



*Rapporteur: Brooke Lennox*

On April 25, 2023, CNA held the second Inclusive National Security event of the year (@InclusiveNatSec on Twitter) with the theme “intersectionality.” This April event ([recording here](#)), “Climate Conflicts and Environmental Peacebuilding: Intersectional Approaches,” examined how intersectionality can be a fruitful lens for viewing climate change conflicts. The event featured Dr. Erika Weinthal, professor of environmental policy and public policy at Duke University, and Dr. Aubrey Paris, senior policy advisor on gender, climate change, and innovation in the secretary of state's Office of Global Women's Issues at the US Department of State.

### Reflections from Dr. Weinthal and Dr. Paris

- The scholarly link between environmental security and peacebuilding matured in the 1990s to create an approach to security that not only incorporated the human dimensions of security but also encompassed climate change, natural resource conflicts, and natural resource management. A 2009 United Nations Environment Programme report, resulting from efforts to identify the link between internal conflicts and natural resources, advanced the field; furthermore, early security perspectives on climate change–related conflicts focused on climate change as a threat multiplier.
- Climate change–related conflicts disproportionately affect women and girls. Environmental changes and resource competition increase the potential for gender-based violence, and as economic stress on families increases, the frequency of child, early, and forced marriage increases.
- Climate change research increasingly demonstrates that empowering women and girls and incorporating their needs results in more equitable policies and outcomes. When more women are in leadership, particularly at the community level, climate change and environmental policies are more likely to be accepted.
- Numerous government approaches and policies are currently in place to ensure women and girls can influence policy-making, including ensuring that efforts related to gender and environment are un-siloed and integrated, women and girls are incorporated into decision-making at the earliest stages of project development, and women and girls are directly consulted to avoid barriers to their involvement.
- An intersectional approach to mitigate climate events requires a consistent focus on program design and the engagement of diverse stakeholders. Consultation of marginalized populations—by gender, race, and other intersectional factors—is critical to ensure the effectiveness of program implementation.
- Vulnerability to climate change is context-specific. Populations are increasingly migrating to urban environments that are not set up for hotter weather, which will disproportionately affect impoverished and marginalized communities due to preexisting inequalities.
- Climate change compounds preexisting disparities and inequalities. We need to understand the context in which people experience climate change impacts to avoid exacerbating preexisting inequalities; interventions that invest in human capital and sustainable livelihoods should mitigate negative impacts.
- When engaging marginalized communities, remember that local power roles can determine whose interests are prioritized. It is critical to recognize and mitigate differences between “winners” and “losers” so that everyone can benefit, and to understand the local value system so that work can take place within pre-existing structures.

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