



Future of Africa Podcast
Episode 2: Climate, Peace, and Security Nexus
Transcript
August 19, 2025

[00:00:00]

The views and opinions expressed in this episode are those of the guests and hosts, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the podcast's partners.

Mark Leon Goldberg [00:00:10]

Welcome to the Future of Africa, a special series on Global Dispatches. I'm Mark Leon Goldberg, the host and founder of Global Dispatches, and in several episodes over the coming weeks, we will bring you in-depth conversations designed to explore Africa's future in the context of today's challenges and opportunities.

This series is produced in partnership with the African Union, the Elders, and the United Nations Foundation, and is hosted by the Kenyan journalist Adelle Onyango.

I am truly thrilled to bring you this special project of Global Dispatches. We have some amazing guests in this episode and throughout the series.

Enjoy.

Adelle Onyango [00:01:02]

Welcome to the Future of Africa podcast, where we explore the bold ideas and leaders shaping Africa's place in the world. I'm your host, Adelle Onyango, and one thing's for sure, climate change isn't just an environmental challenge.

In Africa, it's a driver of geopolitical instability, community conflict, and tons of security risks. Droughts, floods, and shifting weather patterns are intensifying competition for resources, which then turns environmental stress into a peace and security issue. In this episode, we explore the Climate, Peace, Security Nexus with three powerful voices from different vantage points. The first is President Juan Manuel Santos. He's the former President of Colombia, also a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, and Chair of The Elders. And he will be connecting African experiences to global peace building and climate diplomacy with the wealth of experience that he has.

President Juan Manuel Santos [00:02:01]

Until they consider nature as a first-rate citizen and not a second-rate citizen, then there will be no peace with nature.

Adelle Onyango [00: 02:09]

We're also going to be talking to Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim. She's an environmental activist from Chad and a President of the Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad. She's bringing a grassroots Indigenous perspective on resilience and conflict prevention.

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim [00:02:27]

We have to live in harmony with nature. And that is what our ancestors are doing for thousands of years through our own way of living.

Adelle Onyango [00:02:37]

Last but not least is Khouloud Ben Mansour. She's a junior diplomat, climate negotiator with Tunisia's Young Climate Change Negotiators Group and a former African Union Youth Ambassador for Peace. She's offering a next generation policy perspective on protecting vulnerable communities.

Khouloud Ben Mansour [00:02:58]

We talk about extremism, we talk about everything related to peace and security, but we know that climate is majorly one of the peace and security issues today in Africa.

Adelle Onyango [00:03:07]

Let's get into it, starting off with former President of Colombia Juan Manuel Santos.

Adelle Onyango [00:03:20]

Thank you, President Juan, for making time to be on the podcast with us.

President Juan Manuel Santos [00:03:25]

It's a great pleasure and a great honor.

Adelle Onyango [00:03:27]

So, when we're talking about international peace efforts, why do you feel like it's important that we integrate climate considerations in that conversation?

President Juan Manuel Santos [00:03:40]

I became acquainted with our Indigenous communities and got really interested in their knowledge, their culture. I started talking to them. And the day I was inaugurated as President, that morning I took a plane, one hour flight, took a helicopter up in the mountains, more than 3,000 meters above, where the oldest Indigenous community in the whole of the Americas live. And I went to them, to their governors, to ask for their permission to go that afternoon and be sworn in by the Colombian Congress. They felt that there was a gesture that nobody had ever done, recognizing the importance of the Indigenous communities. And they gave me a baton, and they told me, "You have our permission, but you have a mandate. You, I know, want to finish this war more than 50 years old, with the oldest and most powerful guerrilla group in the whole of the Americas, the FARC. So, our mandate is make peace with them, but also make peace with nature. Because if you don't make peace with nature, it doesn't matter if you make peace with the FARC, there will be no peace in the planet." That was my first personal experience. Well, I made peace with the FARC, very difficult but successful process. It lasted six years.

But at the same time, Colombia started to promote the Sustainable Development Goals. It was a Colombian initiative. Two marvelous women that worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, came to me and said, "We have this idea. The millennium goals that expire in 2015 should be renegotiated, but with two new ingredients. The rich countries, the developed countries, should take responsibility also, and the environmental sector should be introduced." And so, we started a process of multilateral diplomacy around the world. We ended up with 17 Sustainable Development Goals. And in year 2015, in a historic General Assembly, every single country voted for the Sustainable Development Goals. I went to the Indigenous community, I took them the two documents. And I said, "here is my mandate and here is the baton. You told me to give it back when I finished. Here it is, mission accomplished." And they said, they're very proud. And they said, "listen, the peace with the FARC, with the guerrillas is okay. But the Sustainable Development Goals, they are not okay." And I said, "Why?" And they said, "Because the most important factor is lacking." And I said, "What factor?" And they said, "The spiritual factor." And I said, "And what is that?" And they said something which is so amazing. And they said, "Until the human beings don't feel that nature has life, that rivers have life, that mountains have life, that nature's have rights, until they consider nature as a first-rate citizen and not a second-rate

citizen, then there will be no peace with nature. And therefore, we don't bless the Sustainable Development Goals.” And they gave me the baton back that you must continue trying to make peace with nature, because your mandate has not been fulfilled.

