



Civil Society Dialogue Network Geographic Meeting

Water, Peace and Conflict: Exchanging on Opportunities and Best Practices

27 October 2022

MEETING REPORT

The overall aim of the meeting was to exchange and to gather input on how the EU should enhance the way it addresses the linkages between the climate crisis, water resources, and peace and conflict dynamics, particularly in relation to mediation and issues of governance. The geographic focus of the discussions was the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and the Horn of Africa.

The meeting brought together 29 participants, including 16 civil society experts, 12 officials from the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission (EC), and 1 official from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The discussions were held under the Chatham House Rule. There was no attempt to reach a consensus during the meeting or through this report, which presents the key points and recommendations put forward by the civil society participants.

The Civil Society Dialogue Network

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a mechanism for dialogue between civil society and EU policy-makers on issues related to peace and conflict. It is co-financed by the European Union (Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace). It is managed by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), a civil society network, in co-operation with the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The fourth phase of the CSDN will last from 2020 to 2023. For more information, please visit the [EPLO website](#).

Summary of Recommendations

1. The EU should ensure that it analyses and understands the connections between water, peace and conflict in the areas where it is engaging, as these connections are often complex, multi-faceted and specific to individual contexts. The EU should also ensure that its engagements and the efforts it supports are gender, climate and conflict-sensitive, and based on input and consultations with communities and civil society actors from affected areas.
2. The EU should strengthen its support to peacebuilding efforts relating to access to water, to water management, and to the protection of water ecosystems. It should place particular emphasis on supporting inclusive dialogue and mediation efforts at the local, national and regional levels around the shared use of water resources.
3. The EU should promote and support inclusive governance and co-operation structures for the management of water resources, and it should help strengthen the capacity of governance institutions to ensure that populations have a fair access to water and that water ecosystems are protected and used sustainably. It should also support connections between local, national and regional structures.
4. The EU should expand its support to local communities and local civil society actors in their efforts to maintain and increase access to water, to build peace around the use of water, and to protect water ecosystems. In particular, the EU should ensure that it supports these efforts on the long term and maximises the local ownership of responses to water-related risks.
5. The EU should deepen its support to co-operation across the peacebuilding, water management, environmental protection and climate adaptation sectors. This should include building the capacities of actors to co-operate across sectors, promoting the sharing of data, and supporting cross-sectoral, integrated engagements.
6. The EU should support further the development of early warning systems integrating water, weather/climate and conflict-related data to identify conflict, livelihoods and environmental risks relating to water. The EU should ensure that these systems are linked with mechanisms for early action at relevant levels.
7. The EU should expand its support to efforts to raise awareness about the interplay between water resources and peace and conflict dynamics. It should also support efforts to conduct research on these issues, and it should help give visibility to lessons learned and best practices in responding to them.

