

Report: The Hague Roundtable on Climate & Security 5th meeting hosted by the Embassy of Australia on 19 April 2017

International cooperation on water-related climate change impacts was the theme of the fifth Hague Roundtable on Climate & Security. More than 40 representatives of embassies and non-governmental institutes shared strategies on key water issues at the meeting hosted by the Ambassador of Australia to the Netherlands, H.E. Dr Brett Mason. Threats and opportunities were examined from various perspectives with the aim of building capacities to address challenges such as sea level rise, climate-induced migration, droughts, natural disasters and water-related conflict.

Roundtable participants shared information in presentations and in open discussions – with the goal of building opportunities for regional and international cooperation. Initiatives including water diplomacy, disaster response, water management technology, and broadening the climate-humanitarian role of military units were examined as potential areas of joint efforts. Multi-stakeholder actions for peaceful climate adaptation are increasingly needed to meet emerging risks.

Countries

represented:

Australia,
Bangladesh, Chile,
Colombia, Costa Rica,
France, Germany,
Japan, Mexico,
Morocco, the
Netherlands, Serbia,
Sudan, Tunisia,
the United States



Roundtable participants at the Residence of the Australian Ambassador in The Hague

Organisations

represented:

Asser Institute; Civil Military Interaction Command, Royal Netherlands Army; Ranger Campus; Clingendael Institute, Deltares; Diplomat Magazine; Hague Centre for Strategic Studies; IHE Delft Institute for Water Education; Institute for Environmental Security; International Water Association; Leiden University/the International Centre for Counterterrorism (ICCT); World Resources Institute

Moderators:

Matt Luna and Wouter Veening, Institute for Environmental Security

Excerpts from remarks by the Australian Ambassador, H.E. Dr Brett Mason

The unifying theme of today's Roundtable discussion is water. In particular, the relationship between water crises and conflict on the one hand, and good water management and security on the other. In Australia, water plays an important, indeed defining, role.

We are the driest inhabited continent in the world and prone to highly variable and extreme weather. Flood, drought and fire have long been part of our national story. The expertise and knowledge we have developed in managing water is something we have in common with the Netherlands. Last November, the Dutch King and Queen visited Brisbane, and launched the Smart Scanner for Water Resilient Cities, an interactive tool to explore the effects of various flood mitigation measures. We also share a commitment to improving water management with a view to ensuring that every person in the world gets access to safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation.

And, importantly for today's forum, we share a concern about the risks to peace and security created by a failure to provide functional water supply and sanitation systems, as well as the security risks posed by extreme weather events, including water scarcity.

That's why Australia's PM Turnbull has, along with the Netherlands' PM Rutte, become a member of the UN's High Level Panel on Water. So far, the focus of our cooperation has been in Myanmar where we are helping to develop a sound water resources management system focused on the Ayeyarwady basin. The Ayeyarwady delta was devastated in the worst natural disaster in Myanmar's recorded history, cyclone Nargis, in 2008. Early cooperation has been focused on exchange of information and data, and capacity building for local institutions that manage the basin. In the management of shared water resources, systems for sharing hydrological data can be integral for building constructive civilian-government relations – a key building block for peace and security.

When it comes to the impacts of climate change, we know it will primarily affect the water cycle. And the UN has projected that, by 2030, almost half of the world's population will face severe water stress. The focus for Australia's work in this area is the Indo-Pacific. In our neighbourhood, the security implications of sea-level rise caused by climate change are very real.

We are increasingly sensitive to the need for our development assistance to integrate climate considerations with decade-long time frames that deal with the slow-onset impacts of sea-level rise such as salt water intrusion, inundation and increasingly severe floods. With our support, our vulnerable neighbours are undertaking sea-level rise modelling and long-term economic and development planning.

As well as factoring slow-onset impacts into our development assistance, we are also helping our neighbours address acute climate impacts. We have invested heavily in climate resilience across the Pacific where, together with partner governments, we are working to climate-proof new investments and to strengthen disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response.