Adelle Onyango [00:07:32]

It's so incredibly well put in how they said, you can make peace amongst communities, but you have to make peace with nature. And it really is a point of connection for me and Kenya. The knowledge our African grandmothers and great grandmothers had about climate and how Africans were ready bringing to the table climate solutions and learning how to live in harmony with the environment and look out for each other in terms of how nature and humans are interlinked, as you said. And sometimes I wonder with the rising influence of African countries, sharing that we have this knowledge, sharing that we may be on the receiving end of the harmful effects when we're talking about climate change. But we are also innovators, and we also can give global solutions. That rising influence of African countries, how do you see it transforming global approaches to climate change and security? Do you think that's been recognized as far as solution building is concerned on a global scale?

President Juan Manuel Santos [00:08:47]

Well, fortunately, knowledge of the Indigenous communities around the world, not only in Africa, finally is being recognized. Because for many, many decades, for centuries, it was ignored. Now you see in discussions in the United Nations and all around the world, hear more what the Indigenous communities have to say because they are the ones who know better how to protect nature.

So, I will give you another anecdote that I have with the Indigenous community. I became very interested in their knowledge and very interested in their concept of justice and I took to them our National Development Plan that we have almost every country has a development plan that has to be approved by Congress. And they said, “Mr. President, this is something that we cannot discuss with you.” And I said, “Why?” They said, “Because we have a completely different view of what development is.” And they said, “For you, for most of the humans around the world, development is constructing roads, building houses, extracting oil from the soil. For us, development is maintaining our culture, our traditions, our harmony with nature. That is development for us. So, we have a basic contradiction in what we think is development and what you think is development.” That was also a lesson for me, but I understood very well that their view of development is much more logical from the point of view of the environmentalist of protecting nature than ours. So, we have to hear more the Indigenous communities around the world, in Africa, in Latin America, everywhere.

Adelle Onyango [00:10:51]

It really does speak to, even in terms of inclusion, how intentional you need to be with inclusion, because already your definitions of development were on two different, not even two different pages, in two different books. So, you had to come back down to the basics to say, okay, we need to include what development means to this community in our national agenda.

Do you think there's a way that international policies can borrow from that, that specific story when it comes to including Indigenous communities in global policy and like creating structures that could see us advance forward when we're looking at climate and peace discussions?

President Juan Manuel Santos [00:11:38]

Fortunately, we are seeing how more and more development plans have sustainability as an important factor. We're seeing how in the universities they are teaching the engineers to take into account the effect on the environment of what they do. So, slowly what we're doing in practice is incorporating that very basic knowledge that the way you develop cannot be contrary to what nature is demanding. Otherwise, we will never have peace with nature. So, we are advancing in that direction, unfortunately not fast enough. That's why we have to promote more and more these type of changes in the paradigms of what we consider development, we consider success, economic success, we have to start changing that in order to make it compatible with nature.

Adelle Onyango [00:12:44]

There's something else that has been coming up in the conversations we've been having on this show and even in Kenya, it's a conversation we're having now as we try and craft what leadership looks like for us going forward as a country, and its intergenerational conversation, intergenerational leadership or approach to setting policies on a national agenda. And I know this is something that is very important to you on a personal level, but also when we look at The Elders and your intergenerational call to action that was co-authored by you, urging leaders to share power across generations. So that is really important, especially for me sitting here in Africa, knowing our youth numbers, knowing how vibrant and innovative our African youth are. Knowing how important this is to you, what role do you see young people playing when it comes to climate action and pushing for peace?

President Juan Manuel Santos [00:13:50]

As an Elder, I learned an enormous amount from the wisdom of the youth. As different generations, we can inspire each other and a former Elder, Kofi Annan, which was one of the founding with Nelson Mandela of the Elders, he had a phrase which is very pertinent. He said, "You're never too young to lead and never too old to learn." So, the Elders, we are

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learning from our conversations with the young generations, and we are encouraging them to be more proactive. It is their future.

