



Security Council

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Letter dated 18 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

During its presidency of the Security Council, Germany plans to hold an open debate on the theme “Climate and security” on 24 July 2020, which will be chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Heiko Maas (see annex). The meeting is planned to be held as an open videoconference, to begin at 10 a.m.

You have always attached high priority to the overarching issue of climate change and are highly engaged in increasing the political momentum for more ambitious climate action in greenhouse gas emission reduction, adaptation and climate financing.

We are very grateful for your engagement and support towards achieving a more systematic approach by the international community in addressing the peace and security implications of the effects of climate change, as we discussed on 23 June 2020 together with the permanent representatives of like-minded Security Council delegations.

Mahamadou Magagi of the Niger, Director of the Centre national d'études stratégiques et de sécurité, and Coral Pasisi of Niue, Director of Sustainable Pacific Consultancy, have been invited to brief the Council. Following the 15 Security Council members, groups of States that are not members of the Security Council will be given the opportunity to speak.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Christoph Heusgen
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 18 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to inform you that on Friday, 24 July 2020, the Security Council plans to hold an open debate, co-sponsored by Germany, Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and Viet Nam, at the ministerial level, on the theme "Climate and security". The related concept note is attached (see enclosure).

We should be grateful if the present letter and the concept note could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Marc Pecsteen**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations

(Signed) **José Singer**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations

(Signed) **Sven Jürgenson**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations

(Signed) **Nicolas de Riviere**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations

(Signed) **Christoph Heusgen**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

(Signed) **Abdou Abarry**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations

(Signed) **Rhonda King**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations

(Signed) **Kais Kabtani**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations

(Signed) **Dinh Quy Dang**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the Socialist Republic
of Viet Nam to the United Nations

(Signed) **Jonathan Allen**

Ambassador

Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland to the United Nations

Enclosure

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on the theme “Climate and security”, to be held on 24 July 2020

I. Background and developments

1. Climate change is a growing multidimensional challenge. While there are established United Nations processes on the environmental and sustainable development dimensions of climate change, its implications on international peace and security are yet to be properly addressed by the Security Council.

2. The effects of climate change, including increasingly frequent and severe weather phenomena, floods and droughts, diminishing freshwater resources, desertification, land degradation and sea-level rise, deprive entire populations of their livelihoods. Among those, women are disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change, deepening gender inequality and increasing the risk for gender-based violence. These effects of climate change can lead, inter alia, to food insecurity, large-scale displacement and social tensions, exacerbating, prolonging or contributing to the risk of future conflicts. The effects of climate change are threat multipliers and constitute major risk factors for international peace and security.

3. Climate-related security risks are a daily reality for millions of people: 8 of the 10 largest multilateral peace operations are active in countries highly exposed to climate change. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance owing to the effects of climate change has been predicted to double by 2050 to 200 million per year, women and children being among the most vulnerable. Entire nations are threatened in their very existence.

4. With the effects of climate change expected to increase dramatically, there is a strong scientific basis to conclude that the security implications of climate change will rise accordingly in the near future. On the current trajectory, the effects of climate change will not only aggravate existing vulnerabilities and conflict drivers, but will also contribute to the emergence of new and unprecedented risks.

5. The effects of climate change in specific situations are conducive to the potential emergence, continuation or escalation of conflict. The Security Council needs to consider and address these security implications in its work, just as other dimensions of climate change, including the environmental and developmental aspects, need to be tackled by other competent United Nations organs and Member State-led entities.

6. In recent years, substantial progress has been made: the United Nations system has strengthened its capacity on climate and security and has conducted a global scan of United Nations activities in the area of climate-related security risks. A toolbox has been developed to promote a common understanding in the United Nations system of the complex interlinkages between climate change and peace and security, and to support integrated climate-related security risk assessments. The climate security mechanism between the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme is currently at the forefront of these efforts.

7. The Security Council has increasingly recognized the role of climate-related security risk in specific situations on its agenda. Currently, 11 resolutions refer to the implications of the effects of climate change on peace and stability. Furthermore, the Security Council explored the security implications of climate change in a number of thematic debates, the latest in January 2019 under the presidency of the Dominican

Republic. Informal Arria-formula meetings, most recently in April 2020 initiated by France and others, have also shed some light on this pertinent issue.

8. Despite growing attention on the ever-increasing scale of climate-related security implications, the Council still lacks a systematic approach to climate-related security risks. Several proposals have been made to further develop the Council's tools for forecasting and early warning, risk assessment and conflict prevention. There is an evident need to pursue both a context-specific and an integrated approach to climate-related security risks to inform decision-making, facilitate climate-related security risk assessments and enable appropriate responses by the Security Council.

II. Objective and scope

9. The aim of the open debate is to define how best to provide the Security Council with a comprehensive and authoritative information basis on the security implications of the effects of climate change. Member States are encouraged to share their experience with and assessment of the following questions:

- How can we ensure that the Security Council has authoritative information on the impact of climate-related security risks in conflict settings?
- What tools, partnerships and early warning capabilities would support the timely assessment of and response to climate-related security risks in order to prevent the escalation of conflict?
- How can United Nations in-country resources, including peace operations and special political missions, be enabled to better collect, analyse and report on relevant information in specific country or regional situations while also applying a gender-sensitive analysis?
- Which existing tools may the Council wish to use in addressing the implications of climate change on international peace and security? How would these need to be enhanced to appropriately respond to climate-related security risks?
- How can the Council's operational readiness in cases of climate-related security risks be increased?

III. Format and briefers

10. The open debate will be held at the ministerial level. Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and Viet Nam join with Germany to support the holding of the debate. The open debate will be chaired by Heiko Maas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany. According to the working methods for the month of July, the presidency of the Security Council intends to hold the open debate in the format of an open videoconference meeting. Member States and observer States that are not members of the Security Council are invited to participate in the open videoconference within the principles of Rule 37 and can participate, following a decision, by submitting written statements. In that case, they will be invited to send their written statements to the President of the Council ahead of the meeting. The presidency will try to accommodate requests to speak as additional speakers in the open videoconference for Member States or observer States who represent certain groups of States within the technical limits of the videoconference platform.

11. The following will brief the Security Council:

- Secretary-General of the United Nations (to be confirmed)
 - Mahamadou Magagi, Director of the Centre national d'études stratégiques et de sécurité, the Niger
 - Coral Pasisi, Director of the Sustainable Pacific Consultancy, Niue
 - Youth representative (to be confirmed)
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