



**ECOSOC**

United Nations Economic and Social Council

**TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES**

**Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)  
and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)  
on the Linkages between Climate Change and Challenges to  
Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in the Sahel**

---

**Remarks at the Opening Segment  
H.E. Ambassador Inga Rhonda King  
President of the Economic and Social Council**

**Tuesday, 13 November 2018, 10:00  
Conference Room 2**

Your Excellency Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission  
Your Excellency Deputy Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you to the Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission on the Linkages between Climate Change and Challenges to Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in the Sahel.

This meeting builds on the joint meetings of ECOSOC and the PBC of the past two years that focused, respectively, on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace and on the Situation in the Sahel.

The Sahel is characterized by major complex and multidimensional challenges. Insecurity remains prevalent and, as a result of armed conflict, violence and military operations, human suffering and humanitarian needs continue to escalate. Some 4.9 million people have been displaced this year, a three-fold increase in less than three years, while 24 million people require humanitarian assistance throughout the region.

The continuing deterioration of the situation is the result of underlying causes, such as poverty, socio-economic exclusion and deprivation, lack of access to basic social services, inequalities, including gender inequality. Lack of economic opportunities, growing unemployment, poor natural resource management and weak governance also have harmful impacts.

The region is also one of the most environmentally degraded in the world with temperature increases projected to be 1.5 times higher than the rest of the world. It is largely dependent on rain-fed agriculture, and is regularly hit by droughts and floods with enormous consequences on people's food security. As we speak, some 33 million people are food insecure while 4.7 million children under 5 suffer from acute malnutrition.

The special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on Global Warming of 1.5°C issued last month is a stark reminder of the risks posed by climate change, particularly in places that already bear disproportionate economic and

social challenges to sustainable development like the Sahel. The report analyses the risks associated with global warming, noting that in the Sahel, risks of food shortages would be lower if global warming would be limited at 1.5°C as opposed to 2°C. The report also notes that some of the worst impacts on sustainable development are expected to be felt, inter alia, among agricultural dependent livelihoods, indigenous people, children and the elderly, poor labourers and poor urban dwellers in African cities.

With rapid population growth estimated at 2.8 per cent per year in an environment of shrinking natural resources, including land and water resources, climate change in the Sahel can compound existing vulnerabilities. This risks generating new conflicts and forced migration, issues which already characterise the region. This situation requires our urgent attention.

The meeting today offers us the opportunity to discuss the linkages between climate change and peacebuilding and sustaining peace, an issue which merits further consideration. The UN Member States have long recognised the intrinsic link between peace and development. They have been placing increasing emphasis on the concept of sustaining peace, with the twin resolutions of the GA and Security Council on the review of the peacebuilding architecture.

At the United Nations, last July, the Security Council itself held an open debate which looked at the linkages between climate change and security. The Security Council's debate focused on the security implications of climate change. In our meeting today, we aim to explore what can be done to effectively tackle the challenges posed by climate change in promoting sustainable development and peace, focusing on the Sahel region.

The Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission continue remaining engaged in the Sahel to ensure renewed national, regional and international efforts put in place to tackle the multi-faceted challenges facing the Sahel.

This meeting today will provide the opportunity for participants to share examples of successful conflict-sensitive mitigation and adaptation measures to address climate change and sustain peace. We will also explore ways to enhance the coherence of

the United Nations' system support to the countries in the Sahel to strengthen their resilience to climate change. It gives us the opportunity to reflect also on the role that the United Nations can play in finding creative and innovative solutions to support climate action in the Sahel, including in the context of cross-border solutions. In this reflection, we should be guided by the premise that successfully addressing climate action besides being a goal in itself, would also help us reach the other Sustainable Development Goals including those related to water, energy, food and land. It would also contribute to poverty eradication which are so relevant in the Sahelian context.

Our discussion today will provide inputs to upcoming meetings addressing climate change, including the July 2019 High Level Political Forum, which will review the implementation of SDG13 on climate change, and the Climate Change Summit that will be convened by the Secretary-General in September 2019.

We are honoured to have with us the Deputy Secretary-General.

Madam, your participation in our meeting shows your continuous interest in ECOSOC-PBC joint initiatives to promote sustainable development and peace. You will bring the United Nations' vision and efforts on climate action and their relevance for the Sahel region.

We are also pleased to have with us Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General for the Sahel. He will provide us with an overview of the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel including efforts to successfully address climate change and promote sustainable development and peace.

In our meeting, we will have the opportunity to also hear the perspectives and experiences of local communities in Chad and Burkina Faso from Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Coordinator of the Peul Indigenous Women and Peoples Association of Chad – who joins us via videoconference, and Mr. Ahmed Aziz Diallo, Mayor of Dori, in Burkina Faso.

I now have the pleasure of giving the floor to my co-chair, Ambassador Ion Jinga, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, to deliver his opening remarks.

I thank you!