

An international partnership of the United Nations and the European Union dealing with the interlinkages of sustainable natural resource management and conflict prevention has now received some guidance. The EU and six UN partners want to equip national stakeholders, UN Country Teams and EU Delegations with the skills and tools needed to prevent and mitigate potential conflicts over natural resources. The reason behind this cooperation is that, e.g., the exploitation of high-value natural resources, including oil, gas, minerals and timber has been a key factor in triggering, escalating or sustaining wars around the globe. Also, climate change and environmental degradation are more and more discussed as factors that increase conflict potentials.

Against this backdrop the partnership asked a number of researchers to compile guidance on how to deal with conflicts related to land, the activities of extractives industries and other forms of resources scarcity and how to strengthen capacities for conflict avoidance or, at the least, mitigation. In addition, approaches of capacity development for managing land and natural resources are discussed. As a starting point, the partnership commissioned an inventory to outline what capacities in the UN systems already exist. Apart from a comprehensive review this inventory allows to access relevant material, manuals, tool-kits and a selection of trainings directly. The guidance notes, as the second step, will now be validated during the second phase of the project and updated accordingly. Stakeholders and practitioners are invited to review and comment on these documents until next June.

The partnership is coordinated by the UN Framework Team for Preventive Action and financed by the EU's Instrument for Stability. Apart from the provision of technical assistance it should also help to enhance policy development and programme coordination between key actors at the field level. (Dennis Taenzler)

For more information:

<http://www.unep.org/conflictsanddisasters/Policy/EnvironmentalCooperationforPeacebuilding/UNEUPartnership/tabid/29405/Default.aspx>

The Capacity Inventory:

http://www.adelphi.de/files/uploads/andere/pdf/application/pdf/un_capacity_final.pdf

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About the repercussions of resource scarcities:

http://www.cic.nyu.edu/internationalsecurity/docs/evans_wdrbackground.pdf

"When the water ends - Africa's Climate conflicts" (a video):

http://e360.yale.edu/feature/when_the_water_ends_africas_climate_conflicts/2331/

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Il Centro Documentazione Conflitti Ambientali:

<http://www.cdca.it/>