Our generation, in a way, failed the coming generations because we did not do enough. And we are giving the new generations an enormous responsibility because of our failure. Many times I ask for forgiveness. Now, please forgive us, we failed you, but you must take the baton and persevere. It is in your hands. And fortunately, we're seeing different young organizations around the world, I was very, very pleased to see how Pacific Island students fighting climate change, they succeeded in their struggle to have the International Court of Justice make a ruling about climate. This is an enormous step because now this is a legal recognition by the highest court of the world, that nature has rights. This is a major, major step in the right direction and it was promoted by young people. We are trying to promote that in the COP 30, every country has a representation of the young people of their country in the delegation that the country is sending to Brazil to have the voice of the young people expanded and heard more is so important right now.

Adelle Onyango [00:15:58]

I want us to go into and tap into your insights and your experience when it comes to negotiating Peace Agreements in Colombia because I feel like there's many lessons or thought points that you could share with those who are listening perhaps it's specifically African leaders and multilateral organizations who are also listening to this, to help them effectively integrate climate resilience and conflict prevention. So, during your experience negotiating the Peace Agreements in Colombia, were there lessons and key insights you took from that that you could share?

President Juan Manuel Santos [00:16:37]

Again, I'm going to quote another Elder, the founder Nelson Mandela. I was inspired by him in a conversation that I had back in 1994. I remember I was chairing the Eighth Conference of the United Nations for Trade and Development called the UNTAD and he was elected chair of the Ninth Conference. So, I went to Johannesburg to formally give him the chair. I had not met him; he was President of South Africa. That morning, I turned on the public television in South Africa. I was in my hotel, and I started seeing like a surreal live program for the first time. The victims of the war in South Africa and the perpetrators were getting together. And they were filming that in real time. And some of them screamed at each other, hit each other, others embraced, others cried. And I thought, this is crazy. And that afternoon, I went to give the chair to Nelson Mandela. We had programmed a meeting for 15 minutes. It lasted three and a half hours. He started explaining to me how important it was to bring the victims and the perpetrators together and have them talk. And there's a phrase of Nelson Madera that I use very often. He said, "The most powerful weapon in the world is to sit down and talk." But talk in a constructive way. You don't sit down to impose the way you think to the other person who thinks differently. You sit down to hear what the other person has to say in order to learn and discover common

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denominators that will bring you together and then you can build an agreement despite the differences. This was a marvelous lesson that I had. I used it in the Peace Process in Colombia. I sat down with the terrorists because they were called terrorists. Many people criticized me, but I said, you don't sit down with your friends to make peace. You sit down with the people you are fighting to make peace.

And so, dialogue, constructive dialogue, learn from the others who think differently is so important in every aspect of government and of peacemaking. And also, nature, the environment, and peacemaking to sit down with the people who don't believe in climate change and instead of simply rejecting them, let's sit down and discuss it. Listen, are you not seeing what is happening in the world? This is because the temperature of the world is rising. It's not that we want to stop the oil companies from producing oil. No, because we need to save the planet. But it's by talking constructive dialogue that we can save the planet.

Adelle Onyango [00:19:53]

I'm also reminded of something that Barack Obama said recently, which is when it's most important for you to listen is when you're listening to someone you disagree with. That's when you should really be listening to what they're saying, 'cause there's a lot to learn. And it's really just going back to the fundamentals.

One thing I really love about the shows that we've done on this podcast is one of the key takeaways is hope and that there is always hope. And so, I want to know, in terms of climate action, in terms of global peace, in this moment, what is giving you hope that we're making progress?

President Juan Manuel Santos [00:20:38]

My own experience gives me hope. Everybody told me that peace with the FARC was impossible, all my predecessors had failed. When I got elected, even my family told me, how are you going to sit down with these people. You're going to lose your political capital. Don't do it. Don't do it. You were elected as a war hero, because I was, and I was the most popular politician in Colombia at that time. But I said, no, I want to sit down and make peace. Everybody says it's not possible. But then again, I will quote Nelson Mandela. Nelson Mandela said, "everything is impossible until you make it possible."

Adelle Onyango [00:21:17]

Yes.

President Juan Manuel Santos [00:21:18]

We made it possible. And I think, yes, we are going through a very difficult moment right now. The multilateral system is crumbling, and it's been not respected. We see how many conflicts around the world. We have more than 140 conflicts around the world. Some of

them, you don't even hear about them, but they're the human tragedies in many parts of the world that you don't hear about and we are going through a very difficult process with our environmental policies you see temperature going up without precedent in almost every part of the world, you see the rains are much more intense every part in the world, you see the fires going around more than ever. But you also see examples of processes that go in the right direction. And I am a natural optimist. I think that people will realize that we have to change, for example, in the United Nations, the reform of the United Nations. I think that is something that is going to happen. Everybody was saying, "No, it's impossible. The countries that have a veto power will never accept that." Well, they will accept it, and you're seeing a trend. Just last week, I was in the United Nations talking about the two-state solution and the need to recognize Palestine. And just a year ago, they told me the developed countries and the G7 countries will never recognize Palestine. Well, in the last few weeks, France, the UK, a few days ago, Canada, said we are going to recognize Palestine. So things change and things change for the better when people realize that it's in their hands to change it, and there you need long-term leadership. Leaders that don't think about the next elections but think about the next generations. And this is the type of leadership we have to promote. And the young people should promote that type of leadership.

