



# Women and Natural Resources

## Unlocking the Peacebuilding Potential



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office and United Nations Development Programme

## About this report

This report focuses on the relationship between women and natural resources in conflict-affected settings, and discusses how the management of natural resources can be used to enhance women's engagement and empowerment in peacebuilding processes. Part I of the report examines the relationship between women and natural resources in peacebuilding contexts, reviewing key issues across three main categories of resources: land, renewable and extractive resources. Part II discusses entry points for peacebuilding practitioners to address risks and opportunities related to women and natural resource management, focusing on political participation, protection and economic empowerment.

This report was developed by a dedicated team comprised of UNEP, UN Women, UNDP and PBSO, whose members contributed critical guidance and expertise to the project. Silja Halle of UNEP served as the team coordinator and led the report development process. The report was authored jointly by Adrienne Stork, Cassidy Travis and Silja Halle of UNEP. David Jensen provided guidance and inputs on conflict and natural resources linkages. Sarah Douglas, Tracy Raczek and Anne-Marie Goetz of UN Women offered their expertise on gender, peace and security linkages, while Henk-Jan Brinkman, Gérald Pachoud and Cécile Mazzacurati of PBSO provided key support and guidance on peacebuilding aspects. Leontine Specker, Glauca Boyer and Nika Saeedi of UNDP provided wide-ranging expertise on livelihoods and economic revitalization, as well as gender and peacebuilding dimensions. UNDP also contributed a number of case studies and was instrumental in linking the drafting team to field practitioners through its extensive network.

In addition to the report development team, the report benefited from the inputs and contributions of some 45 experts and field practitioners, who shared their knowledge and expertise through interviews as well as reviews of successive drafts. An extensive peer review process involving more than 20 leading experts in the fields of gender, natural resources and peacebuilding from the UN, international and national NGOs and academic institutions was conducted as well. A comprehensive list of reviewers and contributors is provided in Annex 3.

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United Nations Environment Programme  
P.O. Box 30552, Nairobi, KENYA  
Tel.: +254 (0)20 762 1234  
Fax: +254 (0)20 762 3927  
Email: [unep@unep.org](mailto:unep@unep.org)  
Web: <http://www.unep.org>

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality  
and the Empowerment of Women  
220 East 42nd Street  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
Tel.: +1 646 781 4400  
Web: <http://www.unwomen.org>

United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office  
United Nations, 30th floor  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
Tel.: +1 212 963 0936  
Email: [brinkman@un.org](mailto:brinkman@un.org)  
Web: <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso>

United Nations Development Programme  
One United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
Tel.: +1 (212) 906 5000  
Email: [publications.queries@undp.org](mailto:publications.queries@undp.org)  
Web: <http://www.undp.org>

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Series editors: David Jensen and Silja Halle  
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## Foreword

Around the world, over half a million people die violently every year – more than one per minute. Inequality in access and benefit-sharing from natural resources is a major driver of conflict. As the global population continues to rise and the demand for resources continues to grow, there is significant potential for violent conflict to intensify in coming decades. In addition, climate change is exacerbating these risks and posing new threats to men, women, boys and girls in many parts of the world.

As primary managers and users of natural resources in many conflict-affected contexts, women have a key role to play in building peace. However, they remain largely excluded from owning land, benefiting from resource wealth or participating in decision-making about resource management. Excluding women is clearly a missed opportunity. Indeed, peace and development will only be achieved when both men and women in conflict-affected and fragile societies access and benefit from natural resources in an equitable and sustainable way.

As countries, regional groups and the international community work to define a new framework for development beyond 2015, it is clear that new approaches to international assistance, conflict prevention and peacebuilding are needed to ensure that the most vulnerable are not left out.

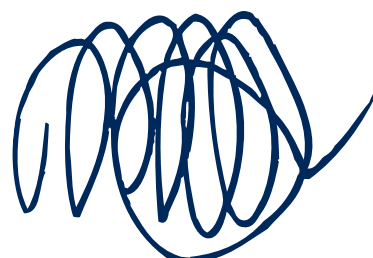
This joint policy report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equity and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) analyzes how women's empowerment and the sustainable use of natural resources can be pursued together to help build lasting peace. Written for policy-makers and practitioners, it aims to contribute to a broader discussion about development challenges in peacebuilding contexts.

Thirteen years after the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), investment in women as agents of change in post-conflict recovery remains inadequate. With this report, UNEP, UN Women, UNDP and PBSO invite the international community, national governments and civil society to close this critical gap. We must ensure that peacebuilding efforts fully include women, especially when it comes to managing natural resources.



**Achim Steiner**

Under-Secretary-General  
Executive Director  
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)



**Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka**

Under-Secretary-General  
Executive Director  
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality  
and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)



**Judy Cheng-Hopkins**

Assistant Secretary-General for  
Peacebuilding Support  
United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)



**Jordan Ryan**

Assistant Secretary-General  
Director  
Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery  
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

# Acronyms

AFEB	Association Femmes et Environnement au Burundi
AMIS	African Union Mission in Sudan
ANMUCIC	National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women of Colombia
ASM	Artisanal and small-scale mining
BRA	Bougainville Revolutionary Army
CFMB	Community forestry management body
CRL	Community Rights Law
CSO	Civil society organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EU	European Union
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FLEGT	EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Initiative
GAM	Free Aceh Movement
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IDP	Internally displaced person
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NTFP	Non-timber forest product
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBSO	United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RCM	Regional Certification Mechanism
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SME	Small and medium enterprise
TNI	Indonesian National Army
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	United Nations-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women (now part of UN Women)
UNIRP	United Nations Interagency Rehabilitation Programme
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
US	United States of America



# Executive summary

Women's diverse experiences in times of conflict have powerful implications for peacebuilding. Their capacity to recover from conflict and contribute to peace is influenced by their role in the conflict, whether directly engaged in armed groups, displaced, or forced to take on additional responsibilities to sustain their livelihoods and care for dependents. In spite of efforts by the international community to recognize and better address these multiple roles through agreements such as United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the dominant perception of women as passive victims in conflict settings continues to constrain their ability to formally engage in political, economic and social recovery, and thereby contribute to better peacebuilding.

One of the unexplored entry points for strengthening women's contributions to peacebuilding relates to the ways in which they use, manage, make decisions on and benefit from natural resources. Coupled with shifting gender norms in conflict-affected settings, women's roles in natural resource management provide significant opportunities to enhance their participation in decision-making at all levels, and to enable them to engage more productively in economic revitalization activities.

As the primary providers of water, food and energy at the household and community levels, women in rural settings are often highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, and are therefore particularly susceptible to changes in the availability and quality of these resources during and after conflict. In particular, lack of access to land – which underpins rights to all other natural resources and is a key asset for securing productive inputs – can force them into increasingly vulnerable situations and expose them to higher levels of physical and livelihood risk, with trickle-down impacts on community welfare. The structural discrimination that women face regarding resource rights and access also limits their political participation and economic productivity.

At the same time, conflict often leads both women and men to adopt coping strategies that challenge traditional gender norms. To meet the needs of their households and compensate for loss of revenue usually provided by male family members, women may assume new natural resource management roles, either by taking up alternative income-generating activities or by moving

into traditionally male sectors. In the aftermath of conflict, capitalizing on these shifting roles can contribute to breaking down barriers to women's empowerment and enhancing women's productivity in sectors that are often critical to economic revitalization.

Failure to recognize the challenges and opportunities awarded to women in conflict-affected settings by their various roles in natural resource management also risks perpetuating inequalities and deepening grievances linked to natural resource rights, access and control, which have proven to be powerful catalysts for violence. Addressing issues of inequality related to resource access and ownership, participation in decision-making and benefit-sharing early on in the peacebuilding process is therefore a critical condition for lasting peace and development.

To strengthen peacebuilding outcomes by enhancing women's engagement and empowerment in conflict-affected contexts through sustainable natural resource management, this report recommends that national governments and the international community take the following action:

1. **Promote women's participation in formal and informal decision-making structures and governance processes related to natural resource management in peacebuilding:** Working with natural resource management authorities can help increase women's participation in decision-making at the sub-national and national levels. However, targeted support is needed for overcoming the structural, social and cultural barriers to women's formal and informal political participation in conflict-affected settings. This can be achieved by including women and gender specialists early on in peace negotiations in a variety of positions – as negotiators, as expert advisors and as civil society observers – and in mediation support teams, as well as supporting their capacity to engage effectively in these processes. It also requires ensuring that women are represented in relevant decision-making bodies, including through the use of quotas and soliciting inputs from a broad range of women's groups and networks when elaborating natural resource management policies. In addition gender experts should be part of teams charged with developing policies and other governance tools around natural resource management in

peacebuilding contexts, including in supply-chain certification mechanisms, benefit-sharing schemes, and transparency initiatives. Finally, it is essential to provide training and capacity-building and to support the advocacy efforts of women's organizations and networks.

**2. Adopt proactive measures to protect women from resource-related physical violence and other security risks early in the peacebuilding period:**

Women in conflict-affected settings routinely experience physical insecurity, including sexual violence, when carrying out daily tasks linked to the collection and use of natural resources. Moreover, while the impacts of environmental contamination and pollution adversely affect all, women are particularly vulnerable, due to heightened exposure in their gendered roles and responsibilities. Protecting women from these risks is not only important to their health, but also key to ensuring that they are able to safely carry out economic and social activities linked to natural resource management. Among other measures, addressing these risks can involve: conducting assessments to identify specific resource and environment-related security and health threats for women in conflict-affected contexts; ensuring that women have safe access to key resources, such as fuel wood and water, in internally displaced persons and refugee camps; supporting the dissemination of innovative technologies, such as improved cook stoves, that protect women from adverse health impacts in carrying out their roles; increasing women's participation in security sector institutions and conflict resolution processes; and supporting awareness-raising and training on women's rights among the staff of government institutions and the national security sector, as well as at the community level, in order to increase gender-sensitive operational effectiveness and security service delivery by the army and police.

**3. Remove barriers and create enabling conditions to build women's capacity for productive and sustainable use of natural resources:**

Access to credit, technical support and benefits from natural resource exploitation is essential to improving women's economic productivity, which in turn is key to their empowerment. Likewise, legal support for the enforcement of land rights and other resource rights underpins women's ability to productively use natural resources for their recovery. Achieving this can include: identifying women's specific roles in key natural resource sectors and how those roles may have been affected during conflict, establishing regular consultative mechanisms with a variety of women's groups and networks on the development

of basic service infrastructure in their communities, prioritizing land negotiation and reform processes that improve women's rights to land. In addition, providing legal aid, conflict management, negotiation and mediation services to women can enable them to enforce their resource-related rights and access dispute resolution mechanisms. Prioritizing access to finance, inputs and skills training for women and men equally, upholding human rights and minimum labor standards for women's involvement in the extractive sectors and ensuring private companies operating in the extractive sectors engage both men and women during environmental and social impact assessments, as well as throughout the project cycle can further improve women's productive and sustainable use of natural resources. Finally, women's representation on commissions established for wealth-sharing and national and sub-national level and the provision of gender expertise for such bodies, should be prioritized and efforts made to ensure that women are included in community-based natural resource management initiatives in conflict-affected settings.

**4. Within the United Nations, increase inter-agency cooperation to pursue women's empowerment and sustainable natural resource management together in support of more effective peacebuilding:**

Existing inter-agency mechanisms at the global and country levels should be tasked to address the risks and opportunities presented to women by natural resource management in peacebuilding contexts more systematically in their work, including by: conducting pilot programmes to learn lessons on how to integrate the linkages between women, natural resources and peacebuilding in joint assessments and country programming; ensuring that 15 per cent of all funding towards UN-supported natural resource management programmes in peacebuilding is allocated to women's empowerment and gender equality; requiring the collection of sex and age-disaggregated data on peacebuilding and recovery programmes that address and/or have an impact on natural resource management; developing specific targets related to the participation of women and gender experts in natural resource management in post-conflict countries, in line with the priorities and goals set in the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States and the goals for the post-2015 development agenda; supporting further research on the nexus of women, natural resources and peacebuilding, particularly in areas where significant knowledge gaps remain; and integrating gender equality and women's empowerment issues in meetings of actors working on addressing the linkages between natural resources, conflict and peacebuilding.

# Introduction

# Introduction

Violent conflicts pose distinct challenges to men and women. Indeed, the capacity of individuals to cope with physical and food insecurity, displacement, loss of livelihood assets, social exclusion and other impacts of conflict is strongly influenced by their gendered roles and responsibilities. As the primary providers of water, food and energy at the household and community levels, women in rural settings are generally highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, and are therefore particularly vulnerable to changes in the availability and quality of these resources during and after conflict.

At the same time, conflict often leads both women and men to adopt coping strategies that challenge traditional gender norms. To meet the needs of their households and compensate for loss of revenue usually provided by male family members, women may be required to assume new natural resource management roles, either by taking up alternative income-generating activities or by moving into traditionally male sectors. In the aftermath of conflict, capitalizing on these shifting roles can contribute to breaking down existing barriers to women's empowerment and enhance women's productivity in sectors that are critical to post-conflict economic recovery.

By the same token, failing to seize the opportunities presented by women's roles in natural resource management can perpetuate inequities that ultimately undermine recovery. This has important implications for peacebuilding, as structural inequalities and grievances linked to natural resource rights, access and control have proven to be powerful catalysts for violence. Since 1990, 18 conflicts around the globe have been fuelled or financed by natural resources.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the chance of conflict recurring within the first five years after a peace agreement has been signed is greater in contexts where the conflict was linked to natural resources.<sup>2</sup> Addressing issues of inequality related to resource access, participation in decision-making and benefit-sharing early on in the peacebuilding process is therefore a critical condition for lasting peace and development.

