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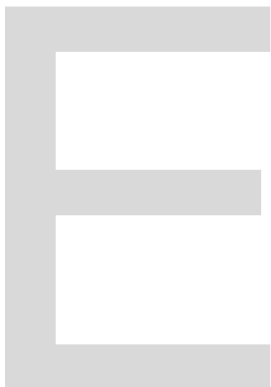
Standing Committee on
Peace and International Security

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Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences

***Explanatory memorandum submitted by the co-Rapporteurs
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1. When United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres recently described the climate crisis as "a matter of life and death", he did not exaggerate. He was stressing the dramatic and extreme nature of our common reality. Every day, millions of people all over the world are witnessing the destruction of their existence. For them, the climate crisis equals desertification and crop failure, soil salinity and water scarcity, floods and heatwaves. At the same time, global warming is a driver of hunger and poverty. Already today, it is causing the incalculable loss of homelands, community structures and cultural heritage.
2. In January 2019, the UN Security Council held an open debate to discuss the concrete impact of climate change on peace and security, focusing on tangible ways to diminish the effects of global warming. More than 80 States took part in the debate, demonstrating the importance of the topic. At this meeting the term "threat multiplier" was coined to describe climate change.
3. With the signing of the Paris Agreement in 2015 and the adoption of the Katowice Rulebook, the international community has recognized the climate crisis as a shared global challenge and agreed to limit global warming to under 2 degrees Celsius, and if possible to 1.5 degrees Celsius, with Parties aiming to overcome global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible.
4. The number of people who have been displaced as a result of climate-induced events has quadrupled since the 1970s. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre estimates that there was an average of over 24 million new internal displacements per year for the period between 2008 and 2017, with the trend continuing to rise. In its 2018 Groundswell study, the World Bank estimates that 140 million people will be displaced by the climate crisis by 2050 in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America alone. However, the report also shows that around 80 per cent of the displacement can be avoided with ambitious mitigation and adaptation measures.
5. The effects of climate change are having an increasingly severe impact on different aspects of human life and human security as well as on development opportunities. The worldwide geopolitical order and global stability are also impacted by climate change. In many respects, the climate crisis is also a crisis of global justice: although extreme weather events are becoming increasingly common in industrialized countries, the climate crisis primarily affects developing countries and emerging economies – and thus the very regions of the planet that, from a historical perspective, bear least responsibility for global warming. Meanwhile, it is those with fewer resources to adapt who will be hardest hit by the impact of climate change: women, youth, children and indigenous people, as well as the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of society. Whether it be due to unemployment, migration or vulnerability to recruitment into armed groups, young people are among the most likely to be directly implicated in instability resulting from climate-related disasters.



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6. The climate crisis also acts as a threat multiplier of existing injustices, with a tendency to amplify conflicts and to further undermine basic human rights, such as the rights to food, water, shelter, education, health and a life in dignity. People living in vulnerable situations, especially the women and children among them, are at particular risk of being further excluded and deprived of their human rights. Crisis situations tend to make existing forms of discrimination and abuse, especially sexual and gender-based violence, even more acute and widespread.

7. People whose lives are affected by climate change and the impact of global warming are more likely to support climate action as well as peacebuilding and natural resource management when their rights are being promoted and protected, and when they participate in decision-making. Ownership and participation therefore make climate and peacebuilding policies more successful, and induce fairer and more successful mitigation as well as environmental action.

8. In order to maintain peace and stability and to minimize climate security risks, the draft resolution encourages IPU Member Parliaments to be prepared for the challenges and to invest in prevention strategies. It calls on IPU Members to recognize the need for strategies to respond to climate security risks, in terms of both prioritizing support for vulnerable and fragile regions in implementing the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda and equipping the UN system (including its most powerful organ, the UN Security Council), other multilateral institutions, States and other relevant actors to deal effectively with the looming threats to food sovereignty, the challenges of natural resource management and displacement, and an increased risk of disasters.

9. The draft resolution also aims to intensify the urgent debate about climate-induced migration as much as the protection of refugees in the context of the climate crisis – refugees who, at least in most cases, do not fall under the protection of the Refugee Convention. The international community has to find solutions on protecting refugees and internally displaced people, and in the field of migration. IPU Members are called upon to support the work of existing institutions, including in the framework of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage and its Task Force on Displacement, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Platform on Disaster Displacement. At the same time, individual States that are carefully pushing forward should be supported, and existing role-model agreements, such as the Cartagena Declaration in Latin America or the Kampala Convention adopted by the African Union, should be strengthened. As the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees explicitly refer to climate-related migration and displacement, IPU Members are encouraged to work towards their full implementation.

10. In signing the Paris Agreement in 2015, the parties recognized at least to some extent the goal of climate justice. It was thus agreed that countries with a large ecological footprint would accordingly take greater responsibility and seek common solutions together with countries that are especially affected by the crisis. This means that dealing with the climate crisis is also a matter of global justice that must be taken seriously in order to counteract a distributional crisis.

11. The draft resolution states that climate change and its impact on humanity are a common struggle, to be tackled by the international community as a whole. That is why we all need to stand together to uphold the natural foundations of life, and to ensure we can all live well on our planet. This is essential not only from a climate policy perspective, but also as part of the sustaining peace agenda.