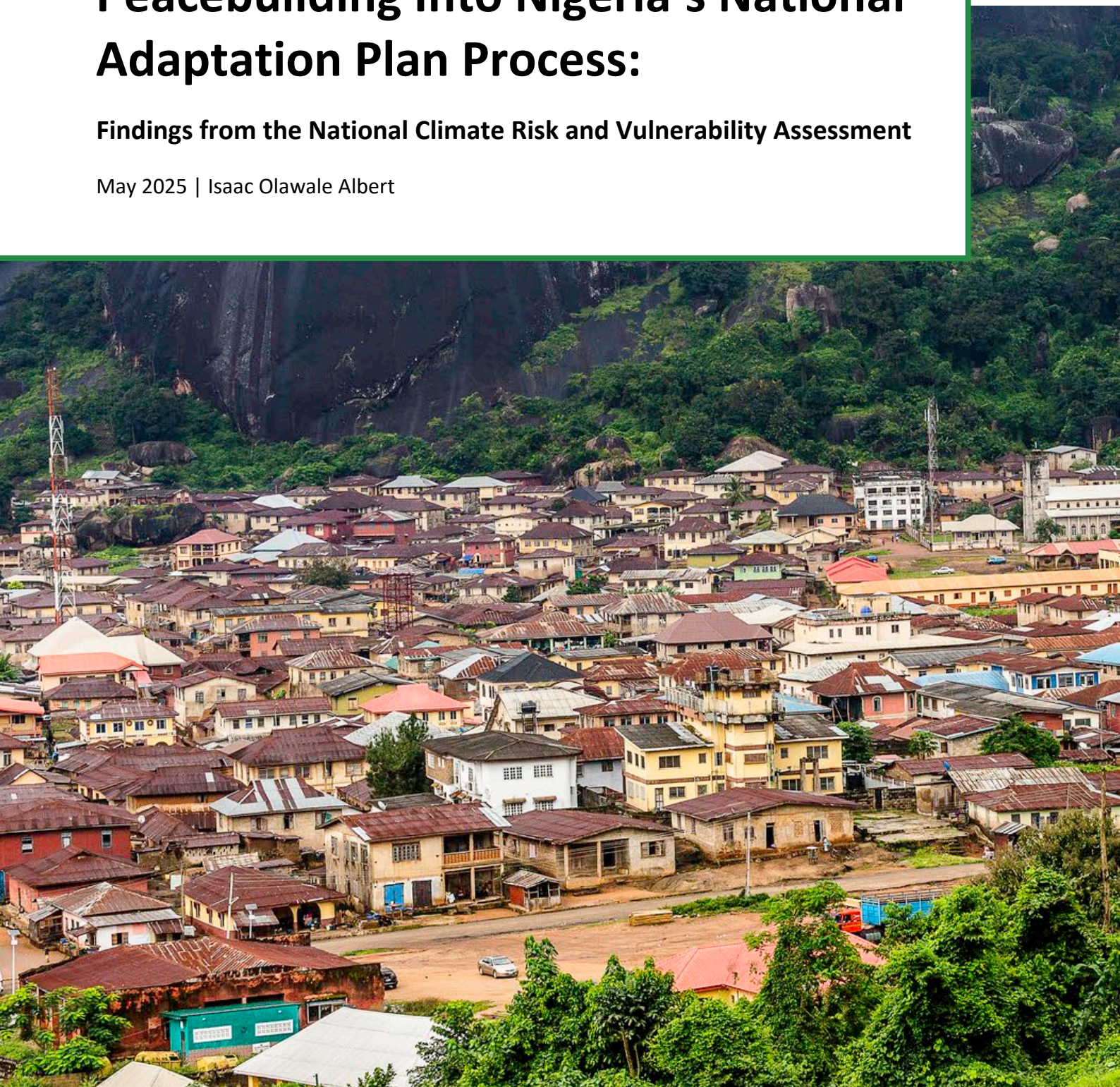
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

Integrating Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding Into Nigeria's National Adaptation Plan Process:

Findings from the National Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

May 2025 | Isaac Olawale Albert



Integrating Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding Into Nigeria's National Adaptation Plan Process: Findings from the National Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

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About the NAP Global Network

The NAP Global Network was created in 2014 to support developing countries in advancing their NAP processes, and help accelerate adaptation efforts around the world. To achieve this, the Network facilitates South-South peer learning and exchange, supports national-level action on NAP formulation and implementation, and generates, synthesizes, and shares knowledge. The Network's members include individual participants from more than 155 countries involved in developing and implementing National Adaptation Plans. Financial support for the Network has been provided by Austria, Canada, Germany, Ireland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Green Climate Fund. The Secretariat is hosted by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). For more information, visit www.napglobalnetwork.org.

NAP Global Network

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Foreword

Climate Change is on the front burner of international discussions and is at a critical moment in its history. Its effects are all around us from varying weather patterns that threaten food security and other forms of livelihoods to rising sea levels that increase the risk of flooding as well as increase in temperature of the atmosphere resulting in global warming. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) recognizes adaptation as a critical option that countries should pursue to reduce the impacts of the change. These climate change impacts often cause conflicts due to battle for limited resources

Conflict occurs when two or more individuals, groups, or entities have competing interests, values, beliefs, or goals, leading to a disagreement or clash. Conflict sensitivity means understanding and addressing the conflict dynamics and potential risks associated with development interventions, including climate change adaptation efforts. Peacebuilding encompasses initiatives promoting lasting peace, stability, and reconciliation in conflict-affected areas or communities. It involves promoting sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of conflict, fostering forgiveness and healing, rebuilding infrastructure, institutions, and economies, promoting equitable growth, and protecting and promoting human rights.

