

# Biodiversity and people under attack from disasters and conflicts

## A challenge for the implementation of the Convention

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Presentation by  
Ecoropa & EcoNexus

COP11, Hyderabad, October 2012



### **Item 3: Implementation of the Strategic Plan - UNEP/CBD/COP/11/4**

19. Requests the Executive Secretary to undertake, subject to the availability of financial resources, **a review of the impacts of disasters and conflicts on biodiversity** and ways and means to take **actions for implementing the Strategic Plan** for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets under such conditions, and **invites the Executive Director of the UNEP to integrate** as far as feasible **the Strategic Plan** for Biodiversity 2011-2020 **in the initiatives of the UNEP programme of work on conflicts and disasters**, and to submit a report to the next meeting of SBSTTA in accordance with the rules of procedure highlighted in decision IX/29.

# Outline

- Why special attention for the effects of conflicts and disasters?
- The challenges
- Some ideas for directions and cooperation

Conflicts and disasters  
are not a new and emerging issue.

They have shaped  
our landscapes and our societies  
for centuries.







Since the start of the new millennium,  
over 35 major conflicts  
and some 2,500 disasters  
have affected billions of people around the world.

These crises destroy infrastructure,  
displace entire populations  
and threaten ecosystems  
and the people who rely on them to survive.

