



Federal Foreign Office

Federal Foreign Office Climate Diplomacy Report

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I. Climate change as a key foreign policy issue

Halting climate change and related environmental changes and the loss of biodiversity, as well as implementing a comprehensive transformation towards a CO₂-neutral economy and society, is one of the major challenges facing humanity in the 21st century.

Climate change is not only one of the greatest global challenges, but also gives us the opportunity in the area of foreign policy to support other countries and international organisations in dealing with the impact of climate change and in the transformation towards a climate-neutral economy, thus injecting impetus into the entire spectrum of our bilateral and multilateral relations. In other words, we want to use climate change as a catalyst for foreign policy to an increasing degree.

The Paris Agreement, adopted by the international community in 2015 with the aim of limiting the global rise in temperature to well below 2°C and, if possible, to 1.5°C, constitutes the central basis of our climate diplomacy. The core task of our climate diplomacy is to support the implementation of the Paris Agreement through our foreign policy and to promote it in all bilateral and multilateral contacts. Climate diplomacy is also an essential component of a diplomacy for sustainability with a view to implementing the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The genuine core of a preventive foreign policy is to forestall or at least limit the impacts of climate change wherever possible, and, above all, to identify crises occurring as a result from an early stage and avoid violent conflicts. The nexus of climate and security – one of the priorities of Germany's membership of the United Nations Security Council in 2019 and 2020 – takes this into account and will continue to gain in importance. The negative impacts of climate change will grow exponentially and will primarily affect poorer and particularly vulnerable countries. The consequences range from water crises and famine and loss of habitable land to violent conflicts over increasingly scarce resources, resulting in displacement and migration. Climate change is thus increasingly becoming a focus of foreign policy.

Climate change will shift the key coordinates of foreign policy in the coming years and decades. More and more countries will reach the limits of their economic and social capacity as they struggle to deal with the impacts of climate change. In the worst-case scenario, state structures may erode. As sea levels continue to rise, the existence of megacities, especially in

Asia, as well as entire countries, particularly small island states, is threatened. Melting glaciers will flood huge regions in South Asia. This development will give rise to new foreign policy challenges. Conflicts over spheres of influence are waiting to happen. Inhabitants of small islands and people in coastal regions will need to migrate. There is a risk of conflicts of interest between major powers over resources and trade routes owing to the melting of Arctic sea ice.

Geopolitical changes also include the fact that today's exporters of fossil fuels are threatened with losing economic clout and thus political influence if they do not change course. New centres of power could emerge in countries that successfully position themselves in the export markets of the future, such as the hydrogen economy. It is in our foreign policy interest for this change to take place in a cooperative framework and without new lines of conflict.

II. Activities in the area of climate diplomacy to date

Climate change and its impact on peace and security worldwide are already high up on the foreign policy agenda. This applies both to the Head Office of the Federal Foreign Office (FFO) and to the network of our over 200 missions abroad. We are focusing on the nexus of climate and security as part of Germany's membership of the United Nations Security Council. This initiative is supported by a Group of Friends comprising some 50 countries. Our common goal is to enshrine and expand the security policy dimension of climate change in the United Nations (UN) and other relevant international forums. Our activities in the areas of crisis prevention, humanitarian assistance and stabilisation already take into account the impact of climate change as an incubator of crises and, in some cases, address this issue directly.

In close cooperation with the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, the Federal Foreign Office is also making an important contribution to advancing the implementation of the Paris Agreement worldwide.

It is clear that an ambitious climate policy remains the best way to limit climate risks. We are promoting German and European positions on climate protection in a targeted manner through our missions abroad, particularly in the run-up to international climate negotiations and in the context of the G7 and G20. We are also engaged in dialogue with the host

countries in the context of around 100 projects financed by the FFO climate fund each year. To this end, we are drawing on a broad network of contacts at our missions abroad, which extends far beyond national governments in the host countries and includes stakeholders at sub-national level, as well as representatives from civil society, academia and the business community.

