

BACKGROUND BRIEF

Security Council

World Scout Jamboree Model UN 2019



What is the role of the Security Council?

After the devastating effects of two world wars, the international community established the United Nations (UN) as an intergovernmental organization with the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, creating the conditions conducive to economic and social development, and advancing universal respect for human rights. The Security Council was established as one of its six principal organs and was given the primary responsibility of preserving international peace and security.



Traditionally, the Security Council discusses issues related to peacekeeping missions, political processes, the protection of human rights, disarmament, and humanitarian crises. However, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) by the UN General Assembly in 2015, the Security Council began to increasingly focus on the intersection between sustainability, and peace and security. Some important cross-cutting issues the Council is currently addressing include human rights and the protection of civilians for conflict prevention and sustainable development; women, peace, and security; and the prevention of conflict and sustaining peace. At a meeting on 17 November 2015, members of the Security Council highlighted that the goals outlined in the post-2015 development agenda, particularly Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on achieving peaceful and inclusive societies, cannot be attained without the promotion of peace and security.

Governance

The Security Council is the only UN body that has the power to adopt legally binding resolutions, which places an obligation on Member States to accept and carry out the Council's decisions under Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations (1945). The Security Council also has a variety of other tools to address issues on its agenda. For example, the President of the Security Council may issue press statements or presidential statements to communicate the Council's position.

Membership

The Security Council is comprised of five permanent members and 10 non-permanent members. The five permanent members of the Security Council are: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, often colloquially referred to as the “P5.” Every year, the General Assembly elects five of the 10 non-permanent members for a two-year term. States elected to serve on the Security Council are expected to represent the interests of their region; they usually have an influence at the international level and demonstrate leadership in specific areas of interest to their foreign policy. Belgium, Cote d’Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland and South Africa are the current non-permanent members for the term 2019-2020. The 10 non-permanent members represent countries from five groups: Africa, the Asia-Pacific Group, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Eastern European Group, and Western European and Other.

Voting

Every Member State of the Security Council has one vote. Votes on all matters require a majority of nine Member States. However, if one of the five permanent members of the Security Council votes “no” on a matter of substance, such as a draft resolution, it does not pass. This is known as “**veto power**”.

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The mandate of the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security and to take action whenever peace and security are threatened. The Council’s authority is particularly relevant with respect to the UN’s four primary purposes, as specified in the Charter of the United Nations:

1. Maintaining international peace and security
2. Developing friendly relations among nations
3. Cooperating in solving international problems
4. Promoting respect for human rights, as well as being a center for harmonizing

Current Priorities

On 11 July 2018, the Council convened a session to discuss the impacts of climate change on peace and security. At this session, members of the Security Council recognized climate change as a cause and exacerbating factor in humanitarian crises and conflicts. Despite this recognition of the seriousness of climate change and its impacts, the Security Council was unable to agree on the degree to which the Council should be involved in this issue. Specifically, some members argued that the Council must address climate change as a risk to peace and security, while others worried that significant involvement may unnecessarily expand the mandate of the Council or interfere with the work of other UN entities.

TOPIC 1: STRENGTHENING PEACEBUILDING TO PREVENT AND MITIGATE CONFLICT



What is peacebuilding?

In his 1992 report, “An Agenda for Peace,” former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali introduced the concept of peacebuilding to the UN as “action to identify and support structures, which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.” Over the years, various efforts have been made to elaborate on this definition. The Brahimi Report from 2000 defined peacebuilding as “activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war.” **In 2007, the Secretary-General’s Policy Committee has described peacebuilding as:**

“A range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives.”

You can also expand your knowledge about peacebuilding to prepare to discuss topic 1 with the information and resources provided in the following links:

