

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



NATURE FOR PEACE

**NATURE
PLEDGE**

**NATURE FOR DEVELOPMENT
ACTION KITS**



ABOUT THE 'NATURE FOR DEVELOPMENT' ACTION KIT SERIES

This document, “Nature for Peace” is one of a series of “Nature for Development” Action Kits, as part of UNDP’s Nature Pledge. This series includes “Nature for Water Security,” “Nature for Climate Action,” “Nature for Food Security,” “Nature for Prosperity,” “Nature for Disaster Reduction,” and “Nature for Gender Equality.”

This action kit provides UNDP staff with an overview of the many intertwined relationships between nature and sustainable development. It also provides key facts and figures and talking points, and the programming entry points needed to make the case for investing in nature to achieve development outcomes. This kit, which also provides the tools and information needed to learn more and take action, aims to:

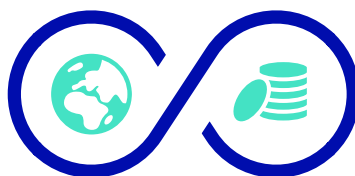
- highlight entry points for implementation of the UNDP Nature Pledge;
- strengthen UNDP policy, advocacy and awareness-raising efforts;
- inform effective national, regional and integrated programming efforts, and support issue-based portfolio approaches in line with national priorities and UNDP’s Moonshots;
- support resource mobilization with traditional and non-traditional funding partners;
- strengthen and forge new partnerships with sister UN agencies, other international development partners, national and local stakeholders in government, the private sector, academia, media and other civil society groups; and
- leverage and strengthen internal UNDP capacities and expertise at all levels.

ABOUT UNDP’S NATURE PLEDGE

The Nature Pledge is UNDP’s commitment to support more than 140 countries in achieving their ambitious goals under the [Global Biodiversity Framework](#) and nature-dependent Sustainable Development Goals. The Nature Pledge focuses on three system shifts essential to put nature at the heart of sustainable development:



VALUE SHIFT



FINANCE AND ECONOMIC SHIFT



POLICY AND PRACTICE SHIFT

A ‘Value Shift’ to transform the value we place on nature and drive changes in people’s behavior so that we place nature at the heart of development and across sectors including governance, economics, finance, health, and conservation.

An ‘Economic and Finance Shift’ to support a system where decision makers value natural capital, alongside financial, human and man-made capital.

A ‘Policy and Practice Shift’ to deliver change at scale on the ground - led by governments, and grounded in partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

The Nature Pledge provides a pathway to transform our global systems by meeting vital targets to protect and restore our planet, eradicate poverty, reduce gender and other inequalities, protect human rights, and accelerate overall progress on nature-dependent sustainable development goals.

NATURE AND PEACE

The world is facing an unprecedented environmental crisis, driven largely by biodiversity loss and climate change. As humanity surpasses critical planetary boundaries, including biodiversity loss, ecosystems that are vital for life and human prosperity are under threat. Over 75% of terrestrial and 40% of marine environments are degraded, leading to drastic declines in wildlife populations, and pushing a million species toward extinction.

These intertwined crises compromise peace and security around the world, as environmental degradation and climate change are increasingly becoming drivers of vulnerability and violent conflict. Loss of biodiversity and ecosystem degradation often threatens nature-dependent livelihoods, increases political instability, and creates a cycle of additional loss and degradation. Poor environmental governance, such as ineffective control of poaching or deforestation, including by organized crime, further exacerbates social instability. Competition for scarce resources such as water and arable land can lead to tensions and violence – 90% of conflicts between 1950 and 2000 took place in countries with biodiversity hotspots, with 80% of those conflicts directly in biodiversity hotspots. Destructive practices such as illegal mining and illegal logging thrive in conflict zones and marginalized areas, further degrading the environment and fueling instability. Environmental degradation not only contributes to conflict but can also result from war and insecurity, as military activities and security operations often cause significant environmental damage, further destabilizing regions and complicating recovery efforts.

