




A DECADE OF CAUX DIALOGUES ON ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY 2011 - 2020



**Impact,
Recommendations
And Pointers To The
Future**

By Alan Channer PhD



Executive Summary

This report focuses on lessons learned over a 10-year span of Dialogues on Environment and Security at the international conference centre in Caux, Switzerland. They are lessons of both process and content. The report commences with a brief summary of the historical and philosophical context of Caux. It goes on to outline the methodology and trajectory of the dialogue series and then unfolds its global impact. From there the lessons learned are distilled, before elucidating key policy recommendations and pointers for the future.

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Context and genesis

A long vista of hope

To step off the small mountain train in the village of Caux and look out over Lake Geneva is already to have an expanded sense of possibility. At the end of the 19th century, the Caux Palace Hotel played host to some of the great personalities of the day, but its glory as a hotel faded and sank with the onset of the Second World War and economic crisis.

In 1946, several hundred Swiss families pooled their resources to buy the building as a centre of reconciliation for the movement known then as Moral Re-Armament, now Initiatives of Change. The first delegation of Germans to receive permission to leave Germany after the war came to Caux. The Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the leadership of countries colonized by Britain and France and now striving for independence, trades union leaders and management all met in Caux in subsequent years.

The philosopher Gabriel Marcel (whose thinking influenced Pope John Paul II among others) said in his book *Fresh Hope for the World*¹, that '**Caux brings together a remarkable conjunction of the intimate and the global**'.

While the main foci of Caux have been conflict transformation, reconciliation and the centrality of the human factor in human security, a multitude of dialogues to foster mutual understanding and collaboration between disciplines, sectors and generations have taken place there over the last seven decades.



The Caux Forum

unapologetically seeks to inject an ethical dimension into the public policy space.

Kevin Rudd, Prime Minister of Australia

The root causes of human insecurity

In 2010, Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, a former Special Envoy to the UN Secretary General for Somalia and Deputy Secretary General of the Arab League, proposed a vision that Caux could provide a platform to address the root causes of human insecurity. Sahnoun identified several key themes, including just governance, healing wounded memory and sustainable living.

Sahnoun shared this vision with the Human Security Division of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and a lasting partnership was forged. State Secretaries and Heads of the Human Security Division participated regularly in the Caux Fora, and multiple conference sessions, as well as off-the-record meetings, were organized by the Swiss FDFA in partnership with Caux.

Many public figures rallied to support the endeavour, for example the former Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd, who commented, '**The Caux Forum unapologetically seeks to inject an ethical dimension into the public policy space.**'

Context and genesis



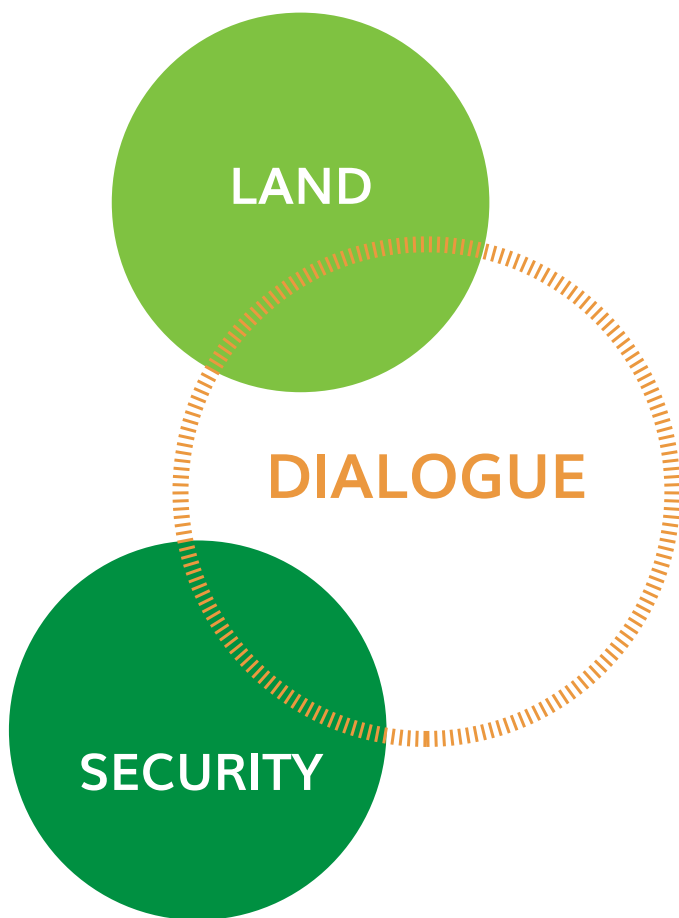
Another who responded with his own complementary vision was Luc Gnacadja, then Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Noting that **'continuous and intensive degradation of the environment and related loss of ecosystem services can have major implications for public security at the national level, and threaten international stability,'** Gnacadja concluded that **'soil security is a prerequisite for human security'.**

