advisor on global issues related to climate, security, water, food, energy and resources. A former diplomat for the NL Ministry of Foreign Affairs, his last position (2016) was Strategic Policy Adviser on Global Issues.

Climate change, migration and security: hype or reality?

[Dr. Louise van Schaik](http://gmaccc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Presentation-Louise-van-Schaik--Climate-migration-security.pdf), Head of the Clingendael International Sustainability Centre, discussed climate-driven migration and factors related to refugees, political tensions in destination countries, adaptation and resulting crime and/or terrorism.

<http://gmaccc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Presentation-Louise-van-Schaik--Climate-migration-security.pdf>

Dr. van Schaik is the Project Manager of the Planetary Security Initiative and a visiting professor at the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium. Her fields of expertise are climate change & natural resources, global health and EU external action.

Innovations in desalination to alleviate water stress

[Prof. Maria Kennedy](http://gmaccc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Presentation-Maria-Kennedy--Desalination-Drought-Mitigation-and-Diplomacy-2017.pdf), Head of Environmental Engineering & Water Treatment Dept. IHE Delft, highlighted progress in desalination technology that could bring ‘drought-proof’ water resources to more areas. Sustainable solutions are becoming feasible with lower use of energy and chemicals.

<http://gmaccc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Presentation-Maria-Kennedy--Desalination-Drought-Mitigation-and-Diplomacy-2017.pdf>

Professor Kennedy is professor of Water Treatment Technology with 11 years of research experience, and specializes in development in the field of membrane technology, including reverse osmosis desalination. She is also President of the European Desalination Association.

The role of water diplomacy in reducing potential for conflict and migration

[Ms. Zaki Shubber](http://gmaccc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Presentation-Zaki-Shubber--Water-Diplomacy.pdf), Lecturer in Law and Water Diplomacy at IHE Delft, explained the sometimes complicated dynamics of sharing water resources – also in context of SDG 6.5 – and noted that cooperation with dialogue on multiple levels is key to peaceful transboundary water use.

<http://gmaccc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Presentation-Zaki-Shubber--Water-Diplomacy.pdf>

Ms. Shubber holds an LLM in Water Governance and Conflict Resolution and an LLM in Public International Law. Prior to joining IHE Delft, she worked as a lawyer in London. She now focuses on water law at a national and international level, as well as water dispute resolution.

Feeling the heat: the need for global engagement in protecting ecosystems

[Wouter Veening](#), President of Institute for Environmental Security, shared the global importance of the “cooling power of trees” to help communities be sustainable amid rising temperatures.

<http://gmaccc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Presentation-Wouter-Veening--Feeling-the-Heat.pdf>

Mr. Veening focuses on policy and legal responses to security risks from environmental degradation in key regions of the world. He has worked as a policy adviser at the Dutch Ministry of the Environment and a policy director at the Netherlands IUCN/World Conservation Union.

Presentation excerpts: Bangladesh land and vital forests lost to rising waters, and urgency of a regional approach of cooperation

Major General (Ret.) A N M Muniruzzaman of Bangladesh (via Skype from Dhaka)

General Muniruzzaman (Ret.) is Chairman of the Global Military Advisory Council on Climate Change ([GMACCC](#)), senior military leaders highlighting the security implications of a changing climate and advocating action to minimize risks. A former adviser to the President of Bangladesh, he has experience in UN Peace Support operations, and is President of the Bangladesh Inst. of Peace and Security Studies ([BIPSS](#)).



- A significant proportion of Bangladesh’s land could be lost to flooding / sea level rise (17-20%), with 25+ million climate refugees in a trans-boundary migration scenario, for destinations including India and Myanmar. In response, India has fenced some borders. And in extreme cases, island states like Maldives and Papua New Guinea could disappear.
- Mangrove forests are also threatened, which could reduce protection from cyclones.
- Food and energy security are key concerns with sea level rise: Agricultural land is being lost to rising sea-levels, and the quality of remaining farm land will decrease due to saline water intrusion. Energy infrastructures are also vulnerable to sea-level rise; nuclear power facilities near coastlines are more prone to flooding with potentially dangerous impacts.
- Militaries are key actors with capacity to provide large-scale humanitarian assistance and operations including disaster response and management of mass migration and refugees.
- Regional cooperation is needed, as many military units need more planning to prepare troops to perform humanitarian missions in response to climate change impacts.

Climate-related events and initiatives

Planetary Security Conference 2017

The Planetary Security Initiative (PSI) aims to increase awareness, deepen knowledge, and develop and promote policies to help governments, the private sector and international institutions better secure peace and cooperation in times of global climate and environmental challenges.

The third Planetary Security Conference will be held on December 12-13 in The Hague. The 2017 theme is "From Analysis to Action". The goal of the conference is to strengthen the knowledge-policy interface by consolidating the community of practice on planetary security. The target audience includes policy makers and diplomats working on the climate-security interface, as well as representatives from NGOs, research and the private sector. For further information, visit the PSI website: www.planetarysecurityinitiative.org

Brussels Dialogue on Climate Diplomacy (BDCD)

The Brussels Dialogue on Climate Diplomacy (BDCD) consists of a series of informal meetings to exchange information and promote cooperation among European institutions and international organisations active in the nexus between climate change and international, national, human and environmental security.