Women have a fundamental role to play in this equation. Starting with peace negotiations, they have been shown to consistently prioritize equitable access

to natural resources, such as land, forests and water, as an important part of peace.<sup>3</sup> More equality in the access to and management of natural resources could enable women to support their families more effectively, contribute to community decision-making and work against distortions in the control of natural resources that can trigger conflict. However, their potential as leaders for peacemaking and recovery remains largely unexplored, as they are routinely marginalized from formal peace negotiations and peacebuilding processes. Rather, international assistance for women in conflict-affected settings continues to focus chiefly on women as victims of violence, particularly sexual and gender-based violence, indirectly eschewing support for women as productive actors in recovery and peacebuilding. This is clearly a missed opportunity.

In order to assist both policy-makers and practitioners to understand the ways in which natural resources can be used to strengthen women's contributions to peacebuilding, this report seeks to: (i) provide an analysis of the relationship between women and natural resources in conflict-affected contexts; and (ii) propose entry points for peacebuilding interventions to capitalize on the opportunities presented by women's natural resource management roles.

While focused on women specifically, this report recognizes that addressing women's needs requires the engagement of men. As a result, attention is paid throughout to articulating the ways in which women's rights and access to natural resources and decision-making are linked to the cultural, economic and political dynamics surrounding the relationship between women and men. Moreover, the report attempts to identify the commonalities between various groups of women and examine the common challenges they face in peacebuilding contexts, while fully acknowledging that women are not a homogenous group.

The report is divided into two main parts. Part 1 provides an analysis of the relationship between women and natural resources in peacebuilding contexts, reviewing key issues across three main categories of resources, including land, renewable and extractive resources. With this background, Part 2 discusses entry points for peacebuilding practitioners to address risks and opportunities related to women and natural

resource management, focusing on means to enhance political participation, improve protection and increase opportunities for economic empowerment. The report concludes by summarizing the main findings and offering recommendations for policy-makers and practitioners in both national governments and the international system. Case studies are featured throughout to illustrate how gender dynamics and natural resource management unfold in different peacebuilding settings.

As an initial “tour d’horizon” of this critical nexus of issues, this report seeks to catalyze further research and broader dialogue around policy and programming options for addressing identified risks and opportunities in peacebuilding. As such, it is hoped that it will contribute to realizing the goals of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the UN Secretary-General’s Seven-Point Action Plan on Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding,<sup>4</sup> and inform the key policy and programming processes surrounding the post-2015 development agenda, as well as the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.

## Methods and evidence used

The information presented in this report is based on a thorough desk study and literature review of academic publications and reports published by the United Nations (UN), international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs), as well as evidence collected through the field work and research of relevant UN and other institutions.

In addition, interviews were conducted with experts and field practitioners from humanitarian organizations, women’s organizations and NGOs, government ministries, UN peacekeeping missions and the private sector. In total, 45 experts and field practitioners were interviewed, and over 200 academic journal articles, reports, books and other reference materials were reviewed.

Finally, an extensive peer review process was conducted, involving more than 20 leading experts in the fields of gender, natural resources and peacebuilding from the UN, international and national NGOs, and academic institutions. A comprehensive list of reviewers and other contributors is provided in Annex 3.





# Part 1

Overview and analysis  
of key issues

# PART 1

## Overview and analysis of key issues

This section of the report provides an overview of the relationship between women and natural resources in peacebuilding contexts. To frame the discussion, a brief examination of the broader gender dynamics of conflict with respect to natural resources is proposed at the outset, followed by an analysis of key issues in a range of resource sectors selected on the basis of their relevance to women's livelihoods in peacebuilding settings, as well as their role in driving economic development. In order to combine discussions of resources that are used and governed in a similar manner – and are thus associated with common challenges and opportunities – the various resource sectors have been organized in three main categories: i) land; ii) renewable resources, comprising agricultural crops, livestock, non-timber forest products and water; and iii) extractive resources, including both industrial and artisanal mining, and commercial forestry.

It should be noted that oil and gas were not included in the discussion on extractive resources, as more detailed examination of gender roles and collection of sex and age-disaggregated data are needed to determine the risks and opportunities presented to women by these sectors in peacebuilding settings. It is also important to highlight that while the implications of climate change are outside the scope of this particular report, its effects are already strongly felt in such sectors as agriculture and water. It is hoped that by establishing an initial baseline for the analysis of linkages between women and natural resources in peacebuilding contexts, this report will catalyze further research in these areas.

### 1.1 The gender dynamics of conflict and natural resources

Natural resources underpin livelihoods for the vast majority of populations worldwide, and are often the driving force behind economic development, industry and gross domestic product (GDP) in peacebuilding contexts. Exclusion or restrictions imposed on certain communities and groups of people to own and access natural resources are examples of the structural inequalities and discrimination that can ultimately

destabilize a peaceful society. This is most evident with regard to land tenure, but also extends to access and usage rights for other renewable resources, such as water, and benefit-sharing from extractive resources.

Gender is an important part of understanding these dynamics, as men and women tend to use and enjoy the benefits of natural resources according to the roles and responsibilities determined by their gender, as well as economic and social status. However, violent conflict often causes gender roles and responsibilities to shift. For example, where families have been displaced by conflict, women may become primary earners for their households when they are able to continue or even expand economic activities traditionally associated with their gender roles, such as petty trade and selling in local markets.

Others may be forced to break certain accepted “feminine” behaviors by adopting riskier coping strategies dictated by market demand, such as prostitution, or other tactics to maintain or gain access to livelihood assets necessary for their survival, including valuable natural resources.<sup>5</sup> In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, women have relied on marriage outside of their ethnic groups to secure access to cash crops, in spite of the fact that such marriages are outside of cultural norms.<sup>6</sup> Although these tactics allow them to cope with the changes wrought by conflict and to provide for their households, they can also result in altered perceptions within their community – in the form of resentment from men who feel that their role as primary economic providers has been usurped, or stigmas that lead to social marginalization.

It is important to note that in conflict situations, women may be both victims and perpetrators of violence, choosing (or being forced to) participate in violent conflict for a variety of reasons and motivations. In Sierra Leone, for example, it is estimated that some 10 to 50 per cent of armed forces were comprised of women and girls,<sup>7</sup> though exact figures are unknown. Perpetuating a simplistic view of women in conflict settings as more “nurturing” and “peaceful” can not only strip women of their agency and reinforce patriarchal values, but also result in roll-backs and marginalization for women in the peacebuilding phase. In many wars of independence, such as those that occurred in Mozambique and Angola, women took on traditionally “masculine” roles

as combatants in armed groups, only to find that their new independence was not equally respected in the peacebuilding period.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, female ex-combatants and women associated with armed forces and groups, regardless of whether they were willingly or forcibly recruited, are often perceived to be poorly suited for culturally accepted female roles in the aftermath of conflict. As a result, they tend to face greater challenges when returning to their communities or to civilian life in general and realizing important social achievements such as marriage. Other conflict-affected women, including widowed internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees who do not have a male family member to protect their land interests, often face difficulties in accessing land and natural resources to support their reintegration. When disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes fail to recognize these roles and develop gender-specific programmes, female ex-combatants can be further marginalized and even denied the support services afforded to male ex-combatants, such as access to land or disbursements of cash through which land can be purchased.<sup>9</sup>

Men's livelihoods and notions of masculinity are also affected by conflict. They often have more difficulty maintaining their traditional livelihoods (e.g. livestock herding or day labor) due to insecurity, and can face intense pressure for recruitment into armed groups. With few employment opportunities overall, as well as reduced access to important natural resources such as land, social understandings of masculinity are often challenged or threatened during conflict. This can lead to the adoption of coping strategies that involve violence towards women and other men, or the adoption of a "hyper-masculine warrior identity" amongst male combatants in an attempt to cope with the extremely uncertain and insecure conflict context.<sup>10</sup> Some of these behaviors may continue in the peacebuilding period; in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone, for example, levels of domestic violence against women have skyrocketed in the past 10 years.<sup>11</sup>

Changing gender roles and relationships can also affect the expectations that men and women have of the types of employment and opportunities that will be available during peacebuilding. For example, during the conflict in Aceh, Indonesia, women's roles increasingly expanded into agricultural sectors that were traditionally male-dominated, such as aquaculture and fisheries. This had the unintended consequence of leaving men feeling disempowered by a lack of employment opportunities and threatened by women working in traditionally "male" employment sectors.<sup>12</sup>

Likewise in post-conflict Liberia, where the national rate of unemployment was 85 per cent, men expressed frustration with respect to economic empowerment programmes that were geared towards women, claiming that the programmes undermined their ability to fulfill their roles as providers for their families and thereby to

gain social respect as men.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, many Liberian men acknowledged that women had become the primary providers for their families during the war.<sup>14</sup> Although women may strengthen their position in earning roles within households and communities during conflict, there is often pressure for them to return to a more limited range of activities during the peacebuilding period.

It is critical to note, however, that gender is only one of many identities carried by any individual. Violent conflict almost invariably exacerbates economic and social hierarchies within a society and often results in violence towards particular groups or individuals for economic, political, religious or cultural reasons. For women in particular, it is often those from marginalized ethnic, economic, political and social groups (such as immigrants or indigenous peoples), as well as very old or young women, who face the harshest discrimination and are likely to be the most vulnerable to violence and ensuing poverty from armed conflict. Peacebuilding interventions need to take into account the ways in which women's access to natural resources has been altered during conflict and how these dynamics may change between different groups of women, leading either to barriers or opportunities that can either further entrench vulnerabilities or enhance self-sufficiency.

## 1.2 Land and renewable resources

Conflict almost invariably has an impact on the availability and use of natural resources such as land, agricultural crops and water, which underpin the basic needs of a large majority of the world's population. Women – particularly those in rural settings – tend to be disproportionately affected by these changes, as they generally depend on these resources for their livelihoods, and are most often the ones responsible for acquiring and using them to meet daily household needs. Furthermore, conflict significantly disrupts social and cultural management systems for natural resources, especially land. In conflict-affected contexts, this can have acute implications for women, as their access to land is typically dependent upon the social structures of their communities.

Conflict can also lead to the adoption of coping strategies that damage the local resource base, such as intensified land use, deforestation or encroachment of forests and protected areas. In turn, this environmental degradation can limit women's access to essential resources, such as plant medicines from forests, further marginalizing impoverished communities. Yet peacebuilding interventions – whether focused on livelihoods or institutional and legal reform – often miss the specific challenges faced by women with regard to their access and use of renewable resources, and therefore fail to capitalize on related opportunities. These challenges are further explored in subsequent sections.

### Land

Land is a critical economic asset for rural livelihoods and is intrinsically tied to culture, heritage, identity and community. It also constitutes a major factor in gender inequality,<sup>15</sup> as women are estimated to own less than two per cent of land worldwide.<sup>16</sup> Lack of access to land, which lies at the heart of women's poverty in most developing contexts, can be further exacerbated by conflict, as displacement from land and the death of male family members, coupled with a prevalence of land-grabbing in post-conflict settings, can make women more vulnerable to landlessness.<sup>17</sup> Given these trends, women's land rights are a key focus of this analysis. Issues related to women's land rights are also increasingly being included in peace negotiations, providing an unprecedented opportunity to improve access and increase formal recognition of women's property rights on equal terms with men's.

Land is directly linked to women's interests in natural resource management, as it has implications for tenure rights to other important resources, such as agricultural crops, non-timber forest products or metals and minerals. Land rights and access are also tied to women's ability to productively use and develop these natural resources, including access to credit and other forms of inputs needed to transform and process raw resources into marketable products. Finally, land has implications for women's rights more broadly, since the right to own land is an indication of citizenship or membership status in most countries.<sup>18</sup>

The chaos created by violent conflict and subsequent weakening of state and customary authorities often allows existing and unresolved land disputes to emerge. In such contexts, claims to land may be contradictory or seen as invalid or unjust, especially where traditional customary systems of land tenure are at odds with statutory regimes. For example, statutory systems can be used as the basis for the allocation of large-scale concessions for agriculture, mining or timber, which are not often recognized or seen as legitimate by customary authorities.

While concessions may help catalyze economic recovery at the national level, they can also prevent men and women from utilizing the land to fulfill their basic daily needs, and can therefore aggravate existing livelihood insecurities. Women's interests can be sidelined in these situations, especially where village chiefs or male heads of the household are responsible for representing the community's interests. This is especially problematic where women do not have documentation for their land or a male counterpart to advocate on their behalf. It is therefore important that regulatory frameworks aimed at protecting customary land rights ensure that women's rights to access and own land are respected. Mechanisms to more systematically document women's land rights and ensure representation of their interests are particularly needed in these contexts.

Moreover, insecure land rights can undermine incentives for women to invest in the productivity of land. In Côte d'Ivoire for instance, where contested land and property rights are pervasive, local populations often seek resolution to disputes through extra-legal means,<sup>19</sup> which can lead

to violence.<sup>20</sup> Women, who have some of the least secure land tenure rights, face routine competition for their land, especially once they have increased its value through the cultivation of cash crops. As a result, they have little incentive to invest in improving its productivity.<sup>21</sup>

Interventions intended to clarify land rights, however, should be careful not to assume that formal statutory systems are the only mechanism by which women's rights are upheld. Indeed, a rigid approach to applying statutory laws – without recognizing the social context in which they are applied and the relative strengths of parallel customary systems – could result in women's marginalization when the two converge. The case from Uganda (see Case study 1) highlights the challenges for women stemming from legal pluralism and the impacts of the conflict on land use, displacement and unclear demarcation of land parcels.

