

Conference Report

AFRICA AND EUROPE:
CLIMATE SECURITY FOR THE FUTURE
– GLOBAL CHALLENGES, LOCAL ACTIONS



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS



EUROPEAN UNION



The Conference is a high-level annual event aiming to strengthen political, economic and cultural cooperation between Slovenia, Europe and Africa. With the event, Slovenia strives to build partnership with African countries based on understanding and mutual respect.

The topic of the 2023 edition was climate security.

The event brought together the highest representatives of the Republic of Slovenia, four ministers of foreign affairs from Africa, other high-level representatives and policymakers, diplomats, experts, researchers, members of civil society organisations, business people and representatives of the media.

400 participants

900 online views

12 leaders

53 speakers (28 men, 25 women)

60 countries

3 pillars of cooperation
(political, economic & cultural)



SPEAKERS' STATEMENTS



“Our goal is to establish partnership and cooperation based on mutual respect and solidarity.”

Tanja Fajon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Slovenia; host



“We sincerely hope to strengthen our partnership with African countries and work together to address global challenges.”

Nataša Pirc Musar, PhD, President of Slovenia



“Protection of endangered species is one of the actions of African countries that could be emulated around the world.”

Urška Klakočar Zupančič, Speaker of the National Assembly, Slovenia



“Climate change cannot be addressed by each country alone. We need to work together because climate change is a global problem that needs a global solution.”

Vincent Biruta, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Rwanda



“While Africa is the most severely affected by the consequences of climate change, it contributes only 4% of global emissions. This is by no means just.”

Dhoahir Dhoukmal, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Comoros



“For us, the question of water is the question of survival.”

Rui Alberto de Figueiredo Soares, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Regional Integration, Cabo Verde



“For us, (climate change) it is not something that awaits us in the future, it is something that is here, it is happening and having negative impacts on our country.”

Nancy Tembo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malawi



“Climate change is one of the most serious threats to global security. The EU and Africa share an interest in keeping the 1.5 climate threshold alive.”

Jutta Urpilainen, European Commissioner



“The greatest challenges of our generation are having the greatest impact on the African continent. Addressing these consequences is our common responsibility.”

Matjaž Han, Minister of the Economy, Tourism and Sport, Slovenia



“Europe and Africa have an opportunity to strengthen cooperation, share experience and exchange knowledge on the role of nature-based solutions in building a just, nature-friendly and climate-resilient future for the planet.”

Uroš Brežan, Minister of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning, Slovenia



“While we are mitigating future climate catastrophe, we also know that we have to do more to prepare vulnerable and insecure regions for the changes that they are experiencing now.”

John F. Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, USA



“There is a strong urge to find appropriate solutions for international climate financing, and alleviating the burden of the countries most affected by climate change.”

Samuel Žbogar, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Slovenia

Leaders' panel

- Political leaders have a political and moral duty to improve the situation in their countries and to work closely together to address the various aspects of climate change at an international level. Climate change also presents an opportunity for partnerships for a green transition.
- African countries are among those nations who contribute the least to the climate change but suffer its worst harms. Climate change is a security threat and the UNSC must address it.
- The close interconnection between climate change and water calls for more extensive bilateral and multilateral cross-border cooperation to avoid security risks.
- The international financial system should respond better and faster to the impacts of climate change, adaptation needs and threats to climate security.
- Climate justice must also take into account its international legal and human rights aspects.

Participants in the panel:

Tanja Fajon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Slovenia

Rui Alberto de Figueiredo Soares, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Regional Integration, Cabo Verde

Dhoiher Dhoulkamal, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Comoros

Vincent Biruta, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Rwanda

Nancy Tembo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malawi

John F. Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, USA (pre-recorded video)

MODERATOR:

Seku Mady Condé, journalist and TV presenter, RTV Slovenija



Climate security at the UNSC



- The discussions in the UNSC to date have exposed a wide range of security implications of climate change.
- Seek synergies with other UN bodies and pursue a horizontal approach. Strengthen the mechanisms already in place, such as deployment and training of climate advisers on the ground.
- Strengthen cooperation with the G77 and regional organisations, and complement the conceptual link between climate and security with the (economic and social) development dimension.
- Target climate funds more towards the most vulnerable countries, while ensuring that climate finance does not contribute to the exacerbation of conflicts and outbreak of new ones.
- Strengthen links with the UNFCCC and the COP. COP28 should adequately address climate, water and food security.

