Berghof Foundation

National Dialogues at crossroads

A series

National Dialogues x Climate Change

About this paper
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Eucalyptus plant taking root on sand dunes near Lompoul. In an effort to prevent the desert from engulfing fertile land, the Government has undertaken tree-planting projects such as this with help from UN Environment Programme and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). 1983.
Photo inside: Photo © picture alliance / Hans Lucas | Xose Bouzas
20 July 2020, Paris (75), FRANCE. Barbara POMPILI (L), Minister for Ecological Transition, Jean CASTEX (C), Prime Minister, and Marc FESNEAU (R), Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister, in charge of Relations with the Parliament and Citizen Participation, during the meeting with representatives of the Citizen Convention for Climate, gathered within the association called "Les 150", at the Matignon Hotel.

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Preface

Over the last two decades, National Dialogues have been increasingly recognised as a comprehensive tool for preventing violent conflicts and reaching inclusive political settlements. As the practice has developed worldwide, conceptual expertise and process design support have expanded and professionalised, resulting in a number of publications, hands-on manuals and training materials on National Dialogues. In 2017, the Berghof Foundation and swisspeace published the *National Dialogue Handbook* to assist national stakeholders and international support actors in the preparation, conduct and implementation of National Dialogue processes. We define National Dialogues as "nationally-owned political processes aimed at generating consensus among a broad range of national stakeholders in times of deep political crisis, in post-war situations or during far-reaching political transitions". They enable a process-oriented dialogue among an inclusive group of representatives from various segments of society, and strive to achieve consensus-based decision-making. The timeframe of National Dialogues varies widely, from national conferences lasting a few days, to sustained and multi-level processes over several years.

Despite their promising features and potential benefits for inter-elite crisis management or inclusive structural reform, National Dialogues have also been critically reviewed and challenged for their limitations, especially when used by contested governments to (re) assert their power and legitimacy, or due to their poor track record on implementation. Furthermore, there are still many knowledge gaps when it comes to various substantive and procedural issues in National Dialogues. In our own engagement and interactions with conflict parties and stakeholders involved in or considering National Dialogue processes, we have observed their keen interest in learning from peers and experts from other contexts on how to best integrate certain topics in the design of National Dialogues, or how to meaningfully include specific societal groups.

In response to these identified gaps and practical requests, this paper series compiles lessons learned and recommendations on three cross-cutting issues (overlapping with the Berghof Foundation's *Strategic Priorities for 2022-25*): climate change; digitalisation; and protest movements. Additional nexus areas will be explored in forthcoming papers, including a paper on National Dialogue x Transitional Justice and Dealing with the Past to be published in 2024. The series aims to systematise knowledge and experience of these nexus areas, which are generally under-explored; to illustrate them through various examples where National Dialogue processes have taken place; and to provide pointers for practitioners, to help them tailor strategies of external support and local engagement. The papers do not provide easy or definitive answers, but outline open questions, dilemmas and options to foster a constructive exchange in theory and practice.

These papers are written by recognised experts in their respective fields, drawing on their own previous research and personal experiences, in addition to secondary sources and (when possible) a small sample of interviews with key informants. Each study was also guided by a dedicated Advisory Group, formed by five to seven Berghof colleagues, peer-practitioners from other peacebuilding organisations, thematic experts and National Dialogue stakeholders (e.g. former delegates). The groups were convened twice, to inform the design and peer-review the drafting of the papers; we are deeply grateful for their contributions.

These studies will hopefully appeal to a broad readership. Readers who are expert or interested in National Dialogues will find inspiration on ways to integrate the nexus areas covered by the series, while thematic experts in the fields of protest movements, climate change, and digitalisation will gain new insights into the relevance and added value of National Dialogue processes as an inclusive format for multi-stakeholder consultation, consensus-building and decision-making.

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ROGGEMAN

Abbreviations

CCC	Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat (Citizens Convention for Climate)
COP21	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 21st Conference
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

1. Introduction

The most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicates with high confidence that climate change will interact with non-climatic risk drivers – for example, social conflict or human health – to increase human vulnerability (IPCC 2023). The IPCC report highlights particular concerns about food insecurity, supply chain instability, and the risk extreme weather events pose to human health, livelihoods, assets, and ecosystems. Societies with agriculturally dependent populations, highly unequal access to land and natural resources, low governance capacity, exclusive political institutions, or a history of armed conflict are likely to be more vulnerable to climate change shocks and stressors (Daoudy et al. 2022). Across the globe, however, all evidence points to a high likelihood that climate change will profoundly affect the socio-ecological systems that underpin human societies and result in fundamental social change.

In addition to potential risks, climate change may provide novel opportunities for social transformation. For example, it can open political space for national actors to address long-standing tension around natural resources and the environment. Alternatively, the broad-ranging and uneven impacts of climate change can present new opportunities for historically underrepresented groups – women, youth, Indigenous people, and people of colour – to engage in political movements or processes, resulting in a shift toward more democratic or inclusive decision-making. Youth activism on climate issues has increased in the last decade, with many youth groups demanding greater political and economic engagement as a means to precipitate social change (O'Brien et al. 2018). Simultaneously, successful mitigation/adaptation may be dependent on recognising and dismantling entrenched gender inequalities (Pearse 2017).

Even as some societies face particular risks, all societies will be required to address and adapt to novel socio-environmental change. This suggests a critical need to **proactively identify and deploy processes capable of addressing climate-related social change** in ways that mitigate vulnerability and enhance resilience. This is a tall order as it can be difficult to recognise and fully understand the diverse ways in which climate affects social systems, especially in countries already experiencing instability or crisis. Understanding how to incorporate issues of climate change into venues for crisis management and conflict transformation, particularly under conditions of uncertainty, is thus of paramount importance.

This paper considers **National Dialogues as one such venue**. National Dialogues have the potential to provide societies with a platform to address high-stakes social, political, and economic issues in ways that contribute to short- or long-term transformation. While National Dialogues take many forms, in general they are self-organised and self-facilitated by national actors, oriented around processes that facilitate dialogue and build trust, and broad-based and participatory such that they include a wide range of societal actors.

Incorporating climate change into National Dialogues raises several important questions. When might a National Dialogue be an appropriate venue to address climate change? When is it appropriate to consider climate change in relation to national crises? Who should participate in a climate-related National Dialogue? What does climate change look like as an agenda item? **The aim of this paper is to provide policy-relevant recommendations that help diverse actors – from local community leaders to political elites – think about the opportunities and**

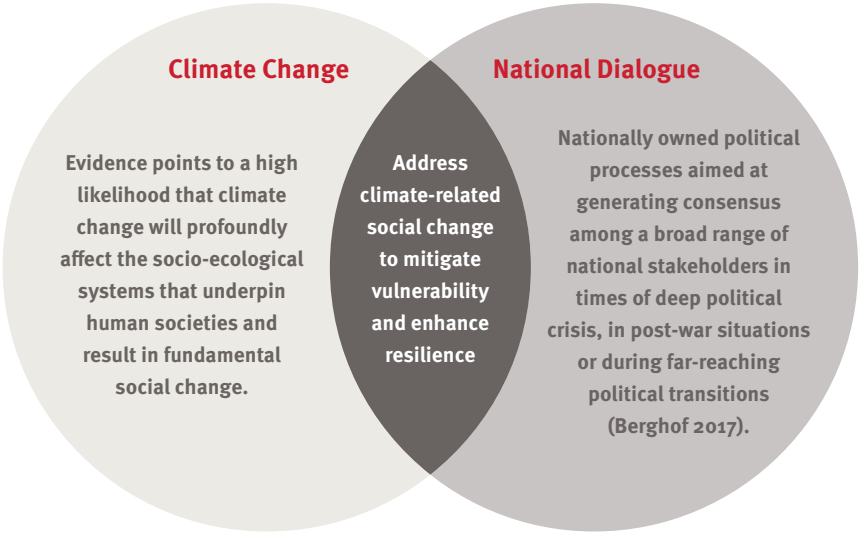

Figure 1. Climate Change-National Dialogue Nexus

risks involved with integrating climate change into a National Dialogue process. It provides a conceptual vision of the climate change-National Dialogue nexus (Figure 1).