Adelle Onyango [00:23:42]

Yes, I completely agree with you. I think we have an African proverb that says we should be planting trees that we're not even going to enjoy the shade from. And that's kind of like the leadership you're looking at. People who are not looking for immediate gains or selfish gains, but are thinking beyond the now and beyond themselves. And honestly, I just have to say thank you for being that kind of leader, even with the work that you're now currently doing with The Elders. It's how can we equip younger generations to do things that might outlive us.

President Juan Manuel Santos [00:24:17]

Thank you, Adelle, and thank you for your work.

Adelle Onyango [00:24:30]

Let's head over to Chad and hear from Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim.

Adelle Onyango [00:24:47]

Hindou, welcome, welcome to the podcast.

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim [00:24:51]

Hi, thank you very much for having me.

Adelle Onyango [00:24:30]

Let's start first. The thing that I think we don't see coming out a lot when we zero in on climate issues is how African communities have had sustainable practices for managing natural resources. This is core to the work that you do. So maybe we can unpack the work that you do in terms of championing change when it comes to environmental issues.

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim [00:25:18]

Coming from communities like mine, where the peoples are leaving from one place to another one to find water and pastures it is already embedded in our way of living the resilience, the adaptation, and mitigation. Because we are the peoples depending from nature we do not depend from the end of the day salary where we can get your cash and go to the market. We depend from the rainfall that can penetrate the soil that can allow the trees to flourish to give the fruits that can allow the pastures to grow up to give our cattle food and we can get a milk and then we can build our food system, we can build our economy. So that's mean we have to live in harmony with the nature.

And that is what our ancestors are doing for thousands of years through our own way of living. So then we know where we can live during the drought when we can stay during the flood and that helps us to ensure that the balance of the ecosystem is kept. So, as nomadic peoples, when you live with your cattle, you stay two days, three days, and maximum one week in one place. And, when you leave this area, that's meaning your cow dung helped to fertile the land. So, when you come back later, some months ago, so you found that does land have a lot of grass, have a lot of insects, and the bears and then the ecosystem keep the balance. And all of the way that we are living in this movement, that's mean you are fertile the land naturally and keeping the balance between the ecosystem. And, this is the best resilience and adaptation system ever. No chemical, no need for technology, but the best technology is us and nature.

Adelle Onyango [00:27:15]

What do you think is a stumbling block to seeing African communities and their strategies as global solutions to environmental issues?

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim [00:27:26]

We are a global solution. This is not duped and no discussion on that full stop because we didn't create the climate change. It is the western culture who abuse to the nature and who is actually overdeveloped, not only developed, overdeveloped and continuously just extracting from the nature who create the climate change impact. We know scientifically Africa contributes little and countries like Chad contributes even little to the climate change impact. So that means we are already by creation a solutions, as sustainability.

However, climate change has no frontiers. Climate impact do not choose where they have to impact people. And most of the time it is the place that you are not creating it that you

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are most impacted. So, this is the injustice of climate change. The world have to recognize and understand the way of living that Africans are doing is so generous without putting any barriers. We just sharing our way of living and protecting the nature for everyone because there is no frontiers. It's so amazing when I talk with my grandmother, and when I talk with my cousin, because we do the weather forecast, just by observing the nature. And we can know if it's going to rain in the next two hours, or if it's going to be the rainy season in the next three months, or if the next year, 12 months later, is going to be flooding years, or is going to be a dry years. And that science do not know that and I get the confirmation because I did invited the scientists people in my community and when they went there they just like stay and suddenly the rain is coming so my people start packing the stuff as nomadic you don't have house that you can hide your stuff there and then the scientists say like, "Are we moving?" I'm like, "No, we are not moving. It's just going to rain." And then the look at this guy is like, "Okay, it's not going to rain." Suddenly, you see the heavy rain start coming. We are packed with our stuff. And you see the scientists running, hiding somewhere, looking the bigger tree where they can hide themselves. And all the kids at the community seem like those people dressed well and then riding under the rain, we're just like laughing on them. At the end of the rain, the conversation is started and then they come like, "How do you know it's going to rain?" We're like, "Well, we saw the little insect taking their eggs in their nests. We saw the wind direction, that just change. And of course, we know in the next two hours it's going to rain." They say, "Well, that is so interesting because you can check in your app, in your phone, you can say it's going to rain, surprise is sunny, or it's going to be sunny, surprise is wind. So how do you know that?" We said, like, "We live with the nature."