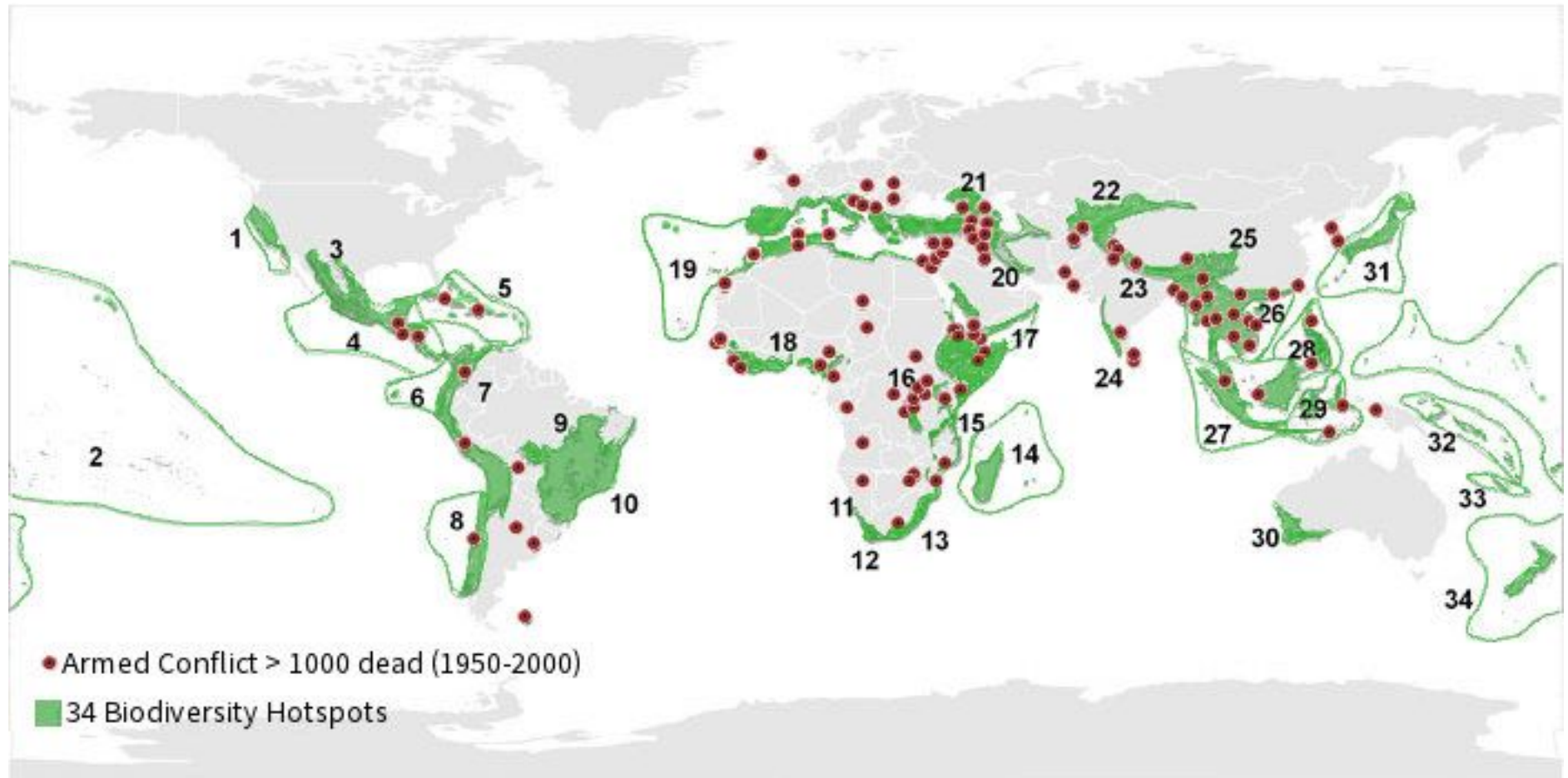
UNEP Disasters & Conflicts, Fact sheet

[www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts](http://www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts)

Most conflicts take place in biodiversity hotspots,  
and most hotspots experience conflicts.



# Warfare & Biodiversity Hotspots



Source: Conservation International 2009,  
<http://www.conservation.org/warfare/Pages/map.aspx>

# Challenges

## and a Disclaimer



1

People and Biodiversity  
are intrinsically linked.

# Example: Agent Orange

- defoliation of 10% of forest cover and of more than 50% costal mangroves
- high-diversity forests and mangroves are replaced by grassland and mud flats
- loss of diversity, loss of costal protection, ongoing toxic legacy
  - 24 bird and 5 mammal species in sprayed forest vs. 145-170 birds and 30-55 mammal species in unspraid forest (Chiras 2010)
- Clean up programme (2012): 43 Mil USD, of which 20 Mil to clean up of Danang Airport





# What harms on, harms the other

Cooperate with those that already work on “the environmental impacts of crises on human health, livelihoods and security”

→ UNEP Disasters and Conflict





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UNEP to Train Blue Helmets on Environmental Challenges to Peace and Security

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### Country Operations

From the Balkans to Afghanistan, Nigeria, Sudan and China, UNEP's Disasters and Conflicts work, led by its Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch, has responded to crisis situations in more than 40 countries since 1999, delivering high-quality environmental expertise to national governments and partners in the UN family.

The branch is based in Geneva, Switzerland, with project offices in Afghanistan, Sudan, South Sudan, Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

For a list of UNEP's current activities please [click here](#).

### UNEP Disasters and Conflicts Programme

UNEP's Disasters and Conflicts programme seeks to minimize environmental threats to human well-being from the environmental causes and consequences of conflicts and disasters.

### Highlight

IDRC  
DAVOS 2012





United Nations Environment Programme  
environment for development



Climate  
Change



Disasters  
& Conflicts



Ecosystem  
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### Publications

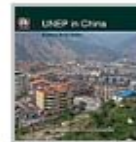
Further resources



General Publications



Afghanistan



China



Côte d'Ivoire



Depleted Uranium

[www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts](http://www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts)

## UNEP to Train Blue Helmets on Environmental Challenges to Peace and Security

Fri, Sep 21, 2012

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UN peace  
alternat

Geneva  
manage  
(UNEP)

### Greening the Blue Helmets

Environment, Natural Resources  
and UN Peacekeeping Operations

United Nations Environment Programme

hydraulically compressed soil blocks. The blocks have been used as an  
er-fired kilns, reducing timber and reducing water use by 30%.

training programme to support the UN's 16 peace operations in improving their  
resources has been launched by the United Nations Environment Programme

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## MOST POPULAR



Expe

# 2

Biodiversity cannot be protected  
without protecting people.

And neither the other way round.

“Refugees and internally displaced people (IDP) often have no choice but to rely on natural resources for their survival, particularly during an emergency.