While many National Dialogue processes have been held across diverse contexts, none have integrated climate or climate change as a central issue. The lack of empirical cases makes it difficult to draw conclusions about best practices or identify potential risks. With this in mind, this paper employs the following approach. First, it identifies instances wherein climate change may constitute an important *component of* or act as a *catalyst for* a National Dialogue and then breaks down this categorisation into three linkages. Second, it presents three empirical cases. Only one case – Sudan – represents a true National Dialogue. The other cases – Chile and France – draw from National Dialogue-like processes to make relevant conclusions. It examines Chile's Constitutional Convention (2021-2022) and France's Citizens Convention for Climate (2019-2020). These cases move beyond armed conflict to examine political conflict and social unrest. Finally, it presents key opportunities and challenges for integrating climate change into National Dialogue processes.

This paper builds on research conducted through document and literature reviews, focus groups, and interviews. Possible cases for inclusion were selected by the author in conversation with Berghof Foundation staff. While a range of cases were considered, three were selected based on discussions held in an initial focus group in February 2023 with an Advisory Group of independent experts assembled by the Berghof Foundation. The selected cases – Sudan, Chile, and France – represent ideal types reflecting the range of existing climate change-National Dialogue linkages. A second focus group was held with the Advisory Group in June 2023 to review a first draft of the paper and discuss the proposed conceptual framework. Revisions from this session and additional feedback from Berghof Foundation staff were incorporated into the final draft.

2. Conceptualising the nexus: Climate change and National Dialogues

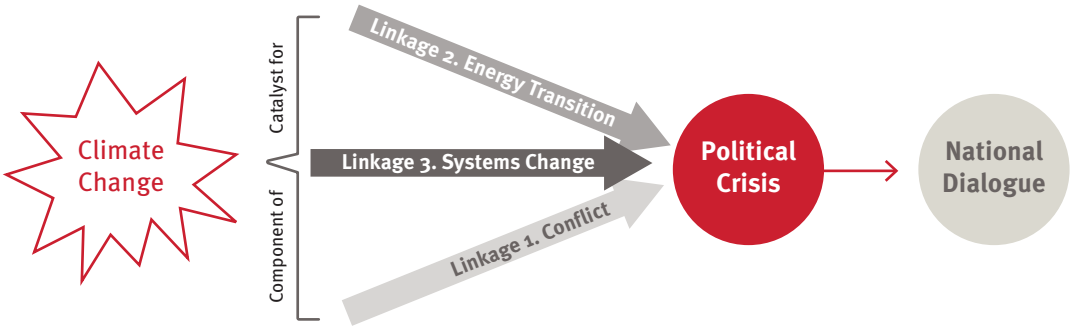

Figure 2. Climate Change as a component of or catalyst for a National Dialogue

This paper theorises two ways in which climate change could be integrated within a National Dialogue process. In the first, climate change may be a component of a National Dialogue process. As such, climate change may affect or exacerbate the primary issue under consideration in a National Dialogue but is itself not the main consideration. In the second, climate change acts as a catalyst for a National Dialogue. Here, national actors recognise climate change as a societal challenge that requires broad-based dialogue to address. Within this spectrum, we can envision three specific linkages (Figure 2). These conceptual categories exist at the nexus of climate change and National Dialogues.

2.1. Linkage 1: Climate change x conflict

Climate change has been described as a threat multiplier or something that acts with or on other socio-environmental factors to increase the likelihood of violent conflict. In this role, climate change may comprise an important *component* of a National Dialogue where it is perceived to contribute to or exacerbate insecurity or conflict within a national context. In Sudan and Syria, for instance, climate change has been linked to civil war, with some arguing that it exacerbated the socioeconomic and political stressors that fuelled conflict in both places (Ki-Moon 2007) (Box 1).

Integrating climate change as a component of a National Dialogue process may compel national actors to grapple with the complexity of environment-climate-conflict linkages. Moreover, it may provide actors with a novel entry point to address long-standing environmental issues and consider how they contribute to conflict or instability. Exploring the impact of climate change on water availability, for instance, could open up opportunities for actors to discuss long-standing grievances around access and use, and

generate innovative solutions. Others highlight that climate change can serve as an entry point to examine social inequalities and their relation to conflict. A focus on climate change-related risk and burdens, for example, may expose unrecognised but entrenched gender or ethnic inequities (Pearse 2017). Examining the ways in which climate change interacts with particular features of a given society, especially one experiencing instability, could thus provide an opening to explore topics which, in its absence, might be too politically sensitive or contentious.

The concept of a threat multiplier, however, is widely contested. Opponents argue that the concept is deterministic and depoliticises conflict by attributing a 'natural' cause outside the control of human beings (Daoudy 2021). This, in turn, can enable political elites to view themselves as "passive actors and victims of nature" and avoid taking accountability for harmful policies or addressing other, potentially more important conflict drivers (Daoudy et al. 2022: 3). A focus on climate could thus magnify or perpetuate instability where national actors instrumentalise climate change to justify violence or overlook critical environmental, political, economic, or identity-based drivers of conflict. Others point to the difficulty in isolating climate change as a causal driver of conflict and substantiating such linkages under complex scenarios of environmental change. Climate-conflict linkages are indirect at best, and the effect of climate change on human vulnerability, while substantial, is uncertain and mediated by complex environmental, socio-political, and economic factors (DPPA 2022).

Given these costs and benefits, national actors need to **carefully assess the trade-offs** involved with incorporating climate change into a dialogue process and how it can **address insecurity and conflict**. This paper takes the perspective that, in most National Dialogues, it may be **necessary to subsume climate change within a broader environmental category.** This is for three reasons. First, environmental issues contribute to conflict in diverse ways. Including an environmental component ensures that national actors address the range of possible conflict drivers, which include but are not limited to climate change. Second, environmental issues, unlike climate change, cannot be easily reduced to natural phenomena outside of the control of the government. Concrete issues like land access or mineral rights are political problems that require political solutions. It is thus more difficult for elites to instrumentalise environmental issues, minimising the chance that complex socio-environmental drivers of insecurity will be reduced to climate-related 'acts of God' in moments of political crisis. Finally, using a broad category like environment may facilitate participation for a wider range of people as environment-conflict linkages are often more salient in comparison to climate-conflict linkages.

Integrating **environment** into National Dialogue processes, in which climate is one of potentially multiple pertinent issues, can thereby provide the space to address grievances or inequities related to natural resource issues while simultaneously recognising the potential of climate change to affect these relationships. There is support for such an approach in academic research, which shows that engaging environmental issues in a dialogue process can help mitigate and manage social conflict, reframe environmental challenges to highlight shared benefits, include a wider range of societal actors, and promote peacebuilding (Johnson et al. 2021).

Box 1: Sudan – A Missed Opportunity for Environment?

Overview: The Sudanese National Dialogue (2014-2016) emerged in the context of protracted civil conflict (including Darfur and the Two Areas, which consists of Blue Nile and South Kordofan) and the nearly 30-year authoritarian rule of then-President Omar al-Bashir. Sudan has long been thought to be a country particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, especially water scarcity caused by drought. Climate and conflict were first linked in Sudan in 2003 when violence erupted in Darfur (De Juan 2015). UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon later solidified this linkage when he argued in 2007 that the "Darfur conflict began as an ecological crisis, arising at least in part from climate change" (Ki-Moon 2007). In the wake of this comment, Darfur was labelled as the world's "first climate change conflict" (Sova 2017). The idea of climate change as a primary conflict driver in Sudan, a prominent viewpoint within the international community, was not reflected in its National Dialogue. Initiated unilaterally by al-Bashir's government, the alleged objective was to "elaborate a constitution which protects and reaffirms the fundamental rights, freedoms and social justice of all Sudanese" (Berghof 2017: 294). Sudan's National Dialogue was largely viewed as a failure as it was not broadly representative and lacked legitimacy from the start (Saeid 2017). Omar al-Bashir was deposed in a coup d'état in 2019 and Sudan is again experiencing conflict after a planned transition to democracy collapsed.

Role of Climate Change: The assertion that climate change contributed to conflict in Sudan is contentious. Those who argue for a climate-conflict linkage contend that severe drought and the rapid expansion of the Sahara Desert led to unprecedented internal migration, which increased competition over scarce resources like land and water. Resource competition is thought to have subsequently increased the risk of violent conflict. Those who argue against such linkages contend that this causal narrative is reductive and overlooks political drivers of violence and insecurity, especially changes to land tenure and agricultural policies, ethnic tension, and severe political and economic inequality (Selby et al. 2022).