Investing in nature as part of a broader development approach is a powerful investment in peace and security at all stages of conflict, including in pre-conflict and post-conflict situations. Healthy ecosystems provide essential resources, including clean water, food, medicines, fuel and energy, which are foundations of social and economic stability. By restoring degraded environments and implementing nature-based solutions, and by investing in sound management of biodiversity and ecosystems, we can prevent resource scarcity that often leads to conflict. Additionally, preserving natural habitats and safeguarding the sources of livelihood can reduce displacement and buffer the impacts of climate change, both of which are key factors in regional and global security. Nature-based solutions also foster cooperation among communities and nations, as shared environmental challenges can unite people in collective efforts to protect and restore their surroundings providing new opportunities for peacebuilding. Thus, prioritizing environmental health not only enhances resilience against vulnerability, but also strengthens the foundation for peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

There are many ways to invest in nature for peace. For example, engaging local communities in environmental conservation and resource management is crucial for enhancing stability and preventing conflict. When communities are actively involved in protecting and managing their natural resources, they are more likely to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility towards these resources. This involvement can lead to more effective and sustainable management practices, as local knowledge and priorities are integrated into conservation efforts. Examples of successful community engagement include community-managed forests in Nepal and marine protected areas in the Philippines, where local stewardship has improved resource management and reduced competition and conflict over resources. By fostering social cohesion and empowering local populations, community-based approaches contribute to long-term peace and stability.

Investments in nature can also provide unique opportunities for cooperations around post-conflict settings and can yield a peace dividend. Our work in Colombia highlights that the restoration of ecosystems, environmental conservation and nature-based solutions can help build trust and repair social fabric, as evidenced by the broader field of environmental peacebuilding. It is important to note that post-conflict environmental assessments are key in identifying environmental risks to human health, livelihoods and security, especially when prioritizing needs in the short and medium term, and mitigating long-term risks. Such efforts have been seen, for instance, in Ukraine with the establishment of the Coordination Centre of Environmental Damage Assessment.

Moreover, investing in nature offers significant economic benefits for building resilience. Healthy ecosystems underpin vital economic activities such as agriculture, tourism, and fisheries, which are crucial not only for economic development but also for employment generation and sustainable livelihoods. Sustainable management of these resources helps prevent economic hardships that can lead to social unrest and conflict. For instance, the restoration of wetlands has been shown to enhance agricultural productivity and reduce flood damage, providing economic security for communities.

THE BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

Implementing nature-based solutions offers profound benefits for peace and security by addressing the root causes of conflict, fostering stability and more responsive social contracts. By restoring and protecting ecosystems, we enhance resource availability, reduce the likelihood of resource-related conflicts, and build community resilience. Nature-based approaches also promote economic stability through sustainable resource management, creating jobs and boosting local economies. Additionally, engaging communities in environmental stewardship fosters cooperation and trust, which are essential for sustaining peace. Overall, investing in nature not only safeguards our environment, but also strengthens societal foundations, contributing to a more stable and secure world.



Investing in ecosystem restoration on **350 million hectares** would create **nearly 400 million jobs** through eco-tourism, agriculture, forestry and fisheries – and could generate and could thereby reduce the economic stressors that often lead to conflict.



Practices such as agroforestry and sustainable, regenerative agriculture improve soil health and crop yields – **agroforestry can increase crop yields by up to 56%** - reducing food shortages and associated conflicts.



Nature-based solutions improve health by providing clean air and water, and **reducing stress that exacerbate conflict**. Urban green spaces have been shown to significantly contribute to social stability and cohesion.



Actions on nature often involve women in decision-making processes. In fact, women's participation in community-based environmental management has been linked to **longer lasting peace, better climate resilience and sustainability**.



Nature-based solutions for water security improve water quality and availability – by **as much as 60%** – reducing competition for water resources, and preventing water-related conflicts, at an average cost of just \$2 per person annually.



Nature-based solutions promote sustainable livelihoods and green jobs. Nature-positive investments **could generate 395 million** new jobs by 2030, reducing poverty and the risk of conflict in vulnerable areas.



Nature-based solutions foster cross-border cooperation on environmental management, enhancing regional stability. Such cooperation has been shown to **reduce regional tensions by up to 50%** in some regions.