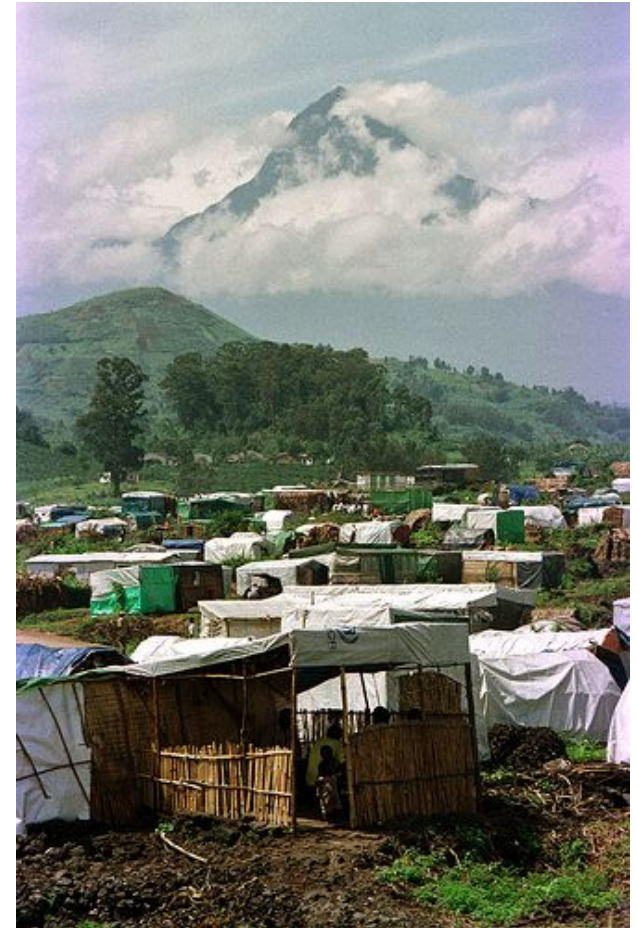
Trees may be cut to build or support simple shelters, wood may be collected to cook meals or to keep warm, and wild game, fruit, herbs and other plants might be gathered as a source of food or medicine.

Unless controlled, these and related activities can quickly get out of hand and have a negative impact on the environment as well as the displaced and host populations.”

UNHCR Environment  
[www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)

# Example: Refugees

- What when nature is the only friend - and still needs protection itself?
  - wood, plants, animals, water



Kahindu refugee camp,  
Goma, DRC, 1995



# Early Cooperation

- The faster people get help, the smaller the impact.
- Not protection *against* refugees, but *with* them.
- Provide input *during* humanitarian actions instead of cleaning up afterwards.
- Liaise *before* a conflict or disaster happens.
  - UNHCR Environment
  - UNEP Disaster & Conflict







## Environment



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### Looking After the Land

The sudden arrival of large numbers of people in a small area can place significant pressure on the local environment. Refugees and internally displaced people (IDP) often have no choice but to rely on natural resources for their survival, particularly during an emergency. Trees may be cut to build or support simple shelters, wood may be collected to cook meals or to keep warm, and wild game, fruit, herbs and other plants might be gathered as a source of food or medicine. Unless controlled, these and related activities can quickly get out of hand and have a negative impact on the environment as well as the displaced and host populations.

Camps for displaced people are never meant to be permanent, though many countries have hosted refugees or IDPs in the same place for several decades. Strategies and actions need to be implemented that address key environmental issues, prevent environmental degradation from taking place and help avoid conflicts arising over competition for natural resources.

UNHCR recognizes the potential damage that camps and settlements can have on the environment, as well as on the local economy and relations with host communities. To this end, the refugee agency has developed an overarching policy to deal with environmental issues. Equally important, UNHCR develops and supports a range of field projects that help reduce or overcome some of the damage caused by humanitarian operations. UNHCR also responds to new, emerging threats such as climate change.

### Environment in the News



-  [Climate change drives people into harm's way, says UN refugee chief](#)
-  [Light Years Ahead](#)
-  [Solar lamps brighten future for refugee students in Uganda](#)
-  [UNHCR project brings light, security and fuel-efficient cooking to refugees](#)
-  [Guterres to brief UN Security Council this week, expected focus on climate change](#)

[more documents](#)



### Kenya: Solar Success Story

UNHCR chief António Guterres is impressed by a green energy programme, supported by Portuguese energy company EDP, that is helping refugees in Kenya's Kakuma camp.







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## Environmental Publications Available from UNHCR

Environment, 27 August 2009

The following publications are available from UNHCR.

### 1. Policy

- [Environmental Guidelines](#). UNHCR, Geneva, August 2005.