Nigeria is currently implementing the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Readiness Support to advance its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) through a Project titled "Strengthening Nigeria's Capacity to advance its NAP". This will build on the National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action on Climate Change for Nigeria (NASPA-CCN) developed in 2011 that identified 13 thematic areas requiring adaptation planning. However, the Support did not make adequate considerations for conflict resolutions and peacebuilding issues

Nigeria is currently battling conflict issues such farmer-herder clashes, inter-communal clashes, cattle rustling among others. Some of these conflicts are triggered by climate change impacts which has resulted in fierce competition for scarce resources. Climate change has also triggered forced migration in search for resources which has resulted into bloody clashes among various groups.

In recognition of this challenge, the NAP Global Network, through its Country Support Hub in has facilitated the process of mainstreaming conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding issues into Nigeria's NAP process to serve as a guide to implementing climate change adaptation through the lens of conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding.

Conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding should be integrated into Nigeria's NAP process in a sequence of activities, not a one-off activity or engagement. As a result of studies and analysis carried out in the implementation of this process, suggestions are made here on what the process could look like. Five logical steps are at this moment proposed: (i) Support institutional and policy frameworks for conflict-sensitive adaptation (ii) Integrate conflict-sensitivity into CRVA and NAP formulation process, (iii) Ensure NAP implementation is conflict-sensitive, (iv) Include peacebuilding provisions as part of the NAP implementation, and (v) Include peacebuilding markers into the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework .

I appreciate the NAP Global Network and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) for their support towards the actualization of this Project. I also want to appreciate the Federal Government of Nigeria for providing the platform for the actualization of this project. Thank you.

Balarabe Abass Lawal
Honourable Minister
Federal Ministry of Environment
March, 2025

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1.0 Introduction

Climate change is a global existential problem against which nations are building adaptation strategies. In Nigeria, the phenomenon has environmental and socio-economic impacts that have ripple effects on social cohesion and state stability. Nigeria's first National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action on Climate Change for Nigeria (housed by the Climate Change Department in the Federal Ministry of Environment) was produced in 2011 to respond to the challenges. It focuses on 13 priority sectors or themes: agriculture (crops and livestock); freshwater resources, coastal water resources, and fisheries; forests; biodiversity; health and sanitation; human settlements and housing; energy; transportation and communications; industry and commerce; disasters, migration, and security; livelihoods; vulnerable groups; and education. Nigeria is currently in the process of strengthening and updating the document with a view to submit a first national adaptation plan (NAP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Nigerian NAP focuses on (a) strengthening effective adaptation governance and coordination for the NAP process; (b) strengthening capacity to undertake a NAP planning process, including analyzing climate information and prioritizing adaptation options; (c) strengthening national capacity to mainstream climate change adaptation into national and sectoral policies, projects, and plans; (d) developing a funding strategy for the implementation of the NAP process; and (e) enhancing national capacity for monitoring, reviewing, and reporting on the NAP process enhanced.

1.1 Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

To generate context-specific data for the NAP process in Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Environment, through the NAP Secretariat and the Ministry's operational team, undertook participatory climate risk and vulnerability assessments (CRVAs) in July and August 2024, with funding support from the Green Climate Fund NAP readiness project in partnership with the United Nations Environment Program. The CRVAs occurred in nine Nigerian federation states: Nassarawa, Kwara, Ondo, Lagos, Bayelsa, Enugu, Gombe, Birni Kebbi, and Borno.

To strengthen the recommendations of the climate change scientists responsible for the CRVA, the NAP Global Network appointed me as a consultant for integrating conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding into the NAP process, as requested by the government of Nigeria—the assignment started by integrating conflict analysis tools and methods into the CRVA methodology. During the participatory risk assessments, the work included participation in the fieldwork and conflict analysis workshops in Ondo, Lagos, and Kebbi states. Information about the six other states was collected through desk work and liaising with the NAP Team who were represented at all the states visited. The tasks included advising Nigeria's NAP Secretariat and the operational team on integrating conflict sensitivity and conflict resolution into the assessment process and advising on entry points for mainstreaming peacebuilding and conflict-sensitivity issues in the overall NAP process. The results were presented during an inception workshop in Abuja on October 10, 2024. The participants came from different parts of Nigeria, mainly from federal and state ministries of environment, health, and agriculture; the National Defence College; civil society organizations, most especially the Society for Peace Studies and Practice and the International Alert (a British non-governmental organization in Nigeria). There were also participants from the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the Nigerian Standards Organisation, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), and the Nigerian Meteorological Agency. Many

academics and officials of state ministries of the environment from different parts of Nigeria participated in the exercise.[1]

1.2 Conceptual Clarification

To put our findings in perspective, it is necessary to shed light on the main concepts: (a) conflict, (b) conflict sensitivity, and (c) peacebuilding.

- **Conflict** is when two or more individuals, groups, or entities have competing interests, values, beliefs, or goals, leading to a disagreement or clash. Conflict is an everyday human experience and could occur within a person (intrapersonal conflict), between individuals (interpersonal), within a community (communal conflict), in a country (national conflict), or even across nations (international). The most typical causes include competition for social, cultural, economic, political and environmental resources. The conflict is fiercer in a community where these resources are dwindling, and the population needing them is increasing. The situation is worse in communities with historical grievances. This means a problem with past injustices and unresolved issues. Conflict becomes dysfunctional when it escalates into insurgency, terrorism and other forms of violent extremism, such as unprovoked attacks on communities in pursuit of criminal or political interests.
- **Conflict sensitivity** means understanding and addressing the conflict dynamics and potential risks associated with development interventions, including climate change adaptation efforts. This involves analyzing how climate-related interventions may exacerbate or mitigate existing conflicts. On the other hand, peacebuilding strengthens the capacity of individuals, communities, and institutions to manage conflicts peacefully and promote social cohesion.
- **Peacebuilding** encompasses initiatives promoting lasting peace, stability, and reconciliation in conflict-affected areas or communities. It involves promoting sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of conflict, fostering forgiveness and healing, rebuilding infrastructure, institutions, and economies, promoting equitable growth, and protecting and promoting human rights. Strategies include facilitating dialogue and healthy communication among stakeholders, community engagement, job creation, livelihood support, effective governance, and promoting peace education and reconciliation in post-conflict communities. This could be done at local, national, and international levels.

