

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WORKSHOP

Defense Policy and Strategy and Climate Change

NOVEMBER 22ND AND 23RD, 2023

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Introduction

This document is the result of an effort to systematize the contributions offered by the participants of the workshop “Defense Policy and Strategy and Climate Change”, held by the Sovereignty and Climate Center, on November 22nd and 23rd, 2023, at the facilities of the Management and Operational Center of the Amazonian Protection System (CENSIPAM, for its acronym in Portuguese), in Brasília, Brazil.

The initiative is an unprecedented opportunity to bring together representatives of Brazilian institutions linked to the Defense and environmental sector, thus contributing to the expansion and qualification of debates on how to build a robust and integrated national agenda, capable of responding effectively to the multidimensional risks triggered by the climate crisis.

Over the two days of discussion, the participants presented an enriching collection of data, scientific evidence, and reports on how the effects of climate change are already revealed in the daily lives of their respective sectors, including the National Defense. Such contributions are invaluable to support decision-making processes and have the potential to contribute to the efforts to update the National Defense Policy and Strategy, and the White Paper on National Defense, high-level documents that are under review for the quadrennium 2024 - 2027.

The purpose of this document is to list, for the general public, the main findings and strategic recommendations derived from the debate.

WORKSHOP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Defense Policy and Strategy and Climate Change: challenges and opportunities for integrating agendas in Brazil

Held on November 22nd and 23rd, 2023, at the facilities of the Management and Operational Center of the Amazonian Protection System (CENSIPAM), in Brasília, Brazil.

Findings

- Scientific evidence gathered by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) already points out, with a high level of certainty, that transformations in the planet's climate systems pose risks to the food and water security of populations, have adverse effects on the physical and mental health of individuals, increase the frequency and intensity of extreme natural events, and contribute to the worsening of humanitarian crises. Climate effects also directly affect essential infrastructure in the areas of transport, housing, food production, energy and health;
- In the Brazilian context, Defense institutions perform fundamental roles in the areas of climate mitigation and adaptation. With regard to mitigation, the Armed Forces and intelligence agencies provide essential support to other instances in operations to combat environmental crimes, including deforestation and fires, activities responsible for the largest share of national Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Regarding adaptation initiatives, the contribution of intelligence instances in the improvement of alert and monitoring systems is highlighted, as well as the support granted by the Armed Forces to Civil Defense in scenarios of extreme weather events;
- By modifying the environment in which the Armed Forces operate and demanding decarbonization efforts, climate change also presents challenges to the Brazilian Armed Forces' operation. These challenges include: additional difficulties for mobility and border patrols; risks imposed on Defense infrastructures and assets; increased demands and complexity of subsidiary operations and the need to modernize equipment used by the Army, Navy and Air Force;
- In contrast to other countries in the world, especially those in the Global North, Brazil lacks data and in-depth research on the vulnerability of its Defense structures and assets to the adverse effects of climate change.

In view of these findings, it was possible to develop some strategic recommendations to support the government decision-making process.

Strategic Recommendations

1) Climate change is a multidimensional challenge and has implications for development, security and overcoming inequalities between people and countries.

The necessary and urgent climate mitigation and adaptation measures cannot contribute to the intensification of inequalities, either in Brazil or in the world. The fight against climate change cannot come at the expense of the sovereign right to development of the countries of the Global South, nor can it result in the widening of inequalities between the poorest and richest parts of the population. However, the climate crisis imposes the urgent task of promoting a new development model, ca-

pable of guaranteeing environmental integrity, combating inequalities and promoting the country's economic prosperity and, consequently, strengthening national sovereignty.

2) Considerations about the risks posed by climate change must be incorporated into the texts of high-level Defense documents.

In view of the multidimensional risks posed by climate change to human security and its likely implications for the operation of the Armed Forces, it is essential that the issue be included in the updated versions of the Brazilian strategic defense documents. The absence of references to climate change in the texts of these high-level documents presents itself as an obstacle to the consolidation of clear and comprehensive plans and guidelines to be adopted by the Defense institutions, in order to join efforts with other national sectors to address serious climate challenges.

3) There are gaps in the mapping and analysis of the climate vulnerabilities of Brazil and its subregions, including its Defense assets.

Considering the most recent scientific evidence that points to a likely scenario of a temperature increase of 2°C in the coming years, it is essential to map the country's vulnerabilities in order to build a comprehensive, integrated and multisectoral national strategy for climate adaptation. These efforts must also be directed at promoting the resilience and adaptation of Brazilian defense structures and assets, in order to ensure the conditions for fulfilling the constitutional and subsidiary functions of the Armed Forces.

4) Defense plays a fundamental role in encouraging research and sustainable technological innovation in the country.

Recognizing Brazil's vocation in the sector of technological development in the area of Defense, contemporary challenges must also be understood as stimuli for innovation and promotion of qualified jobs, contributing in a crucial way to the strengthening of the Armed Forces' climate resilience.

More sustainable equipment and renewable energy sources, when incorporated into the daily lives of the Brazilian Armed Forces, have the potential to contribute to the mitigation of national GHG emissions, reduce the sector's vulnerabilities to fluctuations in fossil fuel prices and modernize Defense assets. It is also noteworthy the possibility of the new technologies being used in a dual manner, for the benefit of other segments of society.

5) Creation of a structure, within the scope of the Ministry of Defense to coordinate the efforts and initiatives of the Armed Forces in the area of climate change.

Replicating structures already incorporated into other Brazilian ministries, it is recommended the creation of an agency or advisory body, to be installed within the scope of the Ministry of Defense, to coordinate, across the board, the Armed Forces' initiatives aimed at coping with climate change and promoting greater synergy with other national policies in this sphere.

Some of the actions to be carried out by this agency or advisory body are highlighted: the articulation with other ministries and national instances, the analysis of vulnerabilities mapping of the Defense sector, and the promotion of initiatives to adapt Brazilian Defense structures and assets, in order to guarantee the constitutional and subsidiary functions of the Armed Forces, and contribute to addressing the multiple challenges posed by climate change in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

WORKSHOP REPORT

Defense Policy and Strategy and Climate Change
Held on November 22nd and 23rd, 2023, at the facilities of
the Management and Operational Center of the Amazonian
Protection System (CENSIPAM), in Brasília, Brazil.

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