

# Geopolitics and Climate Diplomacy in the Lake Chad Basin: An Assessment of Riparian Policies

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## Abstract

## Original Research Article

The Lake Chad Basin constitutes one of Africa's most complex transboundary socio-ecological spaces. Shared principally by Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, and involving the Central African Republic and Libya within the wider basin framework, it is characterised by intense ecological, economic, political and security interdependence. The variability of water resources, environmental degradation, demographic pressure, population mobility and protracted insecurity have transformed the governance of natural resources into an increasingly important geopolitical question. Yet climate change does not operate as an autonomous driver of conflict. Its political significance emerges through its interaction with unequal access to resources, institutional capacities, and state policies, patterns of mobility and security practices. This reflection examines how climate dynamics are reshaping geopolitical relations in the Lake Chad Basin and assesses the extent to which riparian policies and regional institutions are developing effective forms of climate diplomacy. Drawing on a qualitative and comparative analysis of institutional documents and policy reports, the paper combines hydropolitics, political ecology and securitisation theory. It argues that the basin is witnessing a gradual institutionalisation of climate diplomacy, particularly through the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Water Charter and the Strategic Action Programme 2023–2037. Nevertheless, regional cooperation remains constrained by competing sovereign interests, unequal institutional capacities, the securitisation of environmental challenges and competition for international climate finance. Climate diplomacy in the basin therefore remains situated between cooperation and geopolitical competition. Its future effectiveness will depend on the capacity of riparian states and regional institutions to move from fragmented national adaptation policies towards a genuinely integrated approach centred on human security, territorial resilience and hydropolitical cooperation.

**Keywords:** Geopolitics; Climate diplomacy; Hydropolitics; Political ecology; Lake Chad Basin; Climate security; Riparian states.

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## INTRODUCTION

The geopolitics of water has become increasingly important in international relations because transboundary water systems challenge the conventional assumption that political

sovereignty corresponds neatly to ecological space. Rivers, lakes, wetlands and aquifers rarely conform to state borders. Their governance consequently brings states into relations of both cooperation and competition. The Lake Chad

Basin provides a revealing illustration of this tension. Its environmental dynamics are inseparable from questions of territorial authority, resource access, population mobility, regional security and international diplomacy.<sup>1</sup> The Lake Chad Basin is a transboundary socio-ecological system shared principally by Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, with the Central African Republic and Libya also associated with the wider basin institutional framework. The basin supports agriculture, pastoralism, fisheries, trade and other livelihood activities for millions of people. Its ecological variability, however, exposes populations and states to considerable uncertainty. The issue is therefore not simply whether the lake is “shrinking”, but how fluctuations in water availability alter access to land, pasture, fisheries and other resources and how these changes are governed. This distinction is important because the conventional narrative that climate change simply causes conflict in the Lake Chad region is analytically inadequate. Barnett and Adger demonstrated that climate change affects human security through intervening economic, social and institutional conditions.<sup>2</sup> The Lake Chad evidence suggests that climatic stress interacts with pre-existing political and socio-economic vulnerabilities rather than generating conflict automatically. The 2026 Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) - Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) climate, peace and security assessment similarly stresses the interaction between increasingly variable precipitation, drought, resource pressures, displacement and existing tensions.

The geopolitical importance of the basin consequently derives from the intersection of ecological interdependence and political sovereignty. Water, pasture, agricultural land

and fishing grounds are simultaneously environmental resources and objects of political regulation. Farmers, pastoralists and fishers may cross administrative and international boundaries in response to changing ecological conditions, while states increasingly attempt to regulate these movements in the name of security and territorial control. The border thus becomes simultaneously a line of sovereignty and a zone of economic, ecological and social interdependence. This situation gives particular significance to the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), created in 1964 as an institutional framework for the coordinated management of the basin. Over time, its mandate has expanded beyond conventional water management to encompass environmental sustainability, development, peace and security. The current Strategic Action Programme (SAP 2023–2037) explicitly links ecosystem rehabilitation, climate resilience, inclusive development and peace and security.<sup>3</sup> The Commission’s recent activities illustrate this institutional evolution. In March 2026, its Council of Ministers adopted the 2025 annual activity report and approved the 2026 work plan and budget, valued at approximately 15.14 billion FCFA, with emphasis on climate resilience, ecosystem restoration, peace and sustainable water-resource management.<sup>4</sup>

Yet institutional development does not necessarily imply policy convergence. Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria experience broadly shared environmental pressures but possess different demographic structures, economic capacities, security priorities and geopolitical ambitions. Cameroon tends to connect climate adaptation in the Far North region with territorial stabilisation and cross-border security.<sup>5</sup> Chad has strong incentives to

<sup>1</sup> OLOWOYEYE O.S, KANWAR R.S. Water and Food Sustainability in the Riparian Countries of Lake Chad in Africa. *Sustainability*. 2023, 15(13) :10009. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151310009>

<sup>2</sup> JON BARNETT and W. NEIL ADGER, “Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict,” *Political Geography* 26, no. 6, 2007, P. 639–655.