Gnacadja saw in Caux a platform from which to launch a bid to **'Restore Earth's Degraded Land'.** **'The unique strength of Caux,'** he observed at the time, **'is that this place and atmosphere offer us the opportunity to think about potential.'**

Two full days on 'Restoring Earth's Degraded Lands' formed a key part of the Caux Forum for Human Security in 2011 and 2012. In response to the interest generated by these events and spurred by the observation that mutual understanding and cooperation was largely absent between the security and the land management sectors, the Caux Dialogues on Land and Security were born.

In 2013, 200 participants from all continents, representing government, business and civil society, came together for four days to explore the potential of sustainable land management as a driver of peace, development and climate change mitigation. The efforts have continued to generate considerable impact to this day, as this report goes on to demonstrate.

Methodology and trajectory



The fundamental premise of the Caux Dialogues on Land and Security (CDLS) was that bringing the 'worlds' of land and security together in dialogue on shared concerns would generate fresh insights and inform new solutions to seemingly intractable problems. As the Dialogues proceeded different strands, fora and sub-dialogues – as outlined below – evolved organically, from one year to the next.

All these strands had their roots in the distinctive 'Caux approach', with its emphasis on (a) the centrality of the human individual as an agent of social change, (b) the importance of encounter and honest dialogue for building trust and (c) the possibility of personal transformation. The approach is a self-organizing, responsive and organic one, building teams around ideas and evolving themes to meet emergent needs, as these clarify.

A loose steering group developed to take forward the convergent vision of Mohamed Sahnoun and Luc Gnacadja, led by Dr Martin Frick, then German Ambassador to the UN agencies in Bonn (UNFCCC and UNCCD), veteran British environmental journalist Geoffrey Lean and others. Year on year from 2013 to date, this steering group conceived and managed a Dialogue on Land and Security in Caux, fuelled by the vision that the restoration of land can have multiple environmental and social benefits. This group consolidated into a programme of Initiatives of Change called Initiatives for Land, Lives and Peace. UNCCD and then the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) became co-hosts of the annual dialogues.

2011 - 2020: A journey of dialogue

What are the human connections between poverty, conflict and environmental degradation?

This question set the scene for a decade of dialogue that has undoubtedly been ahead of the curve on the global debate – and may have influenced its evolution. Active participation from countries as diverse as Ukraine, Syria, North Korea, the Maldives, Guatemala, Chad and Burkina Faso is testimony to the convening power of the topic, as well as of Caux itself.

As the dialogues progressed, a focus developed on the potential of land restoration to avert mass migration from degrading rural landscapes. In 2017, leading actors in the private sector and innovators in financial technologies explored the potential of their role in building landscapes,

livelihoods and human security. Year on year, the importance of the climate crisis grew in prominence. In 2019, the Dialogue changed its name to the Dialogue on Environment and Security, broadening the discussion to ecosystem restoration as a whole. In 2020, the Swiss FDFA actively joined the Caux Dialogue on Environment and Security, co-organizing two online panels on security and land in Francophone sub-Saharan Africa.

