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PRESS RELEASE

REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE, PEACE AND SECURITY IN WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

Dakar, 7 April 2022 - The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), together with the Governments of Ireland, the Republic of Ghana, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and in collaboration with ECOWAS Member States and the United Nations system, organized a regional conference on climate change, peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel, in Dakar on 6-7 April 2022.

The objective of the Regional Conference was to concretely define the adverse consequences of climate change, energy insecurity, ecological changes and natural disasters on human security in West Africa and the Sahel; to take stock of current efforts at the local, national and regional levels to address climate security risks; and to identify options for strengthening current responses to climate security risks from the perspective of conflict prevention and peace building.

The conference brought together about 100 participants, including researchers, experts, civil society and government representatives from countries in the sub-region, the United Nations system, as well as regional and international partners.

The conference was opened by Mr. Amadou Lamine GUISSÉ, Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Senegal; Mr. Kenneth THOMPSON, Special Envoy for Ireland for Francophone Africa and the Sahel; Ambassador Kwabena Osei DANQUAH, Special Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of Ghana; General Francis A. BEHANZIN, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of ECOWAS; and Mr. Mahamat Saleh ANNADIF, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. Ms. Inger ANDERSEN, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), participated through a video message.

Through different sessions, participants addressed a series of issues and themes related to the impact of climate change on security and peace at the local, national, and regional levels. They emphasized the need to take urgent and concrete measures, including strengthening coordination between different partners, and mobilizing all actors, especially women and youth to curb the adverse effects of climate change on security and peace in West Africa and the Sahel.

The regional conference on climate change, peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel concluded its work with a **Call to Action** addressed to the governments of the sub-region, regional and international organizations, the United Nations system, and various partners.

UNOWAS with its partners, and the participants committed to continue their efforts to support the countries of West Africa and the Sahel to address the adverse effects of climate change on peace and security.

This regional conference is part of the activities that UNOWAS is undertaking in coordination with its national, regional and international partners in response to the UN Security Council's request of January 20, 2020 to "address the adverse impacts of climate change, energy insecurity, environmental change and natural disasters on peace and security by assisting governments in the sub region and the United Nations system to conduct assessments of risk management strategies related to these changes."

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