The relationship between security and climate change is complex to understand, and complex to address. But this cannot be an excuse for inaction. Australia is focused on doing what we can – together with those around this table working on analysis, policies, research, implementation, funding and advocacy - before it is too late.

Excerpts from remarks by Skype from [Admiral Chris Barrie \(Ret\)](#) of Australia

The GMACCC Report of May 2016 on [“Climate Change & Security in South Asia: Cooperating for Peace”](#) has been of intense interest on possible implications for Australian security and border protection if the third pole is very much reduced in its size, or disappears altogether due to global warming. This report illustrates the serious implications if there is little we can do to ameliorate the possible consequence of extreme shortages of fresh water in the sub-continent.



GLOBAL MILITARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
CLIMATE CHANGE

In Canberra, I was part of a panel to address key issues arising from the film “Age of Consequences” and fielding questions from an audience of more than 500. This is an example of how anxious the community has become. There is no question that changing weather patterns are having an impact on attitudes to climate change and on an apparent lack of political leadership to deal with the consequences. There has also been quite a shift towards climate change issues within the Defence organisation.

Twenty months ago, senior officials were not permitted to write the words “climate change” in any official documents. Now, maybe because of significant lobbying activity to influence policy, the March 2016 [Defence White Paper](#) signalled a change. The briefing on addressing climate change consequences domestically and in the region has been given significant emphasis within the Defence headquarters. I have also been advised that, under the leadership of the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, relevant Department and Agency Heads are engaged in a series of scenario games to examine climate change issues from a policy-making perspective. Defence has several seats, including top leaders, at these events. Thanks must go to all those who helped in the lobbying campaign.

There is to be a delegation visit to Australia about EU Climate Change Diplomacy objectives for 2017 in the third week of June. The focus from the EU’s perspective is to look at regional aspects of climate change consequences, particularly in the Pacific Islands. The view in Brussels is that EU development assistance may be better coordinated with Australian efforts as the two major donors of aid in the region. I am sure the delegation from Brussels will be well received, with media support offered by our Climate Council. From my perspective, climate change advocates may be able to leverage this visit to promote further discussion of the key issues.

On water, I cannot let this opportunity go by without drawing attention to the announcement last week that the Queensland Government had issued an unrestricted water licence to the operators of the Adani Coal Mine, valid to 2070. This mine, reputed to be potentially the largest coal mine in the world, is in the project development stage yet it begs belief that, against well-advertised perspectives on leaving 80% of known fossil fuel reserves in the ground, we would allow this project to proceed. We should be concerned as well about the impact this mine might have on the Great Artesian Basin.

Feature presentations from the 5th Roundtable:

Water on a Global Scale

J.T. (Jan) Busstra, Head of Unit - Marine and International Water policy
Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment

<http://gmacc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Water-on-a-Global-Scale.pdf>

Jan Busstra is the manager for international programs in water management and for marine policies. He is leading a team working in bilateral water-related projects in a number of delta-countries around the globe and on issues like water governance and finance in multilateral organisations such as the UN and OECD.

Climate, Water and Security Risks

Karen Meijer, Senior Advisor on Water Governance at Deltares

<http://gmacc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Deltares-water-and-conflict.pdf>

Dr. Karen Meijer's main fields of interests are global environmental governance (international climate change policies) and the multi-actor context of policy implementation. Particularly, she is interested in how new approaches and policies to increase the sustainability of natural resources use and management can be implemented.

Fresh groundwater resources in SIDS under climate and global stresses, and how to alleviate them

Gualbert Oude Essink, Expert Hydrogeologist at Deltares

<http://gmacc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Deltares-groundwater-SIDS.pdf>

Gualbert Oude Essink's expertise is groundwater resources in coastal zones. He combines monitoring and modelling to assess fresh groundwater availability. He has executed numerous modelling studies on variable-density groundwater flow and solute transport under palaeo, flooding, drought, global & climate change conditions, on different scales and in different areas of the world.

