

CGIAR’s CRITICAL CONTRIBUTION TO SDG16 - a universe of untapped impacts, partnerships and resources

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CGIAR FOCUS Climate Security: Feedback on One CGIAR Research Strategy August 2020

The development of CGIAR FOCUS Climate Security has revealed CGIAR’s untapped potential to contribute to SDG16 and the Humanitarian Development and Peace (HDP) nexus. Here we explain why CGIAR’s contribution is of such importance, and how it should articulate its contribution to SDG16 followed by specific comments on the One CGIAR strategy.

WHY SDG16?

The key element of the CGIAR strategy, by focusing only on SDGs linked to the prevention of hunger by 2030, stops short of accounting for the massive consequences on peace and institutions. It appears as if the challenge ahead is conceived partly by the assumption that peace and institutions will remain static, regardless of crisis, the best or worst-case scenarios induced by climate change. However, more hunger means more threats to our global security, with a direct link to the full spectrum of conflict and the resilience of human institutions. CGIAR’s key challenge about tackling hunger has to recognise that it is much more than the symptomatic and descriptive consequences on its physical components (food, yields, and environmental degradation) and should embrace the strategic role that food systems have in the pursuit and maintenance of peace. More and more, the nexus is becoming apparent and its strategic importance is key to global security.



Figure: A universe of untapped impacts, partnerships and resources if One CGIAR strategy accounts for SDG16.

The whole spectrum of security disruptions, including different degrees of conflict, and their impact on food, land and water systems is crucial but currently missing in the One CGIAR strategy. Food and nutrition security are at stake and any exogenous shock to any of these systems is bound to alter the way they function.

Conflicts in the 21st century illustrate a paradigm shift. Often, violence, in its different scales, is rooted in political, geo-strategic, or ideological frameworks. However, this is changing. Conflicts increasingly denote a stealth complexity in which triggers, and consequences are intricately linked to each other and to climate, environmental degradation, food security and the struggle to control a finite pool of natural resources. **Food, land and water systems in a climate crisis are at the heart of peace and without peace, there is no end to hunger.** Ignoring the role of conflicts in shaping the ONE CGIAR mission does not account for the significant contributions of what we do towards peace and security.

It follows then that **the One CGIAR strategy should be cognisant of this important impact on peace and embrace its central role in the SDG16 context, framing and accounting itself as a central actor and multiplier.** On this regard, it is then essential to show how the CGIAR influences so many aspects of the SDG16 on its foundational parameters and the achievement of its most strategic indicators.

Innovation

Adding a conflict lens will demonstrate CGIAR's contribution to peace and unleash an immense untapped potential for impact.

- Potentially 80% of CGIAR's innovation already directly contribute to the prospects for peace. Unlike the case of climate, nutrition and gender, CGIAR rarely designs its research using conflict-sensitive lenses. However, CGIAR's work in least developed and fragile countries on water, food and land always contributes to mitigate drivers of conflicts (food security, nutrition, gender, climate, food systems, water, NRM, etc.).
- A portfolio review conducted by CGIAR FOCUS Climate Security resulted in 240 CGIAR research products that intentionally focus on Security ([here](#)).
- The security community is only superficially aware of CGIAR's role and no other comparable actor is as well positioned as CGIAR to target and convey food systems knowledge in a way that can contribute to better understanding and decision making in the security/conflict context.

Capacity Development

CGIAR has the potential to increase capacities of actors in the Humanitarian Development Peace space and contribute to lasting peace.

- CGIAR has traditionally not been working with humanitarian and peace building actors. Feedback from discussions and partnerships established through CGIAR FOCUS Climate Security demonstrate the need for capacity building on CGIAR's core competencies on land, water and food systems science to support humanitarian and peace building actors and operations.

- The [CGIAR FOCUS Climate Security Webinars Series](#) (on science for peace, data and technologies for peace, sustainable finance for peace, climate security in the Sahel, climate security in post-conflict Colombia and partnerships for peace) have clearly demonstrated the tremendous demand for novel partnerships and capacity development. The Webinar Series were [viewed](#) and [listened](#) as podcasts by several ten thousand global development, international policy and humanitarian affairs professionals.
- Actors across the humanitarian development nexus frame their actions mostly on operational considerations determined by the timeline of their roles. Humanitarian actors in the short term to address a shock and development actors work towards restructuring a system seeking a degree of improvement. Along that spectrum, the current understanding of food systems is rather simplistic and unidimensional. The intersectionality of food systems on human society is not well recognised nor appraised which means that interventions, with some notable exceptions, are not accounting for the centrality of the food nexus. In the realm of security, this is even more central, since the resilience of any affected community can only be strengthened if its food systems are well understood. Reconstruction, development and humanitarian strategies regularly denote food supplies as itemised contributions, and this has been more often than not, either a missed opportunity or purely counterproductive. CGIAR has a central role to play in changing this state of affairs.

Partnerships

Actors and funders across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus are craving for CGIAR science to contribute to lasting peace. A universe of untapped funding and partnerships.