We do learn how the nature behave from the insect to the birds, to the cloud, to the star. So, we understand how they are living. So, we do have the knowledge not because it's not written that we are not expert. Our grandma and grandpa are PhD plus plus. They are professors in a multiple discipline, not only one. And not going to school is not make us ignorant people. We are so knowledgeable in that need to be understand, and consider, and respect.

Adelle Onyango [00:31:14]

Yeah, so we are so in tune with nature and we've been that way for years. You know something else, Hindou, that I find gets overlooked, especially when we're talking about issues that affect people globally, is the intersections. For example, when we talk about climate change. It's very hard for people to understand where that overlaps with women. And I was quite interested in knowing about an association that you founded for Indigenous women and peoples of Chad. So maybe you can tell me and the person listening, what was the motivation behind that and where climate and women meet because people often overlook that.

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim [00:32:02]

So, you know, why I speak English or French or whatever, thanks to my mom, this already the first connection with the woman, because my mom was of her generations and then things like, well, even my kids cannot understand their culture, their identity, they have to understand the western culture to make them more communicate or live better. So, she sent us to school, me, my sister and my brothers. But of course, when I went to school, I have been marginalized and discriminated by the other kids that thinking you are coming from Indigenous communities. Cattle held us, that you smile, milk. And then they discriminate me. And of course, being a child, we just wanted to fight and tell them that I'm a human being and I have a brain. So, then I was fighting for that. But when I start becoming teenagers. I understood that the discrimination is not only for me as Hindou and for my sister that I'm fighting every day. It is for the girls who have my age who never get the chance to go to school. They are doubly marginalized because they are early marriage, they do not go to school. They can get divorced, and they can just like live on their own. So, then I decided to change the life of myself but also of those women. And I understood immediately, you cannot talk about the girls rights without talking about the women rights. And I understood you cannot talk about the women right without talking about the community's rights because we are living in a collective life. And immediately understood, I cannot talk about the community without talking about the environment, because we live dependent of it. And then my objective become more clear. And in age of 12 teenagers, I founded the Indigenous Women in People Associations of Chad. And I've fight it until I was 16 before to get the official authorizations of that one. And for me, it's how we can protect the right of the women and the right of the environment.

Adelle Onyango [00:34:14]

Congratulations, 12 and actually 16 is when you got the certification. This is incredible. And what was the reaction from your community when you started championing for women's rights and also highlighting how this is linked to the environment?

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim [00:34:33]

You know, we are in patriarchal society, like in many African culture. So for me, going to school is creating an identity for me. Because when I'm in the school, they say, "Oh, these Indigenous girls that is smiling milk." When I go to my community, "Oh, the city girls is there." So that's me at the community level. The city girls is allowed to do something that the Indigenous girls cannot do. So, I can go and sit with the elders. I can go and sit with the men community leaders, that the girls of the community cannot do. And then they just forgive me, accept me, 'cause I'm a city girls and I use this discrimination positively to try to tell them, "Listen, what's happening this year? What are you leaving because there is this drought?" Then I try to explain to them like how we can do to change that. And I have a adult conversation with them because it is the things that they are discussing every single day. I do remember my first day having a women meeting. So, I went on the afternoon. So,

the elders prepared a tea. I sit down there as the only one woman and one young girls between them. So, then they serve the tea. Then I say like, "Listen, I want to discuss with the women. We have to discuss about what they're doing every single day to go collect this water, food, medicine, etc. Then maybe I can get a project for them to help them." They're like, "Oh, okay, yeah, why not?" So I'm like, "Okay, may you help me to talk to them? Because you are the leaders, you are the men. So, if you can tell them, they can listen to you." And then they feel like, "Of course, we are the chiefies. So, we can make that happen." The next day, the work is done. I didn't went to any women, but the women gathered in one places. And then I went there. I started a serious discussion with them. We had one day of the discussion with the women. The next day, when I wake up and I'm working between the communities, every men that crossed my eyes, they just thought, laugh, smile, they're like, "You get to come to make a revolution in our community." I'm like, "What did I do?" They're like, "Hmm", that's mean they have a conversation with the wives. So that was like the first thing I started having a women meeting using the power of the men at the communities.

Adelle Onyango [00:37:10]

You know what's so interesting is that you have found a way to identify what your privilege would be when you're the City Girl in the community and using that privilege for impact, which is quite interesting and in a very sneaky but impactful way. So, when we look at the global discourse around climate change and issues around the environment really, what do you think other gaps as pertains to Africans, as pertains to how we are impacted by climate change and the solutions towards climate change?

