



Memorandum

Joint Nexus²⁵-World Food Programme MSC Side Event: Sustainable Security in a Hot and Hungry World February 18, 2024

On February 18, 2024, the Nexus²⁵ project organized its third annual side event at the Munich Security Conference (MSC). The discussion, co-hosted with the UN World Food Programme (WFP), brought together leaders from government, multilateral organizations, civil society, security institutions and the private sector to discuss the links between hunger, climate and sustainable security.

The ongoing war in Ukraine, growing risk of famine in Gaza, and increasingly extreme weather patterns have demonstrated the fragility of the modern food system. Modern supply chains are easily disrupted by conflict, crisis, geopolitics, and the accelerating climate crisis. Furthermore, some of the world's leading economies face growing food security concerns given their large populations, reliance on imported goods, climate vulnerability, and ailing economies. The UN Secretary-General's 2021 Food System Summit has put these interdependencies on the international agenda. Supply chain disruptions caused by Covid-19 and the war against Ukraine have put the nexus between food security and "hard" security in the focus of governments and multilateral organizations alike. The growing recognition is that food security can serve as a predictive national security tool, and practical approach to address polycrises. In today's geopolitically divided world, food presents a rare opportunity for multilateral cooperation.

Multiple side events and the launch of a formal Food Security Task Force at this year's MSC demonstrated the growing convergence between the development, humanitarian, diplomacy, and security sectors on the challenge of food security – and multilateral efforts to close some of the gaps between these stakeholders. In this context, the Nexus²⁵/WFP discussion sparked conversation between these communities on three core themes:

How a better understanding of the hunger-climate-security nexus leads to policy approaches that promote sustainable security. Current policy approaches are siloed and duplicative, with particular divides between defense, diplomatic, and development actors – also known as the "Three Ds". Recognizing that the world is now in an era of compound risks and polycrises, policymakers must shift their focus towards preventing these redundant lines of effort and better integrating nexus approaches into their thinking and planning.

Attendees emphasized that while this transformation will be challenging in the short-term, moving from disconnected policies to a holistic approach is necessary to support sustainable security in the long-term. This must include concrete shifts in analytic approaches, wargaming, programming, policymaking, budgeting and more. Critically, participants warned against

getting trapped in debates over different nexuses, such as the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, employment-environment-climate nexus, or water-food-energy-climate nexus. Instead, as one participant noted, “we must have one common nexus” to ensure a holistic and integrated approach.

Why long-term investments in resilient communities and food systems are crucial for achieving zero hunger and securing peace. Both panelists and attendees noted that emergency food aid must be paired with long-term development programming to achieve zero hunger and peace. As mentioned above, these programs remain siloed, largely as a result of financial and budgetary constraints. This has critical implications for the future of global peace and stability. While overall poverty is declining, acute hunger and conflict are on the rise. Today’s limited financial mechanisms stymie investments in the local capacity building needed for community resilience – particularly much-needed support to women and smallholder farmers. Even more critically, today’s approach leaves those on the front lines of climate change trapped in erratic cycles of emergency response without the long-term investments needed to support adaptation.

To achieve sustainable security, this approach must change. Multiple participants warned that the international community must not let current disagreements over mitigation and adaptation overshadow growing climate finance needs – particularly for those disproportionately affected by and on the front lines of climate change like indigenous peoples, residents of the small island developing states (SIDS), women, children, and minority populations.

The international community has recently recognized these gaps, making historic climate finance commitments and capitalizing the first-ever ‘loss and damage’ fund at COP28, but this must not compromise mitigation and adaptation efforts and funding. Renewed climate finance mechanisms must better consider local contexts, promote an approach focused on adaptation rather than mitigation, and integrate short-term response and long-term solutions. New and existing mechanisms need to better reach the most climate-vulnerable communities, most of which are trapped in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Therefore, the international community must work towards climate finance instruments that are backed by a coherent policy framework on stability and development. This framework should recognize the complementary roles of adaptation and loss and damage financing, acknowledge the debt crisis facing emerging economies, and think more creatively about how to get limited financial resources to the front lines of climate change.

How to better integrate food security into security initiatives. As seen by the growing emphasis on food security at MSC, addressing the links between hunger and peace is indispensable for the international community. In particular, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent collapse of the Black Sea Grain Initiative has highlighted the weaponization of food - and the clear geopolitical implications when supply chains break. Climate change will only exacerbate this fragility, as extreme weather events threaten the current agri-food system.