- The CGIAR FOCUS Climate Security is already collaborating with many of the most strategic actors in the conflict and peace space. These include the *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)*, the *International Crisis Group (ICG)*, the *Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)*, the *Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)*, the *Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael)*, the *International Organisation for Migration (IOM)*, and the *World Food Program (WFP)* among others. These partners recognise CGIAR's comparative advantage on land, water and food system science, and the global reach and network of experts. We represent a global social capital and are a knowledge partner on which they all depend to increase the impact of their own institutions and partners to deliver lasting peace.
- A joint CGIAR-SIPRI-WUR PhD program has already been launched with the first three students starting this fall. This initiative is central for capacity building effort which other institutions expressed interest in joining.
- It must be highlighted that funding from the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) funders and agencies has largely been untapped by the CGIAR. Given the centrality of CGIAR's role, formal alignment with SDG16 will strengthen our narrative and role in this context.

Policies

Policies and decision making around climate, conflict and peace from global to local level lack understanding of land, water and food systems and therefore rarely contribute to lasting peace. An important responsibility for the CGIAR is to bring its science and expertise to the table.

- We are engaging with diplomats from countries sitting at the UN Security Council and they emphasize the importance of CGIAR science to inform security decisions, global policies and UN operations.
- CGIAR FOCUS Climate Security has conceived a formal mechanism of engagement with the different climate change security bodies at the UN and regional level and this has been praised by key donor countries as a solid step in the right direction. A strengthened narrative on our link to SDG16 will consolidate our role in this context.
- Currently many peace agreements and operations do not sufficiently tackle the root causes of water, food and land disruptions and therefore do not yield tangible dividends for the affected population, missing the strategic window of opportunity to contribute to lasting peace.
- In most of the fragile countries suffering from conflict, policies related to climate, peace and conflict are disconnected and do not allow for sustainable development.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

	Comment	Suggestion
Strategic direction 1	The incidence of crisis such as the current pandemic or the climate crisis on food, land and water systems is missing. These systems are influenced by and influence food and nutrition security and any exogenous shock to any of them is bound to alter the way they function. See for e.g. the change in consumer preferences and/or increase in the use of forest products due to COVID-19.	Consider not only how these systems interact but also study how this ecosystem of natural resource management and food and nutrition security can overcome current and future crisis. Peace/conflict considerations must be accounted into the policy making phase. The resilience of food systems is a strategic core multiplier of broader societal resilience.
Strategic direction 1	A systematic disruption in these systems, especially in the access and use of natural resources and products, has historically led to grievances and ultimately create further disruptions, via increase social and political insecurities. It is not clear how CGIAR will ensure that changes in these systems, oftentimes also purposively introduced by CG innovations and technologies, will not create the basis for social unrest.	Assess the impact of adoption of technologies and innovation on re-distribution of resources within each system and evaluate its impact on social and political security. Ensuring a conflict centre assessment of interventions along with proactive alignment and coordination with key interlocutors in this space is key to secure best possible outcomes.

Strategic direction 2	We think that this strategic direction raises some critical questions related to the ONE CG ambition. Are we simply responding to partners' needs or are actually pursuing higher ambitions of achieving SDGs? This might be oversimplifying the message of this direction. However, we think that maybe a higher focus on the beneficiaries' needs, represents better what we actually do.	Despite CG not being a dev agency, highlight the fact that ultimately, we are looking to help farmers, although working together with partners to achieve their ambitions.
Strategic direction 3	The current pandemic clearly shows that climate change is only one of the many crises that our generation might and is facing. Risk-management is a multi-faceted capacity that should be looked at using multi-dimensional and dynamic lenses	Re-word it to capture a multitude of crises, accounting for the multidimensional nature of security threats.
Strategic direction 5	Will CG continue working in regions where it has a stronger presence? What is the ONE CG position towards new outlets of geographies emerging, for example, as a consequence of different crises?	Describe CG ambition towards new localities and landscapes where the relevance of CG research might emerge in the future
Strategic direction 9	Despite the new focus, it is not clear whether this strategy will introduce a systematisation of the impact analysis throughout the research centers. A new framework and a new system might not be as ambitious as the design of an ad-hoc strategy for this.	Develop a joint impact assessment strategy across centers. Introduce standardised data collection tools and methods for aggregation of results – i.e. systematic review-like approaches. See for e.g. the IFAD impact evaluation initiative
Global challenges	Drivers of food and nutrition insecurity are missing	Add some examples of what can potentially reduce access to safe and nutritious food
Regional challenges	Conflicts and social and political insecurity only mentioned for CWANA, but they occur in many areas of the other regions.	Add social and political insecurity info for other regions such as Sahel, Southern Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Dry Corridor in Central America, the Deltas in Asia, etc.

Correct citation: Laderach P, Pacillo G, Osorio D. 2020. CGIAR's critical contribution to SDG16 - a universe of untapped impacts, partnerships and resources. CGIAR Focus Climate Security Info Note. CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS).