

Joint CPS Pledges Stakeout on Yemen
13 November 2024 – UK Presidency

Today, the Security Council convenes to discuss the situation in Yemen. On this occasion, the Security Council Joint Pledges on Climate, Peace and Security – France, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Switzerland, the United States and my own country, the United Kingdom – have come together to draw attention to the nexus between climate, peace and security in Yemen, highlighting the links between climate change and Yemen's worsening humanitarian situation, ahead of today's briefing.

The protracted conflict in Yemen has led to the internal displacement of over 4.5 million people, alongside significant damage to infrastructure and economic collapse. 18.2 million Yemenis – over half of the population – are suffering from food insecurity and are in need of humanitarian assistance to survive. 75% of these are women and children. This dire humanitarian situation is being exacerbated by climate change-related hazards, such as increased temperatures, drought, and desertification, as well as erratic rainfall patterns and flash flooding.

Access to potable water is one of Yemen's most significant challenges. According to the World Bank, it is estimated that 18 million people lack access to safe water and adequate sanitation services in Yemen. Yemen is already one of the most water-stressed countries in the world. Yet the country's water supply is threatened by a range of climate change impacts, including sea level rise, which can cause salt-water intrusion into fresh-water sources in coastal areas. Moreover, worsening heavy rains and flooding have heightened the risks posed by displaced landmines and other unexploded ordnance, and has increased the risk of cholera transmission through the contamination of water supplies. Depletion of groundwater reserves, and the increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events, have led to the degradation of agricultural land. This in turn worsens food insecurity, which is a driver of displacement and local conflict, as competition over scarce resources increases.

We recognise the multifaceted linkages between climate change, conflict, displacement and increased poverty and vulnerability that all contribute to the worsening security and humanitarian situation in Yemen. Prevention, management and resolution of local disputes related to land, water and natural resources is essential. We commend the indispensable role of women in this regard and encourage their continued engagement. An inclusive political settlement under the auspices of Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Yemen is the only way to bring sustainable peace and long-term stability to Yemen, and to address these challenges.

We, together with the international community, will seek to address the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss, and enhance sustainable management of natural resources in Yemen as part of broader humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts. Additionally, coordination of global efforts to build local resilience to climate hazards and strengthen disaster risk management and response should be enhanced, including through implementing early warning systems and improved monitoring of groundwater resources. We call on the wider UN system to support efforts towards more sustainable food systems, efficient water and energy use, as well as increased renewable energy usage. We will work to address the interconnected challenges of conflict and climate change to ensure that immediate and uninhibited humanitarian assistance can continue to be provided alongside achieving a stable and sustainable Yemen for the future.