<http://www.unpbf.org/application-guidelines/what-is-peacebuilding/>

<https://un-peacebuilding.tumblr.com/>

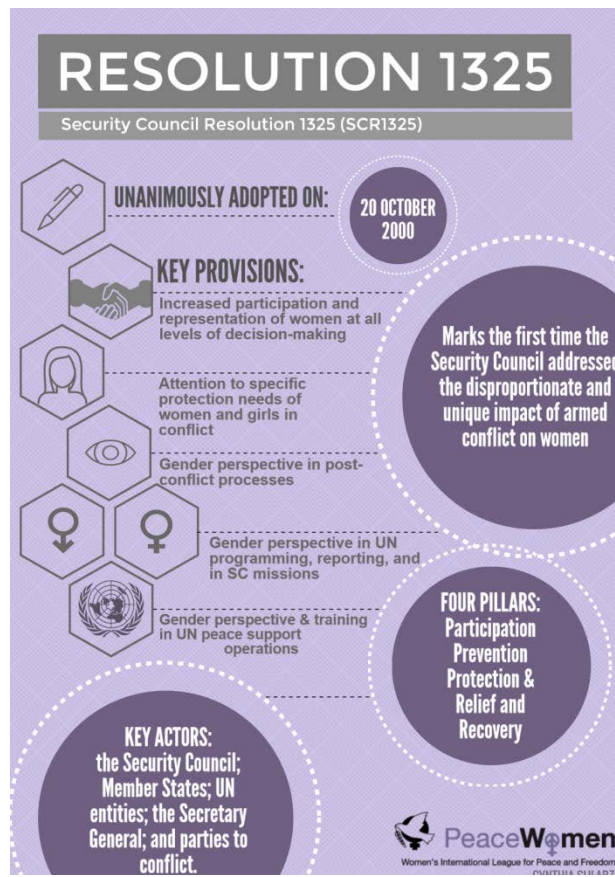
Learn about the Peacebuilding Fund UN and its focus areas and priority windows

<https://youtu.be/z8To3kSeRsg>

What are the challenges of peacebuilding efforts today?

According to the Alliance for Peacebuilding, “peacebuilding is the challenge of our age. We have entered an era of conflict that is taking new forms, and spreading in ways that are outstripping the power of the international community to respond. As ISIS spreads through the Middle East, Ebola roils West Africa, and conflict destabilizes Ukraine, it is clear that we need new conceptual lenses and creative approaches for managing global violence.” Keep reading the article *Peacekeeping 3.0* to learn about what peacekeeping entails today. It can be found at: <https://allianceforpeacebuilding.org/peacebuilding-3-0/>

Resolution 1325 of the Security Council



Source: <https://www.peacewomen.org/SCR-1325>

You can read an explained and annotated version of this important resolution of it:

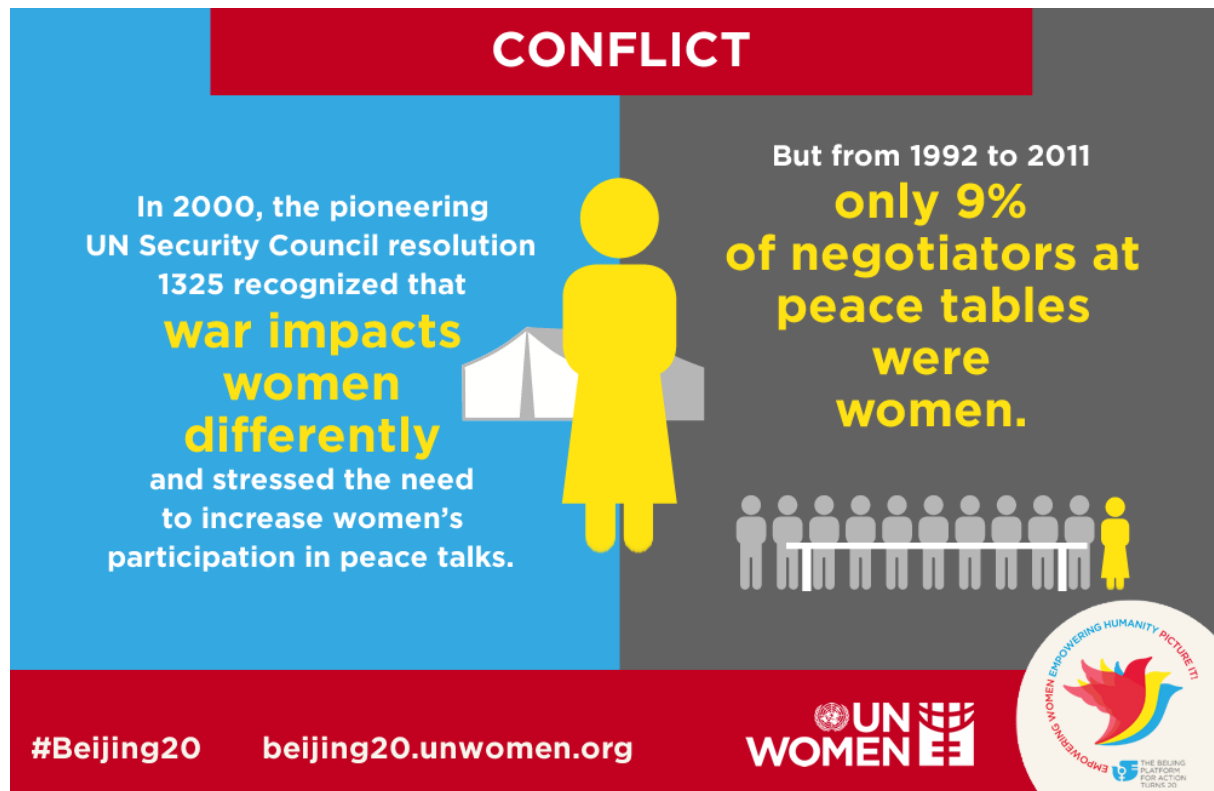
http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/BasicWPSDocs/annotated_1325.pdf