This report summarizes the conflict findings in the nine states where the CVRAs occurred and provides concrete suggestions on integrating conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding into Nigeria's NAP process. It is broken into three logical parts. Following this general introduction is a general review of the links between climate change and conflict. This is followed by a discussion of Nigeria's conflict issues linked to climate change. The report concludes with key messages regarding integrating conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding into the next steps of the NAP process.

[1] All of these activities aimed to support Nigeria's NAP process, building on its NAP framework developed in 2020 while also drawing on recent NAP Global Network guidance on peace and conflict and NAP processes.

2.0 Climate Change and Conflict

Many studies have highlighted links between environmental dynamics and conflict (see, e.g., Homer-Dixon, 1999; Ide, 2023; Ide et al., 2021; Ide et al., 2023). They highlight how environmental stress can generate existential threats in society that may overwhelm institutions, leading to a collapse in governance and social order. This underscores the importance of considering environmental factors in conflict analysis and promoting sustainable resource management to reduce the risk of violent conflict. However, environmental scarcity is often a contributing factor, rather than the sole cause, of violent conflict. Political, economic, and social conditions also play a role.

Climate change can lead to or exacerbate conflict through various cascading impacts. Understanding these cascading impacts is crucial for developing effective strategies to adapt to climate change, reducing the risk of conflict, and promoting peace and stability. In Nigeria, the impacts include droughts, desertification, and changing weather patterns that have led to water and food scarcity, causing tensions and conflicts over access to these resources. Rising sea levels, frequent natural disasters, and decreased livelihoods can force people to migrate, potentially leading to land, resource, and cultural identity conflicts. One impact of climate change is the altered migration patterns of herders and their animals for pasture and water. Previously, herders arrived with their grazing animals after the harvest on farmers' land. With longer dry and shorter rain periods, this harmonious rhythm is shaken up, and herders now often arrive before the harvest, leading to clashes with sedentary farmers who are losing their crops and incomes to the grazing animals. This led to violent conflicts across the land as the migrating herders were associated with extreme violence, forcing many farmers to flee their farms.

In Nigeria, climate change can interact with the following conflict dynamics:

- Economic instability: Climate-related disasters and changes in weather patterns can impact economies, leading to poverty, inequality, and social unrest.
- Social and cultural disruption: Climate change can disrupt traditional ways of life, cultural practices, and social structures, potentially leading to conflicts within and between communities.
- Competition for resources: Climate change can increase competition for resources like land, water, and minerals, potentially causing conflicts between nations, states, or groups.
- Humanitarian crises: Climate-related disasters can lead to humanitarian crises, straining local resources and potentially leading to conflicts over aid distribution and access.
- State fragility: Climate change can weaken state institutions, making them more vulnerable to conflict and instability.
- Transboundary tensions: Climate change can lead to tensions between countries sharing resources, like rivers or fisheries, potentially causing conflicts.
- Recruitment into armed groups: Climate change can lead to the loss of agricultural livelihoods, making affected groups more susceptible to recruitment by armed groups who provide fighters

with a means of survival. At the same time, resource exploitation by armed groups increases the climate vulnerabilities of people dependent on these resources[2].

Many things could go wrong when a country's climate change response is not conflict sensitive and does not provide for peacebuilding beyond the mechanistic approaches usually adopted by environmental scientists. They may worsen tensions and conflicts, mainly if they ignore or overlook local power dynamics and social inequalities. The adaptation processes may introduce new resources, interests, or actors that can create tensions and conflicts, primarily if not managed inclusively and equitably. In the process of responding to the problems associated with climate change, marginalized groups, such as women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and people living with disabilities who are often disproportionately affected by climate change and conflict, may not be provided for. Agenda 2030 (namely the United Nations global Sustainable Development Goals) constantly campaigns against this kind of situation. Climate change initiatives that are not conflict sensitive may focus on symptoms rather than addressing the underlying drivers of conflict, such as resource competition, inequality, or political exclusion. Climate action may disregard local knowledge, capacities, and agency, leading to ineffective or unsustainable solutions. Human rights and social justice issues may not be given the proper attention, thus exacerbating existing inequalities, reinforcing divisions, or creating dependencies. This is why it is recommended that before designing and implementing any adaptation plan, it is necessary to conduct conflict assessments and analysis in inclusive and participatory processes focusing on types of conflict in the society, their root causes, drivers of the conflict, and mapping how these are linked up with the climate change dynamics. These help to properly shape adaptation responses.

[2] This is partly evident in how Boko Haram fund its insurgency through the fishing trade in the Lake Chad region (Businessday, 2019; Salkida, 2020). In the North West, they gain from illegal mining (Ogbonnaya, 2020).

3.0 How Climate Change and Conflicts Interact in Nigeria

Climate change and conflict in Nigeria are linked in two ways: First, existing conflicts and insecurity exacerbate vulnerabilities to climate risks. Second, climate change acts as a driver of conflicts, increasing their frequency and severity. While not exhaustive, the following section presents relevant dynamics between specific conflicts and climate change impacts in Nigeria.