The expertise and regular reporting of our embassies and consulates general on climate and environment policy, as well as on climate change impact, in their respective host countries is an indispensable source of information for shaping our bilateral and multilateral climate and environment policy. The Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety have appointed desk officers for environmental affairs at selected key representations, including in Washington DC, New York, Brussels, Paris, London, Nairobi, New Delhi and Beijing.

Further tasks for the Federal Foreign Office in the area of climate diplomacy include flanking the international initiatives of the ministries, such as the International Climate Initiative (ICI) of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

III. Future challenges and fields of action of a preventive climate diplomacy

As global warming progresses, climate change and the climate-security nexus will increasingly become the focus of foreign policy. The growing importance of this issue on the foreign policy agenda makes it necessary for us to raise awareness of climate change and its impact on foreign policy among our missions abroad and our colleagues at home to an even greater extent. Some of the key fields of action of climate foreign policy in the future will be examined in more detail below.

(1) Pressing for the implementation of the Paris Agreement

The implementation of the Paris Agreement must be put centre stage of our bilateral and multilateral relations in the future. We need new foreign policy strategies on climate change, including with regard to major emitters.

International climate protection is a key objective of Germany's foreign policy. To this end, we must draw on the full range of Germany's foreign policy instruments to push for the implementation of the Paris Agreement and to advocate a global increase in ambition. Germany has a special responsibility in this respect with its EU Presidency in the second half of 2020 and its membership of the UN Security Council in 2019 and 2020. At the end of the day, the coming year will be decisive for emissions targets in the next few years. All countries are called upon to review and step up their Paris climate goals for the first time in 2020. This is because the totality of all the goals submitted is still far from sufficient to limit the rise in temperature to well below 2°C and, if possible, to 1.5°C. Rather, the rise in temperature as compared with pre-industrial levels would exceed 3°C by the end of the century, which would have disastrous consequences. Germany and the EU must forge ahead in climate policy, because only then will other major emitters be prepared to raise their level of ambition.

The further implementation of the Paris Agreement depends not only on the UN climate negotiations, however, but also on additional measures within the framework of our bilateral and multilateral contacts, which we must intensify. We should also keep an eye on major countries that are taking an increasingly critical stance on this issue and thus jeopardising progress with respect to the acceptance and implementation of the Paris Agreement. In particular, we should use dialogue and consultation formats (also in a regional context) to raise awareness of the multilateral benefit of the Paris Agreement and to draw attention to the opportunities offered by a global transformation.

A further point of departure concerns the dialogue with stakeholders whose energy and climate policy decisions have the potential to jeopardise the achievement of the climate goals. This applies, for example, to countries that continue to make massive investments in the expansion of coal-fired power plants, not least by exporting them, especially via the Belt and Road Initiative. According to a recent report by the UN Environment Programme (Emissions Gap Report 2019), fossil energy production in 2030 is likely to be around 50 percent above the target that would be compatible with a 2°C scenario, and even

120 percent above the target for a 1.5°C scenario. In its current World Energy Outlook, the International Energy Agency finds that the current planning of coal-fired power plants without further replanning is already resulting in the failure to meet the 2050 target and that there is therefore a need to upgrade existing infrastructure, including early decommissioning, as this is the only way to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

We should therefore intensify our exchanges with partner countries on concrete policy measures in various sectors, also above and beyond the energy sector, in close cooperation with the ministries. Projects, in particular the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety's International Climate Initiative and the NDC Partnership to support the achievement of the Paris climate goals, should flank the overall approach of our climate diplomacy in the most efficient way possible.

Our internationally recognised technical and political expertise, including in the field of renewable energies, and the close dovetailing of science and politics are an asset that we can use. The Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue, which takes place annually at the Federal Foreign Office with more than 2000 participants from all five continents, a touring exhibition on the global energy transition that travels the world, and energy dialogues in selected countries that underscore the advantages of renewable energies are part of our public relations work with respect to the energy transition.

(2) Climate and security: Climate change as a threat to peace and stability

In the coming years and decades, the security policy dimension of climate change will become increasingly relevant. We want to systematically anchor the climate-security nexus in the UN, in the EU context and in other international fora and to develop a new foreign policy toolbox in order to be able to provide partners with targeted support to deal with the security risks resulting from climate change.