<sup>3</sup> Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), Strategic Action Programme 2023–2037, N’Djamena: LCBC, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Lake Chad Basin Commission, 2025 Annual Activity Report and 2026 Work Plan and Budget, Council of Ministers, March 2026.

<sup>5</sup> DJIDJOUA GARBA (I. D.) « Cross-border crime and its security concerns in the Far North Region of Cameroon », in *La Criminalité Transnationale Organisée. Étude pluridisciplinaire d'un phénomène criminel spécial*, sous la direction de Spener YAWAGA, Modibo Adama, North East Academic Publishing Center, 2026, P.799.

frame climate vulnerability as a diplomatic resource for international financing. Niger must reconcile environmental degradation and pastoral mobility with increasingly securitised borders. Nigeria, as the demographic and economic heavyweight of the region, approaches Lake Chad through both domestic security and regional-power considerations. The Central African Republic illustrates the importance of institutional capacity for translating regional commitments into effective policies. The study has three objectives. First, it analyses the geopolitical consequences of climate and environmental dynamics in the basin. Second, it compares the policies of the principal riparian states. Third, it assesses the capacity of regional institutions to transform national interests into collective climate governance.

The central question of this article is therefore:

***To what extent does climate diplomacy in the Lake Chad Basin transform shared ecological vulnerability into effective regional cooperation, and to what extent does it remain constrained by sovereignty, security imperatives and geopolitical competition?***

The reflection advances the hypothesis that climate policies in the Lake Chad Basin are characterised by a persistent tension between ecological interdependence and state sovereignty. While shared environmental vulnerability encourages regional cooperation and the institutionalisation of climate diplomacy, national security priorities, unequal capacities and competition over resources and international financing continue to limit the emergence of fully integrated climate governance. The study adopts a qualitative and comparative approach based primarily on documentary and institutional analysis. The analysis focuses on Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, while incorporating the Central African Republic where relevant to the institutional and hydrographic configuration of the basin. Three complementary theoretical perspectives guide the analysis. First, hydropolitics provides a framework for understanding transboundary water as an object

of interstate bargaining, power and strategic interest. Waterbury's work on the Nile and the subsequent literature on hydropolitics demonstrate that shared water resources cannot be separated from the power relations among riparian states. Second, political ecology directs attention to the social distribution of environmental resources, the crucial questions are not simply how much water or land exists, but who controls access, according to which rules and with what consequences. Third, securitisation theory explains how environmental problems may be represented as security threats and thereby become subject to exceptional or coercive policy responses. The argument is developed in two parts. Part I examines the geopolitical reconfiguration of the basin under the influence of climate dynamics, focusing first on resource vulnerability and insecurity and then on the differentiated policies of riparian states. Part II on the other hand, analyses climate diplomacy as a mechanism of cooperation and regional governance, while examining the persistent tensions between cooperation, competition, securitisation and sovereignty.

### **Partie1: The Geopolitical Reconfiguration of the Lake Chad Basin under the Influence of Climate Dynamics**

This configuration makes the basin a region that particularly highlights the tensions between territorial sovereignty and ecological interdependence. One of the key transformations in the basin is that environmental changes can no longer be separated from issues of security and governance. Variations in rainfall, droughts, floods, land degradation, changes in water resources and demographic pressure directly affect people's livelihoods. Climate change has not transformed the Lake Chad Basin into a geopolitical space simply because water has become scarce. Rather, environmental variability has altered the conditions under which different actors access and govern resources. This first section therefore examines, on the one hand, how climate change is helping to reshape the balance of power over resources, territories and security (A) and, on the other

hand, how riparian states are responding to this transformation through national policies situated at the intersection of climate adaptation, security and the defence of sovereign interests (B).

### **A. Climate Change As A Factor in The Shift of Balance of Power Within the Basin**

Climate change acts as a critical threat multiplier that is fundamentally shifting the balance of power within transboundary river basins. By altering water availability, degrading arable land, and driving mass migration, environmental degradation redefines the geopolitical leverage, economic stability, and military positioning of riparian states.

