

A group of people, including women and children, are walking through a dusty, hazy landscape. The scene is dominated by a thick, orange-brown haze, suggesting a severe dust storm or a drought-stricken environment. The people are wearing traditional clothing, and some are carrying items on their heads or backs. The overall atmosphere is one of hardship and displacement.

Environment, Conflict and Peacebuilding at IISD

**ADDRESSING THE LINKS AMONG ENVIRONMENTAL
CHANGE, NATURAL RESOURCES AND SECURITY**

iisd

Our approach

IISD's program on Environment, Conflict and Peacebuilding is broad in scope, global in reach and grounded in our experience at the field level. Our team works in a diverse number of settings with a wide array of partners: from climate experts in the Middle East, to conservationists in the Albertine Rift, to local communities in South Asia. In particular, the program:

- **Analyzes** emerging threats from environmental change and natural resource use
- **Convenes** different stakeholders to discuss shared problems
- **Produces** compelling and policy-relevant reports
- **Develops** new tools to address these challenges
- **Communicates** its findings to decision-makers
- **Trains** practitioners in new ways to integrate conflict or environmental perspectives in their work

PAST PUBLICATIONS:



- OUR PARTNERS INCLUDE:**
- Adelphi Research, Germany
 - CARE International
 - Conservation Development Centre, Kenya
 - UNEP Disasters and Conflicts, Switzerland
 - Duke University, U.S.
 - UNEP Great Apes Survival Project, Kenya
 - International Environmental Law Research Centre, Kenya
 - International Union for Conservation of Nature, Switzerland
 - Institute for Security Studies, South Africa
 - Saferworld, U.K.
 - Sustainable Development Institute of Liberia, Freetown
 - UNITAR, Switzerland
 - University of California, Irvine, U.S.
 - University of Maryland, U.S.
 - Wildlife Conservation Society, U.S.
 - Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, Washington, U.S.
 - World Wide Fund for Nature, U.S.



“If we did a better job of managing our resources sustainably, conflicts over them would be reduced. So, protecting the global environment is directly related to securing peace.”

Hon. Professor Wangari Maathai, 2004 Nobel Laureate

At the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), we believe that a better understanding of the links between environmental change and human security is vital for effective conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

Ask an ecologist and a security analyst to name those countries of gravest concern, and though their points of departure are different, their lists would look remarkably similar: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Pakistan and Somalia, among others.

The connections between environmental issues and conflict are many and complex. Environmental factors themselves are rarely, if ever, the sole cause of violence. But natural resources and other environmental factors are linked to violent conflict in a variety of ways that are often obscured by more visible issues, such as ethnic tension and power politics.

First, history shows that scarce natural resources and environmental degradation have contributed to the likelihood, longevity and impacts of conflicts around the world. Similarly, the abundance of high-value natural resources can make conflict more likely if parties compete over their control. And climate change—by redrawing maps of where rain falls, food grows and people live—may exacerbate these links. Second, the environment is frequently a silent casualty of war, which can erase decades of development gains. Third, in rebuilding a war-torn society, the environment and natural resources often play a number of crucial roles—from supporting economic recovery through the creation of livelihoods and the resettlement of displaced populations, to providing opportunities for dialogue, cooperation, confidence building and government reform.

There is a crucial need to understand these links and transmit them to policy-makers and practitioners. This is the focus of IISD’s Environment, Conflict and Peacebuilding work program.

Since 1998, IISD's Environment, Conflict and Peacebuilding program has worked to explore emerging issues, to transmit practical recommendations to policy-makers and to provide training to governments and NGOs. Our team links research, policy and practice so that better environmental management and more effective natural resource governance reduce the risk of conflict.

Environment, Conflict and Peacebuilding at IISD

• RESEARCH • POLICY • PRACTICE

The pace of environmental change and growing demand for natural resources are generating new security challenges. Our field research tries to identify the issues of concern for communities and countries facing these challenges. This work provides a foundation for IISD's ongoing contributions to the academic debate on the links between environment, conflict and peacebuilding.

• RESEARCH • POLICY • PRACTICE

To be effective, research has to be transmitted to policy-makers. Through established links to national and international decision-makers, we promote policy mechanisms that address and challenge the root causes of insecurity around the world: new ways to manage our natural resources more effectively, to address climate change and to reverse environmental degradation.

• RESEARCH • POLICY • PRACTICE

There is much to do at a practical level. IISD helps practitioners address the environmental dimensions of conflict by training conservationists in conflict-sensitive programming, evaluating environmental interventions in conflict zones and developing guidance for natural resource governance in fragile and post-conflict states.

www.iisd.org/security



Project profiles

● RESEARCH

CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Climate change in the Jordan River basin threatens to reduce already scarce water resources, increase food insecurity and hinder economic growth. IISD, funded by Denmark, conducted extensive consultations to outline the threats that climate change could pose to regional security and suggest strategies to address those threats.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AND THE NEW CANADIAN SECURITY AGENDA

Global environmental change threatens Canada's domestic security and interests overseas. In this study for Environment Canada, our team identified three particular challenges: first is the struggle for control of shipping routes across a warming Arctic, second is the hunt for new sources of energy and third is political stability in regions of economic and strategic importance to Canada.

● POLICY

INTEGRATING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS INTO UN PEACEBUILDING

Since 2007, at the request of the United Nations Environment Programme, IISD has led an Expert Group that advises UN agencies on how better natural resource and environmental management contributes to more effective peacebuilding.

