Climate change mitigation in forests:

Lessons for climate security

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Security, peace and conflict concerns should be integrated into climate change mitigation initiatives through conflict-sensitive planning and implementation. To do this, we recommend the following:

▶ Design climate change mitigation initiatives for the local context.

▶ Design climate change mitigation initiatives to be pro-poor, inclusive and promote the key role of Indigenous peoples.

▶ Integrate land tenure security into climate change mitigation initiatives.

▶ Strengthen existing effective, legitimate, and accountable institutions to better address security.

▶ Enhance governance systems and benefit-sharing schemata toward greater equity, and strengthen transparency and accountability of climate change mitigation initiatives.

▶ Explicitly integrate gender equity into climate change mitigation initiatives to reduce inequality gaps leading to instability through differential power relations.

▶ Propose alternatives to neoliberal climate change mitigation solutions.

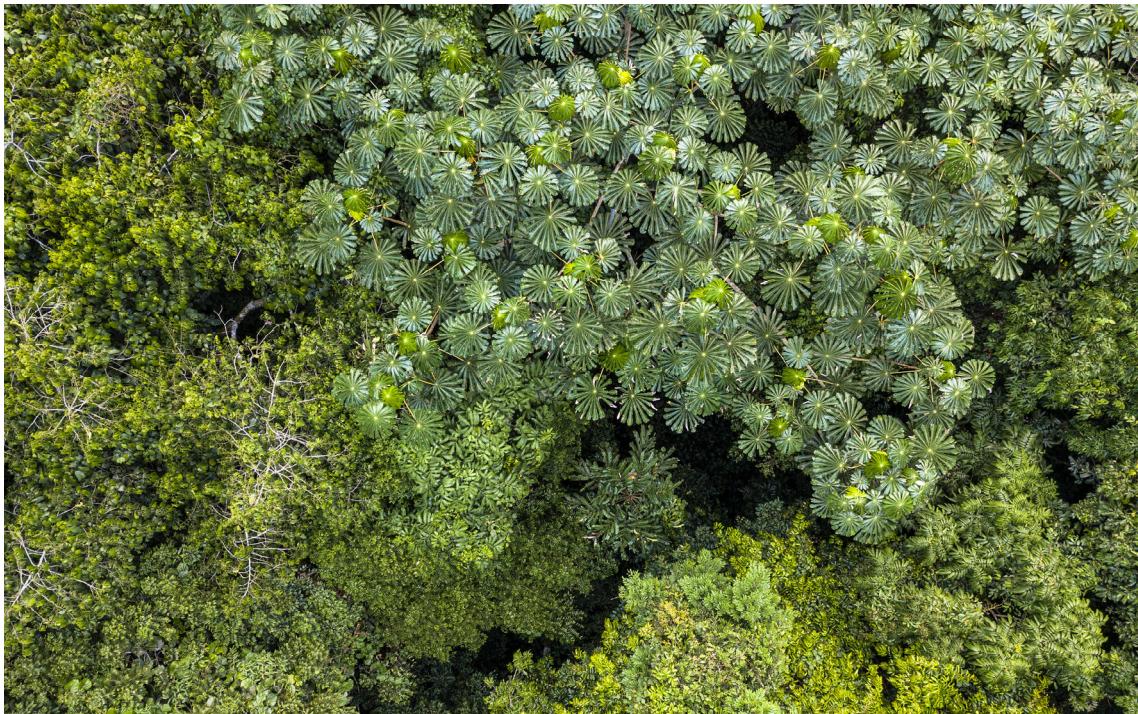▶ Encourage more research on the linkages between climate change mitigation and (in)security.

Forests in low and middle-income countries are at the centre of climate change mitigation efforts. But these forests are also areas of high levels of insecurity and are found in fragile states with weak governance, especially over forestlands. Nations affected by conflict hold 40 per cent of the world's tropical forests (Donovan et al. 2007). No fewer than 25 of 64 countries with REDD+ initiatives are experiencing or emerging from armed conflict (Castro-Nuñez et al. 2017; UN-REDD 2017). The debate about 'climate security' has focussed on the way climate change can exacerbate threats and dangers, but less attention has been placed on the security issues associated with the responses to climate change such as mitigation. Climate change mitigation initiatives can have a significant impact on peace, conflict and security by reinforcing existing inequalities or influencing new forms of forest governance and relations among forest actors. When CCMis contribute to peacebuilding through improved land tenure security for marginalized and Indigenous peoples, enhanced livelihoods opportunities, equitable benefit distribution, and fair processes for governance and conflict resolution, CCMIs can play a constructive force in stabilising security contexts. However, when these dynamics are lacking, they can destabilise forest areas and lead to escalated conflict and insecurity.

This brief is based on a literature review that answers the following questions: (1) What are the ways in which CCMIs and peace/conflict influence one another? (2) How do different dynamics result in different impacts for people and forests? We also aimed to explore CGIAR's contribution to the literature on peace/conflict and climate change mitigation in forests, and what the opportunities for CGIAR might be for future research directions. The framework we developed for this review considers various types of CCMIs and influences of peace/conflict.