Eminent keynote speakers were complemented by grassroots practitioners presenting case-studies of solutions throughout the dialogue process. 'Fireside conversations' between leaders in the field – including UNCCD Executive Secretary Monique Barbut and IUCN Executive Director Julia Marton-Lefèvre – and young people fostered vibrant inter-generational exchanges. Emerging entrepreneurs and innovators connected to consider new technology, project up-scaling and long-term viability. Fresh inspiration was catalyzed and new solution-oriented alliances were forged.



Impact and outreach

The decade of Caux Dialogues on Environment and Security led to the following outcomes:

The Kenya Dialogues on Land and Security in 2016 and 2017

'Without peace, we cannot have development,' the Deputy Governor of Baringo County, Mathew Tuitoek, told the Caux Dialogue in 2013. He brought with him a five-strong delegation funded by the Baringo County Government.

The following year, the Deputy Governor of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Dr Gabriel Lagat, brought a further delegation. During his keynote address, Lagat made a request for a Dialogue on Land and Security in Kenya, and he invited the Caux Dialogue team and the Initiatives of Change team in Kenya to co-organize it with the county governments.

The two Dialogues on Land and Security in Kenya – in Kabarnet, Baringo, in 2016 and Iten, Elgeyo Marakwet, in 2017 – were landmark events that influenced local and national policy. The Dialogues were funded by the governments of the two counties, the National Drought Management Authority, the National Land Commission and other Kenyan institutions. Highlights of the second Dialogue were broadcast on national television primetime news.

Engagement in West and Central Africa

Participants from West and Central Africa have been regular contributors throughout the Dialogue series. This was made possible, in part, by collaboration with the Just Governance conferences in Caux, to which the Swiss FDFA brought, over consecutive years, a distinctive mixture of practitioners from the peace, security and governance fields in francophone Africa, particularly the Sahel.

A case study of rebuilding environmental governance through 'institutional bricolage' in Darfur, supported by UNEP, was presented. The film *Tchad – un chemin vers l'espoir*, made in collaboration with UNDP and featuring work supported by the Swiss FDFA in Chad, was launched at the CDLS in 2014. The Geneva-based Fondation Pro Victimis supported follow-up activities in Chad as a result.

Two high-level online dialogues, facilitated in partnership with the Swiss FDFA in July and December 2020, addressed the inter-related challenges of land governance and violent extremism in the Sahel. The second event, chaired by Luc Gnacadja, featured Bouaré Bintou, Minister for Women and Family Affairs in Mali, and Oumar Sylla, Acting Head of UN Habitat Africa. These two dialogues consolidated the francophone dimension of the Caux Dialogues on Environment and Security and brought to light new approaches and avenues of exploration.

Impact and outreach

The book 'Land Restoration: Reclaiming Landscapes for a Sustainable Future' (Elsevier 2015)²

This academic volume on land restoration was inspired by the vision of the Dialogues, at which the co-editors met, and it was officially launched at the Dialogue in 2015. The volume brings together practitioners from NGOs, academia, governments and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in an exchange of lessons which enrich the academic understanding of the issues and the solution sets available.

It includes on-the-ground examples garnered from diverse areas, including the Sahel, Southeast Asia and the USA, many of which were presented during the Dialogues, and it offers practical tools for designing and implementing restoration/re-greening processes. Hard copies of the book are now available in 570 libraries around the world.

The signing of a cooperative agreement between United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature

Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of UNCCD, and Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Executive Director of IUCN, flanked by delegates from Sahelian countries, plant a tree to mark the signing of an MOU between UNCCD and IUCN.

Desertification is a threat to world peace and sustainability, and that is why IUCN is joining with UNCCD. Together we will continue to work towards a land degradation neutral world.