Participants in the panel:

Dhesigen Naidoo, Head of the African Climate Risk and Human Security Programme, Senior Research Associate, Institute for Security Studies (ISS)

Simone Borg, Ambassador for Climate Action, Malta

Dr Sinead Walsh, Climate Director, Development Cooperation and Africa Division, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland

Hafsa Maalim, Associate Senior Researcher, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

MODERATOR:

Janani Vivekananda, Head of Programme, Climate Diplomacy and Security, Adelphi

Inclusive climate security responses: The role of women, civil society and youth



- It is not enough to simply invite women to the debate: they have to be listened to and their views taken into account.
- Other reasons for the poor engagement of women and young people: they are not adequately acquainted with possibilities for participation and inclusion; they are given too little support; a general lack of capacity and knowledge.
- It is vital to identify promising civil society organisations and actively support them.
- The gap between the visibility and valuing of the role of women, civil society and young people in general political documents and in concrete policies and practices needs to be bridged.
- The climate security debate still largely leaves out important stakeholders. Stereotypes remain a major barrier to greater inclusion of women and a driver of power asymmetries.

Participants in the panel:

Dr Evans Kituyi, Senior Associate, Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA)

Safiya Ahmad Nuhu, PhD, Ambassador of the Republic of Nigeria

Ana Kalin, Policy maker and analyst, Forum for Equitable Development

Domenico Rosa, Head of the Unit on Strategic Partnerships with Africa and OACPS, and Head of the Task Force on Post Cotonou, European Commission

MODERATOR:

Patrick Mpedzisi, Global Diplomacy Lab

Climate security and COP28



- COP28 should adequately address climate, water and food security.
- It is important to achieve a common or more uniform understanding of the concept of a just transition.
- Strengthen and consolidate an inclusive approach, in particular by a more systematic involvement of young people.
- Climate change exacerbates conflicts over land that could escalate into inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts which are harder to resolve.
- Hence, root causes of conflicts need to be identified to facilitate their management and resolution, as climate change exacerbates conflicts over land that could escalate into inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts which are harder to resolve.
- Work towards a more systematic link between carbon finance and climate finance.

Participants in the panel:

Chukwumerije Okereke, Director, Centre for Climate Change and Development, Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike; Visiting Professor, University of Reading, Visiting Professor, University of Oxford

Tina Kobilšek, Lead negotiator for climate change, Head of Climate Change and Biotechnology Division, Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy, Slovenia

Dr Omnia El Omrani, Youth Envoy to the COP27 President (online)

Elisabeth Hege, Senior Research Fellow, Governance and Financing for Sustainable Development, Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI)

Ousmane Fall Sarr, Coordinator, West African Alliance on Carbon Markets and Climate Finance

MODERATOR:

Christopher Vandome, Senior Research Fellow, Africa Programme, Chatham House

Enhancing nature-based solutions and local action for climate resilience



- Much more needs to be done to empower women and girls, and to give women access to land.
- Climate change exacerbates conflicts over land that could escalate into inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts which are harder to resolve. Hence, root causes of conflicts need to be identified to facilitate their management and resolution.
- Sustainable forests and wetlands require responsible management including sustainable livelihoods for communities.
- Multiple failed seasons because of drought pose huge challenges for sustainable livelihoods without international support.
- Natural solutions taking into account specific local features and know-how are key to the implementation of the SDGs and a just transition; an integrated approach and coordinated sectoral policies are needed.
- Cross-border and regional cooperation and the exchange of experience and good practice need to be strengthened.

