



Climate Change and Conflict

Improving prospects for peace through WFP climate action

UNDERSTANDING THE LINK

Climate change acts as a risk multiplier, especially in parts of the world which are prone to social tensions. While climate change cannot be identified as the only reason for conflict, it amplifies and compounds those inequalities and vulnerabilities that often underpin conflict (read full brief [here](#)):

Environmental dimension: Rainfall variability and water scarcity can lead to tension, even conflict, among people who rely on seasonal rainfall as a source of water for consumption, livestock and agriculture.

Economic dimension: There is evidence that a 1°C higher temperature can lead to a drop of more than 2 percent in economic growth in poor countries, also affecting crop and food production. This can result in increased food prices with a higher likelihood of violent conflict. In addition, economic shocks in fragile countries can expose young, unemployed people to recruitment by armed groups.

Social dimension: When livestock herds are reduced in size by the forced selling of livestock due to climate shocks, pastoralists tend to become less mobile, switching to a more sedentary herding system. In this way, they become even more vulnerable in the event of poor rainfall. Alternately, when pastoralists move due to lack of natural resources – food, fodder and water – they are more vulnerable to conflict with settled communities.

Political dimension: Low-income countries in degraded environments face a higher risk of economic shocks, forced migration and disruption of political institutions, which are especially challenging to overcome in fragile and unstable political environments.

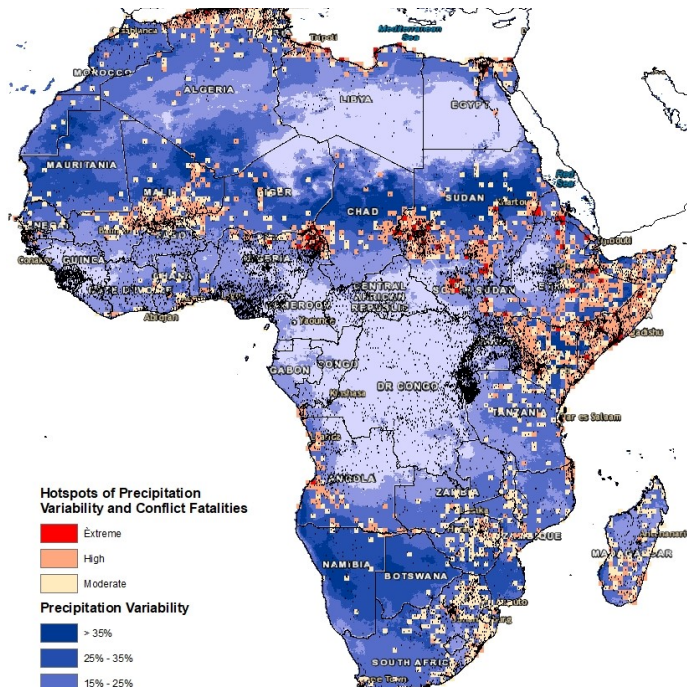
WFP'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROSPECT OF PEACE

In 2018, WFP partnered with the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)** to assess how WFP's programming might contribute to improving prospects for peace. The [report](#), based on case studies conducted in El Salvador, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan and Mali, found that WFP's contributions were strongest in the following areas:

- **Livelihood investments:** In fragile and conflict-affected situations, WFP supports community assets and livelihoods that reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience to shocks.
- **Building good links between the state and citizens:** WFP programmes strengthen national social protection systems and provide safety nets, improving the accountability of government and its relationship with citizens.
- **Natural resource management:** WFP contributes to reducing stresses over food and water's availability for vulnerable communities through food delivery, rehabilitation of irrigated canals, reforestation of degraded landscapes, and by brokering agreements between landless groups and landowners. These interventions contribute to reducing the risk of conflict outbreaks.
- **Community-based participatory approaches:** When planning, implementing and monitoring programmes, WFP relies on a participatory approach in which representatives from all segments of the community are involved. Experience shows this method helps build trust and cohesion among community members.

Climate change acts as a risk multiplier exacerbating different dimensions of conflict. In 2018, WFP partnered with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) to assess how WFP's programming might contribute to improving prospects for peace.

WFP implements an integrated climate risk management approach which identifies the main drivers of risks and enables WFP to reduce people's vulnerability and exposure.



This map shows risk hot spots in which climate variability and violent conflict intersect. WFP is active in many of these hotspots.

WFP CLIMATE PROGRAMMES ALONG THE IMPACT PATHWAY

Food security is critical for stability and peace. To address the impact extreme events have on food security and nutrition, WFP implements an **integrated climate risk management** approach which identifies the main drivers of risk and enables WFP to reduce people's vulnerability and exposure.

RESTORE

Through [WFP's Food Assistance for Assets \(FFA\)](#) programmes, vulnerable people in hazard-prone settings engage in large communal work programmes which restore natural buffer zones and infrastructure to reduce the impact of climate-related hazards. These activities protect and rehabilitate natural assets, such as water and pasture, which contribute to stability and reduce migration. From 2016-2017, WFP has invested an estimated **US\$259 million** in such programmes. The participatory planning that feeds into these programmes has been shown to contribute to the reduction of social tension between different livelihood groups.

PROTECT

WFP is the leading UN agency making climate risk insurance services work for food-insecure populations. More than **1.5 million people** are currently protected with climate risk insurance products that have been developed and supported by WFP.

These products help prevent climate shocks from leading to loss of income or livestock, price volatility and food insecurity.

The [R4 Rural Resilience Initiative](#) supports access to weather index insurance and provides a safety net for smallholder farmers against climate risks. It also encourages participation in Village Savings and Loan Associations to establish reserves to build a stronger financial base for productive investments. Group members can receive small loans from a savings pool which reduces the risk of having to sell assets after a climate shock, thereby also addressing more regular layers of risk that are not covered by insurance.

In partnership with the African Risk Capacity (ARC), WFP has established a climate protection mechanism ([ARC Replica](#)) which allows WFP and other humanitarian organizations to purchase climate risk insurance policies to finance humanitarian operations in response to extreme drought. This prevents extreme drought conditions from developing into a food crisis that can increase tensions in a community or country.

ANTICIPATE

WFP is using its skills in risk analysis, early warning and emergency preparedness to trigger forecast-based, anticipatory action at community level before humanitarian crises materialize. These anticipatory actions minimize losses and damages caused by floods, droughts or storms and reduce the need for humanitarian assistance in their aftermath. Through reducing the recovery time and the number of food-insecure people, [Forecast-based Financing \(FbF\)](#) programmes can reduce the risk of hazards destabilizing communities. At present, WFP is implementing such programmes in **13 countries**. WFP also delivers [weather and climate information services](#) to remote farming communities to help them plan ahead and reduce crop losses in times of irregular rainfall. In addition, WFP develops integrated [climate and food security analyses](#) which inform governments about the impact of climate change on food security and nutrition, thus contributing to national policies, planning and priorities for climate actions.



RESEARCH PROGRAM ON
**Climate Change,
Agriculture and
Food Security**



**International Research Institute
for Climate and Society**
EARTH INSTITUTE | COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

**World Food
Programme**