With these words, Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Executive Director of IUCN, signed a memorandum of cooperation with Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of UNCCD, at the Caux Dialogue on Land and Security in 2013.



Impact and outreach

The signing of a cooperative agreement between Drynet (an alliance of NGOs combating desertification) and WOCAT (World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies).

'A very appropriate place to sign such an agreement!' said Hanspeter Liniger of WOCAT (a global network fostering sustainable land management). The Drynet report on the Caux Dialogue of 2014 stated: **'Dialogues provide a safe and nurturing environment for strengthening values, sharing ideas and getting inspired.'**

A partnership between Excellent Development UK, Initiatives of Change Kenya and the Community Centre for Peace and Development in Baringo, Kenya

Excellent Development, a British NGO which builds sand dams in Africa, teamed up with Initiatives of Change Kenya after connecting at the Dialogue in 2013. The purpose of the collaboration was to bring divided communities in Baringo County together in a single NGO, the Community Centre for Peace and Development, and to address the root causes of social tension through the construction of sand dams concurrently with trust-building initiatives. The sand dams have not yet materialized due to logistical constraints, but inter-community trustbuilding and awareness of the importance and practical possibilities of water conservation in Baringo were strengthened.

The Emerging Leaders Programme

An incubator programme to encourage and support young people to take leadership in valuing ecosystem services was an important strand of the Dialogues from 2014–2018. Each year, 12–16 young leaders were selected to share their ideas for environmental and security start-ups during the conference, while benefiting from feedback and mentoring. Over time, these emerging leaders have started successful businesses and NGOs in their own communities. Several came back to Caux to contribute to subsequent Dialogues.

The policy-makers' roundtable

Two high-level roundtable meetings to discuss the intersection between land and security were jointly convened with UNCCD and IUCN. See:

[Caux Dialogue Land and Security \(CDLS\) 2018 Round Table Declaration](#)

[UNCCD News - Caux Dialogue on Land and Security: creating landscapes of peace](#)

Impact and outreach

Participation at the UN Climate Change Conference in Poland (COP24)

In an event hosted by the African Development Bank at the 24th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the CDES organizing team, in partnership with the World Agroforestry Centre, presented a side-event on 'Trust – the essential ingredient for productive landscapes and climate resilience'. Discussion focused on experiences of strengthening the governance of natural resources as a key both to sequestering carbon and creating resilient communities.

The Summer Academies on Land, Security and Climate

In 2019, Initiatives of Change Switzerland and Initiatives for Land, Lives and Peace joined forces with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy to organize and deliver a world-class Summer Academy on Land, Security and Climate. The vision for this Summer Academy is to forge a global network of practitioners with a strong understanding of the interplay between land restoration, human security and climate resilience, equipped with the tools, knowledge and approach to bring interdisciplinary solutions to complex problems at multiple levels.

Through the sharing of case studies on local solutions, for example watershed management in India and community-based natural resource management in Kenya and Namibia, South-South learning and

collaboration has been fostered, among other impacts. Cornerstone funding is provided by the Africa Climate Change Fund of the African Development Bank. See:

[Summer Academy on Land, Security and Climate is launched in Geneva and Caux](#)



Impact in the lives and work of individuals

It is impossible to evaluate the ripple effect of inspiration and alliance-building that transpired in the life and work of over 1000 participants. Many of the impact stories are captured on the Caux website, as for example, here:

[Patrick Worms: Hard issues in a magical setting](#)

Lessons learned

None of the lessons learned, in terms of policy recommendations, would have emerged without a conducive overall process. These policy recommendations will, in turn, need appropriate tools and approaches to facilitate their implementation. This series of dialogues brought out lessons in (a) how best to optimize the overall process, (b) approaches and tools with which to catalyze positive transformation at the environment-security nexus and (c) specific policy and content recommendations.