### 2. Handbooks

- [Handbook of Selected Lessons Learned from the Field: Refugee Operations and Environmental Management](#). UNHCR, Geneva, 2002. [This is the second edition of the "Refugee Operations and the Environmental Management: Selected Lessons Learned" first published in 1998.]
- [Handbook of Experiences in Energy Conservation and Alternative Fuels: Cooking Options in Refugee Situations](#). UNHCR, Geneva, 2002. [Also available in French.]
- [Handbook for Promoting Sound Agricultural Practices: Livelihood Options in Refugee Situations](#). UNHCR Geneva and CARE International, 2002. [Also available in French.]
- [A Handbook of Sound Practices: Forest Management in Refugee and Returnee Situations](#). UNHCR, Geneva, Geneva, August 2005.
- [A Practical Handbook for Improved Management: Livestock-Keeping and Animal Husbandry in Refugee and Returnee Situations](#). UNHCR, Geneva, August 2005.

### 3. General

- [Environmental Considerations for Camp Phase-out and Closure: A UNHCR Plan of Action](#), UNHCR Geneva, 2009
- [Environmental Perspectives of Camp Phase-out and Closure: A Compendium of Lessons Learned from Africa](#), UNHCR Geneva, 2009
- [Practicing and Promoting Sound Environmental Management in Refugee/Returnee Operations – Papers presented at an International Workshop, Geneva, 22-25 October 2001](#). UNHCR, Geneva, 2002 [Also available in French.]
- [Caring for Refugees – Caring for the Environment](#). UNHCR, Geneva, 2001. [Also available in French and Spanish.]
- [Refugee Operations and Environmental Management: Key Principles for Decision-Making](#). UNHCR, Geneva, 1998. [Also available in French.]
- [Refugee Operations and the Environmental Management: Selected Lessons Learned](#). UNHCR.

<http://www.unhcr.org/environment>





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## Biodiversity Conservation in Regions of Armed Conflict: Protecting World Heritage in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

In 2000, UNESCO and the United Nation's Foundation (UNF), launched an innovating project "*Biodiversity Conservation in Regions of Armed Conflict: Conserving World Heritage sites in the Democratic Republic of Congo*". This pilot project of conservation of natural heritage during conflict was launched for the initial period of four years.

UNESCO, ICCN (Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature), and international NGOs as well as the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) jointly executed the project with a budget of some \$ 3 million. The project, approved in November 1999 when most donors had to pull out from the country because of conflicts - turned out to be of critical importance to UNESCO World Heritage Centre, NGOs and ICCN in order to fight against the destruction of biodiversity and obliteration of protected areas. The Government of Belgium was the first to join forces with the project, providing 300,000€ for community-support activities for conservation in and around the five World Heritage sites.

The success of the implementation of the phase I (2000 - 2004) of the project convinced new partners such as the Government of Italy (with a financial support amounting US\$ 600,000). The Government of Germany, the European Union and the World Bank (through the Global Environment Fund) are also contributing to the implementation of the phase II of the project (2004-2008).

The second phase of the project mainly focuses on the implementation of Emergency Action Plans for World Heritage Properties with outstanding universal value in the DRC as well as on the setting up of an information



### Contacts

- [Guy Debonnet \(UNESCO\)](#)
- [Leila Maziz \(UNESCO\)](#)

### Categories

- [Conservation of Natural Sites](#)
- [Forests](#)

<http://whc.unesco.org/congobiodiversity>

3

Safeguarding livelihoods and local knowledge  
protects biodiversity

# Post-conflict and post-disaster

- Clean-up & Decontamination - esp. relevant for farmers, peasants and pastoralists
- Return of farmers etc.
- Demobilisation, Disarmament & Reintegration (DDR)
- Access to locally adapted seeds and domestic animals for low input agriculture



# Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure

24. Systems for recording legitimate tenure rights should be resilient to natural disasters [incl. off-site storage of records] to allow right holders to prove their rights and relocate their parcels and other spatial units. [...] States and other parties should address tenure during the reconstruction phase.

[www.fao.org/nr/tenure](http://www.fao.org/nr/tenure)





Local knowledge, local agrobiodiversity  
is key  
to protecting biodiversity, to living sustainable.

# 4

Biodiversity is not only affected by conflicts -  
but it is also a source of them.

“Peacekeeping operations can no longer separate questions of peace and security from the way natural resources and the environment are managed in a post-conflict country.