Lack of land rights – especially for young, divorced, widowed or single women – can lead to increased risks of malnutrition, disease and poverty, as land is a common pre-requisite for access to other resources such as credit and agricultural inputs. This is particularly a problem in peacebuilding settings, where up to 40 per cent of households are female-headed.<sup>22</sup> This insecurity threatens not only women, but also young children and other dependent family members.<sup>23</sup> In fact, studies show that in countries where women lack land ownership rights or access to credit, children are 60-85 per cent more likely to suffer from malnourishment.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, as recent research by UN Women shows, resources controlled by women are more likely to be used to improve family food consumption and welfare, reduce child malnutrition, and increase overall well-being of the family.<sup>25</sup> This is further supported by analysis from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which finds that on average, improvements in child health and nutrition achieved by a US\$ 10 increase in women's income would require an increase of US\$ 110 in a male's income.<sup>26</sup>

Women's opportunities to invest in the productivity of land may also be impacted by their position in the family, which often shifts during conflict as a result of death, displacement or migration. For instance, in countries such as Burundi, Colombia and Uganda, where men have been known to take on "bush wives" during a conflict,<sup>27</sup> these women have experienced difficulties in laying claim to their husband's land, either due to the competing interests of formally recognized wives or to the stigma of being a "bush wife." Furthermore, women in these circumstances often have no statutory or customary legal protection to ensure their rights to land.<sup>28</sup>

Women combatants or those who have been associated with armed forces and groups may also face particular difficulty reintegrating into their communities of origin – especially if they have had children through unrecognized "bush marriages." Without a husband or other male relative to access land, these women often have few options to provide for themselves and their children and are more likely to look for economic opportunities through informal or marginal means, including prostitution, farm labor or work in mines.



## Case study 1: Legality versus reality: Implementing women's land rights in Uganda



**A sizeable crowd gathers to discuss women's land rights in Parwech, northern Uganda. Despite being responsible for growing 80 per cent of all food crops, only seven per cent of women in Uganda actually own land**

Uganda has progressive constitutional and legal frameworks regarding gender. When it comes to women's land rights, however, both implementation and enforcement mechanisms are lacking. As a result, customs and practices that block women from exercising their land rights continue to prevail. One of the most significant issues in this regard is the inconsistent application of both customary and statutory laws protecting land rights. Competing land claims in the country are often linked to the multiplicity of land tenure systems – a legacy of colonialism that has been exacerbated by conflict.

Although customary land tenure still predominates in Uganda,<sup>29</sup> the protracted conflict between the government and rebel groups in the north of the country that stretched from the late 1980s to 2006 placed great strains on the system, notably due to the impacts of widespread displacement (1.8 million at the height of the conflict).<sup>30</sup> As a consequence, frequent disputes have arisen as the displaced have sought to return home. In the context of growing competition, land has also increasingly been grabbed by male family members, typically resulting in losses for women. Women's only recourse in the customary system is through the leadership of their clan, although this is limited in situations where clan leaders have been complicit in the land grab, or where clan leadership has been weakened by conflict.

During the drafting of the 1995 constitution, despite male resistance to legislation addressing women's land rights, women actively expressed their concerns and interest in land reform. As a result, not only does the Constitution call for legislation to protect the rights of widows to inherit the property of their deceased spouses (chapter 4, Article 31.2), but the Land Act, which was passed in 1998, contains several provisions that seek to fortify women's access to land.<sup>31</sup> These include Section 28, which nullifies any practice that discriminates against women, children or persons with disabilities with regard to customary land, and Section 40, which requires the consent of legally married women to sell, exchange, donate (except in a will), mortgage or lease land, in cases where they stay on the land themselves. Moreover, the 2004 Land Act Amendment gives women the right of consent in land transactions involving household property.<sup>32</sup>

However, implementation of these laws has proven problematic in many communities across Uganda. Indeed, recent analysis of the impact of the National Land Policy reveals that entrenched customs and practices continued to prevail, leading to systematic violation of women's land rights.<sup>33</sup> For example, despite being responsible for growing 80 per cent of all food crops, only seven per cent of women in Uganda actually own land.<sup>34</sup> In addition, women are routinely denied access and inheritance of land in case of divorce or death of their husbands or fathers, and even those that are protected under law are often unaware of their rights. Further, although sections of the Marriage Law and Succession Law were disqualified as a result of test-case litigation on the grounds of discrimination against women, they are yet to be altered in the books.

Efforts to address these challenges within Uganda's national land reform process remain insufficient. For one, support services are lacking for actualizing national policy reforms, as are resources and clear mechanisms for the implementation of land rights. For example, land tribunals, which were vested with the power to settle land disputes especially for poor and vulnerable groups including women, remain underfunded and underutilized.<sup>35</sup> Practical measures that may help advance women's protection within customary systems include encouraging cultural leaders to support women's land rights, ensuring that courts uphold customary land rights, and assisting women in land demarcation and registration.<sup>36</sup>

## Case study 2: Safeguarding gender equality gains for ex-combatants in post-conflict Nepal



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**Former women Maoist rebels participate in an integration programme at Shaktikhor Cantonment in Chitwan, Nepal. While some have been integrated into the national army, many female ex-combatants rely on access to land in their communities to forge their futures**

Deeply rooted in societal inequality, the conflict launched by Maoist insurgents tore Nepal apart for over a decade. A peace agreement was finally reached in November 2006, marking the beginning of negotiations over the country's future. While the causes of the conflict were manifold, one of the key factors drawing ordinary citizens to participate in the hostilities was access to land. The country's traditional land tenure system was based on state-appointed landlordism, with farmers required to pay taxes and provide unpaid labor services to the landlord in exchange for using a subsistence plot or accessing loans. Starting in the 1960s, the government of Nepal attempted several rounds of land reform aiming to redistribute land for the rural poor, without much success. This contributed to a widening gap between the elites and the underprivileged majority of the population, eventually leading to agricultural workers joining the insurgency.<sup>37</sup>

For women in Nepal, these challenges were further compounded by multiple forms of discrimination linked to land access, including ethnicity, caste and gender. Nepalese women rarely inherit their father's property, as they typically join their husband's family after marriage. Moreover, widows usually only inherit their husband's land if they have given birth to a male heir and are able to pass the heritage on to him. Statistics from the FAO show that only eight per cent of landholders in Nepal are female, although they comprise 65 per cent of farmers and are responsible for 70 per cent of livestock production.<sup>38</sup>

During the conflict, the Maoist movement seized land from traditional landlords with the aim of distributing it to the "real farmers," who were typically sharecroppers without land tenure rights. This included female farmers as well, which encouraged large numbers of women to take up arms and join the conflict.<sup>39</sup> While this strategy enabled the Maoists to garner support in rural areas, it failed to resolve issues of land ownership for the poor.<sup>40</sup> As no legal documents for land captured during the conflict were created, many are now settled on land over which they have no documented rights. Auspiciously, the post-conflict period offers Maoist ex-combatants opportunities for starting anew as smallholders, since land distribution issues were extensively covered in the peace agreement (though many measures remain to be implemented).<sup>1</sup>



## Case study 2: Continued

However, former female Maoist combatants face new types of difficulties in accessing land. Women and men were treated as equals in the Maoist ranks, sharing all the responsibilities from cooking to fighting on the frontline. Women also became accustomed to commanding and training their male comrades. After experiencing these new forms of gender equality, many of the former female ex-combatants now face resistance and rejection from their families, who still largely abide by traditional gender roles. In addition, as part of their political agenda, the Maoists sought to abolish the discriminatory caste system in Nepal by encouraging its members to marry across caste and ethnic boundaries. As a result, many of the former combatants are now in a situation where communities and families reject the social revolution that their marriages represent, making them unable to return to their communities of origin and forcing them to migrate to new regions.<sup>42</sup>

Both of these phenomena pose problems for female ex-combatants wishing to invest in land, as tradition stipulates that a woman needs the support of a male family member to purchase property. Another obstacle for many female ex-combatants is the lack of legal documents verifying citizenship, which is a common challenge for Nepalese women.<sup>43</sup> To address this, the United Nations Interagency Rehabilitation Programme (UNIRP) has been supporting female ex-combatants by helping them obtain legal documents for female family members and their children.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, the programme has engaged in large-scale family and community-level sensitization in order to create social space for female ex-combatants to fully realize their newly found empowerment through equal access to education and livelihoods.

As a complement to these efforts, the government of Nepal is trying to increase women's access to land by lowering the taxation on land registered under the name of a female family member. However, this has not been met with much success as many groups oppose women's land rights based on the fear of losing their traditional farming areas through the transfer of land rights via marriages. Further, in the complex post-conflict political environment, women's rights have also often lost momentum to "more pressing" issues. Despite these challenges however, some of the former female combatants are using the post-conflict social turmoil as an opportunity to act as ambassadors for gender equality in their communities, advocating for a change in repressive gender norms.



A former Maoist rebel walks with her child inside Shaktikhor Maoist Camp in Chitwan, Nepal. Many female Maoists face significant challenges to reintegrate into their communities, due to the fact that their participation in the conflict required them to break with traditional gender norms

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Secure access to land is key for ex-combatants to be able to provide for themselves and sustain productive livelihoods, especially when they do not return to their families or communities of origin.<sup>45</sup> In some disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programmes, such as for the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front in Mozambique, where female members made up 25 per cent of combatants, women were able to successfully benefit from land redistribution as part of reintegration packages.<sup>46</sup> This has not necessarily been the case in other countries, however. Case study 2 on Nepal shows that access to land remains a significant barrier for reintegration for female combatants.

As illustrated in the cases of Nepal and Uganda, there is a significant gap between guaranteeing women's rights to land in legal and policy frameworks, and ensuring that these rights are effectively enforced and protected. While 115 countries now formally recognize women's equal rights to land and 93 recognize women's equal rights to inheritance,<sup>47</sup> research shows that even where women have legal entitlement to ownership, they continue to be denied land rights, primarily for cultural and political reasons.<sup>48</sup> For example, while the new Victims and Land Restitution Law of Colombia includes a gender perspective, restitution claims still require precise land registration details that may be unobtainable for women whose partners have either died or are missing and who are not able to obtain land titles.<sup>49</sup> More positively, land-related issues are increasingly being addressed in peace agreements, providing unprecedented opportunities to address a wide range of human rights concerns.

### **Agriculture and non-timber forest products**

Women are extensively involved in agriculture worldwide, representing 43 per cent of the agricultural labor force in developing countries and over half of all agricultural laborers in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, women play a key role in food production – some 80 per cent of all food produced in Africa is grown at least in part by women – and experience shows that this role tends to increase during and after conflict.<sup>51</sup> As a result, the impacts of conflict on agriculture tend to have particularly deleterious effects on women. Reduced access to land due to insecurity or damages to local resources, destruction or looting of agricultural infrastructure and equipment, lack of availability of extension services and inputs, and reduced access or loss of markets can all render food production insufficient to meet the daily needs of families and children, which remain the responsibility of women in many cases, and lead to loss of critical income.<sup>52</sup>

Women are also frequently responsible for small livestock production. In fact, women comprise around two-thirds of livestock keepers worldwide<sup>53</sup> and are often the primary caretakers of poultry and dairy animals, engaging in the sale of eggs and the production of cheese or other dairy products.<sup>54</sup> This can provide an important means of income for women in both rural and urban areas, but also put women at risk in situations of armed conflict, which can have dramatic impacts on livestock numbers due to

theft, killing or disease. In female-headed households with multiple children – which are very frequent in conflict and post-conflict settings – the loss of livestock can have a direct impact on malnutrition and overall well-being, and contribute to further impoverishment.<sup>55</sup>

In addition, rural women's livelihoods in conflict-affected countries often depend on the collection and production of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) – such as fruits, nuts, medicines, gums, resins, essential oils, various fibers, honey and mushrooms – which can help supplement food security, particularly in the case of crop failure or increased economic hardship that may result from violent conflict. NTFPs also play a key role in the expansion of women's enterprises in formal and informal sectors; examples include honey production programmes in South Darfur, and the production of handicrafts, as seen in Colombia, Rwanda, Uganda and many other peacebuilding contexts.<sup>56</sup> Ensuring women's access to NTFPs is therefore important to maintaining their livelihoods.

Despite the important contributions made by women in these sectors, peacebuilding programmes and international assistance rarely consider women's roles in agricultural production and NTFPs.<sup>57</sup> In Africa, for example, the agricultural extension services that are established are usually staffed by men and are generally not targeted towards women's needs.<sup>58</sup> As a case in point, research shows that only five per cent of all resources for agricultural extension have been dedicated to African female farmers to date.

Furthermore, formal credit for agricultural inputs is often inaccessible or restricted for women due to their lack of land title, requiring them to find alternative sources. In Sri Lanka for example, this has resulted in burdensome levels of debt for women.<sup>59</sup> Gender discrimination in the agricultural sector can also undermine women's productivity: while they tend to bear greater responsibilities for agricultural labor than men, women are consistently remunerated less, thereby impeding opportunities to grow or expand their agricultural activities.<sup>60</sup> In conflict-affected situations, this can exacerbate issues of food insecurity, which in turn can contribute to the recurrence of violence.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, food insecurity has been found to act as a threat and impact multiplier for violent conflict, especially in countries marked by fragile markets and weak political institutions.<sup>62</sup>

Underlying women's ability to productively engage in the agriculture, livestock and NTFP sectors are land tenure systems and issues of land ownership. In spite of the importance of food security for peacebuilding, most decision-making around agriculture, from what crops should be produced to how outputs are marketed and sold, tends to remain in the control of men as landowners. Research has further shown that peacebuilding programmes relating to agricultural planning, technology and credit tend not to consult or include women in the design process, thereby limiting the programmes' impact.<sup>63</sup> Case study 3 from Aceh, Indonesia provides another example of some of the challenges and missed opportunities that result from failing to adequately take into account women's roles in agriculture in the design of recovery programmes.