Optimizing the overall dialogue process

The distinctive value of the safe space

'It's a very safe, secure space, where people can discuss and bounce ideas with people they would not normally meet,' noted Ian Johnson, Secretary General of the Club of Rome. Undoubtedly, the richness of the exchanges and the plethora of new collaborative initiatives can be traced to 'the place and the atmosphere', as Luc Gnacadja put it, of Caux. This dimension, constituted by the surpassing natural beauty of the location, the devoted hospitality and a track-record of seven decades of trustbuilding, is one key to the success of the dialogues – but is not a combination which is easy to replicate.

The benefits of a sustained, iterative process

A distinctive quality of these dialogues is that they have been sustained, and have built upon each other year on year, over a decade. As Dr Peter Rundell, Stabilisation Advisor, UNDP Libya, former Head of UK's Department for International Development in Iraq, observed: **'This 10-year span of Dialogues has made possible an evolution of conversations where practitioners and theoreticians exchange across silos, apply fresh insights to their own situations, and then bring their fresh experiences and ideas back to the intersectional forum. This kind of spiral synergy needs the consistent safe space and interdisciplinary setting to bring maximum benefit.'**

The imperative of inter-disciplinary dialogue

'Dialogues provide a safe and nurturing environment for strengthening values, sharing ideas and getting inspired.' This was the conclusion of the DRYNET report of the Dialogue in 2014 – and it points to the value of the construct of 'dialogue', as compared to other more presentational and less interactive conference formats, to generate new ideas and possibilities.



Lessons learned

Approaches and tools to catalyze positive transformation at the environment-security nexus

Multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration

Holistic solutions cannot be generated without multi-stakeholder engagement and they cannot be implemented without multi-stakeholder collaboration. Purposefully constructing these engagements around an environment-security axis, as well as around the lawmaker-policy developer-field practitioner axis, will become increasingly important in ideation and planning. As Dr Martin Frick, former German Ambassador to the UN in Bonn, expressed it: **'A shared understanding and vision can only be achieved with an inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach, including such diverse actors as business, political leadership, foreign donors, the development and security communities and of course the people of the drylands themselves.'**

Trustbuilding

One of the main reasons that multi-stakeholder engagement fails to get off the ground, or that, when it does, collaboration breaks down, is lack of trust.

As Mathew Tuitoek, Deputy Governor of Baringo, Kenya, put it: 'We need to regenerate land and bring together communities. The key issue is not just the state of the resources but also the state of the relationships among people.'

According to Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General, International Organization

for Migration, **'Good governance and effective public policies are needed but only possible if the lack of trust in and within governments is addressed. The rule of law and the inclusion of civil society are key for building knowledge and taking action to preserve land and security.'**

Dr Martin Frick noted that **'Caux's ample experience of trust and communit-building based on values common to all major faiths proved to be highly relevant.'**

Change in an individual can propel social change

Trust can be built when individual attitudes change and one side reaches out to the other with the will to collaborate. This was amply demonstrated by Nigerian peacemakers Imam Dr Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor Dr James Wuye, laureates of the Fondation Chirac Prize for Conflict Prevention.

'It is the same problem right across the Sahel – the same human challenge, about land and access to resources. The political actors misuse identity. The paradigm "my enemy's friend is my enemy" has to change. Without forgiveness there is no future. We must talk to those who hate us. The things we complain about are our own creation... It is not too late. Go do the little you can, as that little can save the planet,' Imam Muhammad Ashafa told participants during the 2014 Dialogue.

Lessons learned

Approaches and tools to catalyze positive transformation at the environment-security nexus

Bottom-up solutions can spread given the enabling conditions

Individual action at a grassroots level can scale up and generate widespread change. The spread of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) exemplified by Tony Rinaudo, Senior Climate Advisor at World Vision, demonstrates this. **'Our initial efforts [in Niger] met with failure,'** he told the Dialogue, **'but our attention was drawn to desert bushes which we had ignored as useless. The bushes turned out to be clusters of shoots from the buried stumps of long-felled trees... When pruned down to a single stem and the animals kept away, they shot up into substantial trees within four years.'** FMNR spread from farmer to farmer across 21 million hectares of Niger.