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim [00:37:53]

When you go to the global climate negotiations, the discourse is different. And it is also divided like in two, I can say. You have the negotiators, those who are representing the country, who can be in the room arguing because of the full stop or comma or one wording to put the text of the negotiations. Then you have the global peoples who are attending the COP negotiations and trying to go from one corridor to another one to talk about what is the solution, how we can have a relation, et cetera. So, in all those voices, it is not all the 196 countries that are sitting down to decide about the climate, because firstly, the language barrier, the climate negotiations is mostly in English, only in the plenary that you can have the six languages. And the African countries is not all of them that speak English and it's not all of them who are knowledgeable about the climate change. And there is so many thematic discussions, so that make a big barriers.

I do remember when we were negotiating the Paris Agreement. The countries like U.S., like Europe, all of them, they come with all the experts, the lawyers, the judges, the peoples who can know how they can protect themselves later. But the countries like ours go with the negotiators that some of them knowledgables, others are tourists, etc. So, at the end of the day, of course, it's not equal to negotiate and imposing the way that they want. And as they are the one who create the climate impact, they have to pay for the adaptation and for

mitigation. They start creating a law. They do not see that they have to pay. The responsibility is to pay of the damage that they create, but they are seeing as they are making a favor to the developing countries, to Africa. Like they just like, okay, we can give you that and we can impose our own law and this is the injustice when it's come to the African going to the climate negotiation. However, we have a group who are very strong who can tell them like either you accept it or either we do not accept your text that you are proposing but you have to be very strong staying until 5 a.m., I do remember we stay until 5 a .m. every single day to try to negotiate. And that's how it's helped us to include the five references of Indigenous peoples. So for the first time, we get the recognition of the right of Indigenous peoples two times on the knowledge of Indigenous peoples, because of course, this is very helpful for them because they wanna have your solution but not to respect your right. And we have one on participation. So those five references helped us to push them to create certain kinds of institutionalizations of the Indigenous people's knowledge and Indigenous people's participation at the negotiation. But still, as I'm saying, we have all this climate fora, who are very important, where we can meet, we can take a decision, but the climate impact is becoming more higher and higher.

We are seeing people that are dying because of the conflict over the resources. That's exactly what is happening in last May, 14th of May in Chad, where my community were there. Other community come and killed 43 women, children, and babies just because of the land and access to the resources. And it is the same the year before where they fight over the water and land. It is the same where you are seeing the terrorist group around Boko Haram, around the Lekcha that are growing, terrorizing people, getting their land. It is the same when you go to Mali, to Burkina Faso, even to Kenya, to South Africa. So, all that, like the injustice, even if we fight internationally globally, but people are dying because of climate impact, and the global communities are not caring on reducing the simple emission.

Adelle Onyango [00:42:14]

There is a shift happening on the continent. I don't know if you have felt it, but like I feel it every day. In Kenya, we're in the middle of it. If you look at Togo, if you looked at Senegal, even South Africa, I was reading things about Ghana recently. And these young Africans who want to be at the forefront of designing a new, liberated, strong Africa. We can't do that if we don't look at climate issues, clearly, as we discovered in our conversation. What do you think is the next smallest step that African listening needs to take so that they are informed, so that they can be able to hold their own leaders accountable, and also global partners accountable. What do you think is the next smaller step they can take?

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim [00:43:09]

I think all Africans, especially the youths, we have to understand. We are the present in the future. We are the younger continent. And we are the continent that are growing between the knowledge of our ancestors and the new technology that is coming from every corner of

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the world. And we are naturally innovators and solution makers. So, we have all those positive things that we should combine and build our future without letting anyone else to come and dictate to ask what we should do, what we shouldn't do. They say the hand that gives you will not sustain you, but the hand that you create yourself, you know how to heal it even when it is sick. So, we have the hand that we are creating ourselves. And let me share an example, you know, in my projects one of the favorite that I like is the participatory mapping, how I'm using the science, technology, and traditional knowledge of the communities to create a map, by the community themselves, to put the knowledge and to have a local adaptation plan. So, I use satellite image that, of course, we do not have in Chad or in Africa. I use the first science that they have from the Western, but I use that with the knowledge of my ancestors that I put it together. It's a unique way to allow the community who didn't went to school to be innovators to create their own solutions. And that helped us for the first time to get women land right. Those women are doing agroecology, where they are creating their own food. When they are restoring the ecosystem, we have hundreds and thousand of the nursery from the indigenous plant who are a sacred trees that we are growing up now, that they can restore their own ecosystem, and they can create a circular economy without anyone for the future coming and giving them the money or creating all the criteria that they have to respect, they can do it themselves and they can sustain their life, they can create the future of their children. So, that's just like in small examples I'm doing. So, we need to go together, with all our innovation together, exchange our knowledge among ourselves. And we can be not only the future of Africa, but the future of the world that are creating peace, stability, security, fighting climate change around the world. So, it is up to us, and I really hope that we can do it.

