



New Book Highlights Importance of High-Value Natural Resources to Peacebuilding in War-Torn Nations

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– The overriding importance of political will to rebuild sound institutions, promote accountability and anti-corruption efforts, better invest revenues, and develop natural resource management strategies which address the grievances that could lead to further conflict is among the findings in the first book in a major international series on post-conflict peacebuilding and natural resource management.

The Environmental Law Institute (ELI), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the University of Tokyo, and McGill University have today announced the publication of their first book in a seven-volume series on post-conflict peacebuilding and natural resource management: *High-Value Natural Resources and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*. This flagship book addresses the key challenges faced by post-conflict countries in transforming natural resources in ways that contribute to economic recovery and reconciliation, jobs, and sustain livelihoods, and while not creating new grievances or major environmental degradation.

An economy that can create immediate peace dividends based in part on high-value natural resources may be more robust and resistant to conflict relapse. On the other hand, an economy that perpetuates economic inequality and elite control of key resources can undermine confidence and complicate the task of building peace. “Certain countries are blessed with valuable natural resources that can contribute to grievances and conflict,” says ELI’s president John Cruden, “However, in post-conflict situations, there lies a unique opportunity to thoughtfully manage high-value natural resources to support economic development, livelihoods, good governance, and ultimately peace and stability.”

Edited by Päivi Lujala and Siri Aas Rustad and published with the assistance of the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), this book assesses practices from around the world in using high-value natural resources such as oil, diamonds, gold, and timber in consolidating peace. The landmark book includes a foreword by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the president of Liberia and 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, who inherited the task of transitioning the country from war to peace. Sirleaf states that peace brings promise and with it high expectations, especially in a country with abundant natural resources. “We had to turn this natural resource ‘curse’ into a blessing,” she notes, “But where to start?”

Lujala and Rustad—and the 39 contributing authors—attempt to answer that question. The task of achieving long-term peace is difficult in any conflict-affected country, and especially so in countries that have high-value natural resources. The 30 case studies and other analyses in the book, drawn from more than 18 countries from Angola to Nepal, and from Afghanistan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo examine how such high-value resources could be better managed in post-conflict settings.

The book gives insight to a variety of natural resource management strategies, addressing the different steps of the natural resource value-chain, from extraction to distribution and spending revenues. Instead of attempting to provide a single recipe for the management of high-value natural resources, this book highlights a range of policy options and management tools. There are four areas where international support can be particularly fruitful. These include: (1) helping post-conflict countries secure better contracts with companies extracting natural resources; (2) increasing the transparency of contracts, payments, and decision making; (3) supporting the monitoring of companies that are extracting natural resources; and (4) encouraging strategic planning for and accountability in using the revenues from natural resources to provide immediate peace dividends to war-torn populations and invest in infrastructure, health, education, and economic diversification.

The book is the first publication of a four-year research project on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Natural Resource Management, established by the ELI and UNEP in 2008. The series documents and analyzes post-conflict natural resource management successes, failures, and ongoing efforts in more than 55 conflict-affected countries.

United Nations Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner, said the research effort answers an important call by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon for a greater focus on the links between natural resources, conflict, and peacebuilding. “This project is the largest undertaking of its kind and will make significant contributions toward improving post-conflict resource management through sharing lessons learned and best practices,” Mr. Steiner said. “It is UNEP’s hope this research will ultimately help transform the resource economies of post-conflict nations from corruption and rent seeking into ‘green’ economies that can lead nations on a path to peace, recovery and development on an environmentally sustainable basis,” the UNEP Executive Director said.

Providing insight on the management process, the book aims to benefit national and local governments, extractive industries, civil society organizations, and the international community. It also provides invaluable lessons for the UN’s peace and security institutions, including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the UN Peacebuilding Commission. It establishes a platform for global dialogue on the role of high-value natural resources in creating and maintaining peace. Kristian Berg Harpviken, PRIO director, observes that earlier work shows that high-value natural resources are linked to political and economic problems, as well as conflict: “The so-called ‘resource trap’ is a large challenge to many countries rich in natural resources,” added Harpviken. “This book provides important

insights on how to break cycles of mismanagement and violence, so that high-value natural resources can be harnessed for peaceful development.”

The four-year project will yield more than 150 peer-reviewed case studies and analyses by 230 scholars, practitioners, and decision makers from 50 countries. These case studies and analyses are being assembled into a set of six edited books—published by Earthscan—addressing: (1) high-value natural resources; (2) land; (3) water; (4) resources for livelihoods; (5) assessment and restoration of natural resources; and (6) governance. In their diversity and number, the books will represent the most significant collection to date of experiences, analyses, and lessons in managing natural resources to support post-conflict peacebuilding. The project is also producing an overarching book, published by Cambridge University Press (2012): *Post-conflict peacebuilding and natural resources: The promise and the peril*. To order the book, see www.taylorandfrancis.com/books/details/9781849712309/.

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