Full Recommendations and Points

1. **The EU should ensure that it analyses and understands the connections between water, peace and conflict in the areas where it is engaging, as these connections are often complex, multi-faceted and specific to individual contexts. The EU should also ensure that its engagements and the efforts it supports are gender, climate and conflict-sensitive, and based on input and consultations with communities and civil society actors from affected areas.**
- Issues around access to, control over, and the use of water resources can interplay with a range of gendered social, political, economic and geological factors, and they can be influenced by, and/or have an impact on peace and conflict dynamics in different ways. In addition, political and environmental crises are frequently intertwined in fragile contexts. These relationships should be analysed in-depth to determine how to respond to them, including by carrying out conflict analysis, water systems analysis and environmental impact assessments.
- Local communities and civil society actors often have a more detailed understanding of the dynamics around water and peace/conflict in the areas where they live than external actors. Before designing and implementing initiatives, it is important to consult local populations in an inclusive manner as part of conflict analysis, to determine how different groups are affected by issues, how they would be affected by possible interventions, what they are already doing, and what are the solutions that they would like external actors to support or implement. Expertise held by local and national actors is still often overlooked in favour of expertise held by external consultants and organisations. Local communities and civil society actors may also be able to share useful data to inform interventions.
 - The use of water resources by certain groups can harm the livelihoods of other groups. For example, highland farming may at times require water consumption to an extent that considerably limits the amount of water available for other farmers downstream. Likewise, if farmer and herder communities need to use the same water sources, tensions may arise between communities because of reduced water availability. At the state level, the use of transboundary water basins or rivers by one country may harm the livelihoods of populations in another country.¹
 - Certain actors and groups may actively use water to harm or to pressure other groups. Actors that are upstream of a river can seek to harm actors that are downstream by reducing the flow of the river or polluting it. In Somalia, al-Shabaab destroyed water sources in some of the areas that they controlled, leading to the forced displacement of local communities.
 - Floods, droughts and conflict can result in the displacement of population groups,² and there should be efforts to prevent or defuse possible subsequent tensions between refugee and host communities, including over the shared use of water resources.
 - Water-related conflicts often occur at the local level (e.g. over access to water resources or over the use of water infrastructure such as pumps). Understanding local dynamics around water often requires understanding the broader ecosystem and 'landscape' around the water – including where it comes from and where it may flow.
 - Local communities can adopt diverse resilience and coping strategies when facing water stresses. The EU should analyse these strategies and how they may prevent or contribute to conflict.
 - Violent conflict can make it more difficult to access and to use water, including after conflict has ended (e.g. in access to water can be limited by land mines, and the use of certain weapons and military equipment can lead to the long-term contamination of water points).
 - Communities may have cultural and spiritual beliefs and practices around the use of, and their relationship to, water. These may serve as entry points and catalysts for inclusive responses to water stresses, but it also means that external actors may need to be sensitive to these dynamics in their engagements.

¹ One participant expressed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts by the Jordanian government to maximise food security affected levels of groundwater, and that this should be monitored closely as it could lead to a broader water crisis.

² For example, floods in South Sudan in early 2022 led to the displacement of groups from Jonglei to Equatoria.

- There can be different levels of conflict and violence over water resources. This can include conflict and violence within and between households, between and within communities, between communities and actors from the private sector, between communities and the government, and between governments.
 - Interventions should be based on gender analysis and on a gender strategy that lays out how to include diverse women, youth and marginalised groups in decision-making and in implementation.
 - It is possible for water management, environmental protection and peacebuilding interventions around water resources and water ecosystems to exacerbate conflict and/or to harm the environment inadvertently, particularly at the local level.
 - Peacebuilding actors looking to prevent conflict through the shared management of water resources should ensure that their interventions are based on a robust understanding of the technical aspects of water resource management.
 - Environmental protection and development actors sometimes adopt a purely technical approach to interventions that fails to anticipate how certain groups may be affected negatively by them (e.g. installing pumps in the ground may eventually lead to the displacement of local groups). In addition, the use of security forces to protect the environment can lead to abuses against civilians, especially when local communities are not involved and consulted as part of these efforts.
 - It is important to consider the implications of energy generation through hydropower, including on transboundary peace and conflict dynamics. Hydropower can contribute to reducing or increasing water availability at given areas, and the energy generated through it can also be distributed in ways that may benefit groups evenly or unevenly.
 - Building dams to create more stable water points may yield benefits, but it may also lead to water sources drying up due to increased consumption by a greater number of people.³ Similarly, digging wells to increase access to water may provide short-term relief, but in many cases it is unsustainable and it may benefit certain communities (particularly farmers) over others (particularly herders).
 - The EU should have more experts and dedicated focal points working on these issues in its delegations and in the regional teams from the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI). It should also expand its use of climate and environment advisers in its Common Security and Defence Policy missions and in interventions, to help increase their climate-sensitivity.
 - Extreme weather events such as floods and droughts can differ in scope and length, and responses should be adapted accordingly (e.g. in Kenya, the ongoing, lengthy drought has been causing water stress to an extent that existing good practices for responses have been put at risk). The effects of climate change may exacerbate the magnitude and frequency of extreme weather events.
 - The EU should map the roles of different international, regional and national actors (including EU Member States) and their interventions in specific regions, countries and areas. It should enhance its coordination with other donors and international actors, help create synergies between interventions, and help avoid duplication (and competition).
 - Most of the countries that are the most affected by the interplay between climate change, water and conflict are not among the (historically) largest contributors to climate change. The EU should reflect on this and reduce / stop its subsidies to activities that lead to conflict and to the degradation of water resources and of the environment (including deforestation, the extraction of fossil fuels, overfishing, etc.). It should also reflect on how intensive in water usage European consumption habits are, particularly with regard to products coming from countries facing water scarcity.
- 2. The EU should strengthen its support to peacebuilding efforts relating to access to water, to water management, and to the protection of water ecosystems. It should place particular emphasis on supporting inclusive dialogue and mediation efforts at the local, national and regional levels around the shared use of water resources.**
- Responses to tensions around access to, and the use of water resources should involve inclusive dialogue between multiple affected stakeholders, including community leaders, elders, and diverse