### Case study 3: Women in agriculture in post-conflict Aceh, Indonesia



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#### The 30-year conflict in Aceh, Indonesia led to a greater number of female-headed households, increasing decision-making roles for women with regard to subsistence agriculture

The conflict in Aceh, Indonesia, which lasted from the 1960s to 2005, had profound impacts on agricultural production and gender roles in the province. Agricultural production levels and GDP for Aceh generally declined over this period, as fighting between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian National Army (TNI) prevented access to fields and farming areas and decreased crop productivity.<sup>64</sup> At the same time, high fatality rates for men in combat led to a greater number of female-headed households, increasing decision-making roles for women with regard to subsistence agriculture. Women also broke gender barriers by joining the Free Aceh Movement as combatants, spies and service providers.

In Aceh, men traditionally control cash crop income, while women grow subsistence crops to support household food security and gain some financial independence. Following the 2005 peace agreement between GAM and TNI, recovery efforts focused largely on cash crops, which included rice, rubber, palm oil, and coffee and cocoa plantations (as well as marijuana), as a way to support livelihoods. As a result, funding for economic recovery in the first five years following the conflict went primarily to men (and former GAM leadership in particular).<sup>65</sup> Despite their important role in agriculture, women were not specifically targeted by government agricultural recovery programmes and as a result were largely excluded from receiving related benefits.

The traditional links between livelihoods and agriculture for Acehnese women were also overlooked in broader peacebuilding and recovery programmes, including DDR-related reintegration programmes. Instead, programmes targeting women narrowly focused on handicraft-making, cooking, sewing, embroidery and other activities deemed to be “for women only,”<sup>66</sup> without regard for market trends and economic sustainability, with the result that local markets quickly became saturated and no longer financially viable.<sup>67</sup> In the few cases where support was provided to women to grow vegetables for markets in the highland areas, a lack of market information, transportation and alternatives to accepting low prices from middle-men limited women’s ability to guarantee sustainable livelihoods from these activities.<sup>68</sup> Further, there was a failure to promote crop diversification, resulting in market saturation after harvest and low prices.

Recent efforts by the government of Aceh and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research have focused on supporting women’s agricultural groups to develop and expand household gardens for improved subsistence farming and sale in local markets, but are still grappling with the legacy of the years immediately following the peace accord. While women are beginning to carve a niche in these areas by setting themselves up to run small businesses in the sorting and processing of cocoa beans, coffee beans and other cash crops, it is clear that the economic recovery programmes in Aceh missed an important opportunity to ensure that women would benefit equally from the support given.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, they are still largely absent from any decision-making forums on agricultural policy.<sup>70</sup>



## Case study 4: Gender dynamics in water management in the West Bank



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**In the West Bank, women are key repositories of information on water quality and use. Leveraging their unique knowledge and skills could help improve water management systems**

Water availability, in addition to a host of other political factors, is a key issue in the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine.<sup>71</sup> The tensions surrounding water issues are further heightened by a confluence of variables including limited and erratic rainfall, extended dry spells, and Israeli controls and closures that prevent the flow of goods and services and limit Palestinians' access to water resources.<sup>72</sup>

Currently, some 200,000 rural people in the West Bank have no connection to the water network and instead rely on tanked water, which can cost up to 400 per cent more per liter.<sup>73</sup> In particular, Palestinian access to water springs in the West Bank has become increasingly difficult due to Israeli settlements in the area.<sup>74</sup> These challenges have been further exacerbated by suppressed economic activity resulting from restricted mobility of goods and limited access to natural resources.<sup>75</sup> For example, many villages are hindered in their ability to cultivate land for agriculture in the valley or to develop infrastructure due to restricted access to water.<sup>76</sup>

As the primary managers of domestic water needs, women draw on their knowledge of local water sources to employ effective conservation measures, particularly in times of drought and scarcity. This may entail recycling water or using grey water for washing and irrigation, and using run-off from those activities for livestock. Women also tend to monitor water quality, sterilizing or disinfecting well water in an effort to mitigate potential health impacts for themselves and their families.<sup>77</sup> As such, women are key repositories of information, whose unique knowledge and skills could help improve water management systems.

At present, however, formal water management in Palestine remains highly gendered. At the government level, such as in the Palestinian Water Authority, women are generally not promoted into decision-making positions, which require negotiating and dealing with the Israeli Ministry of Defense and soldiers that guard water infrastructure resources. Aspects of water management where women would be highly effective, such as reflecting daily usage needs into water management, have also not been sufficiently explored.<sup>78</sup> Rather, the incorporation of gender perspectives into planning, design and implementation of irrigation programmes continues to be overlooked in spite of data showing that irrigation schemes have routinely failed as a result of erroneous assumptions over division of labor and water use.

This represents a missed opportunity not only to support women, but also to improve water quality and access in a context where the need is high. As donors continue to fund large-scale infrastructure projects, further efforts are needed to shift the focus to more locally appropriate water infrastructure that reflects women's particular knowledge and needs.

It is also critical to balance the competing needs and uses of forest resources in peacebuilding contexts. While forests may provide a legitimate source of revenue for the state and the private sector, they also form the basis of the livelihoods of many poor. If managed inappropriately, concessions can undermine the welfare of affected communities and lead to widespread displacement. This can cause particular hardship for women who depend on forest resources for their livelihoods, and to carry out their roles as primary caregivers for children and the elderly.

In Cambodia, for example, resin tapping from the Prey Lang forest, which is traditionally performed by women, is an essential and sustainable source of fuel for light and cooking for the indigenous Kuy people. However, concessions for these indigenous forest lands are being granted by the state to private companies for logging and mineral exploitation. In many cases, these concessions have resulted in forced evictions, land grabbing and unsustainable use, which have all served to exacerbate poverty and undermine development gains.<sup>79</sup> In order to avoid such consequences, comprehensive socio-economic and environmental impact assessments should be undertaken prior to granting forest concessions. If concessions are granted that require resettlement, procedures should be in place to ensure the process is compliant with international standards and that women have equal involvement in compensation and resettlement options.

## Water

Water is a critical resource for meeting daily household needs and is a key input for agriculture, livestock production and various types of small businesses. Violent conflict can have adverse impacts on both water quality and availability if accessibility is limited by active fighting or the presence of landmines, or water sources and infrastructure are damaged.<sup>80</sup>

These impacts are particularly acute in cases where violence results in increased population density and unsustainable pressure on water resources, as seen in Yemen, Sudan and the Gaza Strip in Palestine, for example. According to a UNEP assessment conducted in the Gaza Strip in 2009, the protracted conflict has led to dramatic over-consumption of water, causing irreversible damage to the underlying aquifer and increasing the threat of scarcity in an already arid region.<sup>81</sup> In such contexts, women and men are often forced to adopt new water use and management strategies. However, these shifts are rarely reflected in the design and implementation of large water infrastructure projects, as exemplified in Case study 4 on the West Bank, thereby missing important opportunities to capitalize on men and women's unique knowledge of related needs and challenges.

In most rural communities, water use is typically divided by gender. Responsibility for supplying water for domestic use and for the irrigation of subsistence

crops generally falls to women and girls, while men tend to use water primarily for commercial and income-generation purposes, including for direct sale as water vendors or for livestock. These gendered roles and uses create expectations for women and men that influence cultural norms and can serve to exacerbate gender inequities, creating barriers for social change.<sup>82</sup> In the case of Uganda, for example, research shows that men who collect water for domestic use are seen by women as either unable to afford water from a vendor (a negative perception for their status as men), lacking children or even mentally unstable.<sup>83</sup>

Socio-economic status is also a determining factor for access to water, both in peacebuilding and development contexts. For instance, women and girls from poorer, marginalized communities, who often do not have secure land rights, are generally more dependent upon open water sources.<sup>84</sup> In turn, reliance on open sources can lead to less secure water access, as well as higher exposure to disease and increased rates of competition.<sup>85</sup> Within these contexts, such as in the case of Uganda, research shows that women can face direct competition with men for communal water resources during droughts.<sup>86</sup> This may be further exacerbated in areas where freshwater resources are in decline due to environmental degradation and poor water resource management.

Conflict can also undermine equitable water distribution. Damage to or lack of investment in water infrastructure resulting from conflict can significantly increase the cost of potable water, which in turn can challenge livelihoods and heighten the risk of disease by requiring reliance on sub-standard sanitation and water facilities.<sup>87</sup> In these contexts, including women in the design and implementation of new water infrastructure can yield improved results in effectiveness and use. Research shows that in cases where women and men are equally consulted in terms of location and placement of water and sanitation infrastructure, the installations are more frequented, better maintained and technically appropriate.<sup>88</sup>

## 1.3 Extractive resources

The role of extractive resources in fuelling and financing conflict is well known. Indeed, many conflict-affected countries hold vast mineral wealth: the Democratic Republic of the Congo's untapped mineral reserves are estimated to be worth US\$ 24 trillion,<sup>89</sup> while Afghanistan's mineral deposits have been evaluated at US\$ 1 trillion.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, the forestry sector is a critical source of revenue in many post-conflict countries. In Côte d'Ivoire for instance, the forestry sector generates hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue each year.<sup>91</sup> In the aftermath of conflict, the management of these lucrative resources can either unite or divide fractured societies. The challenge is to transform extractive resources into peacebuilding dividends that create inclusive employment, sustain livelihoods and

contribute to economic revitalization and reconciliation at all levels of society, while avoiding new forms of social or environmental grievances.

Although women and men face some common challenges in the extractive sectors – including the reallocation of land away from agriculture; negative environmental health impacts from contaminated soils, air and water; heightened levels of violence in the areas surrounding extractive activities; and increased demand for high-risk income-generating options, including prostitution and the drug trade<sup>92</sup> – the environmental, economic and social impacts of extractive industries often affect women and men in different ways. Although the specific risks and opportunities are highly dependent on the context and the type of material extracted, men tend to have greater access to benefits and opportunities from extractive industries, while women bear more of the negative impacts.<sup>93</sup> In addition, women's physiology puts them at greater risk of health problems in areas contaminated with chemicals, petroleum or heavy metals during the extraction process, as such contaminants are stored more easily in women's bodies – due to their higher fat content – than in men's, leading to reproductive and other health issues.<sup>94</sup>

The sub-sections below highlight the diverse experiences of women in three extractive sectors: industrial mining, artisanal mining and commercial forestry. Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) is examined separately here as it poses different risks and opportunities for women than those derived from industrial mining. Moreover, commercial forestry is considered an extractive industry due to the fact that the processes for granting concessions and exploitation permits present similar challenges and are addressed by similar international governance frameworks as industrial mining, as discussed in Box 1. Given the potential for extractive resources to become underlying drivers of conflict or sources of grievance in peacebuilding contexts, governance is a key issue across all extractive sectors.

### Industrial mining

The risks and opportunities presented by industrial mining differ substantially for men and women, with women bearing the majority of the social and environmental impacts of the sector, while enjoying little of the benefits, such as revenues or employment. These disparities tend to be more acute in conflict-affected settings, which are often characterized by militarized control, a governance vacuum, lack of clear policy and weak or non-existent enforcement mechanisms.

According to the World Bank, some 80-90 per cent of the employment at industrial mining sites is typically attributed to men.<sup>95</sup> Women, who are unlikely to have access to the requisite training for direct employment by mining companies, generally provide secondary services at industrial mining sites, such as housing, food and commercial sex. In most contexts, indeed, the number of women in industrial mining is extremely low,

as a result of multiple barriers to entry in the sector. In Uganda's coltan mines, for example, women represent less than five per cent of the work force.<sup>96</sup> This is partly due to social and cultural discrimination, such as the belief that women are "bad luck" in the mines during menstruation. In countries where the number of women in the industrial mining sector is slightly higher, such as South Africa where figures are about 14 per cent, studies have found that women continue to face barriers, such as limited support for their professional development.<sup>97</sup>

Moreover, increased rates of sexual violence often associated with the influx of mine employees, coupled with a lack of access to legal services or grievance mechanisms, can leave women with limited or no recourse when their rights or safety are violated. In these circumstances, women may be forced to accept compensation that is not reflective of the violation they experienced. In Papua New Guinea, for example, the compensation offered by the mining company to victims of sexual violence was widely criticized for requiring participants to forego legal action and for lacking both transparency and legal representation for victims.<sup>98</sup>

In spite of their acute vulnerability to the impacts of industrial mining, women are rarely invited to the table during the negotiation of mining concessions. Often, multi-stakeholder groups established to negotiate with the mining industry do not include or adequately represent the range of women's views, nor do they make provisions for gender experts to provide an impact analysis of proposals under discussion. As a result, women's needs and concerns – relating for example to the risks of environmental contamination, or compensation and reparations for damages incurred – are rarely identified or addressed in subsequent planning and operations, and revenues generated by these sites are seldom distributed in an equitable manner. The case of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea (see Case study 5) illustrates the conflict risks posed by large-scale mining operations, and the role played by women's networks in the peace process.

Land tenure also plays an important role in women's relationship to industrial mining, as they often face challenges in claiming damages to farmland, forests or fishing waters from extractive processes as a result of insecure tenure. Displacement from land as a result of mining activities can further marginalize women. In Georgia and Azerbaijan, for example, high rates of prostitution and sexually transmitted diseases were driven by the displacement of women from their land and livelihoods by mining.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, the allocation of land for industrial extractive activities can lead to the loss of fertile land for agriculture, thereby negatively impacting food security, for which women are often primarily responsible.