We are working closely with our partners in the Group of Friends on Climate and Security to systematically anchor the security policy dimension of climate change in the UN as well as in other international fora. For the international community needs to take action in places where climate change poses a threat to people's livelihoods before conflicts break out or escalate. The Security Council must also be capable of taking action in this regard.

We want to give the Security Council and the UN the right instruments to tackle these tasks. The proposals put forward in the Berlin Call for Action issued at the Berlin Conference on Climate and Security in June 2019 show the way forward. Our aim is to strengthen the UN's capacities in the sphere of climate and security, both in New York and in the field. We need more reporting and better risk analyses and, not least, operational responses in order to provide our partners with targeted support in dealing with climate-related security risks. This includes the development of early warning mechanisms as well as mediation initiatives in those situations where climate change has triggered growing competition for resources.

Together with the UN, the Federal Foreign Office is developing an analysis of climate-related security risks in the Horn of Africa region in an initial pilot project. The Directorate-General for Stabilisation's early crisis detection tool will help the Federal Foreign Office to better determine the impact of climate change as a conflict factor and thus make a key contribution towards prevention. And in Somalia, the Federal Foreign Office is funding the first UN expert on the environment and security, who is assisting the UN Office in Mogadishu. We intend to further develop both – risk analyses and expertise on the ground – in affected regions in future.

Furthermore, we aim to anchor this holistic, networked and prevention-focused approach in the EU's foreign policy, from Council conclusions to the CFSP, the EEAS's Global Strategy and the EU Neighbourhood Policy.

In the longer term, further multilateral fora such as NATO and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) will have to bear the nexus of climate and security in mind when carrying out their mandate.

(3) Stabilisation, post-conflict peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance

In future, we will have to place a stronger focus on climate change and its consequences in all actions relating to stabilisation, post-conflict peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance.

Wherever armed conflicts have already broken out, climate change will have to get more attention in all of our foreign policy tools in future. Within the scope of a holistic and networked approach, therefore, we will have to take climate change into consideration in the analysis, planning and implementation of strategies.

This begins with the paradigm shift in humanitarian assistance (from putting out fires to foresighted, innovative solutions), which has proven especially successful in the case of extreme weather events. Pioneering instruments such as forecast-based financing, in whose development the Federal Foreign Office was involved, should be further advanced with the aim of anchoring forecast-based mechanisms for risk financing throughout the humanitarian system. To this end, we will step up our cooperation with, among others, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the UN's humanitarian organisations.

Expertise on climate risks must also be enhanced when it comes to stabilisation and post-conflict peacebuilding. Conflicts over political or economic ownership as a result of ever scarcer resources will break out time and again in many regions around the world if EU and UN peacekeeping and stabilisation missions fail to focus more on climate forecasts in their measures. That is what we mean by sustainable solutions and we are working towards this end with our partners and with the UN.

It is essential that we coordinate on an ongoing basis with academia, civil society and international organisations in all these fields if we are to use our limited resources to the best possible effect.

(4) Climate, population growth and migration

Climate change, population growth and involuntary displacement are interconnected in a way which presents us with immense challenges.

We have to close the gaps in knowledge in order to better understand these links.

The connection between climate change and migration raises many questions to which a forward-looking foreign policy must provide answers: How and on what scale will displacement caused by climate change as well as regular and irregular migration develop? To what extent will demographic growth and increasing urbanisation influence climate change (forecasted rise in the global population from 7.8 billion today to 9.7 billion in 2050, of which more than two-thirds will be living in cities)? What can the international community do to ensure that people forced to leave their homes as a result of climate or extreme weather disasters such as droughts, floods, tropical cyclones or rising sea levels are provided with adequate protection and help? What implications does this have, especially if an area – and thus entire states in the worst case scenario – is at risk due to the rise in sea levels?

We intend to expand our existing commitment to the Platform on Disaster Displacement and to further intensify our cooperation with the International Organization for Migration and

the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. What is more, in line with the abovementioned holistic approach to humanitarian assistance, the connection between climate change, environmental degradation and forced displacement should be examined even more closely in future.