³ This was illustrated with an example from Uganda.

women, youth, and marginalised groups, with the aim of reaching shared understandings of the causes of conflict and water stresses, and shared views about the solutions to pursue.

- Gender inclusivity is especially important in negotiations around water, as women are often disproportionately affected by challenges relating to water accessibility (for example due to persisting gender roles around the fetching of water).
 - When promoting and supporting inclusive dialogue processes, it is important to take into account the legitimacy and the power of involved stakeholders within and outside of their communities. For example, in certain countries where traditional elders have long contributed to dialogue processes around the use of grassland and water points, their social status may have waned in recent times and this may have reduced their ability to facilitate such efforts. Negotiations can also be dominated by powerful clans, and it is important to ensure that power dynamics in dialogue processes are balanced, allowing minority clans and marginalised groups to be represented and to contribute meaningfully to the outcomes of processes.
 - Strengthening the inclusivity of dialogue and mediation processes should involve ensuring that diverse women, youth and marginalised groups are able to participate in key discussions, not that they are relegated to parallel, secondary discussions. At the same time, inclusion does not require everyone to be in the same room at the same time; this should be determined on a process-specific basis and in a conflict-sensitive manner.
 - Community-level dialogue and mediation efforts can be particularly useful in addressing the root causes of conflict between communities, especially if they lead to the establishment of long-term co-operation structures (see the next section). However, such efforts should also be supported at other levels, including between cities and across borders (e.g. on transboundary streams and basins).
 - For dialogue processes to have a sustainable impact, it is important for local populations to trust them. For this reason, in addition to being inclusive, processes should have a certain degree of transparency and accessibility (including with regard to the language used and to the topics discussed).
- Where relevant, the EU should help connect dialogue and mediation efforts taking place at different levels to increase their inclusivity and to ensure the coherence of processes and agreements. It should also help connect dialogue and mediation efforts with water management and environmental protection programmes that may otherwise be pursued in silos.
- The EU should strengthen its support to efforts aimed at informing and influencing positively the mind-sets of the diplomats, authorities, policy-makers, political advisors and civil servants of partner countries, at the local, national and regional levels, to move away from competition and toward co-operation over the use and protection of water resources, particularly on managing water sustainably.
- Dialogue and mediation efforts should take into account the possible effects of climate change on water availability (in the short term and on the long term), including its effects on cycles of rain and drought, so that agreements may prevent the rise of tensions relating to these effects in the future.
- The EU should support mediators with trainings and resources to develop their expertise of specific climate and water-related issues they may not be familiar with.⁴ As dialogue and mediation efforts around water should be based on robust conflict analysis and water systems analysis to be sustainable, it can also be helpful for the EU to support these efforts by providing mediators and involved parties with data and analysis, including in relation to the effects of climate change.⁵
- Dialogue and mediation processes can benefit from the involvement of third party facilitators and mediators, particularly when these processes are making little progress. In some cases, external facilitators from outside the country/region can be the best placed to build trust with the parties and to help them make progress; in other cases, it is easier for third party facilitators from the same country/region to play this role.⁶ The EU can help such efforts either by facilitating them itself⁷ or by supporting other actors to do so, including mediators with specific expertise on relevant issues and dynamics.

⁴ One participant explained that mediators may, for example, be familiar with dynamics relating to surface water but not those relating to groundwater.