3.1. Conflict-Induced Displacement Increases Vulnerability to Climate-Related Flooding

In the case of flooding, conflicts and insecurity increase people's vulnerability to climate risks, especially in cities. Flooding in Nigeria has increased due to climate change due to rising temperatures and erratic rainfall patterns (Onukwe, 2022; Usigbe, 2021). The worst of the problems in recent times was experienced in 2022, involving heavy rainfall and overflowing rivers that affected 4.4 million people across Nigeria, including 2.6 million children, as the country experienced the worst floods in a decade. The floods have been attributed to climate change (Akanji, 2024; Kabukuru, 2022; World Weather Attribution, 2022), poor urban planning, and the release of excess water from Cameroon's Lagdo dam. Nigeria's geography, with 372 out of 744 Local Government Areas at risk of flooding, makes it vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The government is taking measures to counter the effects of climate change, including rehabilitating degraded lands, reducing erosion and climate vulnerability, and promoting low-carbon development.

Figure 1. Flood-prone areas in Nigeria

Source: Ogunkoya, 2022.

Five of the nine states studied above (Borno, Kebbi, Gombe, Nasarawa, and Bayelsa) are flood-prone. Since September 2022, these states and several others across the country have experienced severe flooding, with over 600 deaths and 1.3 million displacements reported (Njoku & Linderman, 2022). The floods have affected 34 out of the 36 states in the country, with the most severe impacts in Anambra, Bayelsa, Delta, Jigawa, Kogi, and Nasarawa states.

Nigeria witnessed one of the most devastating floods in its history in September 2024. It happened in Maiduguri, the Borno state capital, and was caused by the Alau Dam in Konduga Local Government Area bursting its banks after heavy rainfall. Over 239,000 people were affected, with many displaced and some even losing their lives. The flooding caused significant damage to infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and buildings, and has affected many landmarks and institutions, such as the Maiduguri Zoo, the Shehu of Borno's palace, and the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital. It led to a prison break, with reports suggesting that over 285 inmates, including Boko Haram commanders, have escaped from the Maiduguri Medium Security Custodial Centre.

Figure 2. The flooding in the city of Maiduguri (September 2024)

Source: Uba, 2024.

Snakes, including venomous species like cobras and vipers, have been seen in many parts of the city, posing a threat to residents, especially children and the elderly. Crocodiles have also been spotted in some areas, particularly near waterways and flooded roads. These wild animals have been displaced from their natural habitats and sought higher ground and shelter in unfamiliar places, including urban areas. This has caused concern and fear among residents, who are already dealing with the challenges of

displacement, property damage, and disruption of essential services. The floods exhumed corpses from some cemeteries that were found in the flow. Sewage systems collapsed, polluting water supplies and increasing the risks of waterborne diseases.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that Maiduguri is already hosting many internally displaced persons due to the ongoing Boko Haram conflict in the North East region. The activities of the terrorists also restricted the places where the displaced persons could escape. Anywhere 10 kilometres outside the city of Maiduguri is controlled by Boko Haram fighters. Hence, the displaced persons cram themselves in the little spaces they can find, putting an additional strain on the existing resources and infrastructure in the city. While officials of the National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA) and State Emergency Management Authorities (SEMA) are working toward bringing relief to the victims, authorities and wildlife experts are also working to capture and relocate these animals to their natural habitats safely; however, this has been a very challenging task, especially given the scale of the flooding and the number of animals involved, including snakes and crocodiles (Elazeh, 2024).

While some blamed negligence, most especially the collapse of the Alau Dam, for the crisis, Governor Zulum of Borno blamed it on a combination of climate change, heavy rainfall, and the overflow of the Alau Dam due to the release of water from a dam in neighbouring Cameroon (Usman, 2024).

3.2 Climate Change Drives Recruitment Into Armed Groups and Hinders the Fight Against Them

The Boko Haram crisis ravaging the Northeastern and a few other parts of Northern Nigeria and the Sahel is tied to climate change in several ways. The most referenced factor is the drying up of Lake Chad, which created a perfect storm of poverty, desperation, and competition for resources, which Boko Haram has exploited to fuel its insurgency. The shrinkage of the lake dates back to 1963 primarily "due to reduced rainfall in the Central African Republic (CAR), a country located more than 800 kilometres (or 500 miles) away from the lake itself" (Li, 2024). The body of water started to dry up gradually. The lake's shrinkage led to the loss of fishing and farming livelihoods and food insecurity, pushing many into poverty and desperation, making them vulnerable to Boko Haram recruitment. It led to increased migration of people from the affected areas to other regions, leading to competition for resources, tensions, and conflicts, which Boko Haram has exploited since forming in the 1990s, especially regarding radicalization and recruitment of fighters. Some existing studies show that the shrinkage of the lake seems to have stopped in the late 1990s, but governance deficits exacerbate the adverse effects on the people and also make the ensuing conflict issues challenging to manage (Brown & Vivekananda, 2019; Vivekananda et al., 2019). The physical environment of Lake Chad has also been found to have adverse effects on military operations. For example, when the crisis started, and the terrorists had to be fought by the Nigerian military and the military alliance of the other Lake Chad Basin region, the soldiers were slowed down by the harsh environmental factors, most especially the perennial flooding of the frontlines. All of these combined to make the Boko Haram crisis lead to thousands of deaths and the displacement of several million across Nigeria and international borders.