The role of serendipity in policy development

Successful policies are not always the result of foresight, good planning and effective implementation. The role of luck – which has played a huge role in scientific breakthroughs and successful political careers – is often overlooked. The success of the Kenya Dialogues on Land and Security was in part a matter of good timing. Kenya's 2010 Constitution created 47 new counties, empowering their governments to take over key aspects of land administration and human security, which are both critical issues in the arid and semi-arid counties.

These newly formed county governments were actively looking for tools and networks to help address their land and security challenges at the point when they encountered the Caux Dialogues on Land and Security.

The dictum of Louis Pasteur applies: **'Fortune favours the prepared mind'**.

The place of the online format in dialogue and policy development

The COVID-19 pandemic has of course generated a huge surge in online meetings and conferencing. Feedback from online Summer Academy on Land, Security and Climate in 2020 and from the two online Sahel workshops is that such engagement is productive and cost-effective; it will continue to have a far more important role than it did pre-pandemic. The question now becomes how in-person and online formats can be most effectively integrated.

Lessons learned

Specific policy recommendations for the environment-security nexus

Many issues were raised – pastoralist-farmer conflict transformation, indigenous land rights, community-building for watershed management, conflict minerals, fisheries and ocean conservation, urban-rural tensions – and many recommendations were generated. Some are still in formulation. The following stand out.

The significance of the land-security nexus

Ten consecutive years of exploring the land-security nexus exposes both its significance and how much better it needs to be understood. As Ambassador Ahmedou Ould Abdallah from Mauritania, former UN mediator-in-residence and UN Special Representative to Burundi, West Africa and Somalia, expressed it in 2014: **'For the past few years, violent extremism has deepened its roots in this vast region [the Sahel].... Understanding this situation and addressing its consequences are the subject of heated local and international debates. However, the issue of environment, especially degraded land, seems to be the missing link... The impact of climate and environmental factors is often either totally ignored or minimized when addressing the deep social, political and economic crisis.'**

Jamie Shea, then Deputy Assistant Secretary General for new security challenges at NATO, emphasized that, **'To ensure human security for people on the ground, land restoration is central for peace and stability. Particularly as climate change exacerbates existing vulnerabilities, land management is the crucial issue if we are to stop the vicious circle of migration, organized crime, terrorism, and the drug trade.'**

Addressing land restoration and human security concurrently must become central

to government policy in all regions where land degradation and lack of human security are concurrent challenges, and most notably in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

The centrality of the land-security nexus for climate resilience

Furthermore, resilience to climate change in such regions can only be realized when land is sustainably managed and where human security flourishes.

In response to the flooding, land degradation and security risks exacerbated by climate change in the eastern Himalayan region, during his keynote address in 2019 Chief Minister Conrad Sangma of Meghalaya, India, invited the CDES team to engage in his state to help mitigate and adapt to climate change. (Implementation is currently on hold because of the pandemic.)

All of humanity is dependent on the soil, not least those who subsist from their own farming in the marginal drylands of the world. As Professor Rattan Lal, Director of the Carbon Management and Sequestration Center at Ohio State University, USA, put it: **'The choices we have already made about the way we lead our lives have been slowly eating away at the very support system that enables us to live and breathe. I am even more convinced about "Peak Soil" than about "Peak Oil".'**

Lessons learned

Specific policy recommendations for the environment-security nexus

There are no durable solutions without holistic solutions

'The responses to this catastrophe lie in the hands of committed citizens, supported by the work of able scientists, experts and activists like most of you in this room,' Ahmedou Ould Abdallah stated in 2014. Holistic solutions need to be forged, lest land restoration efforts are undermined by conflict and insecurity, or peacebuilding efforts are undermined by environmental degradation. Populations living in and from landscapes are whole systems, and only a systems approach, or 'solving for pattern', will make a long-term positive difference.