Adelle Onyango [00:45:57]

Thank you so much for making time to have this conversation with me.

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim [00:46:01]

It's a great pleasure. And yeah, we will do it together all as Africans. We will change the wheel.

Adelle Onyango [00:46:18]

Last but not least, let's hear from Khouloud Ben Mansour.

Adelle Onyango [00:46:36]

Thank you so much for making time to be on the podcast with us, Khouloud.

Khouloud Ben Mansour [00:46:39]

I'm very honored.

Adelle Onyango [00:46:41]

A lot of people will see even the title of this episode, Climate and Peace, and wonder how these two things are even related. And it's not only issues peace, but climate insecurity threatens the rights, education, and futures of young people. And I want us to, maybe from your experience, if you could help the person listening understand how climate insecurity affects all of these other things?

Khouloud Ben Mansour [00:47:07]

Thank you. Of course, today, climate change in Africa is no longer an environmental issue, it's becoming a global or continental issue that impacts also other key subjects such as our food security, our psychological stability, our peace itself. And when we speak about climate change the very first thing that comes to our minds are the natural disasters, the natural events, droughts, the floods, the desertification, disrupts, and how that impacts also fields like agriculture, which might be a very important field in some countries and an income source. So, we're talking also about financial stability and therefore other consequences that are bared by the people who are impacted directly. And as we know, Africa being a very useful continent, we know that the majority of the people who would be vulnerable towards the climate events are young people. So, when we speak about climate change, we're also talking about the implications of how these climate events may have serious impacts and the major influence on their peace and security. Also, the inter-displacement issues were having to migrate either internally or outside of your country, meaning that they have to carry not only the environmental tools, but also the psychological and the social, economic tools that are caused by climate change. We need to think about all the implications of climate change, not just to give a priority to one direct scope, that is the environment and the food security, but we also have so many other levels that are deeper and much more important, if not as equal as these subjects.

So today, I think the very first thing that governments and decision makers should consider is to make adaptation plans and mitigation plans at the same time. Indonesia has already started developing its national adaptation plan and they launched also a national youth strategy related to the climate change that was supported by the Ministry of Environment and the Young Negotiators Group, they were also part of that launch and part of developing that adaptation plan, which speaks about the willingness of the government to incorporate young people not only as the vulnerable groups towards these events, but also a key constituency to contribute to the enhancement of the future of young people in Tunisia.

Adelle Onyango [00:49:45]

You've kind of spoken a bit to it, but maybe we could dive in a bit deeper in terms of collaboration between communities and governments. Aside from what you've talked about in terms of the adaptation plan, how have you seen this work? Are there examples

that you've seen work where communities and governments actually come together, collaborate in terms of breaking the cycle of climate driven instability?

Khouloud Ben Mansour [00:50:10]

Of course, collaboration between the governments, either at the local, national, or even the regional levels, is very important because climate impacts, they don't only stop at borders. When you reach the majority of regions or the majority of communities, it shows that the government is being as inclusive as possible, in terms of integrating local communities into the climate mitigation plans or adaptation plans. I think in Africa, such collaboration has added value to attracting a larger joint funding from international partners. I have seen that a lot, especially with the cooperation agencies. The collective action it really signals more a long-term vision it's much more sustainable and much more stronger, and of course, it makes the accountability measure even more effective. I'll give you one example that I have seen in Kenya and I think this was related to the water resource management. In Kenya, local water user associations partner with country governments to manage and they restore water catchment areas. So, what they do is communities they identify local water priorities while the government provides technical and financial backing. You see how this complements each other. So, this has reduced water conflicts, and it improved also the irrigation for farmers and in countries in Kenya that is impacted by droughts and has extreme climate events throughout the year, I think it's important that in a key and important element like water management that they have started directly to provide support for that.

Also in Morocco, there's the OASIS Rehabilitation Program because we understand the importance of OASIS and how they provide not only pure oxygen but they also provide a source of water as well. So, they are very important in North Africa. In southern Morocco these local farmers cooperatives, they work with the government on palm growth restoration. So, they combat the certification. So, they try as much as they can that they restore these farms in order to provide as much as possible water and to avoid the certification because the country at some point, even with Tunisia as well, we have been at risk in 2023 of extreme heat temperatures and extreme drought, and that was a very, very alerting sign for us, and we had to cut down the water consumption. The country actually had to cut down every day in a few hours the consumption of water, and that was such an alerting sign. So, in the south of Morocco, the communities, they lead the implementing, they lead the part where traditional water management systems, and then the government what they do is that they support with the training, and the funding, and the climate resilient education, etc. What these farmers or what these local groups they would do is that they would get the funding, they would get the training, and then they would implement it in the regions where there is the certification issues or water management issues.