Alongside continued food security efforts from development and diplomatic actors, it is therefore critical for the defense sector to consider food security as both an effect and driver of conflict in its planning and analysis. Military actors are increasingly being called upon to deal with climate emergencies, and must therefore equip themselves with the appropriate tools to respond. To support this evolving operating environment, major military institutions

have begun including environmental advisors in international missions, investing in green technology to reduce the environmental impact of military operations and integrating climate threats into wargaming. However, gaps remain, particularly in mainstreaming non-traditional security threats like hunger into their policies and plans, and effectively coordinating efforts with other “3D” actors. Again, participants acknowledged that although it will be challenging to push military actors to consider hunger as a foresight tool, this shift is essential to better work with allies and partners and address future threats.

Overall, the discussion concluded that above all else, preventing duplicity and aligning approaches is a key first step in supporting sustainable security. The international community is currently getting lost in entrenched debates over loss and damage and divides among different actors. While this status quo will be slow to change, it is critical that multilateral actors involve a broader range of actors in their planning before hunger and the effects of climate change intensify. This will help to optimize available financial resources in today’s limited budgetary environment, better support local stakeholders in the most fragile contexts, and more effectively build long-term resilience in a hot and hungry world.

Speakers and attendees:

1. Ambassador Ahmed Abdel-Latif, Director General, Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution
2. Ambassador Cindy McCain, Executive Director, UN World Food Programme
3. Ambassador Delphine Pronk, Chair of the Political and Security Committee, European External Action Service
4. Albertine van Wolfswinkel, Head of Corporate Sustainability, Cargill
5. Amadée Mudie-Mantz, Policy Advisor, Munich Security Conference
6. Bogolo Joy Kenewendo, Africa Director and Special Advisor, UN Climate Change High-Level Champions
7. Dr. Andrew Moravcsik, Professor of Politics and International Affairs, Princeton University
8. Dr. Cary Fowler, Special Envoy for Global Food Security, U.S. Department of State
9. Dr. Luca Cinciripini, Researcher, Istituto Affari Internazionali
10. Dr. Magdalena Kirchner, Head of Europe Division, Stiftung Mercator
11. Dr. Martin Frick, Director, UN World Food Programme Berlin
12. Dr. Michael Keating, Executive Director, European Institute of Peace
13. Dr. Michael Werz, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress and Senior Advisor for North America and Multilateral Affairs, Munich Security Conference
14. Dr. Nathalie Tocci, Director, Istituto Affari Internazionali
15. Dr. Razia Pendse, Chef de Cabinet, World Health Organization
16. Erin Sikorsky, Director, Center for Climate and Security
17. Helga Flores Trejo, Vice President and Head of International & Multilateral Affairs, Bayer AG
18. Ingrid Gabriela Hoven, Managing Director, German Agency for International Cooperation
19. Iris Ferguson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Arctic and Global Resilience, U.S. Department of Defense
20. Lukas Eichelter, Special Assistant to the Director, UN World Food Programme Berlin
21. Mathieu Bussieres, Director, NATO Climate Security Center of Excellence
22. Matthias Berninger, Head of Public Affairs, Science, Sustainability and HSE, Bayer AG
23. Minister Anne Beathe Tvinnereim, Minister of International Development, Government of Norway

24. Neera Tanden, Director, U.S. Domestic Policy Council, White House
25. Nisreen Elsaïm, Chair, The Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change, United Nations
26. Ottilia Anna Maunganidze, Head of Special Projects, Office of the Executive Director at the Institute for Security Studies
27. The Honorable Meredith Berger, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, U.S. Department of Defense
28. The Honorable Rachel Jacobson, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment, U.S. Department of Defense
29. Siena Cicarelli, Research Fellow, Center for Climate and Security
30. Stephan Exo-Kreischer, Executive Director, ONE Campaign Germany
31. Vieshnavi Ratehalli, Foreign Affairs Officer, Office of the Special Envoy for Global Food Security, U.S. Department of State



Nexus²⁵ is a joint project of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) in Rome and the Center for Climate and Security (CCS) in Washington, DC. The project, led by Dr. Nathalie Tocci at IAI, Erin Sikorsky at CCS and Dr. Michael Werz at the Center for American Progress (CAP), is funded by Stiftung Mercator in Germany.

For additional information please visit <https://www.nexus25.org> or contact the Nexus²⁵ team at info@nexus25.org.