#### **1. Ecosystem degradation, resource access and geopolitical vulnerability**

The Lake Chad Basin is best understood as a transboundary socio-ecological system rather than merely a lake surrounded by sovereign states. Water, wetlands, pasture, agricultural land and fisheries constitute interconnected resources on which local economies depend.<sup>6</sup> Their availability varies seasonally and inter-annually, creating both opportunities for adaptation and conditions of uncertainty. This variability complicates the conventional representation of Lake Chad as a simple case of water scarcity. The critical question is not only how much water exists, but where water is available, when it becomes available, who can access it and which institutions regulate such access. Political ecology is particularly useful here because it shifts attention from physical scarcity towards the social distribution of environmental resources. Environmental change can therefore redistribute political and economic advantages. When receding water exposes fertile land, for example, areas previously associated with fishing or wetlands may become attractive for

cultivation and grazing. Conversely, flooding can destroy agricultural production, infrastructure and settlements. Such changes can modify local power relations without necessarily producing interstate conflict.<sup>7</sup> The geopolitical implication is therefore significant. Environmental resources acquire strategic value when access to them becomes politically contested. Climate variability consequently does not eliminate the importance of sovereignty; it makes the political management of sovereignty more consequential.

#### **2. Climate stress, insecurity and cross-border mobility**

The second dimension of the geopolitical transformation concerns the interaction between climate stress, insecurity and mobility. The Lake Chad region has experienced prolonged violence associated with Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province, alongside communal conflicts, displacement and livelihood insecurity.<sup>8</sup> It would nevertheless be misleading to establish a direct causal chain between climate change and violent extremism. The evidence points instead to an interaction between climatic stress, livelihood insecurity, weak governance, inequality and conflict dynamics. Variable precipitation and drought can intensify pressures on land, water and food and aggravate tensions among farmers, fishers, pastoralists, refugees and internally displaced people.<sup>9</sup> Mobility is central to this relationship. Pastoralists adapt to ecological conditions by modifying transhumance routes, fishers move in response to changing access to fishing grounds, agricultural households adjust cultivation strategies. Mobility therefore constitutes not merely a

<sup>6</sup> CLAUDIA W. SADOFF and DAVID GREY, "Beyond the River: The Benefits of Cooperation on International Rivers," *Water Policy* 4, no. 5, 2002, P. 389–403.

<sup>7</sup> THOR OLAV IVERSEN and al., *Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet: Lake Chad* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2026).

<sup>8</sup> ARMEL SAMBO, "La gestion du lac Tchad entre les pays riverains : situation, acteurs, enjeux et conflits," *LHB Hydrosience Journal* 109, no. 1, 2023.

<sup>9</sup> MARIAJULIA TROMBETTA, "Environmental Security and Climate Change: Analysing the Discourse," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 21, no. 4, 2008.

security problem but an adaptive mechanism.<sup>10</sup> The difficulty arises when adaptive mobility encounters militarised borders, insecure territories or competing claims over resources. The border then becomes a paradoxical geopolitical space, it separates sovereign jurisdictions while simultaneously connecting communities whose economic and ecological systems remain interdependent.

## **B. Riparian Policies between Climate Adaptation and Sovereign Interests**

Shared vulnerability has not produced identical national responses. The riparian states confront similar ecological pressures but interpret them through different political, economic and security priorities. They also not share the same geopolitical interests. It would therefore be incorrect to speak of a single climate policy for the basin. Rather, there is a plurality of national policies, which are gradually being linked through regional mechanisms. This diversity is precisely one of the main obstacles to the emergence of genuine regional climate diplomacy.

### **1. Cameroon and Chad: adaptation, security and the diplomacy of vulnerability**

Cameroon's position illustrates the close relationship between climate adaptation and security governance. The Far North region is exposed simultaneously to rainfall variability, land degradation, flooding, livelihood insecurity and armed violence. Consequently, climate policies are increasingly implemented within a broader framework of territorial stabilisation. This can be conceptualised as the securitisation of adaptation, environmental resilience is increasingly understood as part of stabilising vulnerable territories. The advantage of such an approach is that it recognises the interconnected nature of livelihood, environmental and security challenges. Its danger, however, is that adaptation may become subordinated to security

priorities. Chad presents a somewhat different configuration. Given its geographical position and high exposure to environmental vulnerability, climate change can become a diplomatic resource. Vulnerability can be transformed into an argument for international assistance, adaptation finance and technical cooperation. Climate diplomacy thus operates simultaneously as environmental policy and foreign-policy strategy.