⁵ This was illustrated with examples of international NGO support to dialogue processes in Iran, Iraq, Jordan and Syria, and between farmer and herder communities in Niger.

⁶ This was illustrated with the example of the positive role played by external third-party facilitators in a transboundary conflict management process in Central Asia.

- In some cases, the EU should use its political weight to support certain state actors and influence negotiations in their favour, including by helping build their capacities.⁸
- Dialogue and mediation efforts around access to, and the use of water resources can involve discussions at the political and technical levels. These levels should remain connected; when discussions stall at one level, making progress at the other level can help overcome the challenges at the first level.
- In certain areas, there may no longer be water resources available to share, and the EU should support discussions and responses aiming at bringing water back to affected areas and ensuring equitable access to it, and/or at enabling affected populations to access water in other areas.
- Dialogue and co-operation to manage water resources and to adapt to the effects of climate change can serve as an entry point for broader conflict prevention and resolution efforts.⁹ Conversely, in some cases it can be helpful for discussions to focus on other issues first (e.g. on land ownership) before addressing tensions over water.
- It can be helpful to bring different actors together through education, including through common education programmes on climate change, water management and conflict prevention (adults, young people or even children).

3. The EU should promote and support inclusive governance and co-operation structures for the management of water resources, and it should help strengthen the capacity of governance institutions to ensure that populations have a fair access to water and that water ecosystems are protected and used sustainably. It should also support connections between local, national and regional structures.

- It is often the case that governance institutions are patriarchal and characterized by an underrepresentation of women and young people. Government institutions that lack legitimacy and accountability, and/or that exclude and discriminate against certain groups, are often less able or willing to prevent tensions around water and to respond to water-related crises – particularly if marginalised groups are affected. Corruption and cronyism often accompany and exacerbate problematic governance, and they may weaken the capacity of authorities to deliver public services. Similarly, problematic governance may fuel grievances and contribute to conflict, and consequently increase pressure on water resources.
 - The EU should support and provide incentives for the development of inclusive governance institutions. This may include expanding the participation of diverse groups in political processes in conjunction with helping build the capacities of institutions to deliver public services around water in a fair manner (e.g. by training civil servants and developing fairer frameworks), it may involve facilitating agreements between authorities and populations around raising taxes to fund services and to develop mechanisms to ensure increased accountability, etc.
 - A lack of trust between communities and (local or national) authorities can hamper the provision of water-related public services. To build trust, it can be helpful for communities and authorities to co-operate in technical responses, for example through the joint collection of water and resilience data, and through technical capacity building initiatives.
 - The meaningful participation of women, young people and other marginalised groups in governance structures should be supported at all levels; they should not be relegated to having input solely on local issues or ‘women-specific’ / ‘youth-specific’ issues. Ensuring that governance and co-operation structures are inclusive can help solidify the roles that these groups may play in other decision-making arenas and in peace processes.¹⁰

⁷ One participant stated that the EU could help bridge some of the gaps between stakeholders in the negotiations around the Niger River basin.

⁸ One participant expressed that Iraq should be further supported by the EU in its negotiations with Turkey in relation to the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Another stated that the EU should use its influence to encourage a political opening in the discussions between Ethiopia and Egypt around the Nile, so that technical negotiations may succeed. Another participant expressed that the EU should push to lift the blockade affecting Yemen, including due to its impact on the availability of clean water.

⁹ This was illustrated with examples of conflict resolution efforts in Libya.

¹⁰ One participant gave the example of a case where the participation of women in peace processes and peace/natural resource committees had helped them gain the trust of communities and engage in other negotiation processes, including in relation to disarmament.