Update on the Planetary Security Initiative (PSI)

Planetary Security Conference 2017: From Analysis to Action
12-13 December, Marriott Hotel, The Hague, the Netherlands



Climate-related risks are increasingly recognised as a key factor - and at times a key driver - of human insecurity and even conflict. Over the past ten years, both our understanding and awareness of these risks and the relationship between climate change and security have increased tremendously. The topic has been on the agenda at the highest levels of international politics and diplomacy. This is why now is the time to act to reduce risks, prevent conflict and build peace. The Planetary Security Initiative (PSI) aims to spur this momentum from increasing awareness to deepening knowledge and, most importantly, to catalysing action to reduce the risks emanating from climate change and other environmental stresses.

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched the PSI in 2015. Now operated by a consortium of leading think tanks, the objectives of the PSI are to:

- Enhance political awareness and involvement on the climate-security interface;
- Strengthen the knowledge-policy interface by consolidating an inclusive community of practice that is multi-lateral, multi-sector and multi-disciplinary;
- Develop and promote policies and good practice to help governments, the private sector and implementing agencies better secure peace and cooperation in regions impacted by climate change;
- Create a regular platform for international cooperation on planetary security.

Planetary Security Conference 2017

Annual conferences in The Hague are at the core of the PSI. The 2015 and 2016 editions were attended by over 300 representatives from governments, international organisations, think tanks, NGOs, academia and the private sector, from more than 70 countries.

The conferences are to:

- Provide a regular opportunity for practitioners on climate change and security to meet, exchange information and increase cooperation;
- Generate greater awareness of the best ways to address climate-security issues and get more people involved in the discussion;
- Explore the climate-security linkage in specific issues and regions to identify entry points and actionable areas for policy and response;
- Develop ideas that will help shape the needed policies and practices for the next 15 to 20 years.

The annual conferences are supported by complementary activities:

- Strategic consultations at important international events and regional consultative meetings;
- Publications and media outreach on planetary security issues and solutions.

The third annual Planetary Security Conference will take place in The Hague on 12 and 13 December 2017. The theme is "Planetary Security: from Analysis to Action". This conference will reflect the growing call from the policy and practitioner communities to move from conceptual discussions about climate and security linkages to practical approaches, solutions and best practice to addressing the challenges faced on the ground.

The conference programme aims to:

- Highlight areas where the climate-security relationship is pressing: Lake Chad region, Iraq, Mali;
- Focus on the security opportunities and challenges of migration resulting from climate change;
- Share insights about how climate change affects urbanisation and its security dynamics.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: <http://www.planetarysecurityinitiative.org>

Contacts: Louise van Schaik (Clingendael Institute), Janani Vivekananda (adelphi) and Anne Bakker (Clingendael Institute) psi@clingendael.nl <<mailto:psi@clingendael.nl>> T +31 70 3746 694

Excerpts from Embassy of Morocco on COP 22 action and follow-up

30,000 participants from 196 countries attended COP 22 in Marrakech, and governments confirmed their commitment to rapid progress towards full implementation of the Paris Climate Change Agreement. These efforts resulted in the adoption of the [Marrakech Action Proclamation](#), affirming commitment by many in a new era of climate action and sustainable development.

COP22 was also marked by the launching of the [Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action](#), a new institutionalised and structured framework that will ensure the follow-up of commitments. In addition, the "Mohammed VI International Award for Climate and Sustainable Development" will award \$1 million annually to award exceptional climate change actions.

The February 2017 consultations in Rabat followed up on results from COP22, reviewed propositions of various civil society parties, and reflected on the agenda of the Moroccan presidency. At the March meeting of the COP22 Bureau in Rabat with the UNFCCC, Ambassador Deo Saran of Fiji represented the incoming COP23 Fiji Presidency. This meeting served to review outcomes of COP22 and initiatives of the Moroccan Presidency until Nov. 2017. The meeting also advanced preparations for the two subsidiary bodies of the UN convention on Climate change and the [Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement \(APA\)](#) scheduled for the 8th to the 18th of May 2017 in Bonn, Germany.

The COP22 President highlighted that COP22 strengthened the role of the private sector and civil society, and that their commitments to climate action is essential to move forward towards a low-carbon future. He also updated the bureau on the creation of the Blue Fund for the Congo Basin, the Ad-Hoc committee's regional project in the Sahel, and support to Small Island Developing States.