This important resource was created by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

You can also check this link to see what women do to promote peace:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/facts-and-figures>





What do women bring to peacebuilding and peacekeeping processes? How do men and women experience conflict? How do men and women look at peace? What role do women play in conflict resolution? What role do female peacekeepers bring to peacebuilding missions? **Watch this short video to answer some of these essential questions that can prepare you to discuss topic 1 during WSJMUN 2019:** <https://youtu.be/w21nCiG3ZSs?list=PL49CE20981558F582>

What is peacekeeping?

<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/what-is-peacekeeping>

https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/dpko-brochure-2018v17_1.pdf

<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/where-we-operate>

<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/infographics>

<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en>



TOPIC 2: THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE-CHANGE RELATED DISASTERS ON INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY



Locals wait at a World Food Programme food distribution center to receive grain donations at a government-led feeding center in the Wagduf Temporary Resettlement site, Somali regional state. Photo by: UNICEF Ethiopia

Does climate-change related disasters pose a threat to the United Nations' mission?

In the report *United We Stand*, Camila Born and Nick Mabey ask an important question: Does climate change pose a direct threat to the UN's mission? What do you think? This is the fundamental question that will help you to connect the dots as you prepare to discuss topic 2. Listen to Camila as she reflects about this relevant question. <https://youtu.be/X95ppLeRZWs>



French soldiers talk to locals in southern Mali. Since 2014, the French have led Operation Barkhane, a military effort to fight terror in the Sahel (Photo: TM1972/Wikipedia)



<https://www.bbc.com/news/the-reporters-46921487>

Climate change recognized as 'threat multiplier', UN Security Council debates its impact on peace

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/01/1031322>

Scientists and youth to advise the Council

For the first time in history, the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) was invited to brief the members of the Security Council on climate and extreme weather issues. Professor Pavel Kabat, Chief Scientist at the WMO brought some clear scientific data to the table, to inform the debate. "Climate change has a multitude of security impacts - rolling back the gains in nutrition and access to food; heightening the risk of wildfires and exacerbating air quality challenges; increasing the potential for water conflict; leading to more internal displacement and migration," he said. "It is increasingly regarded as a national security threat."

He noted that WMO stands ready to support the UN and Member States with “cutting-edge science” and “expert information” so informed decisions can be made.

Before the floor was opened to Members of the Security Council, a youth representative and a researcher on environmental security, Lindsay Getschel, was also invited to speak.

Listen to Lindsay as she addressed the Security Council:

