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As a practising climate diplomat, I very much welcome the debate on Climate Diplomacy as an opportunity to reflect on how my Government and I can improve on our craft, and edge the world closer towards a safer climate. Nonetheless, I have mixed feelings about this topic: the need for climate diplomacy - and indeed its emergence as a concept - is a recognition that the international system is failing to adequately tackle the problem. What we are talking about is how to address and rectify what is currently a big foreign policy failure.

My work on climate change has brought home some very difficult political realities to me:

• One: International interest in tackling climate change ebbs and flows, but each time it comes back to a high point, the situation is even more urgent and critical than the last time;

• Two: Climate Diplomacy is most effective when you are able to speak to someone else about his or her own political and national interests. Sadly, appeals to morality and fairness are generally ineffective.

• Three: Only the visionary leaders see this problem for what it is – the challenge of our generation. It requires real vision to see beyond short-term political cycles to address a longer-term problem, no matter how dramatic. It is not human nature to adjust behaviour for a problem that is likely to hit home in 20, 30 or 40 years’ time – especially if the worst of the impacts are in someone else’s backyard.

I believe very strongly that climate diplomacy begins at home. The Marshall Islands are lying just two meters above sea level out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Our territory and national identity is under threat. Our people are starting to ask the hard questions, and with increasing regularity: What is happening to my country; where will I go; what will my children do?

Therefore, in the aftermath of the Copenhagen failure, and the realization that things were not looking good, we decided that we needed to take our future into our own hands – and put Climate Diplomacy at the top of our list of foreign policy objectives.

The Marshall Islands’ Climate Diplomacy strategy includes the following three key elements:

• First, enhancing our technical progress in the UNFCCC negotiations, working through AOSIS, as a way to raise our presence and influence, and give us more regular access to the small room and inter-sessional Ministerial discussions that are often crucial in determining the general course of climate negotiations;

• Second, enhancing our international profile, primarily through strategic engagement in the world’s pre-eminent diplomatic forums, such as the Security Council, where I spoke in February 2013, and using academic conferences and other public events to raise awareness and make noise in the international media.

• Third, ensuring that climate change is a central message of every one of the Marshall Islands’ diplomatic encounters, whether bilateral, regional or multilateral. The aim is to build political momentum and catalyse domestic action in other countries to accelerate the global response.
This means that climate diplomacy is also about economic diplomacy and energy diplomacy, and when times are tough, aid diplomacy.

“Climate diplomacy begins at home, but it requires creative thinking, constant lobbying, and technical substance.”

One of our best diplomatic opportunities to do this came in September 2013 when we hosted the biggest Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in history. The result was the Majuro Declaration for Climate Leadership - adopted by the 14 Pacific Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), Australia and New Zealand, and a host of other countries including the US, the EU, Mexico and now Japan, who together represent more than a third of the world’s emissions.

When we hosted the Pacific Islands Forum, we did so at a time when the US was “pivoting to the Asia-Pacific” (Hillary Clinton attended the Forum for the first time the year before) and China was beginning to emerge as a serious actor in the Pacific for the first time. This geopolitical reality was not lost on us. Nor was the fact that more than 60% of the world’s emissions come from the countries of the Pacific Rim. So, on our tiny island in Majuro, flanked by the US on one side and China on the other, we sought to bring home this reality by encouraging the biggest emitters in the region to take our calls to action seriously for the first time and stand with us.

Climate diplomacy begins at home, but it requires creative thinking, constant lobbying, and technical substance. Diplomacy has its origins in helping countries avoid the scourge of war and create a better tomorrow. This could not be more true for the challenge of our generation – climate change.

Regional Highlights: North America

Pentagon Releases New Climate Roadmap
by Schuyler Null, New Security Beat

A series of executive orders signed by President Obama since his first year in office requires all federal agencies to begin planning for climate change and produce an updated adaptation plan. The Pentagon released its second-ever climate roadmap in October. “Climate change will affect the Department of Defense’s ability to defend the Nation and poses immediate risks to U.S. national security,” it says.

The roadmap is explicitly about adaptation – not mitigation. The Department of Defense is one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases in the world, thanks to its immense fuel and energy consumption, but plans to scale back and increase efficiency are reserved for its annual Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan.
The military’s adaptation goals are three-fold:

- To identify and assess the effects of climate change on the Department now and in the future;
- To integrate consideration of climate change into decisions at every level; and
- To maximize collaboration on expected challenges, both internally and externally.

The Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program (SERDP), the Pentagon’s environmental science and technology program, completed an assessment last year on the vulnerability of the Department’s coastal infrastructure, noting many of the steps needed to adapt to rising seas will be less costly now than in the future. The military is concerned about readiness issues, like the increasing number of “black flag” days, when outdoor training is suspended. But a more in-depth look remains on the docket for future study.

Further exploring how climate change will affect state stability is a concern, though there are no updates on progress. It’s not clear what role the military would have in efforts to stabilize climate-vulnerable states. There are concerns about the “securitization” of climate change from those that see building climate resilience as primarily a social or development concern.

Climate Everywhere

“Adaptation to climate change,” the authors write, “cannot be a separate decision-making process, but rather integrated into the Department’s existing management processes.” The Department has identified 58 directives, policies, manuals, and guidance documents that do not incorporate climate change but should – at the risk of “adversely impacting the Department’s mission.” A plan for updating them is supposed to be developed this year.

Since the last roadmap, several new mandates have been established that require including consideration of changing climate conditions when building new structures. Besides incorporating climate change into every relevant point along the military’s gargantuan decision-making tree, the roadmap outlines ways the Pentagon and its Senior Sustainability Council, which is in charge of coordinating the roadmap, are looking to work with other federal agencies, environmental stewardship organizations, and foreign militaries.

Such military-to-military cooperation around climate change – which Secretary Hagel highlighted in a speech at the Council of Defense Ministers of the Americas in Peru – would build on the Department’s track record of efforts to build cooperation around environmental issues and disasters, and provide an avenue for potentially addressing climate’s destabilizing effects on fragile states.

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Ensuring supply and acquisition lines are not interrupted, continuing to train effectively, and adapting to new infrastructure and operational environments will all be more difficult without collaboration. The Arctic is a key example: Melting ice is opening the Arctic Circle up to sea travel and possible resource exploitation, requiring the Navy and Coast Guard to adapt to a new environment, as well as work with other Arctic states and key countries.

The roadmap is impressive for its breadth, but many of its core components remain aspirational. The sections on actual results and efforts since the last edition are frustratingly light. There are also places where the military’s ethos of trying to plan for everything runs into the massive scale of the climate challenge.

The authors note: “Effective adaptation planning will ensure the continued availability of the land, air, and water resources at our installations and ranges so the Department can train and operate today and into the future.” In that respect, the Pentagon is just like the rest of us – increasingly aware of its own vulnerability but not quite able to make many of the changes called for on its own.
Regional Highlights: Oceania and Pacific

Minerals, Climate Change and the SAMOA Pathway
by Saleem H. Ali, University of Queensland, Australia

The United Nations Small Island Developing States conference (UNSIDS 2014) held in Apia, Samoa in early September this year was a momentous gathering of international donors held after 10 years to focus global attention on the predicament of countries most vulnerable to climate change. The attendance of UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon as well as the heads of several UN agencies such as UNDP and UNEP gave particular weight to the meeting.

However, the pre-conference private sector forum deserves additional attention with regard to climate change adaptation strategies for small-island states. This forum was attended by notable multinational players such as Google Inc. as well as natural resource companies. Of particular note in this regard was the presence of deep sea mining company Nautilus Inc., which recently received permission from the Government of Papua New Guinea and has advanced exploration in Tonga.

Mining often does not figure prominently in the public’s perception of a resource base for small island states but in reality some of the world’s most concentrated mineral deposits are to be found in island regions because of geological factors. Massive volcanic eruptions that often form islands bring forth minerals from the bowels of the earth in quantities that might not be found in continental geology. It is thus no surprise that islands such as New Caledonia have an estimated 10% of the world’s nickel reserves. Jamaica has enormous bauxite deposits, which have been mined for decades alongside its tourist economy.

Although the SAMOA Pathway document does not explicitly mention mineral development, there is little doubt that given the resources available for mining in numerous SIDS, mining either on land or in the surrounding seabed will be a significant feature of the investment trajectory. As coral systems and coastal tourism opportunities become more vulnerable to climate change, mineral resources could provide greater resilience to SIDS economies. Even SIDS with minimal history of mining such as Mauritius have now started a process of engaging with mineral extraction prospects through their ocean economy initiative.