Communities practicing sustainable resource management, such as regenerative agriculture or agroforestry, **have up to 20% higher resilience to conflicts** driven by land and water scarcity.



Integrating natural resource management into peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict regions has been shown to lower the chances of conflict recurrence **by up to 35%**. This demonstrates the critical role of environmental governance in sustaining peace and preventing resource-driven tensions

Photo credits: Row one: UNDP Kenya, Zaimis Olmos UNDP, ; Row two: UNDP Sri Lanka, UNDP, Stéphane Bellerose UNDP in Mauritius and Seychelles; Row three: UN Photo Sylvain Liechti Centro Sabiá, Brazil, UN Photo Sylvain Liechti

TRENDS IN NATURE AND PEACE

This section summarizes various trends at the intersection of nature, peace and security.

CURRENT TRENDS

Conflict over Natural Resources: Over the past 60 years, at least 40% of all intrastate conflicts have had a link to natural resources, such as land, water, minerals, gas or oil. Conflicts over natural resources are twice as likely to relapse into violence within five years compared to other conflicts.

Displacement from Environmental Degradation: Environmental degradation, such as desertification and sea-level rise, displaces an average of 21.5 million people annually, leading to increased tensions and conflict.

Impact of Deforestation on Peace: Deforestation and land degradation can be drivers of displacement and conflict. In countries experiencing high rates of deforestation, there is a higher likelihood of internal conflict and violence over access to land and resources.

Resource Depletion and Armed Conflict: Research indicates that even a slight rise in temperature in tropical regions is associated with a 10-20% increase in the risk of armed conflict. This is linked to resource scarcity and competition, especially in areas reliant on agriculture.

Water Scarcity and Conflict: By 2050, more than half of the world's population will live in water-stressed areas, heightening the potential for conflict over access to clean water. In recent years, water-related conflicts have surged globally, from 20 in 2001 to nearly 350 in 2023.

Conservation Efforts Reducing Violence: In regions where local communities engage in conservation efforts, there is often a decrease in local violence. For example, community-led conservation in Nepal has been linked to a 50% reduction in violent conflicts over natural resources.

Environmental Crime and Conflict Financing: Environmental crime, including illegal wildlife trade, logging, and mining, generates approximately \$91 to \$258 billion annually. These funds often fuel conflicts, as non-state armed groups and criminal networks use these resources to finance their activities.

Climate Change and biodiversity loss as threat multipliers: Climate change and biodiversity loss are considered "threat multipliers," meaning together they exacerbate existing social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities, increasing the risk of conflict and instability in vulnerable regions.

Environmental Peacebuilding: In post-conflict settings, managing natural resources sustainably can contribute to peacebuilding and stability. For instance, well-managed forest and agricultural resources have been shown to reduce the likelihood of relapse into conflict by providing jobs and livelihoods, fostering cooperation among communities.

EMERGING TRENDS

Integration of environmental factors into national security strategies: Increasingly, national and international security strategies are incorporating environmental factors,

recognizing that climate change and environmental degradation are significant drivers of conflict. This trend includes the development of comprehensive risk assessments that consider environmental impacts on stability and security.

Strengthened role of nature-based solutions in conflict prevention and resolution: There is a growing emphasis on using nature-based solutions to address environmental challenges as a means to prevent and resolve conflict. This includes investing in ecosystem restoration, sustainable land management, and water conservation to mitigate resource-related tensions and enhance community resilience.

Renewed attention on community-led environmental initiatives:

Empowering local communities to lead environmental conservation and management is becoming a key strategy for promoting peace and stability, as community-led initiatives often result in more sustainable resource use, reduced conflict over resources, and stronger social cohesion.

Use of technology for environmental monitoring and conflict prevention: Advances in technology, such as satellite imagery and remote sensing, are being used to monitor environmental changes and predict potential natural resource

related conflicts. These technologies provide valuable data for early warning systems and support more effective responses to environmental threats.

Incorporation of environmental justice into peace processes: Environmental justice issues, such as the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on marginalized communities, are becoming increasingly important in peace processes.

Ensuring equitable access to resources and environmental benefits is seen as essential for achieving long-term peace and security.