<https://youtu.be/Mi1oBLdwM9E>

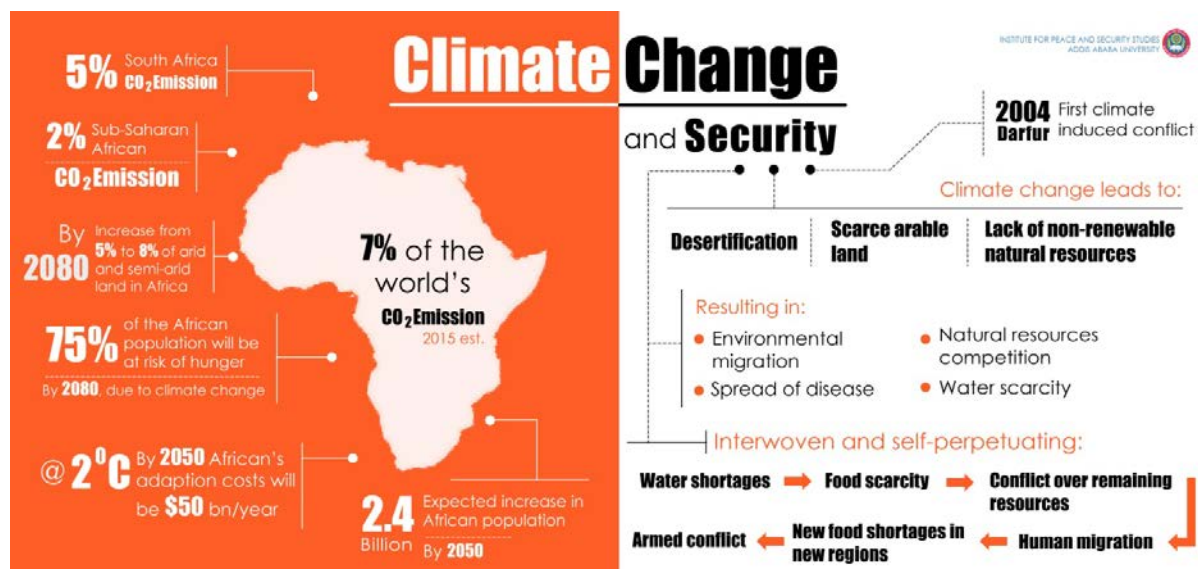


<https://www.climatechangenews.com/2018/01/31/climate-change-affecting-stability-across-west-africa-sahel-un-security-council/>

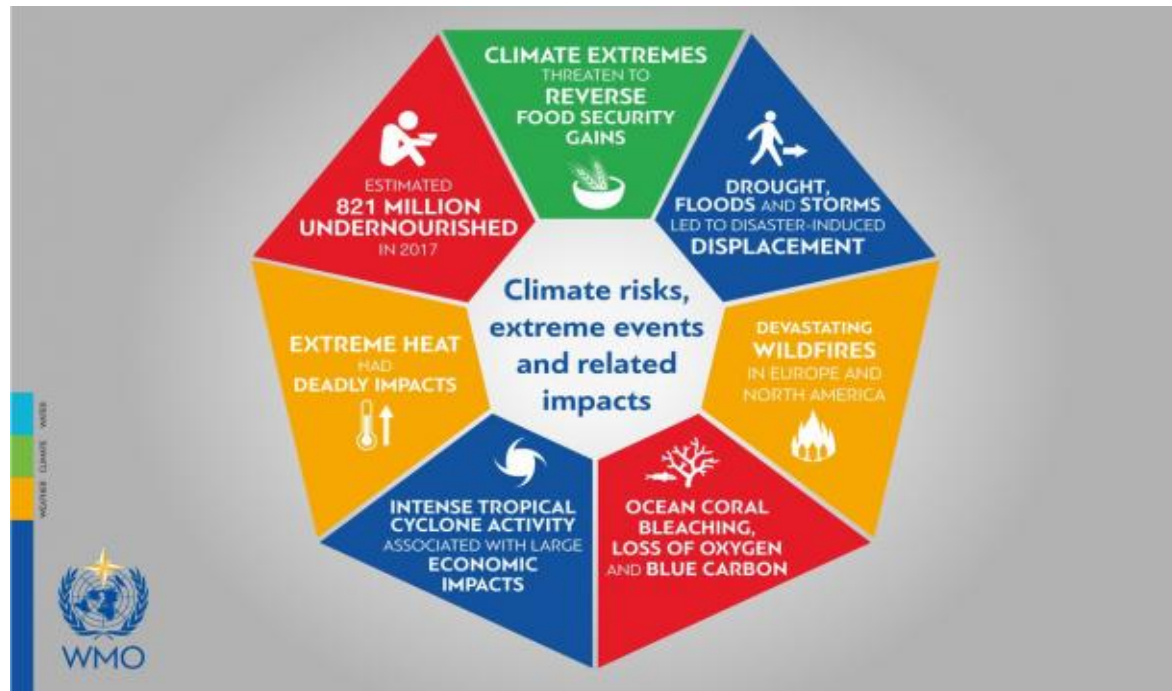
<https://nypost.com/2014/03/30/climate-change-will-push-world-into-war-un-report/>

<https://en.unesco.org/courier/2018-2/climate-change-raises-conflict-concerns>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35054300>



https://www.devex.com/news/record-high-food-insecurity-trends-set-to-worsen-in-2018-92394?utm_source=article&utm_medium=93160&utm_campaign=textbox



<https://www.thedailystar.net/environment/climate-change/news/climate-change-bangladesh-sustainable-development-plans-1693174>

