40% to 60% of internal conflicts over the past 60 years have been linked to natural resources

From 1989 to 2010, at least 18 conflicts were financed by revenues from natural resources

60% to 80% of livelihoods in conflict-affected countries depend on natural resources

Resource-related conflicts are more likely to relapse, and do so twice as quickly

50% to 80% of a post-conflict country’s export revenues comes from natural resources

50% to 80% of ex-combatants return to agriculture—requiring access to secure land tenure

In the aftermath of conflict, one of the few assets held by post-conflict countries are natural resources. How governments use these assets can fundamentally alter the course of peacebuilding and recovery. The challenge lies in converting the revenues derived from natural resource extraction into livelihoods, jobs, infrastructure, and the basic services needed to consolidate and sustain peace. Effective and equitable management of natural resources has the potential to transform post-conflict countries by providing tangible peace dividends that can propel the peace process forward while also kick-starting economic growth.

But this transformation process must be done without triggering new conflicts, fuelling corruption, or impacting the environment. While few post-conflict governments have managed to overcome all of these perils, there are many principles and examples of good practice that can improve peacebuilding. The “resource curse” can be overcome if these lessons are taken into account.

To document how natural resources have contributed to peacebuilding and prosperity, while avoiding the pitfalls and perils, a global research programme was initiated in 2007 by McGill University, and the University of Tokyo. The programme collected 150 case studies from 60 conflict-affected countries written by 225 international experts. These lessons are now being published in a series of seven books and companion policy briefs.

The books identify ways in which good governance and effective resource management can enhance post-conflict peacebuilding and reverse the “resource curse”—in short, how to capitalize on the promise and avoid the peril.

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See our TED Talk:

TEDx Geneva

www.unep.org/ecp/tedtalk

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High-Value Natural Resources and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

In post-conflict countries, economic recovery and the achievement of a strong and lasting peace are the primary goals. High-value natural resources, such as timber, diamonds, gold, and oil, offer governments the means to reach these goals, but poor governance of these resources too often turns them from a blessing into a curse. Forty-one authors analyze the ways in which wealth sharing, transparency, and other elements of good governance of high-value resources can support the economy, livelihoods, and revenue generation.

Assessing and Restoring Natural Resources in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

Repairing infrastructure, restoring basic services, and cleaning up damage left in the wake of armed conflict are the first order of business for post-conflict states. Doing so provides a basis for badly needed economic recovery and improved livelihoods, yet the environmental dimensions of these activities are often neglected. Thirty-five authors examine post-conflict environmental assessment, remediation, restoration, and reconstruction, as well as the role of humanitarian assistance in post-conflict peacebuilding.

Land and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

In many conflict-affected countries, land is one of the most valued resources providing a means for advancing livelihoods, food security, and economic development. It is also important to people's identity. Yet property rights and land tenure are often contested, and conflict only increases the complexity of land governance. Twenty-five authors discuss the division of land during peace negotiations, resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons, land management, and the legal aspects of land disputes.

Water and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

While essential to health, livelihoods, and life, clean water is all too scarce in post-conflict environments. Broken infrastructure can leave whole regions without access to clean water, without which living standards and public health quickly decrease. Thirty-five authors analyze the importance of and approaches for managing water for basic services and human security, livelihoods, and peace processes and cooperation, as well as legal frameworks for allocating water resources.

Livelihoods, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

In most conflict-affected countries, natural resources such as charcoal, pasturage, wildlife, and fisheries are important for livelihoods and culture. However, armed conflict often depletes these resources and erodes the capacity of institutions to govern them. Thirty-four authors examine strategies in managing natural resources to support the restoration of livelihoods in post-conflict environments.

Governance, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

Natural resource management is crucial to rebuilding governance and the rule of law, combating corruption, improving transparency and accountability, engaging disenfranchised populations, and building confidence after conflict. Good governance is also essential for ensuring that natural resource management can meet immediate needs for post-conflict stability and development, while simultaneously laying the foundation for a sustainable peace. More than 70 authors examine experiences in improving governance of natural resources after conflict.

Livelihoods, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: The Promise and The Peril

What does the future hold for post-conflict natural resource management? Will the use, abuse, and depletion of resources fuel future conflict? Or will increased political will, certification mechanisms, and good governance come together to reverse the resource curse? Synthesizing approaches and lessons across the entire series, this book evaluates core issues and presents an eye into the future, revealing both the promise and the peril of post-conflict natural resource management.

Policy Briefs

Policy Briefs distil the key findings and ideas from the books into a series of targeted 6- to 8-page papers that examine specific themes of natural resource management and post-conflict peacebuilding.