Women may also face higher exposure to wastes and effluent from mining operations in developing and peacebuilding contexts.<sup>100</sup> This is not unique to the industrial mining sector however, since women



## Box 1: Governance of extractive resources: The push for greater transparency and equity

In industrial mining and commercial forestry, the private sector – multinational companies in particular – wields significant influence. This poses both risks and opportunities for peacebuilding. On the one hand, companies have substantial authority over whether their operations impact the local social and physical environment in a positive or negative manner. On the other hand, ensuring that concessions and licenses for commercial mining and forestry operations are granted in a fair and transparent manner that yields benefits for local communities and the economy can be a major challenge. This is particularly true in cases where information asymmetries and lack of governance capacity enable companies to undervalue the resources or circumvent international standards or national laws.

Moreover, while new concessions may be accompanied by agreements to develop local infrastructure, these improvements often serve the narrow interests of the mining operations rather than the broader needs of the population, creating “industrial enclaves” that have few links to the local economy. In addition, failure to deliver promised amenities or share revenues with host communities can lead to unmet expectations and ultimately contribute to unrest.<sup>101</sup>

In acknowledgement of these issues, voluntary policies on environmentally and socially responsible business practices for multinationals and governments alike have been developed over the last years. This trend is captured in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011, which provide a benchmark for tracking the positive and negative impact of companies worldwide and improving the integration of human rights into their policies and practices.<sup>102</sup> Other examples include the UN Global Compact, the Natural Resource Charter, the Resource Governance Index and several global regulatory frameworks to certify certain extractive resources as legal and “conflict-free,” including the Kimberly Process for diamonds, the Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), and the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Initiative. The OECD Due Diligence Guidelines for responsible supply chains of minerals, which are oriented towards companies operating in conflict zones, also include specific guidance on tin, tantalum and tungsten and new guidance on gold.<sup>103</sup>

Unfortunately, few of these initiatives have specific provisions or guidance related to gender or women, which remains a gap in implementation and oversight. One positive example is Publish What You Pay, a global network of civil society organizations working for greater transparency in extractive natural resource sectors, which has started a global consultation campaign to improve the inclusion of gender and women’s issues in their work.<sup>104</sup>

In addition, the Regional Certification Mechanism (RCM) adopted by the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) in Africa, which covers major conflict minerals, has included women, peace and security considerations insofar as to recognize the high levels of rape and other sexual violence towards women around militarized mining areas.<sup>105</sup> At an implementation level, the RCM identifies the need for: consultations with women’s groups; strategies for the improvement of the conditions of women working in the mine’s area of influence; and guaranteed protection of fundamental women’s rights. These are listed as “progress criteria” for certification applicable to both artisanal and industrial mining. However, these criteria are currently only monitored for the purposes of certification, with the view that ICGLR Member States implementing the RCM will one day develop and/or demonstrate the will and capacity to enforce such criteria and shut down mines and/or exporters when these criteria are not met.



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Ensuring that concessions and licenses for commercial mining and forestry operations are granted in a fair and transparent manner that yields benefits for local communities and the economy is a major challenge in peacebuilding

## Case study 5: Women's roles in the peace process in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea



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### **Women in Bougainville, PNG, spearheaded peace talks to end the bloody civil conflict that erupted over environmental contamination and the lack of equitable benefit-sharing from the Panguna copper mine**

From 1988 to 1999, the province of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea (PNG), was center stage for one of the bloodiest conflicts in the South Pacific since the end of World War II.<sup>106</sup> While a range of underlying drivers can be linked to the conflict, disputes over the distribution of costs and benefits from a large-scale mining project were central to the eruption of violence in the region. Revenues from the Panguna Mine, the world's largest open-pit copper and gold mine at the time, comprised the single largest source of income for the central government of PNG and brought enormous profits to Rio Tinto, the British-Australian company that owned it.<sup>107</sup> Not all benefited from the Panguna Mine, however, as its operations caused significant social and environmental damage to local communities.<sup>108</sup>

Concerns from surrounding communities, including encroachment on their land, environmental degradation from mining operations and demands for sharing economic revenues and jobs stemming from the mine, were initially disregarded by both the government of PNG and Rio Tinto, until violent attacks brought operations to a halt on 15 May 1989. The conflict quickly escalated, and the government deployed the military in an effort to quell uprisings led by a guerrilla force formed by the members of local clans known as the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). Fighting between BRA and the government continued for nearly a decade, with both sides accused of egregious human rights abuses. A ceasefire agreement in 1997 established Bougainville's political autonomy, but the Panguna mine remained closed.

The widespread displacement stemming from the mining operations and violence from the enduring conflict had particularly severe impacts on women. In Bougainvillean society, kinship and land inheritance are passed on through female family members, and the loss of their land struck at the heart of their matrilineal identities and livelihoods.<sup>109</sup>

Although they were largely sidelined from political engagement in the public sphere, including in the formal peace process, women spearheaded peace talks at both the local and national levels from the early stages of the crisis, providing support in the margins of official meetings and through discrete lobbying efforts. Their unique position in the family enabled them to facilitate dialogue between warring factions and in some cases, to engage directly in negotiations with local BRA units. Women's groups also developed clandestine humanitarian networks that distributed food and emergency assistance in both government and BRA-controlled areas, despite severe restrictions on movement,<sup>110</sup> and brought international attention to the crisis by engaging with influential figures in Australia and New Zealand, as well as in global fora.

During the signing of the Lincoln Agreement, which concretized further peace measures, some 50 Bougainvillean women attended the negotiations and drew up an adjoining statement, calling for greater inclusion in the peace process that read: "We, the women, hold custodial rights of our land by clan inheritance. We insist that women leaders must be party to all stages of the political process in determining the future of Bougainville."<sup>111</sup>

Following the final peace agreement negotiations in 2001, a number of women's organizations held a summit aimed at consolidating and building upon existing women's networks and informing all women of the agreement outcomes to ensure meaningful participation in the reconstruction process. Today, although female representation in the political sphere remains low, women continue to seek space for their voices to raise concerns about the potential impacts on their land and communities in the resurgent discussions on resuming mining operations.<sup>112</sup>



tend to have high exposure risks to toxic chemicals and contaminants in artisanal and small-scale mining operations as well, as discussed in further detail below.

### Artisanal and small-scale mining

Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) plays a significant role in local economies and livelihood strategies in many peacebuilding contexts, as related activities can often continue and even proliferate during conflict due to low barriers of entry (ASM generally requires few skills and little equipment). In cases such as Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia and Sierra Leone, armed forces and groups controlled the daily operations of ASM sites and used revenues to finance the conflict. ASM also forms an important part of seasonal livelihoods for many rural populations and is a potential coping mechanism for rural women in conflict-affected settings, who often have few other means of generating income. Indeed, studies show that women's participation in artisanal mining tends to increase during and after periods of violent conflict due to a decline in other economic opportunities,<sup>113</sup> as illustrated in Case study 6 on Sierra Leone.

On average, women are estimated to represent 30 per cent of artisanal miners worldwide, with the highest percentages found in Africa, where numbers range from 20 to 90 per cent.<sup>114</sup> In Mali alone, 50 per cent of the artisanal mining sector is composed of women.<sup>115</sup> It should be noted that these numbers differ significantly based on the type of ore extracted, the history of the mining site, local culture and market fluctuations.

Women play a variety of roles in artisanal mining. Where certain geomorphologic conditions are conducive, women participate in the direct extraction of ores. Recent studies by the US Geological Survey show that in west and central Africa, women are more likely to engage in artisanal diamond and gold mining where the overburden layers (soil and/or rock covering the ore deposits) are thin.<sup>116</sup> Field work by UNEP in Côte d'Ivoire, for example, observed artisanal gold mining sites run completely by women in the center-west of the country, where women worked in community groups to pan for alluvial gold deposits.<sup>117</sup> In the DRC's copperbelt region of Katanga, it is estimated that 30 per cent of women involved in the sector actually dig, while 60 per cent process the material, and 10 per cent provide transport and supply services.<sup>118</sup>

In addition to extracting ores and minerals, women are heavily involved in processing – in some areas, up to 90 per cent of processors are women – performing such tasks as grinding, sifting and sieving. They also provide ancillary services in food preparation, transportation and retail.<sup>119</sup>

Women also play a substantial role in the trade of mineral ores and gemstones. Research conducted in the province of South Kivu in eastern DRC, for instance, shows that some 70 per cent of traders of licit and illicit goods (including cassiterite, coltan, gold and copper)

in the area are women.<sup>120</sup> In general, however, women trade goods with lesser value than men and are often blocked from access to any start-up capital, credit or other technical support necessary to be able to grow their businesses.<sup>121</sup>

Artisanal mining presents significant direct health risks, particularly for processors, who are often women. In areas surrounding ASM sites, amalgamation processes are generally carried out next to the home, sometimes using cooking utensils that become contaminated with toxic materials such as cyanide and mercury, which are commonly used to extract alluvial gold and are well known to cause substantial neurological and reproductive damages. These risks to women's health have serious implications for children, families and communities.

In addition to these impacts, women's absence from political decision-making fora at both the national and local levels can result in policies that criminalize or hinder women from productively engaging in the mining sector.<sup>122</sup> Certification mechanisms for artisanal ores in eastern DRC, for example, tend to place restrictions on women's involvement in mining activities as a way of dealing with the risks and vulnerabilities that they face when trying to engage productively in the sector, as mentioned above.

Artisanal mining will remain an important source of employment and livelihoods in post-conflict settings. However, as a sector that often lacks regulation or the capacity to enforce the regulations that do exist, proper engagement and oversight are needed to ensure ASM sites do not reignite conflict. Furthermore, engagement strategies should also account for women's involvement in the sector as well as opportunities for them to engage in decision-making processes. Such factors are critical for developing appropriate safeguards that can help minimize competition between various social groups, mitigate health impacts and realize equal economic opportunities.

### Commercial forestry

Commercial forestry includes the production and sale of forested areas and timber through the leasing and exploitation of concessions to communities or private sector entities. Private sector investments in commercial forestry are common in peacebuilding settings, as capital costs are lower than for commercial mining. In such contexts, however, logging concessions are frequently granted with little community consultation due to lack of governance and enforcement capacity; even where regulations requiring such consultations do exist, they are rarely enforced, as illustrated in Case study 7 on Liberia.<sup>123</sup> While granting large tracts of forest to the private sector for commercial exploitation can cause tension or conflict where it impedes on community access to necessary livelihood resources, addressing these issues can be perilous. This is especially the case where forest resources have been used to finance conflict and where their co-option by former members of armed groups is still a risk.

## Case study 6: Women's participation in the artisanal mining sector in post-conflict Sierra Leone

During the civil war in Sierra Leone, which lasted from 1991 to 2002, over 100,000 people lost their lives, at least two million were displaced and the economy contracted an average of 4.5 per cent annually.<sup>124</sup> Although the conflict contributed to pervasive poverty across the entire population, women were – and continue to be – particularly affected by a multitude of factors, including high maternal mortality, low life expectancy, exclusion from land tenure and ownership, and limited access to credit.

In Sierra Leone today, women mostly work within the informal sector, with approximately 66 per cent of the female labor force engaged in agriculture.<sup>125</sup> To supplement their income as the economy recovers, many women have increasingly sought alternative opportunities as informal traders or artisanal miners, especially in the mineral and diamond-rich northern and eastern areas of the country: in 2008, it was estimated that in some areas up to 90 per cent of small-scale alluvial gold prospectors were women.<sup>126</sup> Women have also taken on roles in the service economy operating around the mines, such as the production and provision of food.

Although artisanal mining can provide women with additional options for generating income, it can also exacerbate inequities and have secondary effects on surrounding forests and land, with negative impacts on women's livelihoods in rural agriculture. Unregulated mining in the eastern and southern regions of the country, for example, has resulted in widespread deforestation and land degradation. Moreover, women are often marginalized at mining sites as a result of competing interests. Indeed, women's ability to capitalize on these alternative livelihood strategies depends on their access to different levels and combinations of assets, including land – yet men tend to hold and control most of the required assets, with the result that the benefits derived from artisanal mining primarily accrue to them.

Revisiting existing land tenure legislation such as the Devolution of Estates Act (2007)<sup>127</sup> will be necessary to enhancing protection for rural women working on family or chieftaincy-governed land, and improving women's empowerment in both agriculture and artisanal mining.



To supplement their income, many women in Sierra Leone have sought alternative opportunities as informal traders or artisanal miners. In 2008, it was estimated that in some areas up to 90 per cent of small-scale alluvial gold prospectors were women



## Case study 7: Women's participation in decision-making on forest management in Liberia



### In Liberia today, women remain grossly under-represented in management structures for the forest sector

During the Liberian civil wars, from 1989 to 2003, revenue from timber exports was frequently used to finance arms.<sup>128</sup> As a result, the UN imposed sanctions on Liberian logs and timber in 2001, which were lifted in 2006 when President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf issued a moratorium on industrial logging and timber exports and cancelled all forest concession agreements, pending the passage of appropriate forestry legislation.<sup>129</sup>

Two pivotal forestry laws were subsequently passed by the Liberian government: the 2006 National Forest Reform Law and the 2009 Community Rights Law (CRL). The latter created the legal framework for community engagement in forest management (using community forest management plans, among other tools).<sup>130</sup> The CRL also provided for the establishment of a Community Forestry Management Body (CFMB), a five-member entity that manages the day-to-day activities of community forest resources and oversees a Community Forest Fund that holds funds accrued from forestry activities, including fees and fines. The law states that at least one member of the body should be a woman.<sup>131</sup> Critics argue, however, that this provision is not strong or affirmative enough to ensure the equal representation of women in key decision-making.<sup>132</sup>

Indeed, the decisions of CFMBs can have broad implications for women and their access to forest resources. For example, the granting of palm oil concessions can reduce the availability of agricultural land, thus impacting food security, for which women are primarily responsible. In some cases, actual or potential loss of farmland has resulted in localized conflicts between communities and the companies managing the concessions.<sup>133</sup>

In Liberia today, women remain grossly under-represented in management structures for the forest sector. In none of the 17 established CFMBs are there more than two female members of the Community Forest Development Committee, out of ten in total. This limited representation makes it difficult for women to influence decision-making processes, especially in a culture where men have traditionally been in charge of leading and making decisions on behalf of the community.