<https://www.upi.com/UN-No-2-Help-fight-climate-change-to-avoid-water-war/88111257486060/>

<https://www.waterbriefingglobal.org/wmo-warns-un-security-council-on-risks-climate-change-poses-to-international-peace-and-security/>

Other useful links:

<https://www.whatsinblue.org/2019/01/open-debate-addressing-the-impacts-of-climate-related-disasters-on-international-peace-and-security.php>

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2019/02/devastating-climate-change-world-peace-security/>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/climate-change-as-a-security-risk>

Box 6. Gender inequalities related to climate change impacts, migration and conflict

Gender inequalities, such as women's lack of access to financial resources and limited involvement in decision-making, tend to compound the impacts of changing climatic conditions on their livelihoods and increase their vulnerability.²¹⁶ These inequalities are unfortunately not reflected in the majority of adaptation policies and programmes.

Climate change: Both slow and sudden-onset disasters, which are recognized to be increasing in frequency in the Sahel, have significant impacts on women. Within the countries in this study, women make up 50 per cent of the agriculture labour-force.²¹⁷ Women's high dependence on fertile land and regular rainfall for agriculture make them vulnerable to changes in precipitation, temperature and the occurrence of sudden-onset disasters, such as floods. Given their lack of access to financial resources, such as credit or formal land holdings, women are less able to recover from floods or poor harvests.

Migration: Women are more likely to stay behind as men migrate in search of alternative income and seasonal employment. This out-migration of men can give women greater decision-making power,²¹⁸ but also bring additional difficulties. Due to social taboos, women may not be able to access the same tools or resources as their male counterparts, or participate in certain agricultural tasks. Thus, rural women can become more vulnerable to poverty when males migrate.

Conflict: Conflict places women in danger of direct violence, including intimidation, sexual violence and abduction.²¹⁹ They also experience indirect harm.²²⁰ In many countries, for example, neither traditional nor modern law permit women to inherit land or other assets when their husbands or male family members die.

Adaptation programming: Women are not systematically involved, nor considered, in climate change adaptation planning. Further, women are less able to access the financial and technical resources made available for adaptation programming.²²¹ Despite their traditional role in collecting water and fuel, and securing food for their families, adaptation plans rarely consider women's rich knowledge of natural resources.



Women work to pound and terrace the soil in drought-stricken Burkina Faso to control erosion and manage water in the rainy season



Box 2. The role of non-climate factors in migration and conflict

Migration and conflict are most often the result of a broad range of complex issues. Changes in climate, and their effects on natural resources, are just one such factor. A combination of economic, social and political factors contributes to any decision to migrate and similarly influences conflict-related outcomes.

Migration: Economic opportunities have long been recognized as an important contributor to migration. Cities are often the location for job prospects, and along with other social factors, contribute to a “pull factor” influencing migration decisions. These social factors include access to health care, education and greater infrastructure. Other external factors can also have a significant influence. In the case of coastal fisheries, the existence of international fishing fleets has strongly affected the local population’s catch. It has been estimated that Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone are losing approximately US\$140 million per year to illegal fishing by foreign vessels.¹⁰⁰ This loss translates into depleted fish stocks and a direct economic loss for fishermen, as well as an impact on food and nutritional security for much of the population that depends on fish as their main source of protein. Likewise, dam construction has affected freshwater fisheries, with a 90 percent drop between the 1970s and the early 2000s in the Senegal River Valley, following the construction of the Manatali and Diama dams.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, political instability and weak governance can be “push factors.” Current conflicts in North and West Africa provide a timely illustration of the role that politics play in contributing to the movement of people. Indeed, due to the 2011 conflict in Libya, over 190,000 West African nationals left the country, with 121,000 crossing over the border into Chad and Niger.¹⁰² In Côte d’Ivoire, the 2010 post-election crisis led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, including some 150,000 Ivorian refugees in neighbouring Liberia.¹⁰³ Additionally, local and national governance influence migration decisions. For example, changes in land tenure systems or restricting access to resources can affect livelihood security, with migration being used as a coping mechanism.

Conflict: Natural resources are rarely, if ever, the sole cause of conflict. Rather, availability and access to natural resources can contribute to triggering conflict in already tense situations. Economic disparity between the affluent and poor, weak state institutions and capacity and cultural or ethnic marginalization by one group over another can all contribute to the risk of conflict.¹⁰⁴ Further, the lack of dispute resolution mechanisms for small-scale conflict also blocks the ability for such disagreements to be addressed.