The role of climate in Sudan's conflict is not simply an academic debate. Opponents argue that invoking climate as a cause of conflict in Sudan can serve to obscure genocidal policy, rationalise violence as a natural outcome of environmental change, and enable political elites to avoid addressing root conflict drivers. These actors highlight the need to think more broadly about how issues of access to and control over natural resources affect conflict dynamics. Daoudy (2021: 7) concludes that Sudan's government "and [its] policies are at the root cause of unrest and conflict". While climate change may be an important consideration, it cannot be isolated from the array of socio-environmental issues affecting conflict dynamics.

National Dialogue x Climate Change: In 2014, al-Bashir called on "all Sudanese political parties, pro and anti-government alike, to attend a meeting for deliberating the fundamental questions facing the country in preparation for a comprehensive 'national leap'" (Saeid 2017: 19). The National Dialogue almost immediately collapsed as al-Bashir's government engaged in actions that made opposition parties question the "seriousness" of the regime's commitment to change and the "viability of the National Dialogue's initiative" (Saeid 2017: 37). Analysts contend that the government failed to engage in trust-building measures critical to foster a conducive environment for dialogue and the National Dialogue conference itself was marked by issues of non-representation. While the process resulted in 'The National Document' in 2016, meant to form the basis for a new constitution, the initiative failed to create a foundation for legitimate social change.

The exclusion of environment from Sudan's National Dialogue, which focused predominantly on issues of identity, political rights, and the economy, was problematic as it overlooked key drivers of violence. Its absence may have indicated that al-Bashir saw environment as unconnected to the fundamental questions facing Sudan in its preparation for a 'national leap'. Alternatively, environment could have been viewed

as a contentious issue that posed a threat to the regime's control of critical resources. A more inclusive dialogue process could have seen environment introduced as a key issue for opposition parties, especially around land and water access, use, and ownership. These are all hypotheticals, and we were unable to conduct interviews with Sudanese nationals because of ongoing conflict. A key question here is whether climate change could have been integrated in Sudan's National Dialogue as a mechanism to address conflict. This is a difficult question.

Within an environmental subcommittee examining environment-conflict linkages, climate change could potentially have provided one way to talk about inequities around land access, agricultural policy, and even Sudanese identity, especially given the international community's focus on climate change as a threat multiplier. Indeed, a 2009 report indicated a need for a resource-sharing dialogue in Darfur that took climate change into account (AU 2009). However, either as a component of environment or as a stand-alone issue, there is evidence that political elites would have instrumentalised climate change to justify or naturalise violence. Khartoum, for instance, had previously capitalised on Ban Ki-Moon's 2007 statement to argue to the UN Security Council in 2011 that "drought and desertification in that region [of Darfur] are among the basic causes of that conflict, and that they are the results of climate change" (UNSC 2011: 34). Similarly, al-Bashir said in an interview with The Guardian that Darfur was a tribal conflict exacerbated by "climate change and the dry weather" (Tisdall 2011). Indeed, it is curious, but potentially fortunate, that climate change was excluded from the National Dialogue as it served as a ready-made and internationally accepted excuse that helped obscure the government's role in ongoing conflict and possible genocide. As a case study, Sudan thus highlights the real risks and opportunities that come with engaging the nexus of climate change and conflict.

2.2. Linkage 2: Climate change x energy transition

Climate change will require societies around the world to undergo an *energy transition*, defined here as a "transition from a fossil-fuel based global economy to one powered by cleaner, low- to no-carbon sources" (Carley and Konisky 2020: 569). Transitions are dynamic processes that create new or redistribute existing risks and opportunities across society. While this paper focuses on energy, climate change may require societies to undergo transitions in other sectors (e.g. food systems), suggesting that this framework could be more broadly applied. In an energy transition, some groups may benefit from new employment opportunities, emissions reductions, technological innovation, or novel climate adaptation policies.

Others may disproportionately bear the costs, which include the loss or redistribution of fossil fuel-related jobs, new extractive development, especially for green minerals, or new patterns of energy infrastructure siting (Church and Crawford 2018; Vogel et al. 2023). Issues ranging from lithium mining in the Atacama Desert to wind farms in the Midwest US have become contentious points of national debate, generating critical questions about what constitutes a 'just' transition, who should shoulder the cost, and how it can or should be achieved.

In relation to an energy transition, climate change is likely to serve as a *catalyst for* a National Dialogue. A National Dialogue could serve two functions in this space. First, it may provide an arena for national actors to negotiate the potential redistribution of benefits and burdens in a broadly inclusive way. Second, it can serve as a planning mechanism that

empowers citizens to help set the policy agenda for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In the first instance, research indicates that equity and justice have emerged as important considerations in the context of an energy transition. A transition may generate social instability or unrest when groups feel that the political and/or policy processes that determine how risks and opportunities will be (re)distributed are exclusive or unjust. The Yellow Vest protests (Gilets Jaunes) in France, for instance, initially emerged as a consequence of President Macron's green tax on fuel, which some felt disproportionately affected lower-income and rural populations. The protests, which turned into a larger and more sustained social mobilisation, prompted the French government to initiate the Grand Débat – a series of question-and-answer sessions throughout France – which itself paved the way for the Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat (Citizens Convention for Climate) (Box 2). Increased demand for the 'green minerals' required to fuel a clean energy transition, especially lithium, has similarly emphasised the need for a participatory energy transition that avoids generating new forms of conflict (Church and Crawford 2018). As a broad-based and participatory process intended to generate national consensus, National Dialogues may be well-suited to address these challenges.

In the second instance, National Dialogues may help governments advance toward meeting their global climate change commitments. At the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, many governments established Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which committed them to pursuing domestic climate mitigation and adaptation measures. Governments have been slow to meet these commitments, however, because of the social, political, and economic costs associated with implementing NDCs – as the case of France indicates. National Dialogues can provide a structured process by which societal actors help political leaders decide how to meet national climate change commitments. Such processes may be particularly important in generating political buy-in for policies that may otherwise generate widespread discontent, such as emissions reductions. The Citizens Convention for Climate attempted this by asking French citizens to advise Parliament and president on how to cut carbon pollution. El Salvador implemented a similar dialogue process – the National Council on Environmental Sustainability and Vulnerability – to propose an agenda for sustainable development within the context of climate change (CONASAV 2018).

Box 2: France – Negotiating an Inclusive Transition?

Overview: The Yellow Vest movement mobilised in opposition to President Emmanuel Macron's 2018 fuel tax increase because it was perceived to require those in society who could least afford it to disproportionately bear the cost of climate change mitigation policies. Surprised by the intensity of the crisis, President Macron organised the Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat (CCC) as a "deliberative mini-public" which could help address the problem of climate change mitigation (Giraudet et al. 2022: 2). Composed of a 150-person assembly of randomly selected French citizens, the CCC was charged with generating recommendations on how to cut greenhouse gas emissions in line with France's NDC. The government invested about €6.7 million into the process, providing logistical facilitators to lead debates, technical and legal advisors to assist with policy proposals, and access to experts on climate change. Assembly members were also supported with a stipend and benefits for childcare and lost income. Over a 9-month period, CCC participants worked to formulate 149 proposals of which President Macron committed to supporting 146. Although reworked (and weakened) as they made their way through the political process, the Convention's recommendations became the basis for France's Climate and Resilience Law, which was approved in its final form in July 2021 and published in August 2021.

Role of Climate Change: The CCC reflected a perceived need by the French government to identify an inclusive process with the potential to mitigate social tension over the redistribution of costs within an energy transition and involve the public in advancing national climate change commitments. CCC participants were tasked with defining "measures to achieve, *in a spirit of social justice*, a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990" (emphasis added) (Giraudet et al. 2022: 2). Increasingly, climate change is igniting this sort of social deliberation across the globe, with citizen assemblies emerging in the United Kingdom and the United States (Osaka 2021).

National Dialogue x Energy Transition: The CCC cannot be considered a direct equivalent to a National Dialogue given its predominant focus on a small number of citizens as a mechanism for policy generation. A National Dialogue would necessarily include a broader range of actors in an attempt to generate societal consensus about how to pursue just climate policy. Analysts have questioned the extent to which a citizen's assembly like the CCC, while demographically representative, is representative of wider societal viewpoints on climate change (CAUK 2020). Nevertheless, the CCC was similar enough to a National Dialogue process to draw relevant conclusions.