Any mining activity must be undertaken with great care and the revenues received invested wisely to prevent the dire fate that befell phosphate mining island states like Nauru that squandered much of their revenue due to errant planning of sovereign wealth funds. The potential for conflict caused by resource nationalism (as occurred in Bougainville Island in the 1980s) must also be considered. Despite these cautionary tales, gradual consideration of the role of minerals in providing economic resilience against climate change vulnerability is now being seriously considered.
Regional Highlights: Latin America

Transforming Environmental Conflicts
by Cristina Pinto, Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano

During the last two decades, in both Latin America and the Caribbean, the importance of municipal institutions has increased significantly, as the result of the decentralizing trend in the region. In many countries, environmental aspects have acquired importance in local policy-making and have become more visible in development plans and land use planning.

Decentralization and the implementation of local governments’ competencies often give rise to conflicts. Issues include water supply and sanitation service, solid waste management, environmental pollution, land use and zoning, and even extractive activities that often may not be within local governments’ competencies, but involve diverse stakeholders and sectors interacting in their territory. Latin America is facing increasing environmental and social conflict, as a consequence of unsustainable natural resource management, limited access to information and the existence of few opportunities for multi-sector dialogue at the local, national and regional level.

“Decentralization must be viewed as a process requiring ongoing strengthening. It currently poses a series of challenges which need to be overcome.”

In this context, Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano (FFLA), in collaboration with German Cooperation (GIZ), Ecuador’s Association of Municipalities, the Simón Bolívar Andean University and the Confluencias Group, organized the Seventh Regional Forum on Transforming Socio-Environmental Conflicts in Latin America (16-17 September 2014) in Quito, Ecuador. Two hundred participants attended from Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela and Ecuador, and reflected on decentralization in the region and the opportunities this offers for environmental governance and transforming socio-environmental conflicts. Local good practices were highlighted in the cases presented during the Regional Forum.

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Transforming Environmental Conflicts
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Decentralization must be viewed as a process requiring ongoing strengthening. It currently poses a series of challenges which need to be overcome.

According to Rubens Barbery-Knaudt, Director of CEPAD (Bolivia), trends in Latin America show that the greater the decentralization, the greater the democratization. Decentralization should lead to greater efficiency by bringing administration closer to the citizenry and to local problems.

Local governments have a unique opportunity to transform conflicts insofar as they know the local public’s needs best, provide fundamental day-to-day services, receive demands directly and are in a position to directly cope with conflicts. They can also draw on experiences in local environmental governance and showcase their outcomes.

Therefore, decentralization offers an opportunity to transform socio-environmental conflicts if key elements are considered, such as technical resources and capacities, adequate institutional interaction on various territorial scales, democratization of information, transfer of decision-making and power to local level, as well as financial resour-
ces. Decentralization must be viewed as a process requiring ongoing strengthening, and currently poses a series of challenges which need to be overcome in order for it to be truly effective.

Land use planning and its role in transforming socio-environmental conflicts. Land use planning contributes to identifying and transforming socio-environmental conflicts, however depending on the context may exacerbate conflicts. To reduce conflicts, the diverse existing visions of development must be complemented and discussed with the greatest possible number of stakeholders in tune with local timing.

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Conflicts involving urban environmental management. Issues generating socio-environmental conflicts in cities arise from limited and inadequate planning processes, non-observance of norms, little access to information, power asymmetries, etc. Multiple stakeholders without adequate organization or representativeness, and weak participation, make conflicts unmanageable. Conflicts affect local governance by undermining the credibility of public action, eclipsing other positive actions, fostering political polarization and necessarily requiring both technical and economic resources.

Conflicts involving water management under local governments’ competencies. The public’s different visions of water resources cause an intensification of socio-environmental conflicts. The relationship between climate change and water is indivisible, which poses the need to generate measures to sustainably manage the territory and water resources. Stakeholders’ participation in adaptation to climate change is crucial for a broader vision of local reality in order to prepare holistic strategies for adaptation.

Climate change and socio-environmental conflict. Climate change escalates local socio-environmental conflicts, by impacting natural resources and people’s livelihoods. It also weakens environmental governance and reduces the responsiveness of public institutions to society’s demands. Cities play a crucial role, as centres of innovation and problem-solving, showing how many consequences of climate change can be addressed better locally and holistically (Lukas Rüttinger, adelphi).

Participation on the local level. To ensure that civil society’s local participation will actually be useful, the diverse local and national stakeholders must be identified. Their social organization, representativeness of their interests, relationships and their level of involvement with the issue being addressed should also be identified.

