

4th General Assembly of the Sahel Alliance

July 10, 2023

Panel: Climate, Security and Development – Intervention by Ireland

- In line with our commitment to enhance our engagement with francophone West Africa and the Sahel, Ireland is determined to continue to play our part. This year, we opened a new Embassy in Senegal, with a regional focus on the Sahel, which will provide a platform for the deepening of Ireland's international development programme in the region.
- It is clear that climate and fragility risks intersect, deepening risks to peace and security particularly in already fragile settings. This intersection is particularly acute in West Africa and the Sahel.
- It is therefore particularly important that we have an opportunity to discuss the interactions between climate, security and development here today.
- The impact of climate change on security is clear. Ireland's two years as an elected member of the UN Security Council clearly demonstrated the relevance of climate-related security risks to the Council's work. We worked closely with Sahel countries, particularly Niger, to highlight the impacts on the ground here in the region, notably on negotiating the first-ever UN Security Council Resolution on Climate and Security. Although the resolution was not adopted, the process confirmed the majority of UN member states believe the Council should factor the security risks of climate change into its decision-making.
- In April 2022, together with UNOWAS, ECOWAS and Ghana, we co-hosted a conference on Climate Change, peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel, as many of you will recall, and sponsored a follow-up side event at COP27.
- We continue to work hard with partners to address impacts on the ground. We believe in the importance of initiatives that are African-led and that build upon the knowledge and lessons learned from local communities.
- We are supporting work with the African Union Conflict Management Directorate to facilitate development of an African-led climate-related security risk assessment study on the African continent, a key step towards mobilizing a Common African Position on climate change and security in time for COP28.

- We are implementing a project on locally-led adaptation in Kenya and Nigeria, bringing together climate action and peacebuilding approaches in climate-vulnerable and conflict-affected contexts, and hope to be able to share the learnings from this project widely.
- One aspect of climate and security that needs to be addressed urgently is access to climate finance in conflict affected states. We know the more fragile a country is, the less climate finance it receives. Between 2010 and 2018, more than half of the countries in the Sahel and Horn of Africa received less adaptation finance per person than the average for LDCs, despite their clearly urgent needs.
- As we consider the links between climate, security and development, it is important that awareness is raised on this problem and to take action, making the linkages between the climate and security theme and the broader climate finance conversations.