Despite its apparent success in generating a plan for France's energy transition, reactions to the CCC process and its outcomes were mixed. On the one hand, the CCC served as an experimental and high-profile case that helped substantiate the use of deliberative processes to address the challenges posed by climate change. The citizen's assembly was taken seriously by the French government, which structured and supported the process in ways that helped its members generate substantive and sophisticated policy proposals. This reinforced the idea that so-called ordinary citizens could effectively participate in and contribute to contentious policy processes. The CCC's recommendations, moreover, sparked national debate and discussion around climate change, thereby bringing attention to the issue and raising its saliency for the general public.

Observers contend that the approach was less successful in addressing the problem of a just transition and delivering effective climate policies. Giraudet et al. (2022: 14) argue that the convention "lacked a clear commitment structure" by which the government would be required to take up and implement resulting proposals. This enabled the French government to modify, water down, or reject the CCC's proposals, leading to weaker climate commitments overall and undermining trust between citizens and the state. President Macron, for example, unilaterally vetoed 3 of the 149 CCC proposals, including imposing a 4% tax on corporate dividends to finance climate action (Giraudet et al. 2022). When asked to evaluate both the extent to which the government had followed up on the Convention's proposals and whether such follow-up would enable France to meet its emissions reduction target in a spirit of social justice, Convention participants assigned an average rank of 3.3 (out of 10) for the first outcome and 2.5 (out of 10) for the second (Giraudet et al. 2022). Independent assessments similarly showed that the climate bill resulting from the CCC would not reduce emissions enough to keep France on track to meet its global commitments (Breeden 2021). As a case study, France highlights the difficulties of negotiating an inclusive and just transition amid the social and political tensions that emerge at the nexus of climate change and an energy transition.

2.3. Linkage 3: Climate change x systems change

Climate change has generated diverse and varied social movements, especially among youth groups, whose members aim to spur socio-ecological change. Organisations like Fridays for Future, Extinction Rebellion, Last Generation, and the Sunrise Movement contend that humanity's collective response to climate change to date has been insufficient to address the magnitude of threat (Thunberg 2019). Rather than focus on piecemeal and largely ineffective mitigation and adaptation policies, these groups argue that societies need to fundamentally rethink the exploitative and unjust political and economic systems that created the problem of climate change. This has resulted in calls to forge a new social contract – defined as a "dynamic national agreement between state and society, including different groups in society, on how to live together" (Rettberg 2020: 84-85) – designed around ideas like degrowth, sustainability, inclusivity, and social justice (UNICEF 2022). Initiatives like the Green New Deal – a resolution introduced in the US Congress to initiate a national conversation on climate change – have been held out by these actors as the type of transformative policies required to drive systemic change (H.Res.109).

Simultaneously, citizens across a diverse array of countries have engaged in large-scale social mobilisation to demand transformative solutions to a range of social justice issues, including Indigenous sovereignty, decolonisation, systemic racism, economic inequality, political inclusion and participation, gender equality, and human rights (see also paper on National Dialogues x Protest Movements). These movements similarly seek to renegotiate the social contract around which society functions, with an explicit focus on equity and justice. For many, social and environmental/climate issues are inescapably intertwined. The Black Lives Matter movement, for instance, has directly engaged with environmental and climate injustice in the US to highlight the problem of state-sanctioned racist violence (Pellow 2016). Both social justice movements and climate movements thus increasingly recognise the other as a critical element in the struggle to generate transformative change.

For national actors seeking widespread systems change through the renegotiation of a social contract, a National Dialogue might be a useful process given that it is designed to support efforts to bring about fundamental social and institutional change. In such contexts, climate change may act as either a *component of* a National Dialogue or a *catalyst for* it. As a component of a dialogue process, climate change, especially in the context of broader environmental conflict, might constitute a critical element of a larger societal push for political or economic transformation, with the ultimate goal being to enhance social justice. This was the case in Chile, where massive social mobilisations in 2019 resulted in a novel constitutional process (Box 3). While climate change featured prominently in this process, the primary objective was to usher in social change by replacing the 1980 constitution, which was written under dictatorship, with a more modern, progressive, and democratically inclusive constitution (Piscopo and Siavelis 2023).

Where climate change acts as a catalyst, a National Dialogue could **provide space to envision a just climate future** for a given society, identify the social, political, and economic systems needed to secure such a future, and plan for the changes required to realise that future. In some ways, France's Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat could be said to have partially fulfilled this role. Assembly members, for example, proposed an amendment to the Preamble of the Constitution that would have placed protection of nature above all other liberties (Macron vetoed this proposal). The CCC initiative, however, was ultimately not intended to produce systemic change but rather to devise politically palatable methods for the state to meet its own climate commitments. More likely, a resolution like the Green New Deal, which proposed ideas to radically reorient American society, might serve as the basis around which such a dialogue is based (H.Res.109). As of now, we know of no national processes which have engaged in such a transformative project, although social movements across the global landscape are increasingly calling for this type of initiative.

Box 3: Chile – Climate Change Requires Systems Change?

Overview: Between 2019 and 2022, Chile embarked on a unique constitution-making process that offered the possibility of radical change. This process responded to protests that erupted in 2019 when more than a million people took to the streets to demand systemic change with a focus on social and economic justice. The protests resulted in a national plebiscite in October 2020, in which 79% of Chileans voted to rewrite the 1980 constitution imposed by the dictatorial Pinochet regime and assign the drafting process to a popularly elected constituent assembly. In May 2021, Chileans elected the 155 members of the Constitutional Convention that would be charged with drafting the new constitution. The elections constituted a fundamental rejection of the political status quo and resulted in an inclusive and diverse left-leaning Constitutional Convention consisting of women (49.5%), Indigenous peoples (11%), and independents (66%) (Heiss 2021). Over the next year, the Convention engaged in a chaotic process to draft a new constitution, mostly without strong support from the government. The resulting document, which has been called the world's most progressive constitution (Bartlett 2022), guaranteed expansive social rights, promoted gender parity, recognised and protected Chile's Indigenous peoples, and made the state responsible for mitigating climate change and protecting the rights of nature. Despite responding to calls for change, the new constitution was rejected by a majority of Chileans in a mandatory referendum held in 2022. While there is debate as to why the proposed constitution was defeated, many point to distrust in the constitution-making process, which establishment parties capitalised on to push for rejection. In the wake of this defeat, Chile initiated a new constitution-making process. An expert commission recently delivered a new draft constitution that will be debated by a Constitutional Council – an assembly of 50 elected right-leaning members – and submitted to a plebiscite in December 2023. Although the draft constitution maintained a focus on climate and biodiversity, it is unclear whether the Constitutional Council, which can veto items with only 2/5 of the assembly, will continue to prioritise these issues.

Role of Climate Change: A demand for structural change was the primary driver of Chile's constitutional reform process. In particular, there was a push to shift Chile's economic system away from privatisation and toward redistributive policies perceived to be more just, especially in the water, forestry, and mining sectors. Chileans in general are very concerned about climate change and believe it should constitute a government priority (Leiserowitz et al. 2022). While not the driving force, environment and climate change were thus intimately entangled with wider demands for social justice and featured prominently in Chile's constitutional process. Andreoni (2022: 2) argues that "the proposed constitution made the environment a consideration in almost every aspect of society and governance, from education to monetary policy" and required the government to "adapt to and confront the climate crisis".

Climate Change x Systems Change: While Chile's Constitutional Convention cannot strictly be defined as a National Dialogue, the parallels between constitution-making processes and National Dialogues enable us to draw relevant conclusions. The Constitutional Convention provided a mechanism to reorient Chilean society around a new social contract that rejected political conservativism and economic neoliberalism in favour of a social democratic model. In relation to climate and environment, this turn was intended to reshape nature-society relations by moving away from an extractive development model that disproportionately burdened vulnerable communities and contributed to widescale environmental degradation. The impending energy transition further heightened this need as lithium demand skyrocketed in response to the global push for renewable energy – raising questions about the inevitable consequences for surrounding communities and the ecosystems in which they are embedded. The Chilean case thus also reflects the way in which the energy transition will inevitably contribute to the perceived need for systems change, especially among vulnerable social groups.

As in France, Chile's Constitutional Convention received mixed reviews. It provided a space for Chile's highly mobilised civil society, which had been demanding progressive reform since at least the mid-2000s, to communicate, develop, and advance its policy platform. The Chilean government's institutional response to the 2019 protests, moreover, underscored the idea that social movements can force political elites to "acquiesce to demands for a new social pact" (Piscopo and Siavelis 2023: 154). As this has not been the case for other major social movements, like the Arab Spring uprisings, Chile may serve as a model for both activists and world leaders. The importance of channelling social demands through institutions was reinforced both by the peaceful acceptance of the draft constitution's defeat and the fact that, in the wake of the referendum, the Chilean Parliament re-committed to negotiating a new constitution (Piscopo and Siavelis 2023).