The private sector has a key role

Creating positive incentives and minimizing perverse incentives is critical to improving livelihoods and regenerating the environment. The private sector can play a critical role at the intersection of land restoration and human security. Bernd Wilke, Top Topic Manager Partnering for Food Security, at Swiss Re., put it like this: **'Managing risks costs less than managing a crisis; [therefore] keep people who are already making a living from the land, on the land.... Incorporate business early and develop initiatives together to build something sustainable. Otherwise, we are always in crisis mode.'**

Climate finance as a potential new instrument for positive transformation

The international community has pledged billions of dollars to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Restoring land is one of the main pathways available to both sequester carbon and increase the resilience of landscapes to climate change impacts. Furthermore, new financial technologies are making it possible to make results-based payments directly to small-scale farmers via mobile phones. Climate finance thus becomes a potential catalyst for positive change for landscapes, livelihoods and, ultimately, for peace and security.



Key conclusions

This ten-year span of Dialogues provides a strong basis of evidence from which to draw some clear conclusions:

- The complexity of the land-security-climate nexus means that in any given context, opinion is likely to differ on how best to generate solutions. For example, climate change can be used as an excuse or a foil for failed or inadequate governance policies, as in the case of farmer-pastoralist conflict in the middle belt of Nigeria, or Darfur. At the same time, the nexus has a convening power which can bring divided actors together.
- The land-security nexus is of critical importance wherever there is (a) both ecological and social fragility, (b) a population dependent on the land and (c) ill-defined or contested land tenure. This is the case across much of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, in parts of South and Central Asia and in the dry corridor of Central America. In these regions, addressing the land-security nexus needs to be a high priority for governments and their multilateral and bilateral partners. It is for these regions, and first and foremost the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, that the recommendations below are made.
- Furthermore, only by addressing the land-security nexus in these regions can climate resilience be improved.
- Climate finance that incentivizes land restoration can serve as a catalyst not only for improving climate resilience, but also for improving livelihoods, and ultimately peace and security.
- To forge and implement effective intersectoral policies and holistic solutions requires multi-stakeholder engagement processes of dialogue, policy formulation, action planning and evaluation. Government, civil society, the research community, the private sector, traditional leaders, faith leaders, with strong representation of women and of youth, together with international partners, need to be involved and buy into these processes.



Recommendations

Context

While these conclusions may be compelling, implementing recommendations that will have concrete benefits has unfortunately become more difficult during the decade since the dialogues were first conceived. The Sahel region, for example, is politically less stable, many land restoration efforts have been undermined by conflicts which were themselves triggered by poor land governance, and climate effects are worsening. Meanwhile, the international order is weakening at the same time as COVID-19 has struck. Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy 2021-24 puts it like this: **'The international normative framework and the multilateral approach are coming under pressure from countries that favour bilaterally negotiated solutions or increased protectionism . Democratization, the rule of law and respect for human rights are being challenged on a regular basis.'**

At the same time, we are seeing a strengthening of regional multilateral institutions, a growing role for subnational or local entities such as cities, and the emergence of new grassroots movements. Nurturing regional strategies and new grassroots movements, with both the environment and security sectors contributing to them in an integrated fashion, is a key pathway for action going forward. The launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration in 2021 may provide additional impetus. Research and action research will be critical to understanding and amplifying these dynamics, not least so that local solutions can inform global policymaking and vice versa.

Action steps

- Multi-stakeholder dialogue, engagement, policy development and action planning processes need to be encouraged across the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. These can be partly online. Switzerland is in an ideal position (by virtue of its neutrality and track record in humanitarian action and peacebuilding), to facilitate such national and regional processes, perhaps in partnership with the convening power of the United Nations. The convening power of the land-security nexus theme will have cohesive effects in itself.
- Mediation and conflict resolution skills, human rights awareness (notably for women), and transitional and restorative justice mechanisms need to be built into the design and implementation of land restoration programmes in order to increase their effectiveness in socially fragile and post-conflict regions.
- Human security interventions and capacity-building need to incorporate natural resource management skills and an understanding of environmental impacts into their design and programming, in order to realize genuine benefits for rural populations.