In 2024, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) conducted a study to understand how climate change drives armed conflict in some parts of the world. The areas covered included Northern Nigeria and the Sahel. The study's report found that climate change's impact has been very severe in the Lake Chad region, noting that the region's people struggled with farming, herding, and fishing vocations. It observed that

> In the Lake Chad Basin region, many said that they, or people they know, were having longstanding difficulties making a living from agriculture because of specific climatic changes (28 per cent of respondents in North East Nigeria, 61 per cent in Cameroon, 78 per cent in Chad, 27 per cent in Niger). (UNIDIR, 2024)

A major takeaway of the UNIDIR study is that the climate stressors push some community members in the Lake Chad region into armed conflict. It says:

> Many respondents confirm that armed groups can and are taking advantage of these grievances … In the North East of Nigeria, of those survey respondents acknowledging climate-related agricultural difficulties, 16 per cent said they knew someone who joined BH because of this (18 per cent in Cameroon, 37 per cent in Chad, and 57 per cent in Niger). The numbers in Nigeria are even higher for associates of community security groups such as the CJTF. Notably, climate-related difficulties seem to impact recruitment into insurgent groups and are seen by the public as precipitating a shift toward all kinds of conflict actors. (UNIDIR, 2024)

One farmer explained how he joined the BH movement as follows:

> My farm was affected by flooding. Before the insurgency, I was farming in the hills of Gwoza in Borno; when BH members occupied my community, they built their base on the mountain, which stopped me from having access to good farmland. Heavy rainfall and flooding made it impossible to farm on our available lands. To access good land, one had to join them. (UNIDIR, 2024)

Another respondent said the following:

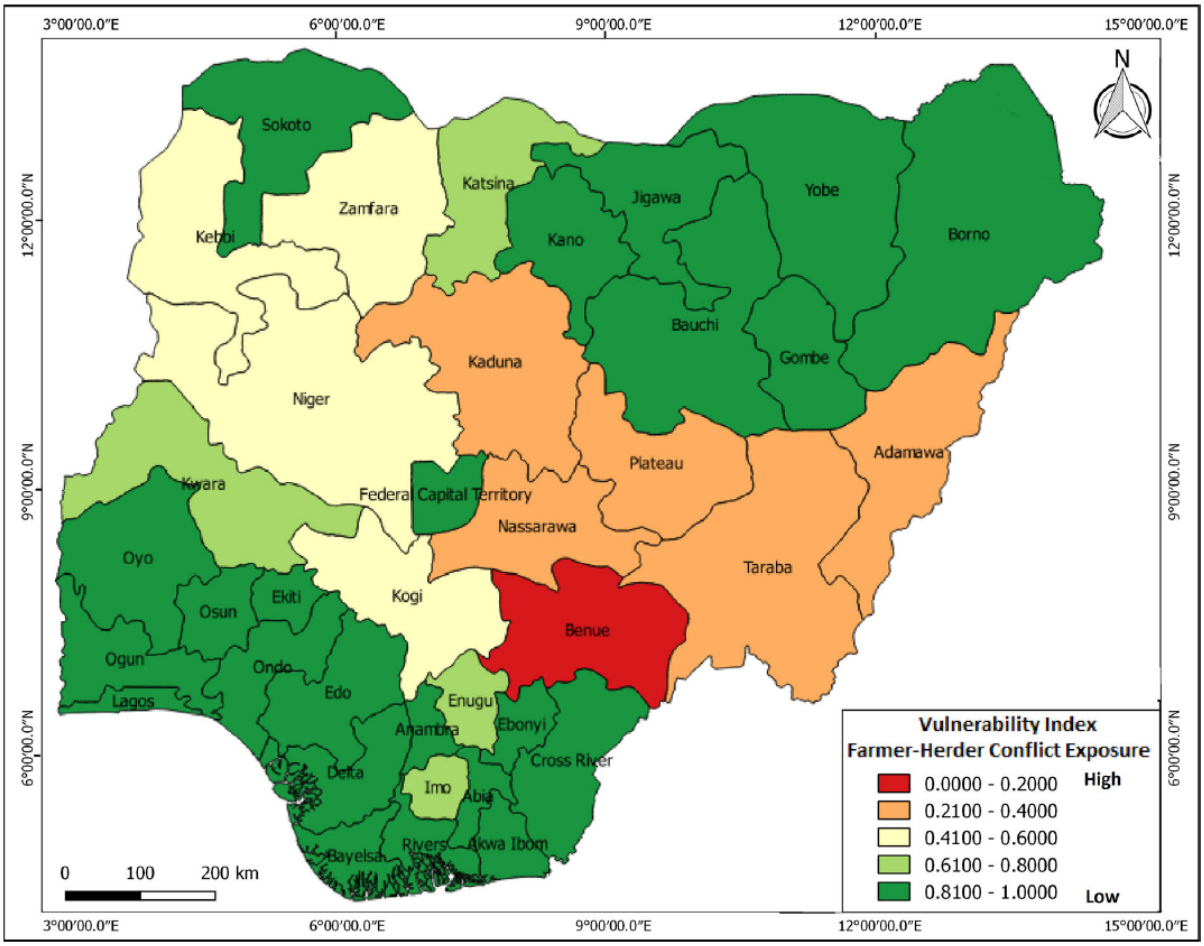
> I had no choice. The crops I planted were spoiled due [sic] lack of enough rainfall and did not yield anything. My livestock was dying because there was no grass to feed on or water in rivers to drink. My health was also at risk because I was not able to get enough food to eat due to all these problems. This is why I joined. (UNIDIR, 2024)

Another one claimed to have joined when sandstorms made him homeless. He said, "I joined the group when the opportunity came along, thinking my life would be better" (UNIDIR, 2024).

3.3 Droughts and Desertification Worsen Banditry and Farmer–Herder Conflicts

To prevent and reduce the harsh effects of environmental scarcity on their animals, the Fulani herders in Borno state had to employ other methods for pasturing their livestock. These strategies included movement downwards that brought them into conflict with farmers in different places over grazing land. In some cases, the animals pollute the local waterbodies, thus choking the existence of community members. In the past, there was a semblance of order between the herders and farmers in their interaction. For example, the farmers allowed herders to graze on the residues on their farms after harvest. However, with the environmental problems worsening, workers husking recently harvested rice have to contend with the herd of cattle now grazing on the same field (Adebajo & Abdullahi, 2022).

Figure 3. Farmer–herder conflicts vulnerability



Source: Madu & Nwankwo, 2021.