Rise of “Green Diplomacy”:

Green diplomacy, which focuses on environmental issues in international relations and negotiations, is emerging as a significant trend. This approach involves using environmental cooperation as a tool for fostering international dialogue and building trust between nations.

KEY MESSAGES ON NATURE FOR PEACE

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS ENHANCE STABILITY AND SECURITY

Investing in nature-based solutions, such as restoring ecosystems and conserving natural resources, plays a crucial role in fostering stability and security. By addressing environmental degradation and resource scarcity, these solutions can reduce conflict over resources, enhance community resilience, and support sustainable development, contributing to lasting peace.

BIODIVERSITY LOSS, COUPLED WITH CLIMATE CHANGE, ACTS AS A 'THREAT MULTIPLIER' FOR CONFLICT

Biodiversity loss, combined with climate change, acts as a "threat multiplier," exacerbating existing security challenges and conflicts. The impacts of extreme weather events, sea-level rise, and shifting resource availability can increase vulnerabilities and drive conflict, and reduce available natural resources, making biodiversity action, along with climate resilience and adaptation, critical for maintaining peace and security.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN NATURE AND PEACEBUILDING ARE OFTEN UNDEREXPLORED

Despite the clear benefits, the role of nature in peacebuilding is frequently overlooked. There is a need for greater recognition and integration of environmental considerations into peacebuilding strategies to fully leverage nature's potential for fostering stability and resolving conflicts. Similarly, conflict-sensitive environmental and climate strategies can promote both nature and peace objectives by increasing understanding of how they interact both positively and negatively with conflict and climate dynamics.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION ENHANCES ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEBUILDING

Global and regional cooperation on environmental issues is crucial for peacebuilding. Collaborative efforts, such as shared conservation projects and cross-border resource management, can help address transboundary environmental challenges and contribute to regional stability.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION CAN EXACERBATE CONFLICT

Degradation of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity can exacerbate the existing social, economic, and political vulnerabilities that make conflict and violence more likely. For example, increased competition for dwindling resources, such as water and arable land, can heighten tensions, fuel conflicts, and destabilize regions, underscoring the need for effective environmental management to mitigate these risks.

ECOSYSTEM HEALTH IS INTEGRAL TO CONFLICT PREVENTION

Healthy ecosystems contribute to conflict prevention by ensuring resource availability and stability. Effective management of natural resources, such as forests and wetlands, helps to reduce competition and conflict, thereby promoting peaceful coexistence and sustainable development.

COMMUNITY-LED ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES STRENGTHEN SOCIAL COHESION

Community-driven efforts to manage and protect natural resources can enhance social cohesion and trust among local populations. By involving communities in environmental conservation and management, these initiatives support peaceful relations and provide a foundation for conflict resolution.

RESOURCES

This section highlights recent publications and tools on the linkages between nature peace and security, including from both UNDP and partners.

TECHNICAL PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

Women and Natural Resources: Unlocking the Peacebuilding Potential



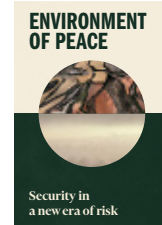
This [74-page report](#) by four UN agencies explores the discrepancies between the foundational role of women in natural resource management, and their general absence in peacebuilding efforts around natural resources.

Nature in Action for Peace



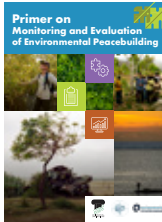
This [18-page report](#) by PAX provides guidance and examples of using nature-based solutions to accelerate peace and security, and to avoid national and regional conflicts.

Environment of Peace: Security in a New Era of Risk



This [98-page report](#) by SIPRI surveys the evolving risk landscape of actions that can create peacebuilding solutions, including the peacebuilding potential of environmental measures such as ecosystem restoration.

Primer on Monitoring and Evaluation of Environmental Peacebuilding



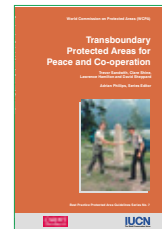
This [42-page resource](#) from the Environmental Peacebuilding association provides a background on key concepts related to the monitoring and evaluation of environmental peacebuilding.