## Part 1: Overview and analysis of key issues

In extremely poor, remote communities, the granting of concessions can result in complete loss of access to food or medicines.<sup>134</sup> Despite these consequences, rural communities are seldom fully aware of their rights as contracts are being negotiated and therefore often fail to receive compensation and other benefits. While lack of information on rights and concession-granting processes impact the community as a whole, rural women often face specific challenges in upholding their rights in the forestry sector due to a lack of land title or documentation, exclusion from decision-making fora and higher rates of illiteracy. This exclusion can be further exacerbated by a lack of sensitization and awareness-raising, particularly amongst rural or impoverished women.<sup>135</sup>

In Liberia, for example, only one of the five members of the Community Forestry Management Bodies established in each community is mandated to be a woman (see Case study 7), despite the fact that women's participation in the

concession process is guaranteed under the Community Rights Law and the Forest Reform Act of 2006. Failing to adequately include women in forest management bodies can have significant consequences for their livelihoods, as the development of commercial forestry, including plantations, can impede women's access to NTPFs, requiring them to find alternative sources of food, medicine and materials for handicrafts, which can increase their burden of responsibilities. Without a voice in decision-making processes, their specific needs and priorities risk being ignored.

Women also often face discrimination with regard to employment opportunities. In commercial plantations, where in some cases they make up the majority of workers, women are often only offered employment as under-paid, unskilled and temporary day laborers. In Sri Lanka, for example, women represent 90 per cent of workers on rubber plantations, yet enjoy few social or labor protections.<sup>136</sup>



# Part 2

Entry points and opportunities  
for peacebuilding

# P A R T 2

## Entry points and opportunities for peacebuilding

While there is ample evidence of the risks and opportunities women face with regard to access, ownership and use of natural resources during peacebuilding, programmatic responses seeking to address them remain in their infancy. Indeed, the international community's dominant focus on women as victims in conflict – particularly as victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) – has indirectly limited recognition of the dynamic and varied roles they play with regard to natural resource management and conflict mitigation, and how these could be harnessed to improve peacebuilding outcomes.

On the basis of the preceding analysis, this section proposes three entry points for peacebuilding interventions to capitalize on the opportunities presented by women's relationships to natural resources: i) political participation and governance, ii) protection and security, and iii) economic revitalization. Examples from a variety of peacebuilding contexts are provided to illustrate opportunities across different natural resource sectors.

### 2.1 Political participation and governance

Peacebuilding typically takes place in a dynamic and fluid political environment, in which transitional authorities may be established, elections prepared and national constitutions revised or rewritten. Local-level governance structures may also change as new leadership is established and local institutions are reformed. In many cases, the governance of natural resources also undergoes major reforms linked to inclusive decision-making, benefit-sharing, transparency and sustainable use. As a result, the peacebuilding phase can provide an important window of opportunity in which natural resource management can be used as an entry point to increase women's political participation.

In order for women's increased participation in natural resource management to yield enhanced outcomes in their daily lives, the discriminatory laws and policies that marginalize women and women's organizations and networks must be understood and addressed, and women's capacity to participate in decision-making bodies at the sub-national, national and regional levels must be supported. Furthermore, efforts to increase women's representation in decision-making bodies

should also target those who are highly vulnerable to shifts in resource use or access, such as women in remote areas, in specific or marginalized ethnic or indigenous groups, widows and girls.

The sub-sections below examine the structural and social barriers to women's participation in three types of political processes and institutions related to natural resource management in peacebuilding settings, and discuss opportunities to address these barriers through interventions such as quotas, access to information, sensitization of institutions at various levels and improved access to education, skills and capacity-building.

#### Formalizing women's roles in peace negotiations

The systematic engagement of women in decision-making on the management of natural resources should begin with their involvement in both formal and informal peace negotiations. This phase constitutes a critical period in which key management choices are made and frameworks guiding land and other resource-related reform processes are established. Too often, however, the specific knowledge, roles and priorities of women and women's organizations and networks go unacknowledged, limiting their opportunities to inform, influence or benefit from the negotiations. This is a missed opportunity, as early engagement in this process sets a precedent for involving women in the implementation of the various provisions of peace agreements.

The representation of women in formal peace negotiations has historically been poor: UN Women's review of 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 reveals that only four per cent of signatories have been women, and only 12 out of 585 peace agreements have referred to women's needs in rehabilitation and reconstruction.<sup>137</sup> In most cases, women are involved behind the scenes or organize their own groups as part of "informal" peace activism in an attempt to influence the formal peace process. Women often also play a valuable role in village-level peace negotiations.<sup>138</sup> For instance, women were acknowledged during the 2012 UN Security Council debate on women, peace and security as highly effective negotiators for local-level conflicts around natural resources in Sudan.<sup>139</sup>

Women's involvement in formal peace negotiations can also lead to the inclusion of natural resource management in peacebuilding processes. Experience shows that women have consistently prioritized issues of land, natural resources and environmental degradation for peacebuilding and recovery when they have been involved in negotiations.<sup>140</sup> For example, in the Darfur Peace Agreement of 2006, women emphasized the deleterious impact of war on agriculture and animal resources, and subsequently on the livelihoods of women and children.<sup>141</sup> As a result, the agreement directed the Darfur Reconstruction and Development Fund to develop mechanisms such as the creation of investment opportunities; the enhancement of productive capacities; and provision of credit, production inputs and capacity-building for women.<sup>142</sup> Similarly, the document "Women's Priorities in the Peace Process and Reconstruction in Darfur," developed by Darfuri women's organizations with the support of a UN Gender Experts Support Team, highlighted the need for alternative energy sources and for efforts to address factors contributing to environmental degradation.<sup>143</sup> Women also requested representation in government ministries dealing with natural resources, including economic planning and energy, as well as in commissions established for wealth-sharing, such as the Petroleum Commission.

Failing to engage women, as well as women's organizations and networks, in peace negotiations can also seriously limit the potential for them to benefit from resource-related reforms that follow during the peacebuilding process. Research in this area shows that the specific needs of women are often ignored in peace agreement provisions that address natural resource access and benefit-sharing.<sup>144</sup> For example, the peace agreements in East Timor, Mindanao (Philippines), Bougainville (Papua New Guinea) and Aceh (Indonesia), did not include specific provisions for women regarding land access and rights. As a result, the vulnerabilities linked to land access and ownership were exacerbated for many groups of women, including female heads of household, widows, refugees, IDPs, ex-combatants and women associated with armed forces and groups.<sup>145</sup>

Conflict resolution efforts should therefore support the ongoing work of women's groups in capacitating women to participate directly in the peace negotiation process. This may include, but is not limited to, training of women negotiators on negotiation skills and drafting of legislation and institutional policy. Beyond women's direct participation, gender expertise is needed to ensure that the legal arguments and proposals of negotiating parties take into account the potential implications for women and men, and to enable mediators and their teams to focus attention on gender issues even if participants to the talks do not raise them. The media and policy community should also be careful not to solely focus on the victimization of women in the conflict, but rather to highlight the active role women and girls can play during the peacebuilding period, and provide an outlet to articulate their specific priorities and concerns regarding natural resources.

### **Supporting women's engagement in decision-making bodies**

Decisions impacting the management of natural resources can take place at the sub-national, national and regional levels, and across a number of institutions, such as national ministries and regional representation bodies, land commissions, water resource boards or forestry committees. At the local level in particular, the knowledge and experience women may have of a particular natural resource due to their roles and responsibilities can provide a clear entry point to involve them in decision-making processes. In the Iraqi marshlands, for example, male leaders have welcomed women's participation in deciding how to manage local water resources.<sup>146</sup>

Meaningful engagement of women in local decision-making about natural resources has been shown to yield positive outcomes for their communal livelihoods and in some cases to lead to conflict mitigation. For instance in Nigeria, including women in the design, implementation and monitoring of a watershed management project (as well as on management committees) resulted in reduced travel times for water collection, allowing local women to spend more time on income-generating activities, such as farming and marketing, and providing more time for women and girls to attend school.<sup>147</sup>

One important means to increase women's participation in decision-making bodies at all levels is the establishment of quotas, which ensure that women are represented in relevant structures and help to overcome the resistance of the electorate and appointing bodies to selecting women. In Rwanda, women's membership has been mandated for all land commissions and local authorities from the village to the national level, with the result that nearly 40 per cent of land commissioners are female. In addition, Rwanda requires the presence of all registered owners of land for any sale or transfer to guard against women's land being sold without their knowledge. The inclusion of women on land surveying teams is also mandated.<sup>148</sup>

While quotas can provide an important entry point for increasing female representation in institutions governing natural resources, barriers that hinder women's full engagement in the process of decision-making must also be addressed. For instance in Burundi, quotas have helped to increase women's representation in political institutions. However, many of these positions have proven symbolic or ceremonial in nature, with male colleagues reportedly making most decisions behind closed doors.<sup>149</sup> Women's representation in decision-making bodies is clearly only the first step; equally critical is ensuring that they are actually empowered in the decision-making process.

In Rwanda, women engaged very early in land reform as part of the recovery process. As a first step, between March and October 2006, the government of Rwanda implemented a trial land reform process at the district, sector and cell (village) levels that consulted both men and women. The approach served to build confidence in the overall reform process and ensured that both the



## Case study 8: Supporting sustainable livelihoods for women through natural resource management in Burundi

The signing of the Arusha Peace Accords in 2000 brought decades of insecurity and conflict in Burundi to a close.<sup>150</sup> Although recovery is slowly progressing, inequitable access to land continues to contribute to deep-rooted poverty in the country, perpetuating mistrust in the government and political elites – one of the multiple causes that led to armed conflict in the country.<sup>151</sup>

At the height of the conflict, groups of people escaping violence fled to the Kibira forest, causing massive damage to its ecosystem through illegal exploitation of the forest's resources as a means of survival. To reverse this, the grassroots organization *Association Femmes et Environnement au Burundi* (AFEB), with the support of the Small Grants Programme of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and UNDP, took up the challenge of replanting native and eucalyptus trees in the forest. Together with approximately 1,300 women and around 100 men who depended on the Kibira forest for their subsistence during the conflict, the organization planted over 400,000 new trees during 2011 and 2012.<sup>152</sup>

Tree-planting in Kibira is not only a strong symbolic gesture of the importance of conserving the environment; participants in the project have also benefited from the process through a contract signed between AFEB and the local authorities to guarantee that, once harvested, 70 per cent of the income created by the eucalyptus trees would return to the association for further investment into similar local initiatives.<sup>153</sup> The women and men participating in the project thus had an incentive to restore and manage their environment, as they benefited from related revenues. Another positive outcome is that the project has provided a space for women to discuss other crucial issues, such as family planning and how to use the sustainable management of forests and other natural resources to help prevent resource-related conflict in the future.



Together with approximately 1,300 women and 100 men, the grassroots organization *Association Femmes et Environnement au Burundi* planted over 400,000 new trees in the Kibira forest during 2011 and 2012 to combat deforestation resulting from the conflict

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## Case study 9: Engaging women in natural resource management and conflict resolution processes in South Kordofan, Sudan



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**Engaging women in natural resource management could help foster more inclusive decision-making processes in South Kordofan, Sudan, where women pastoralists have been recognized as being particularly influential in managing conflict**

Conflict in Sudan has spanned almost 50 years. Although the establishment of the Republic of South Sudan on 9 July 2011 officially marked the final stage of a six-year peace agreement, many critical issues remain unresolved.<sup>154</sup> Decades of violent civil war followed by a fragile peace have disrupted traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and left numerous localized conflicts unsettled.

In South Kordofan, a province of the Republic of Sudan situated along the country's southern border, tensions related to grazing lands and water access remain high. The expansion of mechanized farming is further compounding these grievances.<sup>155</sup> The region is plagued with low rates of literacy, minimal access to healthcare services and pervasive poverty, and has historically faced tensions along pastoral corridors. Further challenges are emerging as the availability of natural resources continues to decline:<sup>156</sup> variable rainfall, recurrent drought, increasing competition over scarce resources and uneven governance have led to increasingly strained relations between local farmers and pastoralist groups.<sup>157</sup>

In response to these mounting tensions, SOS Sahel, an international NGO working in partnership with local NGOs, has implemented a resource-based conflict reduction programme in South Kordofan focused on engaging youth and women in natural resource management and conflict resolution processes. Pastoralist systems in South Kordofan rely on seasonal transhumance through livestock corridors and thus require a high degree of cooperation among various livelihood groups to function properly. However, the institutional mechanisms that previously facilitated this cooperation have been weakened due to the erosion of traditional leaders' authority over land allocation and conflict management. Additionally, the lack of a coherent institutional framework through which to address land issues has served to further undermine people's livelihoods, security and sense of identity. These factors, coupled with altered migration patterns and increased livestock densities, have caused tensions among pastoralists and farmers, often inciting conflicts along livestock corridors.

With these traditional governance structures in flux, opportunities exist to foster more inclusive decision-making processes and promote equitable access through the systematic engagement of women and youth. In fact, women pastoralists have been recognized as being particularly influential in managing conflict, yet remain largely excluded from traditional decision-making processes.<sup>158</sup> To address this, SOS Sahel adopted an entry point system for approaching marginalized groups, first by engaging the community on more general issues and then seeking permission from traditional leaders to involve women and youth.