The herders consider their movement to be existential and probably anticipate the kind of conflict they eventually face. This makes them more prepared to fight than the farmers who come into collision. Herders are often armed with lethal weapons. Hence, the farmers in contact with them are usually the worst hit by the violent conflict. Many permanently fled their farms, thus exacerbating the food crisis in the country. Commenting on the reasons for the movement of these herders, for example, Baba Jauro, a Fulani leader in Borno state, said

> Before now, we had abundant water bodies and grazing fields around our community, which enabled us to rear our livestock comfortably without having to cross Kwajaffa village. … However, those rivers have dried out now, and we must cross over to access our livestock's drinking water. (Adamu, 2023)

Most of the time, the herders are considered to be the perpetrators of the violence. They react sharply when farmers complain about the destruction of their crops. They fight using bows and arrows, machetes, and sometimes guns. This type of violence is prevalent in many parts of the northeast, most especially in Borno state. In the past, the herders had cattle routes restricted for them, but they have since been taken over by farmers equally responding to environmental scarcity. However, only some governments can say precisely where these cattle routes are supposed to be. Hence, the Buhari regime had to order the routes to be found. The Borno state government is also working on this issue. Many of the disputes arise from

the herders' belief that farmers have deliberately taken over their routes and land. Still, in many cases, farmers disagree that any cattle routes ever existed where the herders try to claim them forcefully.

In 2016, the problem reached a crisis point across Nigeria, with Borno, Kaduna, and Benue States becoming the worst hit. Political opposition, particularly the government of Benue state, blamed it all on the governance deficit of the administration of President Mohammadu Buhari. Buhari was often accused of abdicating his statutory duty of securing the lives and properties of the people. For example, the Governor of Benue State, Samuel Ortom, who was constantly swapping accusations with the federal government over the worsening security situation in his jurisdiction, observed in a media interview in 2023, as he did throughout his administration, that "President Buhari has failed woefully in securing Nigeria, and Benue State in particular" (Ejekwonyibo, 2023).

International Alert reported on the problem across northern Nigeria in 2018 (International Alert 2018). The states of the north covered by the report are Taraba, Kaduna, Adamawa, Plateau, Benue, and Zamfara. It shows how poor handling of the problem by security agencies escalated the problems across northern Nigeria, so some communities started setting up different structures to defend themselves. In some communities, people must resort to self-help when dealing with conflict situations.

These factors of drought and desertification across northern Nigeria have reduced food availability, leading to hunger and desperation, creating an environment conducive to criminality, particularly banditry. The situation increased competition for resources such as land, water, and pasture, leading to conflicts between herders and farmers and between different ethnic groups. As the herders migrate southward for greener pastures, they engage in violence and banditry.

The country's weak governance, corruption, and economic inequality exacerbated the farmer–herder conflicts and banditry across Nigeria. This has led to "Fulaphobia" across today's Nigeria, as the Fulani ethnic group is the most identified with pastoralism in Nigeria. They are also blamed for banditry. It is important to note that not all Fulani herders are involved in violent conflicts, and many are peaceful. It is equally important to note that while climate change is not the sole cause of banditry in Nigeria, it has contributed to the underlying social, economic, and environmental factors that drive this phenomenon.

3.4 Sea Level Rise Destroys People's Homes and Livelihoods, Fuelling Grievances and Tensions Between Communities

Climate change leads to rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and flooding in the Nigerian coastline, especially the Niger Delta region, which is highly vulnerable to sea surges and erosion. The most affected areas include Lagos, which is at risk due to its low elevation and dense population. Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State, also has a history of flooding due to its proximity to the coast. Other places susceptible to flooding are Ondo, Bayelsa, Delta, and Cross River states. The environmental crisis in these states from rising sea levels is due to the thermal expansion of seawater as temperatures rise, melting glaciers and ice sheets, and changes in ocean currents and circulation patterns. These problems fuel more intense storms, which can generate higher storm surges. As sea levels rise, storm surges amplify, leading to more frequent and severe coastal flooding. These factors combined create a perfect storm of increased sea surge risk, threatening coastal communities and ecosystems.

Figure 4. Impact of sea surges in Ayetoro

Source: Isaac Olawale Albert, 2024.

Figure 5. Devastation caused by sea surges in Ayetoro

Source: Isaac Olawale Albert, 2024.

How do sea surges affect conflict dynamics in Nigeria? Coastal erosion and flooding, saltwater intrusion into freshwater sources, and damage to infrastructure, livelihoods, and properties have far-reaching conflict effects. Loss of livelihoods and property destroys the economic stability of the people and increases their insecurity—the human displacement and scarcity of resources resulting from the experiences fuel tensions between communities. In the process of protesting their experiences of environmental injustices, some of the people, most especially in the oil-rich Niger Delta, have been killed and maimed (Asuni, 2009; Campbell, 2020). The Nigerian states with this kind of human insecurity problem are Ondo, Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers in the Niger Delta), Lagos State (e.g., coastal communities like Badagry, Epe), and Ogun State (e.g., coastal communities like Ogun Waterside).

3.5 Climate-Related Livelihood Loss Increases the Risk of Radicalization Among Youth

Climate-related crop failures and livestock deaths lead to unemployment among rural youth. The hardship and frustration increase the risk of youth radicalization, making them vulnerable to extremist groups. Evidence of this was visible during the CRVA in Kebbi state. The research team visited Argungu, where hundreds of young people trained in rice farming were found idling under trees. What was the problem? They claimed to have been retrenched from farming by flooding. Many of them claimed they may not be able to recover half of what they planted before the rainy season. During dry seasons, they feared herders would bring their animals to destroy some farms. The research team concluded that terrorists could efficiently recruit the youth. Some of the boys who were willing to talk about the climate change conflict nexus claimed that some of their peers engage in criminal activities but that their group is law abiding. In the first week of November 2024, the Nigerian military announced that a new group of terrorists called Lakurawa had arrived in Sokoto and Kebbi states. They killed over a hundred community members and have continued the killing spray since then. They also rustle cattle. In Kebbi state, one of the places where they struck was Argungu, the same community where we saw hundreds of idle youths during the CRVA. Explaining the crisis, the Chairman of the Tangaza Local Government in Sokoto State, Isah Salihu Kalenjeni, told HumAngle, a northern Nigerian tabloid:

