

Implications of Climate Change on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security

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Statement by Ambassador Gunnarsdóttir Permanent Representative of Iceland

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our times. Indeed, the very existence of some Member States is in danger due to rising sea levels. In that regard, we recognize that small island developing States are especially vulnerable. Others will face serious droughts and increased frequency of extreme weather conditions. These developments and others, which are well known to all of us, will have a significant environmental, social, economic and political impact.

The consequences of climate change can increase tension and potentially lead to conflict. It is therefore very timely and important for the Security Council to address the security implications of climate change. While the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change remains the primary forum for addressing climate change at the international level, the Council, in fulfilling its role in maintaining international peace and security, should recognize the threats posed by climate change and seek ways to address them and ensure the viability and sustainability of our societies.

Although everyone will be affected by climate change, it is important to remember that climate change magnifies existing inequalities. Women are especially vulnerable. Rural areas in developing States and emerging economies, as well as sectors and activities traditionally associated with women, are disproportionately affected by climate change. As a result, women face greater hardships with household activities and the daily struggle for survival. Fewer water resources also have a negative effect on health, sanitation and food security, which puts an additional burden on women. Due to their social roles and responsibilities, women are also more vulnerable to natural disasters than men.

The principles guiding the Security Council when it adopted its landmark resolution 1325 (2000), on women, peace and security, must also guide the Council's work when addressing the security implications of climate change. Women should be portrayed not only as victims of climate change, but also as fundamental actors in action against it. The Council must ensure that any response to climate change takes the gender perspective into account and that both women and men are included in the debate, decision-making and implementation with regard to all aspects of climate change. This will make the response to climate change more effective and appropriately contribute to greater gender equality worldwide.