Through a series of training workshops and meetings, SOS Sahel began educating women on concepts of conflict reduction and peacebuilding in order to promote a common understanding of processes and knowledge of available tools. From these interventions, steering groups with women representatives were developed and community structures were registered as legal bodies in accordance with Sudanese regulations. Such legal standing enables committees to carry out voluntary work on behalf of their communities, including the demarcation of corridors, which is a critical component for peacebuilding and conflict reduction. Moreover, facilitating this dialogue has enabled a broader discourse on alternative means for conflict resolution, which is particularly important for women in pastoralist communities, as they have at times been vocal advocates of violence, encouraging youth to solve disputes by force.



scope and content of interventions were informed and supported by factual evidence from the local level. The outcome included a compulsory land registration system that is both participatory and community-led, and that serves to protect particularly marginalized categories of women and girls – including widows, young unmarried women, orphans and those in non-legal marriages – by requiring men living with women or in polygamous relationships to share land and property equally with each woman. This system has led to a significant increase in women’s formal tenure over land: as of April 2012, private land owners in Rwanda consist of 11 per cent single women, five per cent single men, and 83 per cent married couples who own the land jointly.<sup>159</sup>

Ensuring women’s engagement in decision-making processes often requires confronting deeply embedded socio-cultural barriers. Significant negative cultural beliefs and practices entrenched in society can create resistance, especially where the allocation of economically valuable natural resources is concerned. Furthermore, low literacy rates, particularly in rural women, can constitute an obstacle to participation and prevent awareness of the potential impacts specific decisions can have on their lives. Programme designers should be careful not to consider literacy a barrier for women’s participation, however; after all, many illiterate men participate in decision-making fora.

In spite of these barriers, women can be key proponents of sustainable natural resource management: as Case study 8 from Burundi shows that women can be actively engaged to organize and implement sustainable resource management interventions that support their livelihoods in peacebuilding settings.

### **Capitalizing on women’s leadership in civil society**

Civil society organizations (CSOs), as well as women’s positions within communities, can provide important entry points for promoting women’s interests in natural resource sectors during the peacebuilding phase.<sup>160</sup> During and after periods of violent conflict, such organizations often fill important gaps created by the collapse of formal institutions and provide much needed support and services to various groups, including women. As such, they have a strong connection to the realities on the ground, including those related to the management of key natural resources, and constitute a significant source of information for decision-making. At the same time, it should never be assumed that any one organization represents the full spectrum of women’s interests.<sup>161</sup> To fully understand women’s priorities and roles in peacebuilding, it is critical to work with a variety of groups and networks that are directly engaged with women at the local level.

Given women’s dependence on natural resources, CSOs often prioritize women’s rights and access to these resources as key issues. They can thus provide an important vehicle for communicating and advocating for

improvements in these areas during the peacebuilding process. For example, *Synergie des Associations Féminines du Congo*, a Congolese coalition of women, is working to develop a peace agenda and national action plan that prioritizes solar energy, water and sanitation, farm and livestock management and eco-tourism potential.<sup>162</sup> CSOs that seek to build women’s capacity in conflict resolution can also have positive outcomes for peace and the sustainable management of natural resources, as highlighted in Case study 9.

Women’s roles as community organizers also provide an avenue to improve their access to local-level decision-making fora. Private sector actors operating in peacebuilding contexts have increasingly capitalized on women’s capacity in this regard. In the case of the Ok Tedi mine in Papua New Guinea, for example, the mining company recognized that women were critical to ensuring that the communities used funds productively and sought to establish a women’s delegation midway through the negotiations on compensation agreements. The outcome of the negotiations included 10 per cent of revenues to be earmarked for women and children’s issues, a guarantee that 50 per cent of all community scholarship funds would go to girls, and increased political representation by women on key local governance bodies.<sup>163</sup> Placement of these funds in family accounts, to which women were signatories, also ensured that women had greater access to the funds. Systematically including women in negotiations between communities and extractive companies can also help ensure that appropriate and responsible measures are taken to protect the health and safety of impacted communities.

In conflict-affected countries, companies often provide an organized framework within a weak state structure that can enable women to engage in decision-making processes to which they might not otherwise have access. Encouraging these gains while at the same time working to remediate gender inequalities that may manifest through poverty, low levels of education, limited mobility and lack of access to information can help foster women’s effective participation in this space.

## **2.2 Protection and security**

Women in conflict and post-conflict settings often face significant risks when carrying out daily tasks, many of which involve tending to or collecting various natural resources, such as fuel wood or water. Population pressures in and around refugee and IDP camps, for instance, can lead to deforestation and water shortages, thereby requiring women to venture further and further away from camps, exacerbating their risk. Experience shows that failure by relief operations, peacekeeping or peacebuilding interventions to understand and respond to the specific risks and vulnerabilities faced by women and men in the aftermath of conflict can result in continued exposure to insecurity and violence, ultimately undermining recovery.

## Case study 10: Protecting women from exposure to sexual violence while gathering natural resources in Darfur

Sexual violence is prevalent in many conflict-affected settings and has devastating impacts on individuals, families and communities. Reliable data on trends and attacks remain scarce, however, due in part to the social stigma attached to sexual violence.<sup>164</sup> In Darfur, Sudan, following the crisis that left some 2.3 million people displaced,<sup>165</sup> many internally displaced women and girls were subjected to rape, harassment and other forms of violence when they left the camps to collect essential natural resources for their daily tasks, namely fire wood and water. This risk was exacerbated by the resulting environmental degradation, which forced women to travel farther – three to six miles or more, three to five times per week – to find a single tree.<sup>166</sup>

In an effort to mitigate the risk and prevalence of such attacks, peacekeepers and humanitarian agencies started implementing measures to reduce women and girls' exposure and enhance awareness of the attacks within camps and among peacekeepers. For instance, a gender unit within the UN-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) provided a weeklong training course to the military and police component of the mission on gender-based violence. Given the limited capacity of military and police, providing such training was a critical first step for increasing awareness.

UNAMID also sought to increase the number of female officers within the peacekeeping mission itself. Currently, women account for less than four per cent of UN peacekeeping troops globally.<sup>167</sup> Deploying more female peacekeepers is critical to a more gender-sensitive protection response, as female peacekeepers can often access and interview women and girls more easily when cultural norms inhibit men from similar interactions.<sup>168</sup> This can also enable the provision of all-female safe spaces in which female victims of sex and gender-based violence can discuss their experiences.

Although armed escorts that could accompany women in collecting water and fuel wood were proposed, a lack of resources and capacity limited the provision of such services. Rather, women were encouraged to change the time of day in which they carried out these activities, so as to confuse local armed groups executing the attacks, who timed them to women's daily routines.

International organizations, UN entities and governments can also work to reduce the risk of sexual violence during these daily activities by promoting more efficient technologies and supporting sustainable livelihoods. In this respect, UNAMID is supporting a water project in eight villages of North Darfur,<sup>169</sup> in which 30,000 rolling water containers with a capacity of 75 liters each have been distributed to women in the communities.<sup>170</sup> While the project is principally focused on facilitating female residents' access to water, such technologies can help minimize the time women spend fetching water, thereby limiting their exposure to potential attacks. Other examples include the introduction of fuel-efficient cook stoves: the Rwandan contingent of UNAMID's predecessor, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), worked with local women in Darfur to build fuel-efficient clay stoves (*rondrezas*) traditionally used in Rwanda, which reduced the need for fire wood by up to 80 per cent.<sup>171</sup>



Sudanese women from Kassab IDP Camp in Kutum, North Darfur, venture out to collect firewood. Due to their traditional roles in collecting natural resources for household use, women IDPs are often at risk of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by armed groups or criminals

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### Case study 11: The perils of the charcoal trade in North Kivu, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo



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**Charcoal remains the primary source of household energy in the province of North Kivu, the area at the heart of the protracted conflict in DRC. Making charcoal in the often remote forest exposes women to the risk of sexual violence**

The role of extractive resources (including high-value minerals) in the protracted conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been well documented.<sup>172</sup> However, renewable natural resources, such as land, water, timber and non-timber forest products, also play a pivotal role in the local economy and livelihoods – particularly for women, who gather and transform these resources for household use and sale in local markets.

Charcoal remains the primary source of household energy in the province of North Kivu, the area at the heart of the conflict. Most of the charcoal in North Kivu is produced by women and is derived from timber that is extracted illegally from the forests surrounding and inside Virunga National Park – Africa's oldest national park and home to some of the world's last remaining mountain gorillas. Making charcoal in the often remote forest exposes women to the risk of sexual violence and rape.<sup>173</sup> Even though many rapes go unreported, a study by the American Journal of Public Health found that at least 12 per cent of women in DRC have reported being raped at least once in their lifetime, and that this number is much higher in North Kivu.<sup>174</sup>

Women also face security and personal risks from transporting charcoal, as the charcoal trade routes are controlled and taxed by armed groups. Not only do they typically carry quantities of up to 100 kilograms on their heads for distances of five to ten kilometers several times a week, resulting in chronic neck and spinal injuries,<sup>175</sup> but the profits generated from the sale of charcoal are often only enough to buy daily food rations for their families.

In spite of the clear link between women's reliance on natural resources for daily subsistence and the significant security risks they face, there is limited funding for programmes in eastern DRC to increase women's access to alternative cooking fuels or improved cook stoves. While such interventions cannot alone stem the relentless insecurity faced by women in the region, they could contribute to reducing their exposure to violence and physical injury.



## Case study 12: Improving women's health and reducing deforestation in Afghanistan

Every day, some three billion people around the world cook on open fires or use cook stoves fueled by biomass (e.g. wood, crop waste, animal dung) or coal.<sup>176</sup> This can result in a number of environmental problems, including deforestation, and cause significant health and security risks as well as economic burdens, particularly for women who are largely tasked with fuel collection and cooking. In fact, the World Health Organization estimates that nearly two million people die prematurely each year due to indoor air pollution from cooking.<sup>177</sup> In addition to these damaging health effects, UNEP estimates that inefficient cook stoves are responsible for approximately 25 per cent of black carbon emissions, often known as soot, of which 40 per cent is linked to wood burning.<sup>178</sup> These emissions exacerbate existing air pollution and contribute to global warming.

In Afghanistan, women and children spend significant time indoors during the harsh winters, where they inevitably inhale large quantities of smoke produced by traditional cook stoves and ovens. Women interviewed in local villages unanimously ranked smoke in the kitchen as their most significant problem, followed closely by price of fuel and availability of food and warmth.<sup>179</sup> In response, the Conservation Organization for the Afghan Mountains, in partnership with UNEP and with support from the Embassy of Finland and the Linda Norgrove Foundation, joined the Global Alliance for Clean Cook Stoves to design and test a new stove that could heat houses as well as bake bread, boil water and cook food. Training was provided to women on the operation and maintenance of the stoves, as well as the manufacturing of fuel for income.

Compared to traditional stoves, clean cook stoves consume 60 per cent less fuel, create no smoke and are shown to reduce burning accidents, a particular health risk for children.<sup>180</sup> In Afghanistan, the increased efficiency and improved design has helped to reduce pressures on the surrounding vegetation, thereby mitigating the impacts of natural hazards such as flooding, drought and avalanches, which are particularly severe for disadvantaged groups. Reduced fuel requirements also mean that women and children can spend less time collecting shrubs, which detracts valuable time from other productive activities and can put them at a higher security risk.

This example illustrates that even simple technologies can deliver multiple co-benefits for women's quality of life and the prevention of environmental degradation, which in turn can improve community resilience and support sustainable development. They can also provide women with an opportunity to hone their entrepreneurial skills and engage in economic activity: as the primary managers of natural resource in many conflict-affected settings, women can play a unique role in the adoption and use of such technologies by leveraging existing networks for distribution, marketing and sales.<sup>181</sup>



Women and children spend significant time indoors during the harsh winter season in Afghanistan, often inhaling large quantities of smoke produced by traditional cooking devices. Clean cook stoves consume 60 per cent less fuel, create no smoke and are shown to reduce the risk of burning accidents for children



As illustrated by Case study 10 on Darfur, however, these risks can be reduced by building awareness of aid and peacekeeping actors to the threats faced by women while gathering natural resources, as well as by promoting innovative technologies that reduce resource demands within conflict-affected communities.

In addition to these measures, peacekeepers and national counterparts can also create secure boundaries and transport to areas most frequented by women. This may include public investment in the removal of land mines where women and young girls collect forest resources or farm. Within camps themselves, this can also involve ensuring women's safety when using water points and sanitation facilities, which has been noted as a rising problem in Syrian refugee camps in Jordan, where women and girls have faced sexual assault when using camp bathrooms at night.<sup>182</sup>

Ensuring infrastructure projects are developed in consultation with women can also help minimize sex-based crimes. Women in areas of protracted conflict often face daily risks when transporting saleable products such as charcoal from forests, as illustrated in Case study 11 from the DRC. In Afghanistan, women have sought private road-rest areas to avoid such risks, but in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone, road insecurity has put women traders at risk of attack and rape when going to and from markets.<sup>183</sup> Improving this security scenario can multiply the range of economic and social activities in which women are able to participate, from selling in market places to community organizing, providing social services, and other economic activities.

To address the constant risks faced by women with regard to harvesting natural resources in relief settings, a coalition of organizations led by the Women's Refugee Commission has succeeded in placing safe cooking fuel on the same level of priority as water and food on the humanitarian agenda for camp management.<sup>184</sup> These efforts have led to the promotion of improved cook stoves, which use less wood and charcoal, minimizing environmental degradation and reducing the amount of smoke and indoor air pollution.