Moreover, the inclusive process – in terms of the diverse individuals elected to the convention, the ideas these delegates raised, and the final progressive output – provided a mechanism for delegates to integrate social and environmental issues to advance social change. Delegates drew on their own experiences and worldviews to highlight connections between diverse issues which, in the absence of such inclusivity, might otherwise have remained siloed. The election of a Mapuche leader to serve as the Convention's first president, in particular, underscored linkages between gender, Indigeneity, injustice, and environment and allowed them to become more visible in the constitutional process (Loncón 2023). The case of Chile thus reinforced the argument being made by social movements around the world that social justice and climate change are inherently connected and addressing the challenge of climate change requires wider systems change.

Despite these achievements, the Chilean Constitutional Convention highlights a critical need to build trust in processes that aim to deliver systemic change, especially where those efforts are likely to encounter entrenched opposition. Observers of Chile's Constitutional Convention argue that the unorthodox nature of the constitution-making process combined with the drive for progressive change created scepticism, uncertainty, and distrust among the larger populace. This was exacerbated by a lack of support for the Convention as delegates had little time and few resources to help advance their work (Acuerdo por la Paz y la Nueva Constitución 2019). Six months after the Convention began in June 2021, a public opinion survey showed that the percentage of Chileans who had "little or no confidence" in the Convention had increased from 27% to 50% (Larrain et al. 2023). The lack of resources further impeded delegates' ability to educate the public on the proposed constitution and communicate more broadly about the historic process in the run-up to the 2022 referendum.

This enabled a well-organised and well-funded 'reject campaign' to step into the void and sow doubt about the legitimacy of the process and its outcome. Initially consisting of traditional parties on the right not elected to participate in the drafting process, the campaign ultimately picked up centre-left supporters as the public's confidence in the constitutional process and President Gabriel Boric's administration waned. Following the model provided by Trump in the US and Bolsonaro in Brazil, the reject campaign "sow[ed] mistrust and stok[ed] resentment" in the constitutional process by using disinformation to generate fear about what constitutional reforms could do to Chile's social fabric (Piscopo and Siavelis 2023: 149). Issues like property rights, education, Indigenous rights, and even rights to water were weaponised such that reforms were perceived to generate "fixed groups of winners and losers" (Piscopo and Siavelis 2023: 150). Fearmongering drowned out discussions on the merits of proposed reforms and how they might address structural inequities.

The rejection of the first draft constitution and relatively slower pace of the current process have tempered expectations about the potential for substantive reform. Polling shows that Chileans have lost interest in constitutional reform given that, over the 3-year process, political momentum shifted in ways that make progressive change less likely to materialise. As a case study, Chile thus highlights trust and the need to overcome distributive conflict as key issues at the nexus of climate change and systems change.

3. Climate Change x National Dialogues: Key opportunities and challenges

What are the opportunities and risks of integrating climate change and National Dialogues and how might they be elucidated within the conceptual framework presented above? This paper considers these questions in this section, highlighting both general challenges that emerge at the climate change-National Dialogue nexus and specific challenges occurring at different stages of a dialogue process. A National Dialogue can be broken down into three component parts – the *preparation*, *process*, and *implementation phases* (Figure 3). The preparation phase aims to establish the parameters of a dialogue process, the process phase refers to the formal conduct of the National Dialogue, and the implementation phase identifies dedicated mechanisms for anchoring outcomes from the dialogue into the legal system, putting their provisions into practice, and monitoring and guaranteeing their realisation (see Berghof 2017). For each phase, this paper draws on the case studies to identify challenges and opportunities and offer recommendations. Each case is used to illustrate the complex struggles that emerge at different points in a climate-related National Dialogue process: Sudan's National Dialogue broke down in the preparation phase, France's assembly was undermined in the implementation phase, and Chile's Convention effectively failed in the process phase. These cases thus provide food for thought for national actors considering a dialogue process.

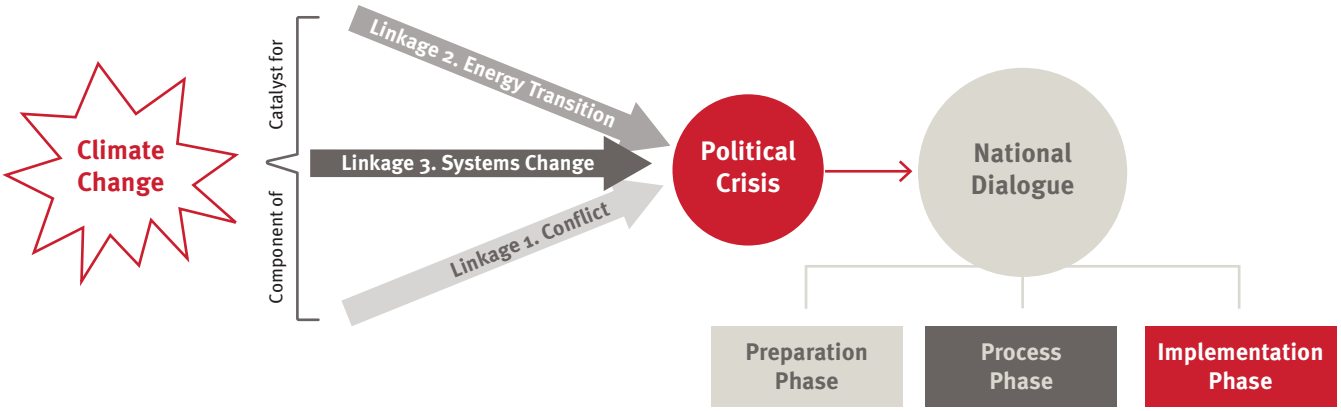

Figure 3. Model of the Climate Change x National Dialogue Nexus

3.1. General opportunities, challenges, and considerations

Before examining each phase of the National Dialogue in depth, it is important to get an overall sense of the opportunities and challenges that emerge at the nexus of climate change and National Dialogues. This paper examines these issues within three broad categories: actors, time and scale, and national ownership.

- **Actors:** While climate change is a global issue that affects everyone to some degree, it disproportionately threatens the most vulnerable social groups in already vulnerable national contexts. This presents opportunities and challenges. In terms of opportunities, National Dialogues that integrate climate change need to be diverse and inclusive in order to sufficiently identify and address the range of climate-related impacts in a given society. Those groups most affected by climate change – women, youth, low-income people, subsistence producers, Indigenous people, and people of colour – will likely perceive linkages between, for instance, environment, climate, and instability in highly nuanced ways based on local context. Acknowledging the multifaceted impacts of climate change can be beneficial where it enables National Dialogue participants to identify new issue-linkages or provides an entry point to address contentious issues like land tenure or the impact of extractive activities.

  However, inclusivity simultaneously generates challenges. Climate-related National Dialogues are likely to be characterised by complex power relations, asymmetrical social vulnerabilities, and diverse interests, worldviews, and relationships to nature. Such processes will require political elites with the most social power to interact with, learn from, and cater to climate-vulnerable groups with the least social power. Consensus-based dialogue processes in such instances are likely to be extremely challenging as participants may struggle to identify common ground, overcome group-based interests, or build trust. This ultimately requires innovation on the part of planners to include diverse actors and perspectives effectively and equitably. Such measures could include the (external or internal) provision of technical advisors, climate experts, or financial resources, participatory mechanisms that enable non-traditional stakeholders to engage on their own terms, or procedural rules to ensure proportional representation for groups most vulnerable to climate change. It may also mean addressing social norms that inhibit certain groups – the under-18s, for example – from participating in politics.

- **Time and Scale:** Climate change occurs across time spans and scales that are difficult to address in the relatively short time period of a National Dialogue. In processes that aim to end or transform political instability relatively quickly, it can be challenging to conceptualise and incorporate an issue whose effects extend both backwards and forwards in time in ways that are hard to identify and understand. Often, the impacts of climate-related vulnerabilities are cumulative, such that a contemporary crisis may in part be deeply rooted in historical and colonial legacies. While climate change can bring to light social and ecological differences resulting from historical inequities, deciding how to rectify such inequities, especially if it requires a major redistribution of resources, can introduce new forms of contention and distributive conflict into the dialogue process.

