



Memorandum

Joint Nexus²⁵-World Food Programme MSC Side Event:

Roots of Resilience:

Building Peace in an Era of Food and Climate Shocks

February 15, 2025

On February 15, 2025, the Nexus²⁵ project organized its third annual side event at the Munich Security Conference (MSC). The discussion, co-hosted with the UN World Food Programme (WFP), brought together leaders from government, multilateral organizations, civil society, security institutions and the private sector to discuss the links between hunger, climate and sustainable security.

The debate focused on the need to strengthen resilience in the face of food and climate crises, with particular attention to the most vulnerable areas such as Africa and Southeast Asia, where food insecurity is often exacerbated by political instability and armed conflicts. During the event, discussions highlighted how climate change is accelerating the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events – such as prolonged droughts, floods, and biodiversity loss – which undermine entire regions' ability to ensure food security for their populations. This environmental degradation not only threatens livelihoods but also fuels broader insecurity. As food supplies dwindle, resource competition intensifies, increasing the likelihood of displacement, conflict, and even armed insurgencies. Addressing food insecurity, therefore, is not just a humanitarian imperative but a strategic security priority.

The necessity of more effective adaptation strategies was also analyzed, emphasizing nexus approaches that combine humanitarian aid, sustainable development, and participatory governance. A crucial aspect of the discussion was the role of Europe and international partnerships as the United States is redefining its global engagement with European partners, with direct implications for the West's ability to address global crises in a coordinated and effective manner.

In this context, the Nexus²⁵/WFP discussion sparked conversation between these communities on core themes:

The Political Dimensions of Food and Climate Crises

The conversation acknowledged that food security is not solely a technical or economic issue but a deeply political one. Political instability, lack of governance, funding gaps, and diminishing trust in multilateralism were identified as major obstacles to effective interventions. Participants highlighted the growing number of actors in the global security landscape, which, while broadening the discussion, also complicates coordination efforts. There was a strong appeal for renewed political will to integrate food security into broader

security and diplomatic frameworks, as well as the need to reframe food security as a political priority rather than a secondary development concern.

Bridging Policy Gaps and Strengthening Cooperation

The discussion highlighted the gap between analysis and implementation, noting that while the scientific community has long identified the risks, political action remains insufficient. Lessons from the Sahel region were used to illustrate the challenges of governance, military engagement, and sustainable development. Some participants pointed out that the divergence between policymakers, think tanks, and practitioners contributes to inaction. Additionally, there was a call for international actors to avoid a patronizing approach (particularly when working with the Global South) and instead work collaboratively with local stakeholders to craft solutions that respect regional priorities.

Reframing the Narrative: From Security Threats to Opportunities

Participants underscored the inextricable link between food security and climate change, emphasizing that these issues are not merely local but have global repercussions. The worsening living conditions in many regions contribute to radicalization and extremism, exacerbating security threats. Several speakers stressed that addressing food insecurity is a strategic necessity to curb instability, while others noted that alarmism might not be the most effective messaging tool. The prevailing rhetoric around food and climate security often focuses on its potential to fuel conflict, with policy arguments framed around preventing extremism and migration crises. Some participants challenged this approach, arguing that while security concerns are valid, the conversation should also emphasize global solidarity and the value of investing in long-term resilience. The importance of communicating a positive, compelling narrative that resonates with the public was underscored, particularly in mobilizing support for food security policies. It was noted that past communication failures have weakened political momentum, and there is an urgent need to restore public trust in multilateral initiatives.

The Role of Europe and Multilateralism

The erosion of multilateralism was a recurrent theme, with concerns over the diminishing influence of collective decision-making in global governance. The discussion acknowledged the critical role of Europe in bridging gaps and fostering dialogue, particularly in transatlantic relations. With the US engagement in multilateral efforts facing uncertainty, European leadership was seen as increasingly vital. Additionally, the potential for green development in Africa was highlighted as an opportunity to simultaneously address food security and climate challenges while fostering economic growth. Finally, a stronger adherence to international commitments, such as the Paris Agreement, was reiterated as a crucial step towards mitigating interconnected crises.

The Nexus Approach: From Marginal Issue to Security Priority

The concept of nexus approaches – linking food security, climate, and conflict – has evolved from a niche topic to a central security concern, especially in the wake of geopolitical disruptions such as the war in Ukraine. The ability to anticipate and mitigate crises through an integrated approach was recognized as crucial. However, participants warned against

excessive securitization of food security and climate issues while doing so, noting the importance of balancing security priorities with development imperatives. Regardless, in an era of accelerating climate shocks and diminishing political attention to external crises, a nexus approach offers a path forward to more effectively addressing these complex crises and avoiding duplicative efforts from security and development actors.

Event Participants (opening speakers in bold):

1. Henry Alt-Haaker, Managing Director, Hamburg Sustainability Conference (HSC)
2. **Niels Annen**, Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
3. **Åsmund Grøver Aukrust**, Norwegian Minister of International Development
4. Mathieu Bussi res, Director, NATO Climate Change and Security Centre of Excellence (CCASCOE)
5. Siena Cicarelli, Center for Climate and Security (CCS)
6. Luca Cinciripini, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)
7. Steven Everts, Director, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)
8. Stephan Exo-Kreischer, Executive Director, the ONE Campaign
9. Martin Frick, Director, World Food Programme (WFP) Berlin
10. Paul Gulleik Larsen, Norwegian Ambassador and Special Envoy for Food Systems, Climate and Security
11. Ottilia Anna Maunganidze, Head of Special Projects, Institute for Security Studies (ISS); Munich Security Conference (MSC) Food Security Task Force
12. Delphine Pronk, Chair of the Political and Security Committee, European External Action Service (EEAS)
13. **Hanana Ould Sidi**, Minister of Defence of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
14. Erin Sikorsky, Director, Center for Climate and Security (CCS)
15. Bart Szewczyk, Associate, Covington; Nonresident Senior Fellow, German Marshall Fund (GMF)
16. Nathalie Tocci, Director, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)
17. Caitlin Welsh, Director of the Global Food and Water Security Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)
18. Michael Werz, Senior Advisor for North America and Multilateral Affairs, Munich Security Conference (MSC)



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Nexus²⁵ is a joint project of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) in Rome and the Center for Climate and Security (CCS) in Washington, DC. The project, led by Dr. Nathalie Tocci at IAI, Erin Sikorsky at CCS and Dr. Michael Werz at the Center for American Progress (CAP), is funded by Stiftung Mercator in Germany.

For additional information please visit <https://www.nexus25.org> or contact the Nexus²⁵ team at info@nexus25.org.