### **2. Niger, Nigeria and the Central African Republic: differentiated capacities and strategic interests**

Niger's climate policy is shaped by desertification, drought, land degradation, pastoral mobility and security pressures. Adaptation therefore cannot be separated from the question of mobility. Policies that restrict cross-border movement in the name of security may inadvertently weaken livelihood strategies that have historically enabled pastoral communities to adapt to ecological variability. Nigeria occupies a distinctive position because of its demographic, economic and military weight. Climate policy in the country's north-east is therefore connected not only to vulnerability but also to national security and regional influence. Nigeria simultaneously has an interest in strengthening basin-wide cooperation and preserving national control over strategic resources.

The Central African Republic occupies a more peripheral position in the political geography of Lake Chad, yet its importance should not be underestimated. Its case illustrates how the effectiveness of climate policy depends upon administrative, financial, scientific and territorial capacities. The comparison therefore confirms that there is no single riparian climate policy. Rather, there are differentiated national strategies connected through an emerging regional institutional framework. This diversity creates both the necessity and the difficulty of

<sup>10</sup> ELINOR OSTROM, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

climate diplomacy.

## **Partie II: Climate Diplomacy as A Tool For Co-Operation, Power and Regional Governance**

Climate diplomacy understood here as the totality of negotiations, legal instruments, institutional mechanisms and discursive practices through which state and non-state actors manage cross-border ecological interdependencies, which is not limited to a technical function of water management.<sup>11</sup> It constitutes a genuine field of power, in the Bourdieusian sense of the term, where relationships of cooperation, competition and geopolitical repositioning are being reshaped between Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria and, to a lesser extent, the Central African Republic and Libya. This second part therefore sets out to analyse, firstly (A), the institutional mechanisms through which regional governance of the basin has been established, centred on the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and its treaty instruments; and then, in a second stage (B), the structural ambiguities of climate diplomacy, which is torn between a cooperative approach and one of geopolitical competition, particularly regarding access to international funding and the risk of environmental issues being securitised.

### **A. Climate Cooperation Mechanisms and The Development of Regional Governance of The Basin**

Established by the Fort-Lamy Convention and Statute of 22 May 1964, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) is one of the oldest river and lake basin organisations on the African continent, predating by several decades the emergence of the international climate regime arising from the 1992 United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Originally comprising Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Chad, and later expanded to include the Central African Republic (1994) and Libya (2008) as associate members, the CBLT has been entrusted with a threefold mandate: the coordinated management of water and fishery resources, the promotion of regional integration, and the preservation of peace and security in the Convention Basin.<sup>12</sup>

### **1. The Lake Chad Basin Commission as a platform for environmental and hydropolitical diplomacy**

The CBLT was not established to address climate change, but from the 2000s onwards it became, in the absence of a regional organisation specifically dedicated to climate issues, the de facto institutional framework for this purpose. We are thus witnessing a shift in the function of a traditional hydropolitical organisation towards a platform for environmental diplomacy, through the development of the Vision 2025 for the sustainable development of the basin, the Action Plan for Sustainable Development (PADD) and the Strategic Action Programme (PAS), documents which are progressively incorporating issues relating to climate change adaptation, ecosystem restoration and the resilience of livelihoods.<sup>13</sup> From a theoretical perspective, this trajectory clearly illustrates the concept of hydropolitics developed by Waterbury (1979) and subsequently expanded upon by Turton and Henwood (2002), according to which the management of shared water resources in transboundary basins cannot be separated from the power relations between riparian states, geographical position asymmetries (upstream/downstream) and issues of sovereignty. Lake Chad, more than 90 per cent of which is fed by the waters of the Chari-

<sup>11</sup> FALKNER, R. « The Paris Agreement and the New Logic of International Climate Politics », *International Affairs*, 92(5); ROGER, C. and BELLIEHATHAN, S. « Africa in the Global Climate Change Negotiations », *International Environmental Agreements*, 16,1. 2016.