- Government institutions sometimes lack the capacities, resources and/or technical expertise to maintain, consolidate or expand water infrastructure – including in response to the effects of climate change. Government institutions with a mandate relating to the management of water resources may also be ignored or undermined by other institutions in the same government (e.g. due to conflicting priorities: protecting water resources vs developing oil production, protecting wetlands vs expanding agricultural production or residential areas, etc.). The EU should help build the capacities of relevant government institutions and their responsiveness to water-related challenges, and it should support efforts aiming at increasing co-ordination between ministries and services, with the objective of ensuring populations' fair access to water and the protection of water ecosystems.
- The EU should support partner governments through grants rather than loans, as the levels of debt of countries affected by conflict and water stresses are often already high. The EU should also promote the national (and local) ownership of solutions.
- The EU should support state co-operation around water (e.g. transboundary water basins and rivers). Such co-operation can be facilitated by dedicated governance structures and infrastructure, including for information sharing, discussions, conflict resolution and day-to-day management (e.g. through joint authority structures).¹¹
 - Co-operation structures can be weakened due to tensions between state parties on other issues.¹² The EU should support efforts to address tensions between countries and it should facilitate continued co-operation on water-related issues despite tensions.
 - At the regional level, civil society actors are often excluded from negotiations and co-operation structures on water resources. The EU should support strengthening the meaningful participation of civil society in negotiations and co-operation structures at all levels, not only at the local level.
 - Governments should promote and implement frameworks to protect the access to transboundary water resources of communities that move across borders, including herder communities.
 - Regional co-operation around water can provide opportunities for other progress relating to energy, food security and environmental protection, e.g. to reduce dependency on oil and to produce and share renewable energy.
- To ensure that the outcomes of (local, national and regional) dialogue and mediation processes are sustainable, it can be helpful to institutionalise these processes through inclusive governance and co-operation structures with representatives from the parties involved.
 - This can include the creation of peace / natural resource committees at the local / district level, and supporting their ability to consult local populations.
 - It is particularly helpful to support platforms for dialogue between pastoralist and farmer communities, and between refugee communities and host communities, to discuss and to find solutions regarding access to water and to land. These structures should also be supplemented with activities involving the communities working together, e.g. around agro-forestry, river cleaning, land sharing, etc.
- It can be helpful to connect governance and co-operation structures at the local, national and regional levels.
 - Connecting intercommunity / informal co-operation structures with local / national government institutions (including national security forces) may help the latter back the agreements that are reached at the community level, learn from successful processes, and respond adequately to possible challenges and tensions identified by local co-operation structures.
 - Similarly, developing connections and information sharing between local and national structures and regional structures can help ensure that regional agreements address the needs of all communities and population groups, and it can help deepen synergies between peacebuilding and water management programmes of different scales.

¹¹ One participant explained that co-operation between Somalia and Ethiopia over the Dawa river is made difficult by the lack of adequate governance structures. Another participant cited positive steps taken by Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian authorities around water and energy to illustrate the benefits of developing co-operation around 'healthy interdependencies' (despite continued challenges).

¹² This was illustrated with the example of the Nile Basin Initiative, which is an important intergovernmental partnership but which has been weakened due to tensions between Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan.