Miguel Pellerano, President of FFLA’s International Board, summarized: “There is nothing more productive than the heterogeneity of groups and homogeneity of goals”, to reflect the great diversity of viewpoints expressed, but all under the same common denominator: moving toward conflict transformation in the region and utilising conflicts as an opportunity for social change.
Fridtjof Nansen can be described as a man with numerous qualities: explorer, scientist, diplomat, humanitarian. In 1922, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work on behalf of the displaced victims of the First World War and related conflicts. Nearly a century later, the Nansen Initiative aims at building a consensus on how to develop a protection agenda addressing the needs of people displaced across international borders due to natural hazards and climate change. Launched in October 2012 by the governments of Switzerland and Norway, the Nansen Initiative is a state-led, bottom up consultative process that currently explores regional dynamics and collaborative entry points to jointly address the challenges of internal and cross-border displacement.

In October 2014, this process took another step forward during a three day regional consultation on “Human Mobility in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change” held in Manila. If there is one region where displacement challenges have become most obvious in recent years, it is probably Southeast Asia: Typhoon Haiyan displaced more than 900,000 families in the Philippines in 2013, super typhoon Ketsana forced the evacuation of about 230,000 people in Cambodia and Vietnam in 2009, and Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar displaced approximately 800,000 people in 2008. In addition, earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanos have hit the region time and again.

Against this backdrop, more than a hundred participants representing governments, international organisations but also civil society discussed what should be part of a forward-looking protection agenda. The summary of conclusions also identifies key principles in the three areas of inter-state and international cooperation; standards of protection for displaced persons and operational responses. In addition, it specifies concrete good practices and tools for the protection of persons displaced across borders in the context of natural hazards. Among the areas to prioritize for future action are recommendations on planned relocation, which outline some of the steps needed to prepare for the unavoidable and to ensure effective and sustainable relocation.

Disaster risks and climate change challenges call for a better integration of these two areas – be it at a strategic level or based on updated guidelines at the operational level. The good news is that there are already regional processes to build on - such as the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) or the ASEAN Climate Change Initiative. The bad news is even after several years of political debate we are no closer to establishing a common language for both areas.

“In disaster risks and climate change challenges call for a better integration of these two areas – be it at a strategic level or at the operational level.”

Although the issue of climate-induced displacement was acknowledged in the outcome of the Cancun conference back in 2010 as part of the Cancun Adaptation Framework, the climate negotiations have so far kept mostly silent on how to design further activities to fully recognize the displacement issue as a core aspect of the discussion on climate change adaptation. The next chance to discuss how to link climate change and displacement and how to contribute to a global protection agenda is a side event on 11 December during the climate negotiations in Lima.
With the COP21 in Paris in 2015 and its prospect of producing a new international, binding climate agreement and Habitat III in 2016, the momentum to benefit from cities’ experiences around the globe with sustainable and climate friendly development seems promising. Asia, especially, has substantial knowledge of rapid urbanization processes that can benefit the international climate regime. Deepening the international dialogue and knowledge exchange on climate action and urbanization is high on the political agenda of ASEAN member states and the potential of such a learning opportunity should be embraced.

Chairing ASEAN in 2014, Myanmar hosted the final conference of the EU-Asia dialogue on 4-5 September in Yangon. The event, organized by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and UN-Habitat, brought together about 40 high ranking officials of the national Government of Myanmar, international institutions such as the UN and the EU, as well as experts from think tanks and academia.

"Cities need a voice in the international negotiation process."

Myanmar in particular can provide a vivid example of how to include past experience in future development. With a low rate of urbanization (both in terms of urban population and urban growth), Myanmar has dedicated itself to learning from other ASEAN countries to find the right balance between economic growth and sustainable, climate friendly development. As in other countries, regardless of their level of development, climate resilience for cities becomes an umbrella topic to unite adaptation, mitigation and economic growth measures.

Predicated on the question of how to include cities in the global climate regime was the notion that the core of climate change might be scientific, but the solution to it remains mainly a political challenge. Along with a thorough review of the UNFCCC process, drawing a line from the lessons of Warsaw to the preparations for Paris in 2015, political questions and concerns regarding the role of cities and their contributions to the negotiation process were discussed.

Key recommendations include:

1) Cities’ vulnerabilities to climate change depend on global commons. Only a global agreement can provide the common ground for cities to find answers to this challenge.

2) Cities and local governments need defining guidelines and reliable frameworks, maybe more so than other actors. This includes long-term financial commitments as well as clearly defined jurisdiction and support for capacity building. These have to be included in any binding international climate agreement.