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We took an inductive approach and began by defining variables and search parameters from the literature, and followed the contours of an integrative literature review that aims to study complex relations. We reviewed 1147 publications that addressed climate change mitigation and peace/conflict. The geographic scope spanned Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Then, using filtering protocols, we selected 42 that robustly addressed the relationships between the two. We focused on 18 key case studies and three literature reviews that addressed the focus of the review most and used other relevant additional literature as needed. Our key case studies mostly focus on a particular set of programmatic interventions that include payments for ecosystem services (PES) like Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD+) and Nature-Based Solutions. We also briefly touch on renewable energy initiatives that have implications for forests.

We identify four dynamics by which CCMIs and peace/conflict influence one another, listed in the table below, and their associated outcomes in forests. The rise of interests, studies, and policy initiatives aimed at articulating and framing climate security raises concerns that they could potentially exacerbate conflict dynamics without careful consideration of these dynamics.

PEACE / CONFLICT DYNAMIC	CLIMATE SECURITY OUTCOMES

1 *Land access, management and tenure rights:*
Climate change mitigation initiatives highlight the importance of access and tenure rights, but implementation often leads to dispossessory and exclusionary effects for local people.

- ▶ Tightening access in areas of contested rights leads to exclusion
- ▶ Technical requirements incompatible with traditions, culture and contexts
- ▶ Re-emergence of 'fortress conservation' approaches
- ▶ Violent evictions and enforcement of externally imposed rules
- ▶ Uncertainty that carbon rights do not automatically follow land, tree, and other forms of resource tenure

2 *Benefit distribution:*
Unequal distribution of benefits from climate change mitigation initiatives within and among communities and actors results in tensions and conflict that compromise the security context.

- ▶ Overall benefit flow is limited and unevenly distributed
- ▶ Uncertainty and changing terms over promises and expectations create tension
- ▶ Finance is not always a key motivating factor
- ▶ Loss of livelihoods
- ▶ Costs accrue disproportionately among marginalised groups
- ▶ Elite capture of benefits
- ▶ Exclusionary effects emerge from technical requirements
- ▶ Corruption with high levels of finance influxes (resource curse)

3 *New actors, agendas and accountabilities:*
Powerful actors become involved in new markets and diverse agendas can create conflict with local communities and governments, leading to deepening or new forms of instability.

- ▶ New range of non-state actors involved in implementation and oversight
- ▶ Overcoming context of colonial dynamics by paying for a global good vs imposing new forms of global exploitation
- ▶ International focus can help highlight rights issues but can also lead to vulnerability for local communities
- ▶ State centralisation is needed for coherence and coordination, which can clash with efforts to empower local rights and authority
- ▶ Climate crisis narrative used to further political agendas;, e.g. militarisation and land grabbing

4 *Conflict management:*
Key opportunities are being missed in climate change mitigation initiatives to address pre-existing tensions, prevent new disputes, or resolve conflicts

- ▶ Lack of attention to conflict in the design of climate change mitigation initiative
- ▶ Lack of attention to root causes of conflict
- ▶ A shift from conflict resolution to peacebuilding
- ▶ The crucial need for meaningful implementation of safeguards
- ▶ Climate change mitigation initiatives can provide avenues to assist in peacebuilding
- ▶ Limited influence of women, Indigenous peoples and minorities in addressing conflicts
- ▶ Poor participation leads to conflict

CONCLUSIONS

▶ There has not been much attention paid in scholarship, policy or practice to the ways in which climate change mitigation and security affect one another.

▶ Technical solutions do not always work in the politicised context of forest governance and power dynamics. There is a complex relationship between financial rewards and technical solutions which, in many cases, do not directly address the underlying drivers and power dynamics that create insecurity and drive many of the conflicts analysed in this report.

▶ Most climate change mitigation initiatives follow similar logics of the commodification of nature, which clashes with local understandings and customary governance practices.

▶ The current design of climate change mitigation initiatives often is inappropriate for addressing the complexities and pre-existing challenges in (post-)conflict contexts. There are different forms of fragile states that result in different security issues and require different responses. Introducing 'rule of law' based initiatives in contexts where implementation of the law is weak are challenging and there are hazards of assuming law will be implemented in fragile state contexts.

▶ Proponents of climate change mitigation initiatives view problems as solvable, placing high importance on the role of safeguards. However, there are also critiques suggesting that climate change mitigation might be better focused on other sectors as climate change mitigation initiatives in forest areas are so problematic, despite their critical role in achieving climate goals.

▶ Taking a political-centric approach to climate change mitigation initiatives means recognizing the historical and power contexts in which they are implemented. Understanding more about the complexity of the interest groups involved can lead to a questioning of the theory of change behind PES and other market-based climate change mitigation initiatives and the tendency within climate change mitigation initiatives to assume that financial incentives can fully and equitably compensate stakeholders for what are often non-financial 'costs'.

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POLICY BRIEF 2021/1