Participating organizations agree on the importance of broadening information exchanges to also involve civil society engaged in awareness raising, as well as on the value of linking the BDCD with meetings of The Hague Roundtable on Climate and Security and with the annual Planetary Security Conference. For more information: www.brusselsdialogue.net

One Planet Summit, France

On 12 December 2017, the President of France, Emmanuel Macron; the President of the World Bank Group, Jim Yong Kim; and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, will address the ecological emergency for our planet by calling together in Paris international leaders and committed citizens from around the world.

Aims of the One Planet Summit:

1. Collective action: There are solutions – roll out globally and locally as swiftly as possible.
2. Innovate: Be creative and resourceful in adapting our systems to the inevitable changes and step up our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
3. Support one another: We are all affected by climate change, but some are more vulnerable. Work together for the good of all and increase support to countries and peoples who need it most.

For more information: <https://www.oneplanetsummit.fr/en/>

Initiative shared by Embassy of France at Roundtable

The draft **Global Pact for the Environment** was drawn up by a group of 80 legal experts from 40 countries under the leadership of Laurent Fabius, President of the French Constitutional Council and former COP21 President. The idea of a global compact for the environment stems from the fragmented nature of international and environmental law. In light of the increasing threats posed to the environment on a global scale, following the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda, it now seems necessary to bring together the different aspects covered by international environmental law in one document and update them in the light of new issues.

The aim is for it to be a legally binding and generalized treaty, setting out all of the fundamental rights that should be protected in the field of the environment and the major principles upon which environmental law is founded, which should guide the actions of States Parties. It is based on pre-existing agreements and declarations (Paris Agreement, Rio Declarations etc.) or those established by international jurisprudence. The draft compact also brings in **some new ideas** including the principle of non-regression, a duty of care for the environment and protection of the environment in armed conflict.

On 24 June 2017, the President of the French Republic gave his backing for France, and its partners, to lead efforts at the UN to draw up a global compact for the environment. A "**Summit on a Global Pact for the Environment**" was held on 19 September 2017 in New York during the ministerial opening week of the UN General Assembly.

The creation of such a Compact will require wide-reaching and inclusive dialogue with all States and stakeholders. France's goal is to launch an international consultation, together with all interested States, with a view to drawing up the compact and submitting, if the conditions are met, a short and procedural resolution to the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly. This resolution would create **an open intergovernmental working group** responsible for negotiating the Compact and setting out its parameters such as its scope and legally binding nature.

[See the statement of the President of France](#), Emmanuel Macron, (in French) on 19 September in New York.

Related publications on climate, water and security

Climate-migration-security: Making the most of a contested relationship – Planetary Security Initiative policy brief https://www.planetarysecurityinitiative.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/PB_Climate-migration-security.pdf [pagespeed.ce.AVMF0qqCX6.pdf](https://www.planetarysecurityinitiative.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/PB_Climate-migration-security.pdf)

Sustainability, Stability, Security: Why it is vital for global security and stability to tackle climate change and invest in sustainability – WWF report https://www.wwf.fr/sites/default/files/doc-2017-11/171114_rapport_3S_ENG.pdf

Innovations for Water and Development – IHE Delft Institute for Water Education https://www.un-ihe.org/sites/default/files/ihe_delft_innovations_for_water_and_development_2017-i.pdf

Microbial Desalination project for low-energy drinking water: <https://youtu.be/sQbVm8IXNto>

Epicenters of Climate and Security: The New Geostrategic Landscape of the Anthropocene – The Center for Climate and Security <https://climateandsecurity.org/epicenters/>

ASEAN Countries Must Act Together to Confront Climate Change – WRI Blog <http://www.wri.org/blog/2017/11/asean-countries-must-act-together-confront-climate-change>

Climate Change and Water Woes Drove ISIS Recruiting in Iraq – National Geographic <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/11/climate-change-drought-drove-isis-terrorist-recruiting-iraq/>

Is NATO Ideally Placed to Manage Climate Change as a Non-Traditional Threat Multiplier? – Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defense Academies/Security Studies <https://climateandsecurity.org/2017/10/24/climate-change-and-nato-a-new-study/>

Implement initiatives on climate change (Roundtable report) – Viet Nam News <http://vietnamnews.vn/society/394324/implement-initiatives-on-climate-change-ambassador-to-netherlands.html#jLDSbkxrQGcHS1Be.97>

Looking ahead

The next Roundtable meeting will be held in the first quarter of 2018. The Roundtable initiative is moving forward with actions including the establishment of a participant contact database, an online platform to facilitate communication, formation of a core group of stakeholders, and outreach for partnerships with civil society organizations in countries of focus. Join our dialogue to share information and explore cooperation to help build prospects for peace and sustainability in expanding areas of the world that are being impacted by climate change.

The Hague Roundtable on Climate & Security is an initiative created and organized by Matt Luna of IHE Delft and the Inst. for Environmental Security, to share strategies on climate risks to issues including natural resource availability, food security, migration, disaster response, and stability of fragile states. The ongoing Roundtable dialogue also supports the Planetary Security Initiative.

For more information, contact Matt Luna: mluna@envirosecurity.org