So, I think now, when you see even with tiny examples, if the country is supporting, it means that they say explicitly we have a solution for you. And that itself, even if it doesn't solve the solution directly, it at least gives you a reassurance that I am backed up, that I have somebody who would support me, or I have a solution as a plan B, and this climate event will not impact me. So even psychologically, it will translate into a message of hope, and it will decrease the risk of stress and escalating things to conflict. So, I think here today, when we speak about governments, it's about time that we start from the root causes and start also from the regions where the access is very difficult, where the means are a bit limited and we should address the issues and we should provide support for them, starting with capacity building or starting with educating the community groups and starting also with providing rooms for collaboration as well.

Adelle Onyango [00:54:26]

So, what I do want to know now, because we've talked a lot about community level intervention and government, what do you think is one practical step that international policy needs to take when we look at addressing the climate peace security nexus?

Khouloud Ben Mansour [00:54:46]

At the moment, I think climate is still addressed in environmental agreements, but at the same time, peace and security are dealt with in separation and security council or in the EU peace and security council mandates. But in reality, the communities that we're talking about, they don't work in this space, they don't live within these issues, they live a completely separate lifestyle. Today, if we want to go to the solution, we have to speak the language of the people. And not just give them the agreements and the conventions and the outcome reports and whatever that is being done at the negotiation rooms. These are very difficult terminologies and technical things for somebody who has 12 years old to understand. So today what we need to do is to make climate more understandable, if I may say. Maybe in our education systems we need to understand, we need to put a new subject called climate education or have an entire subject that has climate and peace and security connected together so that people from the early generations they understand the climate agenda and how it implicates them directly.

I think one practical move also would be to make climate risk assessments mandatory in peacekeeping missions, in conflict prevention, in post-conflict recovery programs. When we look at the documents, you would not find climate addressed that much. It's either about mediation, conflict prevention, or even if we speak about silence in the guns, disarmament groups, we talk about extremism, we talk about everything related to peace and security, but we know that climate is majorly one of the peace and security issues today in Africa. We can allocate a short quota from the government's budget to adapt to climate, to understand or to have an experience sharing with other countries that are advanced and to see how we can also replicate these initiatives through the small budgets, through small community groups in our countries.

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Adelle Onyango [00:57:14]

Thank you so much, Khouloud, for being with us today and for the work that you do and have done in the past as well.

Khouloud Ben Mansour [00:54:46]

Thank you so much.

Mark Leon Goldberg [00:57:42]

Adelle, that was just such a great conversation, you know it's almost cliché at this point to say that Africa is ground zero for the impact of climate change on people's lives. But you know, it's true it's where climate change most directly impacts the dynamics around conflict, peace, and security.

Adelle Onyango [00:57:58]

Exactly, Mark. And I think one key takeaway for me from this episode is just forward, make peace with nature. I think sometimes we get lost in a lot of the terminology, but ultimately that's what we're saying.

Mark Leon Goldberg [00:58:14]

You know, what I so appreciated about this conversation is how it brought together three very diverse voices. And to me, when you bring international and intergenerational perspectives into conversations about climate, that's when progress can actually be made.

Adelle Onyango [00:58:30]

And also what was quite interesting is understanding how on the continent, Africa, we're having conversations about including Indigenous communities when it comes to solutions around climate change and just hearing that that's the case in other continents as well is good to know because the information and the solutions have been there for decades. We just aren't tapping into them enough.

Mark Leon Goldberg [00:58:56]

Yeah, that was something that certainly came through in your conversations. It's just how, you know, for decades or even centuries, there have been solutions to these ongoing climate problems. We just need to harness them using local knowledge.

Adelle Onyango [00:59:11]

It's interesting just to see the similarities that are in fighting one common issue. And so, I guess this calls for us to have a more collaborative approach to climate action.

Mark Leon Goldberg [00:59:25]

So, this was a great episode. We have more in store for you in the Future of Africa series.

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Thank you all for listening and follow us on globaldispatches.org, as well as be sure to subscribe to the podcast on Apple Podcast, Spotify, or wherever you get your show.

I am so excited for the rest of the series, Adelle.

Adelle Onyango [00:59:47]

Me too. Thanks, Mark. And I can't wait for everyone to listen to episode three.

Mark Leon Goldberg [01:00:01]

Thank you for listening to The Future of Africa, a special series on Global Dispatches, produced in partnership with the African Union, the Elders, and the United Nations Foundation.

I'm Mark Leon Goldberg, the host and founder of Global Dispatches. This series is hosted by Adelle Onyango. It is edited and mixed by Levi Sharp.

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