Environmental Justice: Securing our Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment



This [36-page document](#) by UNDP describes strategies for engaging in environmental justice that integrates the rule of law, human rights, peace, governance and nature. solutions in NDCs, through the Nature 4 Climate Coalition.

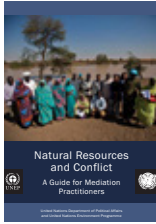
Transboundary Protected Areas for Peace and Co-operation



This [117-page guide](#) by IUCN highlights concrete steps and guidelines for ensuring that transboundary protected areas lead to durable peace and co-operation.

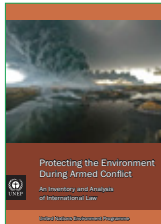
A DEEPER DIVE

Natural Resources and Conflict: A Guide for Mediation Practitioners



This [106-page guide](#) by UNEP provides practitioners with concrete steps to implement mediation measures for preventing and mitigating natural resources conflict.

Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict



This [82-page guide](#) by UNEP highlights practical steps to protect the environment during times of armed conflict, and covers issues related to humanitarian law, criminal law and human rights, among others.

Governance for Peace over Natural Resources



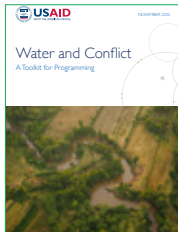
This [92-page case study](#) by UNEP highlights transitions in environmental governance across Africa as a tool for environmental peacebuilding and natural resource management in Sudan.

Conflict-Sensitive Conservation



This [open-access book](#) by Environmental Peacebuilding Association presents evidence that highlights the importance of considering fragile and conflict-affected areas in conservation work.

Water and Conflict: A Toolkit for Programming



This [50-page publication](#) by USAID provides practical guidance for understanding connections between water management and conflict, and for incorporating conflict integration into water security.

Breaking the Environmental Crimes-Finance Connection



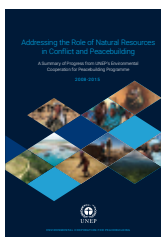
This [report](#) by Nature Finance identifies strategies to break the linkages between environmental crimes and legitimate financial investments.

Environmental and Climate Justice, and the Dynamics of Violence in Latin America



This [25-page report](#) summarizes perspectives from a regional working group on climate change, the environment, peace and security in Latin America.

Addressing the Role of Natural Resources in Conflict and Peacebuilding



This [52-page report](#) from UNEP summarizes progress and lessons learned from their Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding Programme

Valorizing Natural Capital in Conflict and Climate Crisis



This [2-page article](#) highlights the impacts of war on biodiversity and calls for a revalorization of natural capital in conflict-affected and fragile contexts.

TOOLS AND TOOL KITS

This section highlights recent publications, tools, videos, blogs, photo essays and data on the linkages between nature and water security, including from both UNDP and partners.

Nature-based solutions for Peace and Security



This catalog of “[Nature-based Solutions for Peace and Security](#)” developed by PAX and UNEP aims to inspire decision-makers and program managers when designing climate and environmental security interventions.

Toolkit on Monitoring and Evaluation of Environmental



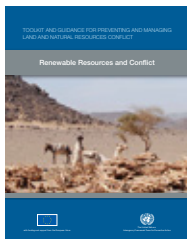
This [interactive toolkit](#) by the Environmental Peacebuilding Association equips practitioners with tools and approaches for monitoring and evaluating environmental peacebuilding, and provides a summary of additional learning resources.

STRATA - Geospatial insights for a changing world



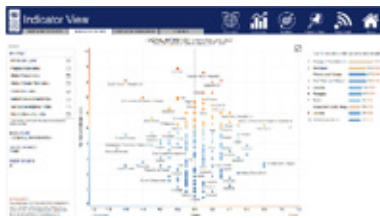
This [spatial tool](#) by UNEP includes data layers specific to conflict, including agricultural stress, coastal inundation, deforestation, degraded land, and flood risk, among others. It also includes specific use-cases of using spatial data for environmental peacebuilding.

Toolkit and Guidance for Preventing and Managing Land and Natural Resources Conflict



This [120-page toolkit](#) focuses on building the capacity of national stakeholders, the UN system, and the EU to prevent land and natural resources from contributing to violent conflict.