ENSURING THAT TRADE AND AID POLICIES REINFORCE, RATHER THAN UNDERMINE, SECURITY

This project, funded by Norway, introduced the links between trade, aid and security, and exposed how inappropriate or misused trade and aid policies can undermine security and contribute to state fragility. On a practical level, it demonstrated how trade and aid policy can be used to help forge stability and security, reduce the likelihood of armed conflict and assist economic and political recovery.

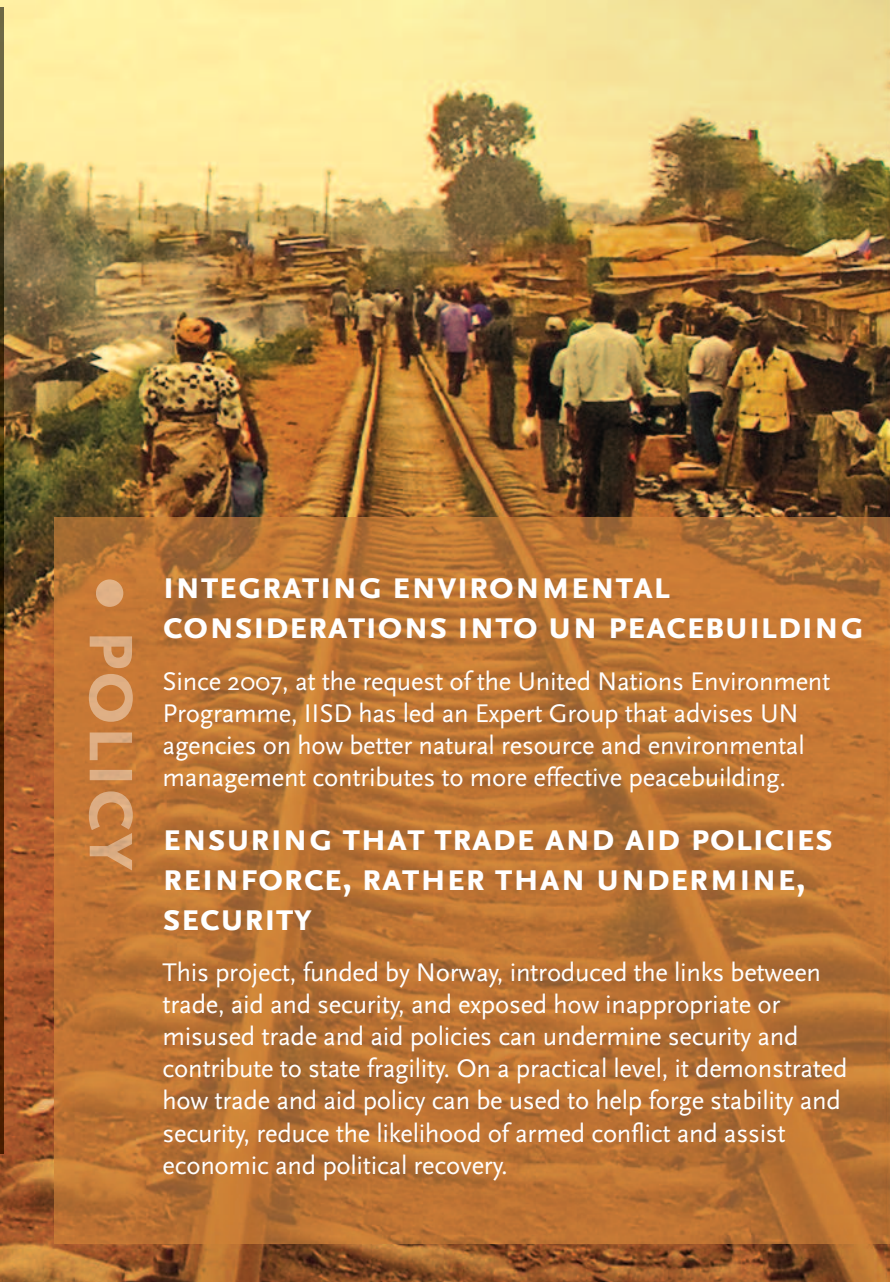
● PRACTICE

CONSERVING THE PEACE: CONFLICT-SENSITIVE CONSERVATION

Many of the world's biodiversity hotspots are located in politically unstable areas. IISD, with the support of the MacArthur Foundation, has developed the *Conflict-Sensitive Conservation Practitioners' Manual*, which provides a decision-making framework to help conservationists understand and address natural resource-based conflict, and integrate this understanding into conservation programs. In so doing, conservationists can avoid exacerbating conflict and maximize opportunities for peacebuilding.

ASSESSING UNEP'S AFGHANISTAN PROGRAMME

Since 2003, UNEP has been working in Afghanistan to establish a Ministry of Environment and build capacity for the protection and rehabilitation of the environment. IISD conducted an assessment of UNEP's Afghanistan Programme and provided recommendations for how UNEP could respond effectively to the extremely challenging, changing context of modern-day Afghanistan.





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The International Institute for Sustainable Development

Established in 1990, IISD is a non-partisan charitable organization specializing in research, analysis and information exchange. Through our offices in Winnipeg, Ottawa, New York and Geneva, IISD engages decision-makers in business, government and non-government organizations and other sectors by creating and implementing policies to benefit the global economy, environment and social well-being. IISD has a diverse team of more than 150 experts located in more than 30 countries, and through our dynamic portfolio of programs and projects, has partnered with over 200 organizations worldwide.

To learn more about IISD's Environment, Conflict and Peacebuilding program, please contact:

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