These efforts need to be coordinated with other development to avoid what the International Crisis Group has termed a 'traffic jam' of initiatives, which can have the collective impact of overwhelming the very state structures that they are meant to assist.



Outlook and final note

The importance of holistic inter-disciplinary solutions at the nexus of environment and security moved towards the mainstream during the lifespan of these dialogues. Talk of 'silo busting' is now commonplace. The set of ideas around 'environmental peacebuilding' is gaining momentum.

Although the situation on the ground in many parts of the world has worsened, many key international actors now appreciate the importance of the land-security nexus. For example, the World Bank's report of 2021, 'Sustainable Land Management in the Sahel: Lessons from the Sahel and West Africa Program in Support of the Great Green Wall'³, states: **'The linkages between land degradation and conflict should be better appreciated by development partners and prioritized to increase development impact in Fragile and Conflict States. One of the most readily available assets to kick-start post-conflict stabilization and recovery is often natural capital. There is clearly room to specifically design projects to be sensitive to ongoing rural conflicts and design implementation arrangements that account for the highly-localized causes of conflicts across the Sahel.'**

Further, a recent report by NATO on the Sahel notes that **'Terrorism and extremist violence are not the primary threats to the Sahel population... The weak or non-existent rule of law, declining human security, and ever-widening poverty and hunger must be addressed. This suggests that support for the region must help the region address these issues in addition to support on matters of hard security. Robust social contracts are needed between the Sahel**

states and their citizens. Governments must restore their relevance by providing essential services. More political energy and resources from the international community are needed to support these ends. It is up to the countries of the Sahel to restore the bond of trust with their populations – trust without which no viable political project is possible.'⁴

lofC Switzerland and the Swiss FDFA have pioneered something very distinctive through these Dialogues in Caux. These lessons learned can, of course, be shared in forthcoming international meetings, notably Geneva Peace Week (November 2021), the second International Environmental Peacebuilding conference in Geneva (February 2022) and the Stockholm +50 conference (June 2022). The UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, which has just started, will really mean something if these lessons learned are put into practice.

Just as valuable as the lessons learned during the process is the strong network of diverse stakeholders who have participated, most pertinently from fragile regions like the Sahel. In continuing to work hand-in-hand with these stakeholders, lofC Switzerland and the Swiss FDFA are uniquely positioned to make a valuable contribution to the future of these regions.



The author

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express particular gratitude to Carol Mottet of the Swiss FDFA for her guidance and detailed feedback. Her insights greatly heightened the document. I would also like to thank Rainer Gude of the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform for his encouragement at the outset, and Stephanie Buri and Nick Foster, Co-Director Generals of Initiatives of Change Switzerland, for their on-going support. I am most grateful to Luc Gnacadja, Chris Evans and Geoffrey Lean for taking the trouble to review the document and for sharing key points of feedback. It has been a great pleasure to work with my photographer daughter, Leela Channer, and to use several of her photographs (on pages 1, 6, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18). The rest of the photos are from the archive of the CAUX-Initiatives of Change Foundation, including the above image by Adrien Giovannelli.

It has also been a great pleasure to work with Taya Seidler of Earthbanc on the report design.

I very much hope that this evaluation will contribute to strengthening collaboration between the land and security sectors in the multiple contexts where such collaboration can ameliorate livelihoods, restore ecosystems, prevent conflict and consolidate peace.

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Initiatives of Change Switzerland would like to thank the Peace and Human Rights Division of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland, for its continuous support over more than a decade of the Caux Forum, including support for this report.