Crisis Risk Dashboard



This UNDP-supported [Crisis Risk Dashboard](#) is a data analytics and visualization platform developed by UNDP's Crisis Bureau. The CRD's primary function is to monitor and analyze multidimensional contextual risks

From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment



This [50-page report](#) from UNEP highlights concrete steps that the UN Peacebuilding Commission can take to integrate environment and natural resource issues into peacebuilding efforts

COMMUNICATIONS – BLOGS AND PHOTO ESSAYS

Blogs

Our nature blogs are written by global experts covering field stories, interviews and insights from around the world examining the ways in which we can meaningfully put nature at the heart of development. For all of our nature blogs, you can find them [here](#).

- UNDP Blog: Nature for Water, Nature, Food and Peace. This blog explores how nature can be one of our most powerful solutions when it comes to tackling systemic risks to society, including maintaining peace and security. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/blog/nature-water-nature-food-nature-peace>.
- UNDP Blog: War and Peace....and Nature. This blog explores how nature and peace are interconnected, and how health ecosystems are essential for maintaining peace. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/blog/war-and-peace-and-nature>.
- UNDP Blog: No war, no peace, and a changing climate: four things you need to know about Climate, Peace and Security in Latin America and the Caribbean. This blog explores the interconnections between climate, nature, peace and security in Latin America and the Caribbean. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/latin-america/blog/no-war-no-peace-and-changing-climate-four-things-you-need-know-about-climate-peace-and-security-latin-america-and-caribbean>.
- UNDP Blog: Making Peace with Land and Ocean: Generation Restoration in action across our Blue Pacific. This blog draws linkages between environmental security and community security in the Pacific. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/pacific/blog/making-peace-land-and-ocean-generation-restoration-action-across-our-blue-pacific>.
- UNDP Blog: The critical connection between human rights and our natural world. This blog highlights the importance of partnerships, including with businesses, to maintain human rights, ensure sustainable supply chains and prevent environmental degradation. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/blog/critical-connection-between-human-rights-and-our-natural-world>.
- Partner Blog (IUCN): Environmental Peacebuilding for a Planet on the Move. This blog highlights the importance of environmental integrity and peacebuilding efforts, including the importance of multi-stakeholder cooperation. Available at: <https://iucn.org/news/commission-environmental-economic-and-social-policy/202205/environmental-peacebuilding-a-planet-move>.

Stories and photo essays

- When Nature Thrives: A photo essay about a community in Southern Ethiopia that restores a forest and strengthens resilient livelihoods, in an area with high displacement and conflict. Ecosystem restoration was a pathway to peace, security and stability. Available at: <https://undp-nature.exposure.co/the-lost-forest>.
- A Race Against Time: A photo essay about combatting illegal and unsustainable trade in endangered species in Indonesia, a practice that was undermining community stability and security. Biodiversity protection led to local sustainable jobs, and helped reduce crime. Available at: <https://undp-nature.exposure.co/a-race-against-time>.
- One Step Ahead: A photo essay about how ever-changing concealment methods for illegal wildlife products helps to keep law enforcement officials one step ahead of illegal wildlife crimes, an important pre-condition for peace and security. Available at: <https://undp-nature.exposure.co/one-step-ahead>.
- Combatting the Illegal Wildlife Trade: A photo essay about disrupting maritime trafficking of wildlife through African seaports by strengthening support to a transparent supply chain and strengthening defenses against wildlife trafficking. Available at: <https://undp-nature.exposure.co/combating-the-illegal-wildlife-trade>.
- Wave of Solidarity: A photo essay about countries working together across Africa to fight the illegal wildlife trade, thereby increasing regional peace and cooperation and strengthening national security. Available at: <https://undp-nature.exposure.co/wave-of-solidarity>.

EXAMPLES OF UNDP'S WORK ON NATURE, PEACE AND SECURITY

UNDP has a growing portfolio of projects that work in an integrated manner to tackle issues related to environmental degradation and restoration, sustainable livelihoods, water security and peace.