  Moreover, it is difficult to draw causal linkages between global climate processes and local environmental change or predict future impacts with certainty. This introduces uncertainty about the scale at which to target climate policy, how to connect different levels of governance, and the extent to which national or global solutions can ameliorate climate-related instability or injustice at local levels (DPPA 2022). In instances where countries have existing climate change commitments, it may be particularly difficult to devise new solutions or alter existing arrangements to address or prioritise local-level impacts.

- **National Ownership:** The political will to address climate change within the context of a National Dialogue is likely to vary across national contexts for several reasons. First, the redistributive potential of climate change, especially in terms of access to or control over resources, may inhibit political support for its inclusion in a dialogue process or for the proposals/solutions that result from it. Groups that benefit from the status quo, for instance, might perceive large costs associated with responding to the impacts of climate change – especially if systems-level change is a desired outcome. At the same time, more vulnerable groups may resist climate change as a National Dialogue issue if they perceive that it provides political cover to enact unpopular or highly redistributive climate policies or enables elites to rationalise violence and/or avoid political accountability for specific actions or policies. This may be particularly true where trust in society and between elites and vulnerable groups is scarce to begin with.

  Second, national actors, especially in conflict-affected countries, may lack the technical capacity to assess a challenging issue like climate change, especially in the midst of a larger political crisis. This is especially true in societies characterised by incomplete data, a lack of access to technical expertise, or varying familiarity with climate issues or policy solutions (DPPA 2022). The need for climate data to generate reliable future projections, moreover, might increase reliance on external third-party actors, thus undermining a sense of national ownership over the process. Climate research is plagued by a lack of diversity and often reflects the ideas and perspectives of (white male) scientists and policy experts in the Global North (CarbonBrief 2021). This can make it challenging for national actors, especially those in more vulnerable groups, to reconcile or align climate science and policy with their worldviews and lived experiences.

3.2. Specific considerations within the phases of a National Dialogue

Preparation phase

In the preparation phase, national actors must decide whether climate change is a *component of or a catalyst for* a National Dialogue, *how climate change is influencing a national crisis, and the degree of change being sought* (crisis management up to fundamental systems change). This is also a critical stage for identifying which participants to include in the dialogue process, the ways in which they have been impacted by climate change, and their interest in generating or obstructing (redistributive) climate solutions. Such information might be captured in the preparation of a **climate-informed impact analysis**, which would address these issues according to the purpose of the dialogue process. In addition, facilitators might need to identify existing climate change commitments and the degree of technical capacity available to assess climate change impacts and craft solutions.

Case	Challenges	Opportunities
Sudan	▪ Outside of the National Dialogue process, climate change had been instrumentalised by al-Bashir to rationalise violence (especially in Darfur) ▪ Climate-conflict linkages are contentious, and analysts worry about the securitisation of climate change	▪ A more inclusive process could have seen opposition groups raise environment or climate change as key issues ▪ Environment might serve as a bridge to connect and/or unify opposition groups in Sudan ▪ Identifying connections between environment/climate and other conflict drivers could have raised new issue-linkages and shaped the dialogue agenda in novel ways
France	▪ Yellow Vests were not identified as an important stakeholder in the citizen's assembly, excluding a key group opposed to climate mitigation policies ▪ Some in the Yellow Vest movement perceived that the CCC was not created to foster socially just climate mitigation but rather to generate political buy-in for policies that disproportionately burdened certain social groups (e.g. working class or rural groups) with the cost of mitigation ▪ Analysts have raised concerns about the extent to which a citizen's assembly represents wider societal views on climate change	▪ CCC represented a (selective) response to protests about the unequal burdens of climate mitigation policy ▪ Selection criteria designed to broaden participation by identifying 'everyday' French citizens to co-design climate policy ▪ France engaged with the public in the run-up to the CCC to generate climate-specific information and gauge public sentiment ▪ President Macron legitimated the initiative by providing resources and verbally guaranteeing that CCC proposals would be presented to Parliament and the public "without filter"
Chile	▪ The apparent lack of a climate impact analysis meant that Convention participants were ill-equipped to address the distributional conflict that emerged in response to climate and environmental reforms	▪ Constitution-making process offered an institutional response to protests demanding systemic change (including climate) ▪ Plebiscite required direct election of representatives, creating an inclusive process that ensured that climate change was a major issue on the agenda by enabling diverse delegates to highlight specific issue-linkages ▪ Plebiscite generated popular legitimacy for the Constitutional Convention, even though it lacked political will among elites

Table 1. Opportunities and challenges within case studies in the preparation phase

Recommendations and insights

1. **The inclusion of diverse actors and assurances of broad participation are critically important to the success of a climate-related dialogue process.** While challenging to implement, climate change is an issue that requires the inclusion of diverse voices and guaranteed opportunities for them to be heard. The exclusive nature of Sudan's National Dialogue led to its failure in the preparation phase. The relatively inclusive nature of both the French and Chilean initiatives, on the other hand, was a key factor in the perceived success of these processes in advancing climate change objectives.

2. **Climate change should be addressed indirectly via a broader environmental category where it is perceived to contribute to conflict.** This is necessary to avoid the possibility that socio-environmental drivers of insecurity will be reduced to climate change in moments of political crisis. In Sudan, including climate change as one of several important environmental issues could have enhanced its legitimacy with opposition parties or created novel opportunities to address root drivers of conflict. On the other hand, al-Bashir instrumentalised climate change to justify violence in Darfur, suggesting its direct or indirect inclusion as an agenda item could have further delegitimised the process.

3. **Measures aimed at building the legitimacy of the dialogue process in the preparation phase contributed to success and raised the saliency of climate change for the broader public.** Sudan's National Dialogue lacked popular legitimacy because it was perceived as a measure to shore up support for al-Bashir's regime. France, however, helped build support for its dialogue process by holding smaller town hall-style meetings via the Grand Débat, identifying key climate issues to include on the agenda, and communicating to the broader public about the CCC's work. The Chilean plebiscite in 2020 similarly built popular support for the Constitutional Convention, which itself acknowledged climate change as a key issue.

4. **Preparing a climate-informed impact analysis may enable the participation of diverse actors and overcome information asymmetries.** The preparation of a climate-informed impact analysis can help dialogue actors identify key groups to include in the process, assess specific risks or vulnerabilities, and consider how potential responses to climate change may impact affected stakeholders. Although not in the form of a single document or analysis, France appeared to be the only case in which information and resources were generated in the preparation phase to help citizens engage with the complex issue of climate change and produce policy-relevant solutions.

Process phase

In the process phase, national actors must decide *how to operationalise climate change on the agenda, which stakeholders to include, the ability of stakeholders/publics to shape the agenda, and the necessary support structures required to facilitate the process.* The linkages conceptualised in this paper can help in this process. For example, climate change might be included as one agenda issue to consider in a larger array of conflict drivers, as in Sudan. In such instances, a dialogue process might necessarily include climate-affected groups – either directly or through multi-track engagement – to better conceptualise and address climate-conflict linkages. In terms of support structures, environment or climate issues may be best channelled through an environmental subcommittee responsible for generating or breaking down complex climate data and connecting it to the lived experiences of local-level actors in ways that create a shared understanding of environment/climate impacts within the larger conflict context.

Alternatively, the agenda might revolve around devising solutions to address the challenges of climate change, as in France. Here, including those actors most likely to be vulnerable to climate (policy)