The Republic of Fiji has outlined the agenda of its Presidency of COP23: climate adaptation, finance, effective monitoring of adherence through the rulebook to the Paris Agreement and the objectives of the Climate Action Agenda as the central focus areas of the Fijian presidency. Fiji also pointed out the need for greater engagement from the private sector, NGOs and civil society in support of Fiji's global effort to boost access to climate finance and reduce climate risks to developing economies.

Excerpts from Embassy of Bangladesh remarks on climate change and water

According to the [Climate Change Vulnerability Index](#) (CCVI-2011) Bangladesh is the most vulnerable country to climate change. Bangladesh is responsible for less than 0.35% of global emissions, with 2.2% of the population. If the world fails to take appropriate action, the costs to Bangladesh of climate impacts could be an annual loss of 2% of GDP by 2050 and 9.4% of GDP by 2100.

Bangladesh has formulated the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2009) and Intended Nationally Determined Contributions – including both unconditional and conditional emission reduction goals. Through the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions, Bangladesh has given an international undertaking to take action on mitigation. Bangladesh also focuses on avoiding an increase of emissions per capita, while pursuing national development goals.

Over the last three decades, the Government of Bangladesh has invested \$10 billion to make the country more climate resilient and less vulnerable to natural disasters. To enhance climate change adaptation activities in all key policies and sectors, Bangladesh has recently established two innovative funds: the [Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund](#) (BCCTF) from the Government's own budget and the Bangladesh Climate Change Resilient Fund (BCCRF), with the support of development partners. Bangladesh became one of the first LDCs to create its own dedicated funding to mitigate and adapt to the challenges of climate change.

Bangladesh is the world's fastest growing Deltas. Recognising the importance of water in the life and livelihood of the people Bangladesh has taken leading role in a number of collaborative forums like Delta Coalition, Dynamic Deltas, and the UN High level Panel on Water.

Related on water and security:

Briefing note: *Water, climate and conflict: security risks on the increase?* (April 2017):

https://www.planetarysecurityinitiative.org/sites/default/files/2017-05/Briefing_Note_PSI_Water_climate_and_conflict.pdf

Briefing note: *Exploring the potential for transformational change in the Horn of Africa* (May 2017):

https://www.planetarysecurityinitiative.org/sites/default/files/2017-05/PB_Horn_of_Africa.pdf.paqespeed.ce.HbXpN_N94E.pdf

Australian Government 2016 Defence Department White Paper:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/WhitePaper/>

High Level Panel on Water – Background Note (2016):

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10004High%20Level%20Panel%20on%20Waterbackground%20note.pdf>

Financing Options for the 2030 Water Agenda (2016):

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/11995HLP%20Financing%20Options.pdf>

Video: Microbial Desalination for low-energy drinking water (MIDES project):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQbVm8IXNto>

The NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme (Dec. 2015):

http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_12/20151218_151218-sps-eng.pdf

The SunGlacier solar-powered water condensation project to develop local off-grid water resources:

<http://sunglacier.com/>

Further on the Roundtable:

A special thanks for support and planning of the 5th Roundtable goes to Ms. Indra McCormick, Deputy Head of Mission and Counsellor, Australian Embassy, The Hague. The next Roundtable will take place in Q3 of 2017 at a location to be announced. Information enquires, agenda proposals and participation requests are welcome for the next meeting. Topics will include multi-stakeholder engagement in the 12-13 December 2017 Planetary Security Conference in The Hague and COP 23 in Bonn, Germany, organised by the Republic of Fiji, from 6 – 17 November 2017.

For more information on participating in The Hague Roundtable on Climate & Security, contact Matt Luna, Roundtable creator and organiser: mluna@envirosecurity.org

The Roundtable meeting series is a local platform with global outreach for embassy representatives and organisation officials to identify opportunities for positive global cooperation on climate and security issues. The Roundtables also serve as an ongoing dialogue and a contact point to increase engagement in global initiatives such as the Planetary Security Initiative in The Hague and the UN COP Climate Conferences.