- Governance and co-operation structures should be fit for purpose, as different types of challenges may arise, and different types of solutions may be required, in relation to tensions around water basins, rivers, water catchments, groundwater, wetlands, etc. Structures should also be adapted to the needs and priorities of diverse population groups and to the level(s) at which they operate. The EU should seek to support and enhance existing structures.
 - The EU should help ensure that the national security forces of partner countries play a positive role in protecting diverse population groups' access to water. This can involve developing security forces' understanding of water-related needs and tensions, and developing channels of communication and platforms for exchanges between security forces and communities.
 - Security forces may play a temporary role in contributing to emergency responses to help maintain communities' access to clean water during crises (e.g. by helping with waste and sewage management, by helping to respond to floods, etc.).
 - When curfews are in place in certain areas, security forces should allow the passage of relevant community members who need to access water points at night.
 - The EU should support the ability of governance institutions to work productively with actors from the private sector to develop water infrastructure and to expand population groups' access to water, on the basis of populations' needs and input. It should also support the capacities of institutions to monitor the activities of private sector actors and to ensure transparency and accountability.
 - Privatising water and sanitation activities can present both opportunities and risks. Actors from the private sector may contribute to conflict by engaging in the predatory use of land and natural resources, including water, or by polluting them. Conversely, actors from the private sector may contribute to the positive development of water infrastructure (e.g. waste water treatment and irrigation infrastructure, or low-tech solutions to be used locally). It may often be easier to build communication channels between populations and private actors when the latter are local/national companies.
 - The EU may creative incentives for private sector actors to be involved productively in EU-led programmes. In this regard, it can be helpful to involve certain actors that have 'legitimacy' within the private sector, e.g. research institutions and think tanks that work with companies, to attract others.
 - The EU should be sensitive to the fact that in certain societies, conceptions of water as private property can be problematic. In Libya, the Constitution was revised to state that water is the property of the Libyan people (in addition to other natural resources).
- 4. The EU should expand its support to local communities and local civil society actors in their efforts to maintain and increase access to water, to build peace around the use of water, and to protect water ecosystems. In particular, the EU should ensure that it supports these efforts on the long term and maximises the local ownership of responses to water-related risks.**
- There are multiple ways in which the EU may support and help build the capacities of local communities and civil society actors to address water-related risks. This may include (a) providing them with financial and material resources as directly as possible (including pipelines, pumps, water filtration systems and basic infrastructure, but also, where relevant, tools for unexploded ordnance removal around water sources); (b) sharing data and analysis with them; and (c) building their expertise and research capacities on the interplay between climate change, water resources, and peace and conflict dynamics (including through trainings). The EU should also defend an open civic space in its political dialogue with partner governments.
 - Civil society actors have a key role to play in monitoring governance institutions and private sector actors and in holding them accountable with regard to the management of water resources. Civil society actors should also be supported in their capacity to advocate for solutions and for the implementation of adopted policies (denouncing corruption is often not sufficient to bring about change – providing recommendations for improvements and changes may be more effective).
 - When supporting civil society actors through trainings, it can be helpful to start with small groups and gradually increase the number of people being trained – particularly if the trainings involve participants from different sectors (e.g. peacebuilding, water management, environmental protection, etc.).

- When funding civil society actors through consortia, the EU should ensure that the organisations it supports are able to work well together. It should build into programmes the time that may be needed for actors from different sectors to build trust, to learn to work together, to reach shared understandings and to develop integrated or complementary activities.
- Short-term interventions can be helpful in responding to crises and urgent needs (e.g. repairing broken water pipes, delivering clean water to communities in need, etc.), however providing long-term funding to civil society actors for peacebuilding, water management and climate adaptation efforts (i.e. for 5-10 years rather than for 2-3 years) is often essential to ensuring that these efforts may be sustainable. In supporting efforts over different time frames, the EU and international actors should ensure that population groups and civil society actors do not fall into 'support gaps'.
- Providing support to scale up community-led initiatives can be helpful, including by connecting community-led initiatives with the work of local, national or regional authorities and co-operation structures, but this should be done on a case-by-case basis, as not all initiatives should / can be scaled up.
- The EU should approach water-related shocks and stresses on livelihoods in a holistic manner, including by supporting both short-term relief (e.g. through cash-for-work and disaster risk reduction interventions) and efforts to develop sustainable economic alternatives and opportunities for population groups, particularly for the poor. Particular attention should be paid to gendered dynamics around livelihoods and economic opportunities.

5. The EU should deepen its support to co-operation across the peacebuilding, water management, environmental protection and climate adaptation sectors. This should include building the capacities of actors to co-operate across sectors, promoting the sharing of data, and supporting cross-sectoral, integrated engagements.