<sup>12</sup> COMMISSION DU BASSIN DU LAC TCHAD (CBLT) (1964). *Convention et Statut relatifs au*

développement du Bassin du Lac Tchad, Fort-Lamy ; ECDPM. *La Commission du Bassin du Lac Tchad, note d'analyse*, European Centre for Development Policy Management, 2015

<sup>13</sup>CBLT. *Rapports d'activités et présentations institutionnelles*, cblt.org. 2023-2026

Logone River from Cameroon and the Central African Republic, places Cameroon and the CAR in the position of “upstream” states, while Nigeria, Niger and Chad, which border the lake directly, are more exposed to the effects of its shrinking. This hydrographic configuration gives the CBLT an irreplaceable role in ongoing diplomatic mediation, in that it institutionalises a forum for technical dialogue capable of defusing tensions linked to competing uses of the resource (irrigation, fishing, livestock farming, energy), in line with the Potential for Conflict to Potential for Cooperation promoted jointly by UNESCO and the CBLT as part of the BIOPALT project since 2019<sup>14</sup>.

## 2. The Water Charter and mechanisms for the collaborative management of transboundary resources

The Lake Chad Basin Water Charter represents an important attempt to establish a common normative framework for the management of shared water resources. Its significance lies in the movement from political declarations towards a more formalised regime of cooperation. The adoption of the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter, signed on 30 April 2012 at the 14th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) in N'Djamena, marks a decisive step in the legalisation of regional cooperation. This text, which clarifies and supplements the provisions of the 1964 Convention, establishes the principle of integrated, equitable and collaborative management of the basin's water resources and environment, by formally involving users, managers, policy-makers, scientific experts and civil society organisations.<sup>15</sup> It also enshrines a key hierarchical principle: the lake's water

supply is given priority over all other uses, which constitutes a rare normative innovation in international water law. The Charter forms part of a broader movement to establish a regional legal framework for shared water resources in West and Central Africa, alongside the Niger Basin Water Charter and the draft ECCAS convention and ECOWAS directive on transboundary water resources.<sup>16</sup> The ‘benefit-sharing’ approach, as opposed to the mere volumetric sharing of water, as theorised by Sadoff and Grey 2002, finds concrete expression here through the promotion of joint projects in fisheries. It also corresponds to Ostrom's argument that collective-action problems involving common resources can be managed through institutions that establish rules, monitoring arrangements and mechanisms of cooperation. livestock farming and irrigated agriculture.<sup>17</sup> However, the effectiveness of this instrument remains undermined by a lack of ratification: more than a decade after its adoption, only three of the six signatory states had formally ratified the Charter, which limits its binding effect and illustrates the classic disconnect, in international law, between the political commitment of signature and its incorporation into national law.<sup>18</sup>

## B. The Ambiguities of Climate Diplomacy: Between Cooperation, Competition And Geopolitical Repositioning

Climate diplomacy also constitutes a field of competition. Reparian States do not enter international climate negotiations with identical resources, institutional capacities or diplomatic influence.<sup>19</sup> Climate finance is particularly important in this respect. Access to adaptation resources depends not only on vulnerability but

<sup>14</sup> UNESCO Diplomatie de l'eau et gestion pacifique des ressources naturelles dans le Bassin du Lac Tchad — Projet BIOPALT. 2019.

<sup>15</sup> COMMISSION DU BASSIN DU LAC TCHAD (CBLT) Charte de l'Eau du Bassin du Lac Tchad, adoptée le 30 avril 2012, N'Djamena.

<sup>16</sup> GENEVA WATER HUB (s.d.). Les eaux transfrontalières et le droit international de l'eau, note d'analyse.

<sup>17</sup> SADOFF, C. W. and GREY, D. « Beyond the River: The Benefits of Cooperation on International Rivers », Water Policy, 4(5). 2002.

<sup>18</sup> IUCN / PROGRAMME BRIDGE. Bâtir le dialogue pour améliorer la gouvernance transfrontalière des eaux du Bassin du Lac Tchad, rapport IUCN. 2017.

<sup>19</sup> ANTHONY TURTON and ROLAND HENWOOD, eds., *Hydropolitics in the Developing World: A Southern African Perspective* (Pretoria: African Water Issues Research Unit, 2002).

also on the capacity to formulate projects, satisfy fiduciary requirements, produce technical documentation and maintain institutional relationships with donors.