> We suspect that these groups are about 300 splitting across Illela, Tangaza, Gudu, Silami and Binji forest areas. They frequently visit our villages, meeting rural people dressed in Muslim attire, sometimes with turbans, and visiting mosques. We fear that they will take over our redundant youths, luring them into their criminal activities. (Jamiu, 2024)

Who are these terrorists? According to Jamiu (2024),

> The Lakurawas were herders who suddenly turned militant after the Malian crisis. Their presence in the communities along the Nigeria–Niger border in the Gudu and Tangaza areas of Sokoto goes beyond the search for food and water for their cattle, which they had been doing for years. Around October 2018, about 200 jihadis arrived in the Gudu and Tangaza area of Sokoto from across the border in Niger. Locals say they're "herders, light-skinned, speaking Arabic and Fulfulde languages" from Mali.

Boko Haram and the bandits equally go around like the Lakurawas recruiting jobless youths. While some of these young people willingly join the violent extremist groups, a few others join vigilante groups to defend their communities, and those not ready for violence migrate to urban areas where they are confronted by different forms of social, economic, environmental, and political challenges.

Those who remain in their rural communities face climate-related food scarcity, which leads to malnutrition, hunger, and related health issues. Climate-related disasters, such as floods and droughts, disrupt education, affecting youth's access to quality education and future opportunities. They also increase the spread of diseases, heat stress, and other health issues, which affect youth well-being and productivity and threaten traditional livelihoods and cultural practices. Thus, they erode youth's cultural identity and sense of belonging.

4.0 Toward Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding

It is necessary here to shed more context-specific light on how conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding can be linked to the climate change adaptation planning process. This can be done in several ways, including raising the awareness that climate change can lead to resource scarcity, exacerbate existing conflicts over resources, and erode social cohesion, particularly if adaptation efforts are perceived as unfair or ineffective and strain institutional capacity, leading to disputes over governance and resource management. When a climate change initiative is not conflict sensitive, it becomes "maladaptation" (Barnett & O'Neill, 2010; Glover & Gransberg, 2021; Juhola et al., 2016). Maladaptive measures create more harm than good, increasing vulnerabilities to climate change impacts, not reducing them.

Nigeria can benefit from different models for integrating conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding into the climate change adaptation planning process. These include those developed by the NAP Global Network (Crawford et al., 2023), the Stockholm Hub Environment Climate Security (Meijer et al., 2023), and the Peace and Conflict Studies Programme, University of Ibadan (Albert et al., 2016). While the third (from the University of Ibadan) generally speaks to collecting, analyzing, and using peace and conflict data, those of the NAP Global Network and Stockholm Hub Environment Climate Security directly address the issue of conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding. The latter proposes three approaches to including conflict considerations in the design of climate change adaptation projects. These are "(a) analysing climate–conflict dynamics at the project level; (b) assessing how the adaptation project influences the climate–conflict dynamics; and (c) integrating the insights from the climate–conflict analysis into the adaptation project's design" (Meijer et al., 2023, p. 2).

The guidance the NAP Global Network provides offers user-friendly approaches for achieving the goals set out above. Integrating conflict sensitivity into Nigeria's national climate change adaptation plans and implementation drew from the guidance in a manner that makes the following nine recommendations worth considering:

- **understanding conflict dynamics**: Authorities planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and learning from environmental crises should recognize how climate change impacts social, economic, and political tensions and build this knowledge in the adaptation plan. This requires a collaborative working relationship between climate change experts and peace, conflict, security and strategic studies professionals. These two sets of professionals currently keep their influence and skills apart, but they need to build a synergic working relationship, which has been started by integrating a conflict expert into the national CRVA. What is needed now is for the government to incorporate the insights on climate change and conflict linkages gained through the CRVA into Nigeria's climate change adaptation plan.
- **identifying vulnerable groups**: To ensure the success of the first step above, those designing the adaptation plan must understand how climate change affects different populations, including marginalized communities. This was done under the CRVA carried out during this consultancy. We visited rural areas to learn how vulnerable people are to climate change impacts. We also tried to understand the adaptation measures the people are implementing, with or without government efforts.
- **assessing resource competition**: It is essential to analyze and understand how climate change influences competition for resources like water, land, and energy. What conflict-handling styles are people using? Avoidance/denial, strategic withdrawal, third-party decision making,

confrontation, or joint problem-solving? Mapping existing conflict mediation strategies can help us better understand how climate-related conflicts can be addressed.

- **addressing livelihood insecurities**: Adaptation options that support climate-resilient livelihoods and community economic opportunities should be identified by supporting people's adaptation measures and identifying new approaches. This project discovered that Nigerian communities have different local climate change adaptation initiatives. More must be invested in understanding these initiatives and their distribution nationwide. How can they be integrated into the official adaptation plans of the Nigerian state?
- **fostering inclusive decision making**: This would help ensure diverse stakeholder participation in adaptation planning and implementation so that the government's approaches align with the stakeholders' social, economic, environmental, and political aspirations. This includes the participation of different ministries to promote alignment across sectors. It also provides for the involvement of subnational government stakeholders to ensure alignment across government levels. Climate change and peacebuilding desks could be established at local government councils across Nigeria. They could generate weekly reports to be sent to state and federal governments.
- **managing displacement and migration**: Adaptation measures should address climate-induced displacement and migration's social and political implications in a manner that promotes social cohesion between the "settlers" and their "hosts." Data on human mobility and conflict should be collected and brought together into an early warning system to monitor the relationships and address potential conflict issues early.
- **promoting conflict-resolution mechanisms**: It is important to establish processes to resolve climate-related conflicts as they emerge and not allow them to fester long enough to acquire new strength, such as religious, ethnic, and political conflicts, as experienced in many parts of today's Nigeria. The task here includes recognizing and addressing power dynamics that may exacerbate climate-related disputes in the communities.
- **integrating conflict sensitivity into policy frameworks**: For now, the link between climate change and conflict must be better understood, even among policy-makers and the professionals working with them. Closing this gap requires better education on climate change conflict dynamics for relevant sustainability stakeholders.
- **peacebuilding interventions**: Implementing climate change adaptation plans will involve conflicts, thus requiring peacebuilding strategies. As shown above, climate change interacts with different kinds of conflict, violence, and insecurity across the country. The Ministry of Environment must build conflict management capacity to respond to such problems. The alternative is to establish a working relationship with conflict management bodies in different parts of Nigeria that are already familiar with working on these conflicts.