- The EU should support co-operation across sectors for research and the generation of data, but also for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of responses. This can help ensure (a) that peacebuilding interventions are climate-sensitive, contribute to protecting the environment and adequately integrate the technical realities and specificities of water management, and (b) that water and climate-related actions are conflict-sensitive and do not lead to maladaptation. It can also help maximise interventions' positive outcomes across multiple sectors.
 - In particular, it is helpful for implementers to engage in joint analysis and joint planning processes to develop common understandings of challenges and of how to address them in a sustainable manner.
 - Cross-sectoral co-operation may be particularly helpful to respond to urgent needs around access to water in situations of violent conflict, as building sustainable water infrastructure can often not wait for conflicts to end, but actors should also make sure not to inadvertently cause harm.
- The EU should provide incentives for working together across sectors (including in its programming requirements), and it should ensure that it supports such co-operation with adequate resources over the long term. Learning to work together can take a long time: it may involve learning to understand and to use different types of data, concepts and methods (e.g. climate science and data for peacebuilders, and conflict analysis for water and climate experts), and adapting the sequencing and timing of interventions.
 - The EU should help to expand data availability, and it should support the sharing and strengthening of data analysis to inform interventions (e.g. to forecast droughts and their impact on contexts and interventions).
 - The EU should help organisations and consortia develop shared indicators that may help actors across sectors work together. In consortia, having a specific partner responsible solely for monitoring and evaluating actions can be helpful in preventing possible tensions between organisations.
- The EU should ensure that interventions involving the cross-sectoral co-operation of actors also include the meaningful participation of local/national civil society actors and experts from the relevant sectors.
- It is still often the case that peace/conflict and water management issues are addressed in silos by EU partner governments (as well as by the EU itself and its Member States). The EU should help ensure that cross-sectoral interventions take into account and engage existing institutions and national sectoral plans, and it should promote synergies.

- The EU should promote and encourage the involvement of financial institutions and development banks (e.g. the European Investment Bank) in supporting cross-sectoral co-operation and programmes, and it should help ensure that this support is conflict-sensitive.

6. The EU should support further the development of early warning systems integrating water, weather/climate and conflict-related data to identify conflict, livelihoods and environmental risks relating to water. The EU should ensure that these systems are linked with mechanisms for early action at relevant levels.

- The development of early warning systems with indicators that are sensitive to changes in rainfall, water levels, water pollution, etc., can be helpful in preventing conflict, threats to the livelihoods of communities, and environmental degradation.¹³ It is possible to identify moments and periods in the seasonal calendar when conflicts over water are more likely to occur between different groups (e.g. herder, farmer and fisher communities).
- It is important to ensure that early warning systems are informed by input from local population groups, including herder, farmer and fisher communities, and local civil society actors and experts. Local actors may also help bridge early warning and early action, helping to ensure that responses at the local level are adapted to local dynamics.
- The EU should support the development of early warning systems in countries that do not experience violent conflict but face water scarcity, to prevent possible tensions from arising and escalating into violence (e.g. in Morocco and Tunisia).

7. The EU should expand its support to efforts to raise awareness about the interplay between water resources and peace and conflict dynamics. It should also support efforts to conduct research on these issues, and it should help give visibility to lessons learned and best practices in responding to them.

- Both authorities and civil society actors can play key roles in spreading awareness about equitable and sustainable water usage, in disseminating information about the water needs of communities (e.g. explaining to communities how other groups living downstream may also depend on a given river), and in educating people and groups on the protection of water resources (including against pollution). The EU should support awareness-raising efforts on these issues, including through partnerships between authorities and civil society actors. Ensuring that populations are better informed on these issues also helps strengthen their ability to hold authorities accountable.
 - Efforts to raise awareness and to share knowledge on these issues should be adapted to the target audiences (e.g. in terms of language). It can be helpful to work with national/local media and through podcasts.
- When national or local government actors are insufficiently familiar with the social and/or technical realities of the challenges around water issues, it can be helpful to organise (informal or formal) discussions, trainings and conferences for them to listen to, and exchange with experts.
- There is an increasingly significant body of knowledge available on the connections between water and peace/conflict, however there is much less information available on the programmes and interventions that have had positive impacts in responding to these connections (and how/why), and on those that have not (and why).
 - The EU should promote and support stock-taking exercises, the sharing of lessons learned and best practices (including in monitoring and evaluating impact), and training programmes by actors with experience in implementing successful interventions.
 - The EU should also support the development of 'programmatic histories' for certain regions/countries/areas, with information about what worked and what didn't work, to facilitate learning.

¹³ This was illustrated with the example of the water crisis that occurred in 2018 in the Basra province in Iraq, with over 100.000 people hospitalised after drinking polluted water. In addition to measures taken to reduce the pollution of water itself, a system to monitor the water level of rivers – particularly around the summer period –, and therefore their ability to flush out some of the pollution, was put in place.