### **1. Climate as a new diplomatic resource: funding, expertise and international influence**

Contemporary climate diplomacy is not merely a functional response to the ecological emergency for the states bordering Lake Chad, it also constitutes a foreign policy resource in the sense defined by Baldwin, who says it is a means of influence that can be mobilised in international relations.<sup>20</sup> The basin's climate vulnerability, which has received extensive media coverage since the 2000s (a reduction of more than 90 per cent in the lake's surface area since the 1960s, a figure frequently cited in the diplomatic discourse of the heads of state of the riparian countries), has become a rhetorical asset that governments deploy in multilateral forums to capture international attention, legitimise requests for assistance and enhance their diplomatic visibility.<sup>21</sup> This has created a paradox in the sense that, the states and communities most vulnerable to climate change may not necessarily be those best equipped to attract climate funding. Consequently, climate diplomacy can simultaneously encourage cooperation and reproduce inequalities. The problem is therefore not simply finance, it is also the political organisation of access to finance. While official rhetoric emphasises the image of regional solidarity in the face of a common threat, the practice of mobilising international financial resources reveals a more competitive dynamic. Climate finance mechanisms the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility, and bilateral development aid channels operate

on a project-by-project competitive basis, whereby each state, or each accredited national implementing agency, seeks to secure scarce resources for the benefit of its own territory or its own priorities, rather than on a strictly pooled basis at the basin level. This competition is particularly evident in the uneven geographical distribution of funded projects, certain territories, which are better equipped with the administrative capacity to set up projects (project design, compliance with donors fiduciary standards), attract a disproportionate share of funding, to the detriment of areas that are nevertheless comparable in terms of ecological vulnerability a phenomenon documented more extensively in the literature on the 'adaptation finance gap' in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>22</sup>

### **2. The securitisation of climate change and the risk of a militarisation of environmental governance**

The growing interconnection between the climate agenda and the security agenda in the Lake Chad Basin can be usefully illuminated by the theory of securitisation, developed by the Copenhagen School.<sup>23</sup> According to this analytical framework, an issue becomes securitised when an actor, through a performative act of language, presents it as an existential threat justifying the use of exceptional measures, outside ordinary political procedures. When applied to climate change what Detraz and Trombetta refer to as the "*climate security discourse*."<sup>24</sup> This analytical framework helps to explain why the environmental degradation of Lake Chad has increasingly been presented, in the discourse of the heads of state of the riparian countries, regional organisations and certain international partners, as an almost automatic causal factor in the rise of Boko Haram.<sup>25</sup> Given

<sup>20</sup> BALDWIN, D. A. *Economic Statecraft*. Princeton University Press. 1985.

<sup>21</sup> CLAUDIA W. SADOFF and DAVID GREY, "Beyond the River: The Benefits of Cooperation on International Rivers," *Water Policy* 4, no. 5, 2002, P. 389–403.

<sup>22</sup> BARNETT, J. *The Meaning of Environmental Security: Ecological Politics and Policy in the New Security Era*. Zed Books ; PNUE (2023). *Rapport sur l'écart entre les besoins et les financements de l'adaptation*.

<sup>23</sup> BUZAN, B., WÆVER, O. and DE WILDE, J. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. 1998\.

<sup>24</sup> DETRAZ, N. « Threats or Vulnerabilities? Assessing the Link Between Climate Change and Security », *Global Environmental Politics*, 11, 2011, P.3

<sup>25</sup> OCDE / CLUB DU SAHEL (2010). *Incidences sécuritaires du changement climatique au Sahel : perspectives politiques*, rapport Philipp Heinrichs ;

that empirical evidence of a direct and unambiguous link between environmental variables and the outbreak of armed conflict still remains insufficient.<sup>26</sup> The main problem is therefore one of sovereignty versus ecological interdependence. States remain responsible for controlling their territories, yet ecological systems operate across borders. Attempts to reinforce territorial control can consequently interfere with the mobility and resource-sharing practices on which local resilience depends.<sup>27</sup> The most promising way forward is therefore not to abolish sovereignty but to reconceptualise sovereignty through cooperative regional governance. Human security, territorial resilience, community participation and hydropolitical cooperation should become complementary rather than competing objectives.

## CONCLUSION

The Lake Chad Basin demonstrates that climate diplomacy is becoming an increasingly important dimension of African geopolitics. Yet the transformation should not be understood as a straightforward transition from environmental degradation to conflict. The evidence instead reveals a more complex process in which climate variability interacts with resource governance, livelihood insecurity, population mobility, institutional capacity and security practices. The analysis has shown, first, that climate change contributes to a reconfiguration of geopolitical relations by modifying the accessibility and political value of water, land, pasture and fisheries. Environmental change therefore becomes politically significant through the institutions and power relations that regulate access to resources. Political ecology helps explain this process by drawing attention to unequal resource access, while hydropolitics demonstrates how shared water resources become embedded in interstate relations.

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<sup>26</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

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<sup>27</sup> TROMBETTA, M. J. « Environmental Security and Climate Change: Analysing the Discourse », *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 21, 4, 2008.

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