(5) Geopolitical changes due to climate change

Climate change results in geopolitical changes. Exporters of fossil fuel are at risk of losing influence. The impact of climate change is likely to take an increasing number of states to their socio-economic limits.

The transformation towards a climate-neutral economy with a global energy transition will have a profound impact on our foreign policy. It will diminish the risk of conflicts over access to fossil fuels and provide incentives for regional cooperation in the sphere of interconnectivity. At the same time, however, it will create additional risks due to the possible destabilisation of exporters of fossil fuels as well as possible stranded assets worth billions. Trade flows will shift greatly due to the global energy transition, while new dependencies on resources such as rare earths or cobalt could develop. A new market has to be created for the international trade in hydrogen. The Federal Foreign Office is addressing these issues with its partners with the aim of ensuring that the risks which the ongoing transformation entails do not materialise and that all states can benefit from it.

Geopolitical changes also arise from the varying degrees to which countries or regions are affected by the impact of climate change. For example, states and regions with low-lying coastal areas are particularly affected, especially as a large share of their economic power usually depends on coastal regions. Small island states as well as fragile states are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with climate change. Secondly, it is often the case that sections of society which already have little political influence are disproportionately hit. These groups range from women in patriarchal states to indigenous populations who depend on an intact environment to make a living. Furthermore, climate change raises some fundamental legal issues, especially for the particularly badly affected small island states. These include the question of national territory, for which solutions should be worked out within the UN.

(6) Further fields of action for a comprehensive climate diplomacy

In future, climate change must be taken into account in all areas of our foreign relations. These range from EU policy to trade and economic issues, the multilateral work done in the UN and the dialogue with affected partners.

In light of the magnitude of the global transformation to which we committed in the Paris Agreement, it is clear that climate diplomacy must be multilateral and be taken into consideration in all aspects of our foreign relations.

This begins at EU level. Within the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework we need a horizontal climate target of at least 25% which adequately reflects the scale of the challenge facing us, as well as an effective method of tracking progress towards this target, so as to allow for correcting measures should progress be insufficient. We will also work to further strengthen the EU's climate diplomacy and internal EU cooperation in this sphere and to ensure that we present a united front vis-à-vis our partners. This includes coordination with the European External Action Service as well as cooperation with the new EU Commission, which has demonstrated its particular interest in tackling climate change mitigation with the European Green Deal it has announced.

Global trade and our economic relations are likewise key to the success of climate-friendly transformation processes. Within the scope of federal guarantees, for instance, the Federal Foreign Office is already fostering climate-friendly projects and technologies and has rejected investment in coal-fired power stations, which are harmful to the climate. It is working to ensure that in the long run all bilateral and multilateral trade agreements conform with the Paris Agreement and that this is explicitly mentioned in the wording.

Within the UN, the Federal Foreign Office is committed to ensuring that climate change and the Paris Agreement are considered and taken into account as overarching issues in all relevant texts.

In future, the international debate about large-scale interventions in the Earth's climate system (climate engineering or geoengineering) is likely to intensify. Forward-looking climate diplomacy must allow for the possibility that some of our partners or even private players such as companies could use climate engineering. Intensive research and first pilot projects have already been initiated. The impact on neighbouring states and thus the consequences for foreign policy are almost impossible to predict. German missions abroad must follow these developments very closely.

Ultimately, we can more actively shape, and where necessary accelerate, all the processes mentioned here through the core competence of diplomacy: dialogue. Alongside the targeted dialogue with states which export oil, gas and coal on green alternative development models, the dialogue with vulnerable states which are especially affected by the consequences of climate change today and in the future is especially important.

Whether it be the identification of hot spots of future climate-related security risks or the exchange with civil society on the opportunities and risks of climate change: the approaches and instruments described in this report will only succeed if they are backed up by active outreach and ongoing consultation on the ground. That will create trust and legitimacy, local ownership and support for our policies in international fora such as the EU and the UN.