5.0 Specific Recommendations to Integrate Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding Into Nigeria's NAP Process

Integrating conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding into Nigeria's NAP process is necessary for anticipating, preventing, and addressing climate-related conflicts, thereby enhancing the resilience of communities facing climate change challenges. Bringing conflict and peace considerations into the NAP process promotes inclusive decision making for political stability, protecting vulnerable populations' rights, and maintaining social cohesion. A list of entry points to consider for this purpose has been provided above. However, conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding should be integrated into Nigeria's NAP process in a sequence of activities, not a one-off activity or engagement. Suggestions are made here on what the process could look like. Five logical steps are as follows: (a) support institutional and policy frameworks for conflict-sensitive adaptation; (b) integrate conflict sensitivity into CRVA and NAP formulation processes; (iii) ensure NAP implementation is conflict sensitive; (iv) include peacebuilding provisions as part of NAP implementation; and (v) include peacebuilding markers into the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework.

5.1 Institutional and Policy Framework

The earlier recommendations will prove challenging to undertake without relevant institutional and policy frameworks. Though the focus is on Nigeria, the appropriate systems to be considered are those of the Federal Ministry of Environment, NEMA, the Nigerian Meteorological Agency, state and local governments, civil society organizations, community leaders, the private sector, and international organizations. Recommendations to support institutional and policy frameworks for conflict-sensitive adaptation include the following:

- establishing a climate change and conflict unit at the Federal Ministry of Environment or NEMA focusing mainly on the climate–conflict nexus;
- establishing a National Climate Change Commission to oversee climate change adaptation and conflict sensitivity;
- establishing state and local government climate change offices to ensure subnational coordination;
- establishing an inter-ministerial committee to foster collaboration among relevant ministries;
- establishing a climate change and conflict resolution council of stakeholders, experts, and community representatives.

These recommendations aim to improve the effectiveness of Nigerian authorities working on climate change adaptation by incorporating conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding.

5.2 Integrate Conflict Sensitivity Into the CRVA and NAP Formulation Process

The first step is to conduct a CRVA similar to that done by the Federal Ministry of Environment in partnership with some state ministries across Nigeria from July to August 2024. This kind of assessment makes it possible to assess climate-related conflicts, vulnerabilities, and tensions. This should be paralleled by establishing stakeholder engagement to involve government, civil society, local communities, and the private sector in responding to climate-related conflict issues. The next step is to develop a NAP and incorporate conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding strategies into the document(s).

5.3 Ensure NAP Implementation Is Conflict Sensitive

The steps in this second stage ensure that the implementation of the NAP is indeed conflict sensitive and provides for peacebuilding. The first step in this respect is for Nigeria to have a NAP incorporating conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding. The provisions should include climate-resilient infrastructure, especially for increasing community resilience, building social cohesion, improving livelihoods, enhancing peace education, and developing climate-related early warning systems. Subnational governments need to integrate conflict sensitivity and ensure provisions are made for collaboration with relevant peacebuilding organizations.

5.4 Include Peacebuilding Provisions as Part of NAP Implementation

When identifying and prioritizing adaptation measures for implementation, an effort should be made to identify adaptation measures that reduce conflicts and support peacebuilding. These could include climate-resilient livelihood interventions or mechanisms to mediate resource conflicts. Provisions could be made for dialogue among conflicting parties, and support should be provided for community-led adaptation measures that have peacebuilding co-benefits. Economic opportunities for vulnerable populations should be promoted and supported, and historical grievances and injustices between the people should be acknowledged and addressed. Making this possible requires the Federal Ministry of Environment to establish multistakeholder platforms for fostering dialogue and inclusive consultations, addressing potential conflicts, assessing progress, and adjusting peace-positive adaptation strategies.

5.5 Train Authorities Responsible for Implementing NAPs on Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding

Relevant stakeholders must be trained in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The Federal Ministry of Environment should build stakeholder capacity and ensure that authorities are trained on integrating conflict sensitivity into their adaptation efforts. This should especially focus on subnational government actors, as adaptation efforts are planned and carried out at the subnational level.

5.6 Include Peacebuilding Markers Into the M&E Framework

Adaptation measures must be regularly monitored and evaluated for effectiveness in peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive development. This requires that those managing adaptation issues in the country track conflict-related metrics periodically, monitor peacebuilding progress, and assess adaptation contributions to social cohesion. Conflict and peacebuilding assessments should be regularly conducted,

and strategies should be adapted based on assessment findings. Doing this well requires a great deal of interagency, stakeholder collaboration, and capacity-building programs across the country over a long period, as climate change threats are existential and not something with a short life span. For effectiveness and sustainability, it is necessary to involve local communities in this process. Good practices in this context are integrating M&E into policy design to ensure that adaptation goals align with M&E objectives and regularly adjust policies based on M&E results.

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