SUSTAINABLE AMAZON FOR PEACE

UNDP's [Sustainable Amazon for Peace](#), a GEF-funded project, is working to strengthen biodiversity conservation and peace-building efforts in the Colombian Amazon by improving the management of 131,000 hectares, protecting 3,000 hectares of forest, and restoring 400 hectares. The project has resulted in over 200 conservation agreements, contributing to a 31% reduction in forest loss and to the protection of jaguar corridors. The project has also boosted sustainable production systems, increasing income from non-timber forest products by 30%, while benefiting 4,000 people, including conflict victims.



PREVENTING CLIMATE-INDUCED CONFLICTS THROUGH EMPOWERED WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

In Papua New Guinea, environmental hazards and climate change are leading drivers of food, health and economic insecurity and internal migration, which could lead to social unrest and intercommunal conflicts. [The project is jointly implemented by UNDP and IOM and funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund](#) with the aim of empowering women leadership in climate-induced conflict prevention to reduce the risk exposure of vulnerable local communities. The project supports women leaders to be conflict-sensitive community resilience activists through training, sharing best practices, strengthening inclusive peacebuilder networks, and advancing gender equality.



ENVIRONMENTAL COMPACT FOR UKRAINE

A mechanism for conflict-related environmental impact monitoring was put in place in Ukraine, given the large-scale environmental damage of its war. The plan outlined by the Environmental Compact for Ukraine [will help post-war restoration to integrate green technologies and environmental solutions](#) as well as to conduct assessments to inform the longer-term responses to environmental damage. The project expects to support government authorities in drawing up the necessary legislation for recording evidence of environmental damage caused by the ongoing conflicts, and to strengthen environmental legal frameworks and institutional capacities.



INVESTING IN NATURE, INVESTING IN PEACE

The UNDP co-hosted [Nature Investment Facility](#) has launched its first landscape program in Burundi to create the conditions for green economic transformation around Kibira National Park, and its rainforests historically used by regional armed groups. This involves [improving the security and social cohesion of communities](#), including Indigenous Peoples such as the Batwa, and focusing on strengthening female participation in forest management. At the same time, the program facilitates the sustainable use of forest ecosystem services through contracts for payment for ecosystem services as well as bankable, nature-based solutions that leverage private sector investment.



CONSERVING MALI'S ELEPHANTS: BRIDGING COMMUNITIES AND NATURE FOR PEACE



In the Gourma region of Mali, nature acts as a neutral space that unites conflicting parties, exemplified by the majestic elephants whose migratory routes connect diverse communities. This shared environmental concern fosters cooperation and builds peace, as local communities recognize the importance of protecting both their livelihoods and the elephants.

The UNDP-led Mali Elephant Conservation Project exemplifies this spirit of collaboration, aiming to safeguard the endangered Gourma elephants while enhancing local livelihoods. By tackling illegal wildlife trade, human-elephant conflict, and unsustainable resource management, the project seeks to alleviate tensions arising from habitat encroachment and resource competition. Approximately 12% of West African elephants reside in this region, making these efforts critical for fostering coexistence between humans and wildlife.

In partnership with the Ministry of Environment, the project focuses on four key components: strengthening legal frameworks to combat wildlife crime, securing migration routes, promoting community-based natural resource management, and ensuring gender mainstreaming and knowledge sharing. By empowering local communities and enhancing their capacity for sustainable resource management, the project not only protects the Gourma elephants but also restores ecosystems and promotes lasting peace in a historically unstable region.

Recognized with the Equator Prize in 2017, the [Mali Elephant Project](#) unites ethnic groups to protect over 300 endangered African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*). The MEP has successfully reduced poaching across 4 million hectares and improved social cohesion among diverse communities, contributing to peacebuilding by providing alternatives to extremist activities. Community-driven initiatives include the formation of resource management committees, support for women's groups engaged in sustainable harvesting, and youth involvement as 'eco-guardians' for elephant monitoring.

Through collaborative efforts, communities have established rules for natural resource use, designated protected forests, and created pasture reserves while ensuring shared access to seasonal water sources for people, livestock, and elephants. The Mali Elephant Conservation Project demonstrates how conservation can be a catalyst for community resilience, environmental sustainability, and lasting peace.

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