Participants in the panel:

Dr Ayan Mahamoud, Senior Programme Coordinator, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

Adenike Oladosu, Agricultural Economist and Climate Justice Activist

Rene Ngongo, Rapporteur, Environment and Natural Resources Commission, Economic & Social Council, Democratic Republic of Congo

Christina Wegelein, Head of Climate and Security Division, German Federal Foreign Office

MODERATOR:

Bob Dewar CMG, Associate Fellow, Africa Programme, Chatham House

Smart business solutions for ecological security



- Funding in the framework of climate finance negotiations should be channelled into energy distribution and made available to African enterprises taking into account sustainable solutions.
- Surveillance and early warning technologies are becoming more affordable and should be more widely applied.
- The circular economy is an opportunity – what is now perceived as waste could be used as a resource. The technologies already exist and decision-makers should be encouraged to include them in their policy-making.
- Development cooperation should be geared towards strengthening the use of technological solutions, both in the form of technical support to the private sector and financial support to states and to civil society to purchase such solutions.

Participants in the panel:

Tomaž Rodič, CEO, Slovenian Centre of Excellence for Space Sciences and Technologies

Matjaž Ivačič, GeoCodis

Dr Aleksandra Lobnik, CEO, Institute for Environmental Protection and Sensors

Mounir Ghribi, PhD, Director of Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Blue Economy, EMUNI

Linda Mabhena-Olagunju, Founder and CEO, DLO Energy Resources Group

MODERATOR:

Elizabeth Maloba, Policy Leader Fellow, European University Institute

Innovative solutions for sustainable development

- Education remains key; it should enable young people to contribute as innovators and problem-solvers, and support their efforts to change consumption habits, which can have a positive impact on climate change.
- EU-Africa cooperation in developing entrepreneurship and new technologies should be strengthened. Several existing initiatives in Africa could benefit from such cooperation, if proper political and financial support was available.

Participants in the panel:

Prof Abdelhamid El-Zoheiry, President EMUNI

Robert Blatnik, MSc, CLP, Jožef Stefan Institute

Jihene Nouairi, young innovator

Patricija Ham, young innovator

Laila Mahmoud, young innovator

MODERATOR:

Jure Tomc, JT Business Development Ltd.

Economic cooperation

A presentation of business clubs, which bring together Slovenian and African companies in order to strengthen business cooperation.

Participants in the panel:

Gilbert Mežnar, Slovenia-Ghana Business Club

Domen Mikša, Slovenia-Tunisia Business Club

Fred Uduma, Slovenia-Nigeria Business Club

Marius Mensah, Slovenia-Ivory Coast Business Club

Nadia Cigale, Slovenia-Cameroon Business Club

MODERATOR:

Rok Tomšič, Head of Department for bilateral economic cooperation, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Slovenia

Business trip

On the sidelines of the conference, the participants visited the Slovenian company Iskraemeco, which has a long-standing presence in African markets.

Cultural programme

Ghanaian singer Wiyaala performed with Slovenian guitarist Miha Petric at the opening event of the conference. In the evening, the singer performed with Slovenian musicians at the concert, which was part of a day-long celebration of African culture organised by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the African diaspora in Slovenia.

Wiyaala is one of the biggest stars of the African music scene. On her 2019 European tour, which she kicked off in Ljubljana, she teamed up with some of the best musicians on the Slovenian music scene. Together they formed the Yaga Yaga project and performed at numerous festivals across Europe. The Yaga Yaga project is a symbol of the successful cultural cooperation between Slovenia and Africa.



Capacity building on climate change, peace and security

As part of the Conference, training on climate change, peace and security took place from 24 to 26 April 2023, organised by the Peace Operations Training Centre in Slovenia and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. 33 participants from 25 countries, including 24 participants of the Africa Day Conference from African countries, gained a deeper understanding of security risks associated with climate change.

