

# NATURAL RESOURCES, CONFLICT PREVENTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## FROM CURSE TO OPPORTUNITY:

AN EU -UN PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION



Natural resources underpin human livelihoods, economic development and stability. If they are poorly managed, however, resources can also undermine development and contribute to negative outcomes, such as unequal growth, corruption or even violent conflict. Sound natural resource governance can mean the difference between prosperity and chronic underdevelopment. The EU and six UN agencies (UNEP, UNDP, UNHABITAT, PBSO, DPA and DESA) are collaborating to optimize the potential of natural resources for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustainable development.

## What are the challenges... and opportunities?

- Unrecognized land and resource rights create uncertainty and insecurity; investments in natural resources can also be the catalyst for securing community land rights.
- Rising scarcity of land and resources increases competition; the increased land value can be used to achieve a wide range of development goals.
- Weak community participation and opaque negotiations undermine agreements; involving communities from the outset – and putting into place grievance redress mechanisms – can help ensure smooth operations.
- Illegal exploitation and resource capture by organized crime are an increasing risk; doing business with reputable firms and in line with internationally recognized good practice helps ensure resources get to market.
- Trans-boundary risks and climate change can contribute to insecurity; sound natural resource management can contribute to regional stability and economic growth while mitigating the risks of climate change.

## What does the EU-UN Partnership want to achieve?

The objective of the EU-UN Partnership is to bring a more coherent and systematic approach to addressing the peace and security challenges associated with natural resource governance. Through the Partnership, the EU and UN aim to provide advice, guidance and technical expertise to help countries and their partners:

- Reconcile interests of extractive industries, local authorities and local communities through agreements that meet the needs of all parties.
- Prevent forced displacement and violent conflict over land and natural resources by improving capacities for conflict prevention and increasing security of land tenure.
- Ensure that natural resources contribute fully to economic development by promoting broad-based local development, equitable benefits-sharing and sustainable livelihoods.

## What does the EU-UN Partnership offer?

- Conflict analysis and conflict prevention strategy formulation to respond to emerging disputes over land and natural resources.
- Rapid response to violent conflicts through the deployment of mediation and natural resource management experts to reduce tensions and develop non-violent alternatives.
- Training on the nexus between land and natural resources for different target audiences (e.g. UN, EU, World Bank, local and national authorities, bi-lateral and NGO partners).
- Support to country programme formulation on land, natural resources and conflict combined with joint fundraising, including from the Peacebuilding Fund and the EU Instrument for Stability.

## Examples of EU-UN work in the field

- Assessing natural resource and conflict risks, developing strategies to prevent conflict and promote stability and sustainable development (Afghanistan, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, DRC, South Sudan).
- Natural resource concession negotiations, environmental impact assessments, implementation and compliance monitoring (Liberia, Sierra Leone).
- Local-level dispute resolution systems for land and related natural resources (DRC, Liberia, South Sudan, Somaliland, Pakistan).
- Rehabilitation of contaminated or mined sites, reforestation and environmental remediation of hotspots (Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan).
- Community-based natural resource management (Afghanistan, Liberia).
- Grievances redress mechanisms – establishing mechanisms to resolve grievances between companies, communities and local governments (Liberia).
- Local economic development and “green economy” strategies and settlement planning to maximize the development impacts of resource investments and mitigate their risks (Rwanda).
- Transboundary resource management plans, mediation and dispute resolution (Iraq-Iran, Afghanistan-Iran).

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The EU-UN Partnership on Natural Resources and Conflict is financed by the EU's Instrument for Stability and coordinated by the UN Interagency Framework for Preventive Action. For further information, contact: [framework.team@undp.org](mailto:framework.team@undp.org)

