

Working through the Conflicts and Disputes of Climate Change: The Mediators Beyond Borders International (MBBI) CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY PROJECT



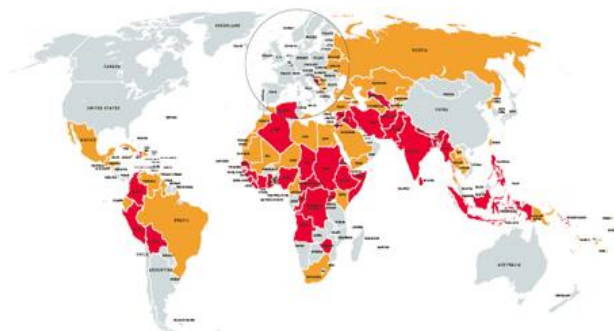
The Mediators Beyond Borders International Climate Change Policy Project features four goals: (1) Include mediation language in appropriate parts of the Paris Agreement and specific areas like REDD+ and capacity building; (2) Promote methods of climate change conflict management related to implementation and encourage conflict management training as part of “Action for Climate Empowerment” (ACE); (3) Serve as a resource and contribute mediation and facilitation expertise to the UNFCCC as appropriate; and (4) Assist Parties and non-state actors in the development and application of mediation and peacebuilding efforts relevant to all scales of climate change and sustainable development.

Goal One. Include language featuring mediation and other means of peaceful conflict resolution in appropriate parts of the Paris Agreement and related climate policies (e.g., REDD+).

MBBI stands ready to work with delegations to craft the appropriate language and determine where that language should appear in the Paris Agreement and related actions.

The MBBI team has identified a range of possibilities such as providing more specific language in Article 24 of the Paris Agreement (Article 14 of the UNFCCC) and Article 15 (implementation and compliance). For example, Article 24 could be modified to state:

Recognizing that disputes are an adverse effect of climate change, the Parties are encouraged to use mediation, facilitation, conciliation, arbitration, and actions before the International Court of Justice to settle their climate change disputes.



From International Alert, *A Climate of Conflict*, 2007. Red-risk of armed conflict. Yellow-risk of destabilization.

Goal Two. Promote methods of conflict management for climate change-related conflict and disputes.

As climate change impacts are felt and as policy decisions are made, implemented, and monitored, conflicts may result. As The International Crisis Group, one of the world’s leading independent, non-partisan conflict analysis advisory organizations, stresses that “a key challenge today is to better understand the relationship between climate change, environmental degradation and conflict and to effectively manage associated risks through appropriate conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms.”

To address climate change conflicts, whatever their nature, context, and scale, parties need access to informal means of conflict management and peacebuilding to work through and resolve those conflicts. Mediators Beyond Borders International advocates the use of a wide range of culturally and contextually appropriate methods of conflict management and peacebuilding, such as mediation, facilitation, public participation, dialogue, consultation, community cafes, mutual gains negotiation, and conciliation.

MBBI members stand ready to work with Parties and non-state actors to build conflict management and informal problem solving capacity so that parties can address their conflicts constructively and productively.



Participants of the REDD readiness field dialogue in Belém, Brazil
Photo: IUCN/ Jan Willem den Besten

Goal Three. Contribute mediation, facilitation, consultation, participation, conflict management, and peacebuilding expertise to the UNFCCC and its parties.

MBBI is a growing organization, with over 450 members from more than thirty countries. Members work in a variety of mediation, conflict management, and peacebuilding fields including the environment, sustainable development, labor-management, workplace, commerce and trade, family relations, education, and health care. MBB members do so on a variety of scales, from local to international.

When and where appropriate and on request, MBBI members volunteer their expertise and experience to UNFCCC leaders and participants to improve the UNFCCC formal and informal communication, negotiation and decision-making activities and processes.

Goal Four. Assist Parties and non-state actors in the development and application of mediation and peacebuilding efforts relevant to all scales of climate change and sustainable development.

Mediators Beyond Borders members can assist the climate change conflict management needs of both Parties and non-state actors. This assistance may be formal, such as providing support for expanding United Nations efforts to provide conflict management and mediation resources, such as the Mediation

Services Unit and a UNEP environmental mediation program as proposed by major stakeholders at UNEP meetings in Geneva and Nairobi. As the Final Report of the Geneva meeting states:

There was also support for the establishment of an intergovernmental body with mandatory jurisdiction to settle environment-related disputes. A related suggestion was the creation of a UN Environmental Mediation Program. (UNEP-IEG October 2010)

The assistance can be informal, through in-country mediation, conflict management, and peacebuilding services with local partners or, through technologies such as on-line seminars, and through partnering with civil society organizations (e.g., universities).

In Summary

Mediators Beyond Borders International is committed to building capacity and provide guidance for the peaceful resolution of climate change conflicts. MBBI looks forward to working with delegations, IGOs, and NGOs in pursuit of its four project goals.

For more information contact a member of the Climate Change Policy Project leadership team -- Tom Fiutak, Mark Kirwin, and Gregg Walker -- at mbbclimate@gmail.com.



Mediators Beyond Borders International – The Organization

MBBI keeps the people affected by conflict at the center of peacebuilding. It is our mission to build local skills for peace and promote mediation worldwide. Our approach emphasizes collaboration and inclusiveness, as well as cultural competency.