Case	Challenges	Opportunities
Sudan	▪ Neither climate change nor environment was included on the agenda, despite their perceived importance to ongoing conflict	▪ Climate change could have provided one way to address contentious issues around land tenure, gender/inclusion, agricultural policy, and ethnic identity ▪ Application of climate-sensitive conflict analysis tools could have helped identify and address conflict drivers, or mitigate climate-related impacts ▪ Inclusion of environmental issues on the agenda could have generated greater support for the process from opposition or international actors
France	▪ Groups that perceived climate policy to be unjust (i.e. Yellow Vests) were not included in the process, undermining its perceived fairness ▪ Assembly members were tasked with helping the government reach its climate commitments and had little scope to shape larger dialogue objectives or outputs ▪ While there was some scope for delegates to influence the agenda and structure of the CCC, this was largely pre-determined ▪ The requirement that assembly members create readily implementable policy measures undermined opportunities to introduce proposals grounded in alternative (non-western) worldviews ▪ Technical experts provided most input on climate change and assembly members were not expected or required to incorporate public input into the dialogue process, limiting exposure to and inclusion of broader public opinion ▪ There were few opportunities for the broader public to evaluate CCC proposals; for example, the assembly chose not to submit their proposals to referendum	▪ France provided support structures in the form of steering bodies composed of technical and legal experts, facilitators to lead debates, and well-defined procedural rules (e.g. sessions that provided participants with structured time for learning about climate issues, interrogating climate experts, debating policy proposals, and voting on recommendations) to overcome information asymmetries around climate science and policymaking
Chile	▪ Rejection of mainstream conservative parties combined with increased representation from Indigenous and independent groups generated opposition and resulted in an overall lack of support for the process among right-leaning (and ultimately centre-left) parties ▪ Radical transparency and inclusive nature of the Constitutional Convention undermined public trust as delegates introduced non-traditional issues that challenged social norms, especially in the absence of broader public education initiatives ▪ Proposed climate and environmental reforms, especially around water and mining, stoked fear of redistribution and entrenched distributive conflict	▪ Seats were reserved for Indigenous delegates, ensuring proportional representation for groups most vulnerable to climate change ▪ Declaration that the Constitutional Convention was taking place within the context of an Ecological and Climate Emergency mainstreamed environment and climate issues in the process ▪ Constitutional Convention was radically inclusive with measures to ensure full transparency and include public input ▪ An Environmental Commission – a subcommittee of the Convention – was charged with discussing and drafting issues to be included in the new constitution, providing a defined space to discuss environment/climate, and raising the profile of these issues

Table 2. Opportunities and challenges within case studies in the process phase

impacts or to obstruct climate progress – whether because they disproportionately bear the costs of a transition or are invested in the status quo – is critical. In terms of support structures, it may be important to design measures that help actors break down the complex issue of climate change. The provision of internal or external technical experts can help actors examine, digest, and apply climate-related information, as well as integrate resulting insights into a highly political process. Additionally, national actors may think about the use of proportional representation or gender parity rules to ensure diverse participation (as in Chile). Efforts to include public input, moreover, can help align dialogue outcomes with wider societal views.

Recommendations and insights

1. **The use of support structures to facilitate inclusive representation is critical to ensure the participation of groups most vulnerable to climate change.** In Chile, Congress agreed to reserve 17 of the total of 155 Convention seats for Indigenous delegates and to ensure gender parity in the remaining 138 seats. This ensured proportional representation of groups particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and may have helped increase the visibility of environment and climate within the Convention. In France, the exclusion of individuals opposed to climate policies raised questions about the representativeness of the CCC. In the absence of these actors, it is ultimately unclear whether the climate legislation resulting from the CCC sufficiently responded to protest demands.

2. **Government investment in dialogue processes – in the form of resources and technical support – is critical to ensure broad participation and overcome information and power asymmetries.** Only France was able to overcome participatory barriers and information asymmetries because the government provided direct support – both financial and technical – to assembly members. However, this required tremendous investment that many countries may not be able to replicate. Where governments lack the resources to fully support dialogue processes, international or external actors may be required to provide assistance to ensure success. Although technical support was key to help assembly members 'translate' their proposals in ways that made them policy ready, questions emerged about whether expert voices crowded out other viewpoints, especially the public. In Chile, greater financial and technical support for Convention delegates could have enhanced legitimacy for the process among the public and provided an opportunity for delegates to engage in broader education/communication initiatives.

3. **Providing the broader public with opportunities to evaluate and validate dialogue outcomes can help build legitimacy in the process but is not without risk.** The decision of CCC members not to submit their proposals to referendum was surprising. Survey evidence suggests that the broader public would have approved of their measures, and broad public approval could have put pressure on the government to implement the proposals without significant modification (Giraudet et al. 2022). The Chilean case, however, shows that such strategies are not without risk as the public may reject the outcomes of the dialogue process in their entirety.

4. **National Dialogue actors need to actively manage the transparency of the process to maintain public support and legitimacy. Open and transparent National Dialogues may raise the saliency of an issue like climate change for the broader public; however, radical openness (or secrecy) simultaneously risks undermining support.** In both the Sudanese and Chilean cases, the initiatives lost broader public support in the process phase. In Sudan, this was on account of the exclusive and non-transparent nature of the dialogue process. In Chile, however, the opposite was true – the radically open and transparent nature of the Constitutional Convention, which made visible an unwieldy process, ultimately fostered distrust in the process that the public observed. This suggests a need to strike a balance between transparency and confidentiality in order to enable delegates to negotiate out of the public eye.

Implementation phase

In the implementation phase, national actors must decide *how to define and measure the success of the dialogue process* and *how to enact its outcomes*. Understandings of success are likely to differ according to the climate change-National Dialogue linkage under consideration. In Linkage 1, successful outcomes would ideally mitigate the impact of climate-conflict linkages on vulnerable populations. In Linkage 2, the effectiveness of outcomes in meeting climate targets or the perceived fairness of climate policies may be primary considerations of success. In Linkage 3, success may depend on the extent to which a dialogue delivers systemic change in relation to the status quo. In all cases, the extent to which outputs are climate-sensitive – that is, sensitive to anticipated climate impacts or vulnerabilities – is a critical consideration. Moreover, designing measures to monitor, measure, and evaluate the degree to which outputs have been implemented is critical to sustain trust.

Case	Challenges	Opportunities
Sudan	▪ Environment/climate not considered in implementation phase	▪ Environment/climate not considered in implementation phase
France	▪ The CCC lacked commitment structures identifying how proposals would be implemented by the French government and did not identify a common definition of success (beyond meeting France's NDC target) ▪ Power asymmetries enabled political elites to discard or water down CCC proposals, generating tension between assembly members and the government and exacerbating distributive conflict over French climate policy ▪ The legislation resulting from the CCC, while comprehensive, is not expected to keep France on target to meet its climate commitments	▪ The CCC resulted in the Climate and Resilience Law, one of the most comprehensive climate laws France had passed in years ▪ The work of the CCC increased the saliency of climate change for the broader public and brought global attention to France's actions to address climate change ▪ Participation in the CCC led to greater citizen engagement in public affairs; for example, some assembly members created a climate-focused organisation called Les Cent-Cinquante (The 150) to continue working on climate issues
Chile	▪ The proposed constitution considered 57 articles to progressively implement the new constitutional order, which raised concerns about challenges related to misalignment with existing domestic and international law (e.g. potential violation of free trade agreements) ▪ The proposed constitution mandated new draft legislation be passed within a certain period of time, which raised concerns about the ability of the legislature to meet these commitments and the cost of implementation (e.g. an estimated 0.32% of GDP was needed to ensure the right to water and sanitation)[1] ▪ No mechanisms were put in place to manage the distributive conflict that would emerge from the Constitutional Convention, especially in relation to contentious issues like natural resource management and climate	▪ All stakeholders continued to use primarily institutional means to negotiate and resolve grievances, and a new constitution-making process has been initiated in Congress

Table 3. Opportunities and challenges within case studies in the implementation phase

1 Both these points are plausible but still hypothetical challenges that may have emerged if the draft constitution had passed the referendum.

Recommendations and insights

1. **In climate-related National Dialogue processes, distributive conflict and power asymmetries are likely impediments to progress.** In both the French and Chilean cases, climate-related issues generated distributive conflicts reflecting "sharp divisions in the material interests of political and economic stakeholders" (Aklin and Mildenberger 2020: 5). In Chile in particular, opponents to constitutional reform had more power and resources in relation to proponents, responding to the possibility of redistribution through obstruction and disinformation. This highlights the potential for distributive conflict and power asymmetries to play an outsized role in undermining dialogue processes, requiring actors to proactively identify areas ripe for distributive conflict and mechanisms to overcome it.

2. **Commitment structures detailing how dialogue outputs will be implemented can reduce power asymmetries.** In the case of France, citizen assembly members had little recourse to challenge the government's feeble response to their work. Moreover, President Macron's appearance of backtracking on his initial promise to advance CCC proposals without filter undermined trust in the state and its commitment to tackling climate change. Identifying how and to what extent dialogue proposals will be implemented, especially in instances where citizens are involved, is thus important to build trust in the process and legitimate dialogue outcomes.

3. **The international community can play an important role to incentivise the implementation of National Dialogue outcomes, especially in conflict-affected countries.** Climate change was an important issue for international actors in Sudan. Had environment and climate been included in the National Dialogue, the international community could have provided climate-related peace dividends to help overcome potential implementation challenges. International actors could have specifically leveraged climate financing, removed sanctions impeding climate investment, or provided other co-benefits (e.g. technology transfer) to incentivise the implementation of climate-positive outcomes. Such measures could provide immediate peace dividends in the area of climate/environment that themselves could foster greater willingness to tackle more challenging implementation issues in other sectors.