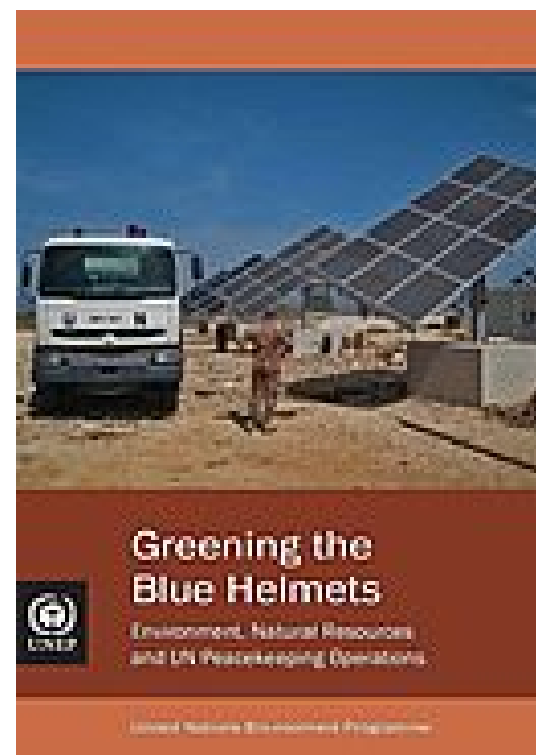
Maintaining security, restoring the economy and providing basic services is often impossible without addressing questions of resource ownership, access, control and management.”

UNEP Conflicts & Disasters (2012): “Greening the Blue Helmets”

[www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts](http://www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts)

# Conflicts over Biodiversity

- No data on how many conflicts are about biodiversity
- 50% of Peacekeeping mission: in situations where natural resources have either been financed or fuelled a conflict
- reports from evictions for land-grabbing, illegal restriction of access to land and water, illegal mining and logging



# Summary

- Wide range of causes and effects of conflicts and disasters, but the challenges they pose are similar.
- Combination of short-term relief and avoiding or minimizing long-term damage
- Integrated approach to conserve biodiversity *and* protect people

“...ultimately, the conservation and  
sustainable use of biological diversity  
will strengthen  
friendly relations among States  
and contribute to peace for humankind”

Preamble of the Convention



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# Resources (1)

## Organisations with Publications on their websites

**UNEP Disasters & Conflicts** [www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts](http://www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts)  
- Country & Assessment reports; “Greening the Blue Helmets”  
(Sept. 2012)

### **UNHCR Environment**

[www.unhcr.org/environment](http://www.unhcr.org/environment) - esp. “Key Principles for  
Decisionmaking” (1998) and “Lessons learned”

### **UNESCO: World Heritage Sites in Danger.**

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/danger/> - and “Biodiversity Conservation  
in Regions of Armed Conflict: Protecting World Heritage in the  
Democratic Republic of the Congo.”

# Resources (2)

## Selected Reports & Papers

**Conservation International:** Warfare & Biodiversity Hotspots.

<http://www.conservation.org/warfare/Pages/map.aspx>

**FAO (2012):** Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security. <http://www.fao.org/nr/tenure/voluntary-guidelines/en/>

**Hanson Th. et al. (2009):** Warfare in Biodiversity Hotspots. *Conservation Biology* 23(3): 578-587.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1523-1739.2009.01166.x/abstract>

**Hatton J., Couto M. & Oglethorpe J. (2001):** Biodiversity and War: A Case Study of Mozambique.

Washington, D.C.: Biodiversity Support Program / WWF.

**Jambiya G., Milledge S. & Mtango N. (2007):** 'Night time spinach' - Conservation and livelihood implications of wild meat use in refugee situations in North-Western Tanzania. Report for TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa. <http://www.traffic.org/home/2008/1/22/lack-of-meat-for-refugees-causing-large-scale-poaching.html>

**McNeely J.A. (2003):** Conserving forest biodiversity in times of violent conflict. *Oryx* 37(2): 142-152.

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/articles/2003/A-00114.pdf>

**Squire C.B. (2001):** Sierra Leone's Biodiversity and the Civil War: A Case Study Washington, D.C.:

Biodiversity Support Program / WWF.

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This presentation was first given at the side event  
**“Biodiversity and People under attack from  
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9 October 2012, Hyderabad, India