3) Cities need a voice in the international negotiation process. They have a legitimate claim to be heard, many climate change sensitive mandates are located on a local level and the pressure to implement measures rests on cities. This should be reflected in a formalized participation mechanism within the UNFCCC.

4) National positions during international negotiations do not necessarily reflect countries’ ambitions in tackling climate change. At the same time, political realities in international processes, shaped by varying relationships between countries through common interest groups and regional collaborations, can produce a gridlock in the negotiations. Cities can bridge these two gaps through their efforts to implement climate action and city-to-city collaboration in exchanging knowledge and applying innovative solutions.
Upcoming Events

Chatham House, London, UK (1-2 December 2014)
Food Security: Mapping Risks, Building Resilience

During this conference, high-level decision makers from public and private domains will have the opportunity to discuss existing and emerging risks for global food security as well as risk mitigation strategies. Impacts of climate change on food markets are one of the key topics. Please consult the Chatham House website for further information or in order to register.

Vienna, Austria (5-6 Dezember 2014)
Towards International Resource Fairness

“Towards International Resource Fairness - Theories, Conflicts and Policies” is the topic of the 1st Austrian Conference on International Resource Politics, which brings together different disciplines in order to investigate modes of fair resource use. Theoretical insights will be combined with analysis of specific natural resource policies and conflict areas. For online registration, the speakers list and programme, please visit the conference website.

Lima, Peru (6-7 December 2014)
Global Landscapes Forum

The Global Landscape Forum will take place during the UNCCC COP 20 in Lima, Peru, following up on the initial 2013 event in Warsaw. The Forum aims to enrich the discussions on the emerging climate regime, the post-2015 development agenda and the green economy by promoting the integrated landscapes approach in the expert and policy communities. A comprehensive concept note and registration details are available online.
New Paths for Climate Diplomacy

The updated version of the Climate Diplomacy booklet is now available online, published by adelphi. It highlights the approach and efforts of the German Federal Foreign Office in the field of climate policy.

The publication features a foreword by the German Federal Foreign Minister Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier. For the most recent information on Climate Diplomacy, please follow climate-diplomacy.org or @ClimateDiplo on Twitter.

Germany’s Water Risk in Times of Globalisation

The WWF report The Imported Risk. Germany’s Water Risk in Times of Globalisation points toward the water risks linked to the country’s imports. Many textile, chemical, mining or agricultural goods, for instance, come from countries that face water issues, which impacts industrial supply chains in diverse ways.

The authors give recommendations to different stakeholder groups on how to consider these faraway but nonetheless significant risks and to act responsibly.

The Economic Risks of Climate Change in the United States

The Risky Business Project, led by a committee of renowned politicians, scientists and entrepreneurs, has recently issued a report titled Risky Business. The Economic Risks of Climate Change in the United States.

The report identifies possible impacts of a changing climate depending on sector and region. It calls for action both by business and public actors in order to adapt to the predicted changes.

Community Forest Rights and Climate Change Mitigation

Securing Rights, Combating Climate Change. How Strengthening Community Forest Rights Mitigates Climate Change is a study published by the World Resource Institute. It focuses on the role of community rights in forest management in African, Asian and Latin American countries.

The findings suggest that legal recognition of community rights combined with supportive action by the government enhance forest preservation along with its climate change mitigation benefits.

Improving Opportunities for Women Farmers in Africa

The study Levelling the Field: Improving Opportunities for Women Farmers in Africa by the civil society group ONE and the World Bank investigates the gender productivity gap in African agriculture and lists policy options that can help to close it.

The publication also includes six country profiles with country-specific policy priorities. The report is available for download in English and German.
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adelphi is a leading think tank for policy analysis and strategy consulting. We offer creative solutions and services on global environment and development challenges for policy, business and civil society communities. Our projects contribute to sustaining natural life systems and fostering sustainable enterprises.

The Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining (CSRM) at the University of Queensland focuses on the social, economic and political challenges that occur when change is brought about by resource extraction and development. The Centre works with companies, communities and governments in mining regions all over the world to improve social performance and deliver better outcomes for companies and communities.

Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano’s (FFLA) mission is to promote constructive dialogue, strengthen citizen, political and institutional capacities, and articulate processes towards sustainable development in Latin America. Therefore it utilizes multi-sectoral public policy dialogues and conflict prevention methodologies as its main strategies.

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