4. **Internal or external support for follow-up dialogue forums or initiatives can help maintain an emphasis on climate-related National Dialogue issues in the implementation phase and beyond.** In France, the emergence of new organisations like Les Cent-Cinquante suggests that the CCC raised the saliency of climate change for the public and created new space for dialogue, an outcome perceived as important in the implementation phase (and beyond). Support for such initiatives, whether internal or external, can help national actors keep dialogue issues in the public eye and increase support for their thorough implementation.

4. Conclusion and reiteration of key points

Climate change is possibly the biggest challenge humanity has ever faced. While much time and energy have been spent trying to identify how to mitigate the physical impacts of climate change, less time has been dedicated to identifying how to address the inevitable social impacts. Countries thus need to begin identifying mechanisms by which social disruption can be effectively and peacefully managed. National Dialogues may provide one useful mechanism.

This paper envisions the nexus of Climate Change and National Dialogues to consist of **three potential linkages – conflict, energy transition, and systems change.** In so doing, it aims to help national actors think in more concrete terms about how a National Dialogue could be designed to mitigate climate-related social or political crisis. Each linkage specifically attempts to conceptualise the mechanisms by which climate change could contribute to social disruption and thereby highlight distinct opportunities and challenges. Several key points emerged from this analysis:

- Climate change is likely to be a component of a National Dialogue in the context of conflict and should be subsumed under a broader environmental category to avoid the possibility that socio-environmental drivers of insecurity will be reduced to climate change.

- Climate change is likely to be a catalyst for a National Dialogue in the context of an energy (or other climate-induced) transition as national actors seek a structured process by which to negotiate the redistribution of climate mitigation/adaptation benefits and burdens.

- Climate change may be a component of or a catalyst for a National Dialogue in the context of the push for wider systems change, particularly where national actors seek to generate a new social contract.

In addition to the unique insights that emerge in each linkage, there are three critical components common to all the cases that are worth highlighting:

1. Climate-related National Dialogues tend to benefit from being **inclusive**. Climate change is a wide-ranging issue that impacts diverse groups in society in unique ways. Recognising how climate change impacts distinct groups and ensuring these groups can access and influence National Dialogues equally is critical to guarantee that the process sufficiently identifies and addresses the range of climate-related impacts. The cases reviewed here suggest that there are a variety of ways in which dialogue planners can enable participation and make dialogue processes more inclusive. The French government provided gender-sensitive resources and support (childcare and compensation for lost income) to create an inclusive process. While this may be difficult for other countries to replicate, Chile demonstrated that there are low-cost accommodations that could be implemented to enable wider engagement – for instance, streaming convention sessions live on YouTube (see also paper on National Dialogues x Digitalisation). Digital engagement may not only open National Dialogue processes to the public but could also help reduce the overall climate footprint.

   Inclusivity, however, can be challenging in politically fraught processes, especially where groups are characterised by significant

knowledge and power asymmetries. The inclusivity of Chile's constitutional process, for example, produced opposition as it came to be associated with the perceived rejection of the political status quo (thereby generating perceptions of conservative exclusion), a chaotic constitutional process (thereby undermining trust), and the perceived potential for major redistribution (thereby creating new winners and losers). This suggests that while inclusive processes should be a goal for National Dialogues, such processes need to be managed carefully to ensure that inclusivity translates into effective and equitable outcomes without producing new forms of conflict.

2. Climate-related National Dialogues must be **sufficiently resourced** by either government or supporting actors. The provision of technical expertise and material resources is critical to overcome participatory barriers, procedural constraints, and power asymmetries. In the first instance, France provided key resources that effectively deconstructed barriers to broad citizen participation. In the second, a lack of resources for Chile's Constitutional Convention impeded preparation, especially in terms of the provision of adequate staff and organisational support for delegates, which limited its ability to overcome information asymmetries. In the third instance, the relative lack of resources for proponents of constitutional reform in Chile, especially in comparison to the reject campaign, impeded their ability to engage in education and outreach.

In cases where external actors provide support and resources for dialogue processes, national actors need to ensure there are mechanisms in place to align technical knowledge about climate change with local knowledges, worldviews, and experiences. National Dialogues that perpetuate the domination of specific knowledges and worldviews risk reinforcing barriers to change and undermining a broad sense of national ownership.

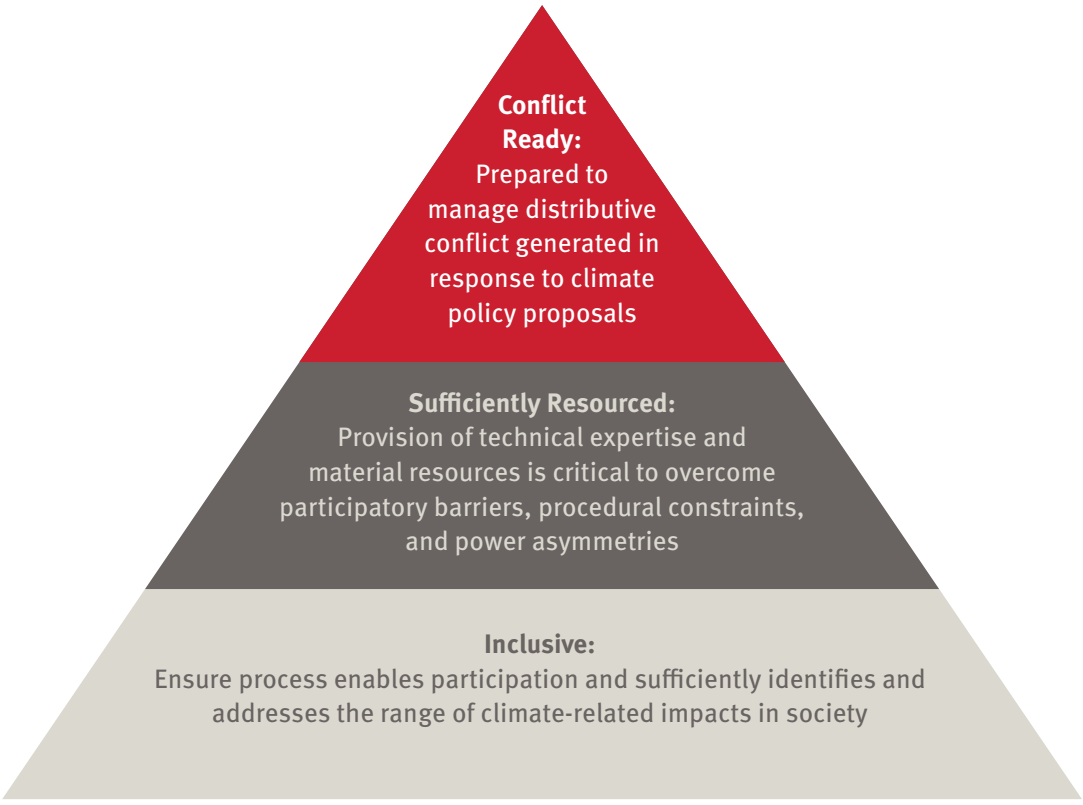

Figure 4. Critical components of climate-related National Dialogues

3. Climate-related National Dialogues must be **conflict ready**. Climate change is an issue that will likely contribute to distributive forms of conflict as negotiations reveal divisions in the material interests of political and economic stakeholders. Such conflict can create new societal tension or exacerbate existing political crises. National actors need to identify areas in which such conflict is likely to emerge and be prepared to address it as a likely impediment to progress in dialogue processes.

   In none of the cases reviewed for this paper did national actors adequately prepare for issues of distributive conflict, which ultimately undermined the success of their dialogue processes. In France, distributive conflict undermined trust in the state (as Yellow Vest protesters were not included) and weakened dialogue outputs, while in Chile, it created societal divisions that led to the rejection of the resulting draft constitution. In Sudan, distributional conflict may have exacerbated violent conflict, as has been seen in attempts to navigate resource-sharing agreements in areas like Darfur.

A final point for national actors to consider is that, in a climate-related National Dialogue, outputs should not only address existing drivers of instability but also be aware of how climate change will act on outputs to shape future social dynamics. Dialogue outputs that are not sufficiently forward-looking may simply recreate the conditions that led to instability or soon be outdated.

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