Other organizations are now seeking to expand the reach of such initiatives worldwide, including in peacebuilding contexts. For example, the Global Alliance for Clean Cook Stoves, which is hosted by the United Nations Foundation, aims to increase investments, innovation and operations to drive a global market for cook stoves by 2020. Case study 12 from Afghanistan illustrates how the approach can be applied in conflict-affected settings.

Physical threats to women can also arise in areas where local conflicts flare up over disputed access to natural resources. Water points and grazing lands, for instance, can become potential flashpoints for violent conflict that put women at particular risk while carrying out their daily tasks. Appropriate responses to these risks can benefit the community as a whole: as the work of Catholic Relief Services in Darfur illustrates, providing separate and more secure water access points for agriculturalists

and pastoralist has had the secondary effect of reducing women's risks when accessing water.<sup>185</sup> Such measures take into account the vulnerabilities of women in relation to water use, and their role in water management, particularly at the local level.

Finally, engagement and sensitization of men and men's groups are widely recognized as key components of implementing gender-sensitive interventions in conflict-affected and peacebuilding contexts.<sup>186</sup> Recent efforts in this regard have included the "One Man Can" campaign in Sudan, where men have been engaged in sensitization, education and communication campaigns to stop violence against women.<sup>187</sup> These efforts encourage men to speak directly to other community members about the impact of violence against women and to help reduce it by confronting the social norms that allow it to continue.

### 2.3 Economic revitalization

In September 2013, the UN Peacebuilding Commission adopted a Declaration recognizing that the "economic empowerment of women greatly contributes to the effectiveness of post-conflict economic activities and economic growth, and leads to improving the quality and social outcomes of economic recovery measures and policies as well as to sustainable development."<sup>188</sup>

However, consideration of these issues as part of national development plans, economic policies and other peacebuilding interventions has remained a gap to date, as women's economic recovery has generally not been prioritized. Indeed, research by the OECD-DAC shows that development aid to the economic and productive sectors (e.g. banking, business, agriculture, transport) in 2009-2010 was less focused on gender equality as compared to other sectors: only two per cent of this aid targeted gender equality as its principal objective. This relatively low focus on gender equality in the economic and productive sectors was even more pronounced in fragile and conflict-affected states.<sup>189</sup>

In rural areas, where women's productivity is often directly dependent on natural resources, supporting women's economic empowerment includes strengthening their ability to capitalize on their natural resource management roles. This is even more important in conflict and post-conflict settings, where women's roles frequently shift or expand to take on income-generating activities traditionally reserved for men. Capitalizing on these shifts is not only essential to supporting women's economic recovery, but can also lead to better peacebuilding outcomes.

This section examines economic revitalization interventions that have implications for both gender and natural resource management in peacebuilding. These include legal protection of land and resource rights, and entry points for addressing barriers to women's employment in natural resource sectors.

### Laying the foundation: Legal protection of land and resource rights for women

Legal protection of productive assets and resource user rights ensure that women and men can successfully transform natural resources into economic opportunities. For women in peacebuilding contexts, a lack of land rights is often the most significant barrier to realizing improved economic opportunities, as discussed in Part 1. Protecting women's rights to land and landed assets, such as cash crops, is therefore key to promoting their economic empowerment, though this task depends largely on proper implementation and differs in every context.

In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, women's land ownership rights are protected in both statutory and customary laws, though in practice women remain disadvantaged in both systems.<sup>190</sup> Their claims have been further undermined by years of conflict over land between ethnic groups, which was exacerbated by the ten-year civil conflict, resulting in widespread displacement. In the context of Côte d'Ivoire, where access to land is critical for women to be able to produce food crops for direct consumption and market sale – the main source of economic livelihood for women in rural areas – lack of protection of land rights inherently denies them opportunities for economic independence.<sup>191</sup>

In Colombia on the other hand, efforts are ongoing to address reparations and restitution of land to victims of conflict and displacement following the passage of the Victims and Land Restitution Law in 2011. For women especially, the implementation of the law offers a chance to reclaim land and receive reparations for lost economic assets. Due to the protracted nature of the conflict in Colombia, the implementation of the law is fraught with complexity (see Case study 13). In spite of this, the Colombian Special Administrative Unit for the Attention and Comprehensive Reparation of Victims is working throughout the country to ensure that eligible men and women receive reparations for land wherever possible.

For legal protection to effectively yield improved economic opportunities for women, both women and men must be aware of the law and empowered to use it. Legal aid programmes are an effective tool for increasing women's awareness of their resource rights. When combined with additional efforts at redressing power imbalances, such as supporting the work of community organizations and other activities that promote communal identity and economic opportunities (cooperatives, microcredit groups or vocational training groups), women and other marginalized groups stand a much greater chance of realizing economic opportunities.

### Breaking down barriers: Women's wage and self-employment in natural resource sectors

Natural resource sectors provide significant sustainable employment opportunities for women in conflict-affected settings. However, women often face considerable barriers to accessing both wage and self-employment,

as well as other income-generating opportunities that arise as part of peacebuilding efforts. This was recently recognized by the UN Peacebuilding Commission in its Declaration on Women's Economic Empowerment for Peacebuilding, which calls upon Member States to "take measures to promote sustainable livelihoods for households led by women [...] in post-conflict societies, including through financial support and access to productive resources and sustainable income-generating activities," and stresses the "importance of assisting post-conflict countries in creating favorable conditions that can generate decent jobs for women."<sup>192</sup>

Addressing these barriers requires concise and complementary efforts by national and local-level authorities early on in peacebuilding contexts, as detailed in the three-track approach of the United Nations Policy for Post-conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration, which includes immediate emergency employment and income-generation activities (Track A), capacity-building and improved access to credit for small business growth (Track B), and the creation of non-discriminatory employment policies (Track C), implemented in parallel with different intensities over time (see Figure 1).<sup>193</sup>

As a first step, comprehensive assessments to better understand the specific needs and opportunities for women across various natural resource sectors, and to establish a baseline for monitoring, are crucial to ensuring that women are targeted effectively and that impact is properly measured. Depending on the needs identified, peacebuilding efforts can then comprise a range of interventions. For example, women's ability to develop natural resource-related small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in peacebuilding settings can be enhanced through education and skills training, as well as access to finance, including savings groups, small grants or start-up packages. The inclusion of women in value chain development in natural resource sectors (both renewable and non-renewable) also constitutes an important element of economic revitalization initiatives.

Low levels of formal education remain a significant barrier for women's employment in natural resource management sectors. Indeed, low literacy rates, which are common among women in conflict-affected states, can limit comprehension of legal or policy developments that may regulate or affect their economic activities<sup>194</sup> and complicate negotiations with banks or lending institutions. This can severely hinder women's ability to access credit for supplies, tools or other necessary goods,<sup>195</sup> ultimately undermining the contributions that women's businesses can make to post-conflict economic revitalization. A study by FAO estimates, for example, that giving women farmers the same access to assets and credit as men could help increase their yields by 20-30 per cent, indicating that the potential of agriculture as an engine for economic growth and peace dividend as a whole could be increased by targeting female farmers.<sup>196</sup>

## Case study 13: Land reparations for rural and indigenous women in Colombia

Land has been central to the conflict in Colombia, where an estimated three to five million people have been displaced and dispossessed of their land by the transformation of agricultural areas for cocoa cultivation by armed groups over the last 40 years. Although both women and men have been left in a precarious situation regarding rights to property,<sup>197</sup> the civil conflict has particularly challenged women's access and rights to land through direct displacement, targeted killings and until recently, a lack of legal structures to support reparation of land losses. In the department of Norte de Santander in north-eastern Colombia, which experienced some of the highest levels of violence, paramilitary groups regularly dispossessed women of their property, animals and other farm and household assets.<sup>198</sup>

In response, the local branch of the National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women of Colombia (ANMUCIC), a group of women rural leaders, began working in Norte de Santander in the 1990s to support the livelihoods of its members and their families. In the villages and the urban area of El Zulia, for example, ANMUCIC members received a piece of land in 1990 as a fifty-year loan that granted tenure for the creation of a farming project by the Colombian Institute for Agrarian Reform. This land not only represented economic opportunity, but was also closely tied to the members' identity as women and people. However, sustained violence in the region led to their illegal expropriation, and attempts to recover the property only increased threats of violence.

In June 2011, Colombia ratified a Victims and Land Restitution Law (Law 1448/11) facilitating the restitution of land that was stolen or lost as a result of displacement during the conflict. Additionally, the law provides reparations for victims of conflict-related human rights abuses.<sup>199</sup> Under the new law, the members of ANMUCIC are eligible for collective reparations for being dispossessed of their land, as well as for the threats, killings and forced displacement that they endured. With support from the Colombian Special Administrative Unit for the Attention and Comprehensive Reparation of Victims and the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Association has been able to make progress on the identification of damages it has suffered as a result of the conflict.<sup>200</sup> Ensuring that the ANMUCIC women are successful in claiming reparations that sufficiently reflect the damage they suffered in terms of violence and lost livelihood opportunities would be an important benchmark for enforcing the rights guaranteed by the new law to the most vulnerable groups. If successful in accessing reparations for its members, the case of ANMUCIC in Norte de Santander could provide a positive legal precedent for other groups of women in similar situations.<sup>201</sup>



Members of the National Association of Rural, Afrocolombian and Indigenous Women of Colombia mark the beginning of a collective reparations process under the Victims and Land Restitution Act, which represents an important opportunity for returning land that was unlawfully taken during the conflict

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## Case study 14: Investing in women to support food security in Côte d'Ivoire



Despite the key role they play in food production and marketing, as seen here in Treichville, Abidjan, female farmers in Côte d'Ivoire rarely use microcredit schemes or government subsidies due to their limited access to technical training and inputs

The civil conflict that plagued Côte d'Ivoire between 2002 and 2011 is rooted in a mix of highly politicized land pressures and ethnic tensions. Open door immigration policies intended to encourage growth in key export sectors (mostly cocoa and coffee) led to the influx of migrants in the 1960s and 1970s, setting the stage for subsequent land conflicts between self-identified indigenous groups and those originating from the wider West African region. At the peak of the electoral crisis in 2011, approximately one million people were internally displaced and 200,000 Ivoirian refugees had fled the country.<sup>202</sup> Since the end of this crisis in April 2011, large numbers of land disputes – at times violent – have occurred, often exacerbated by the return of refugees and internally displaced people.

Since then, declining productivity in cash crop sectors, coupled with lower market prices, has exacerbated competition for land and limited the available space for the cultivation of food crops. In Côte d'Ivoire, where women provide 60-80 per cent of food production and trade,<sup>203</sup> such pressures have particular consequences for women's livelihoods as well as for food security more broadly.<sup>204</sup>

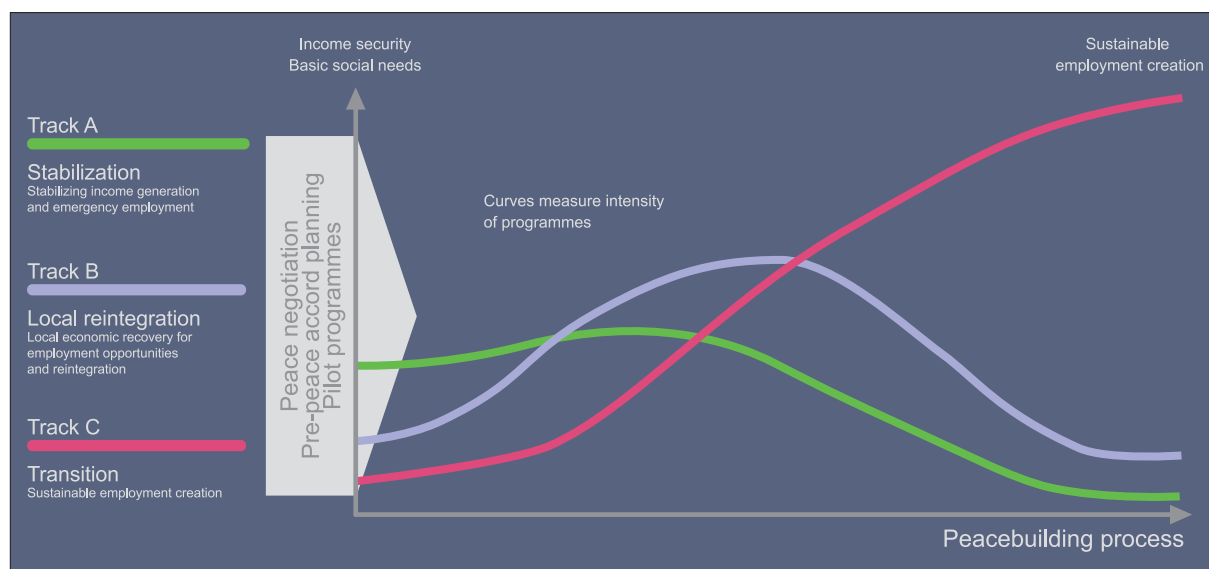
The role of women in the agricultural sector is further challenged by persisting insecurity on roads, limited access to markets and financial structures, high rates of illiteracy and land tenure insecurity. For example, a female-led cooperative operating nation-wide reported to UNEP that they had been waiting for over a year for a final decision despite meeting all the bank loan qualifications.<sup>205</sup> Female-led subsistence cooperatives also suffer from limited access to technical training and inputs and enjoy less formal recognition than cash crop cooperatives. As a result, opportunities to tap into alternative financial mechanisms such as microcredit schemes or government subsidies remain underutilized.

The government has undertaken efforts to address discriminatory laws for women's access to land through amendments in the marriage law, although the impact has been negligible, particularly in rural communities where statutory presence is weak and knowledge of formal land rights is severely limited. Furthermore, while the government has prioritized food production and food security in key planning documents, such as the National Development Plan and the National Agricultural Investment Plan, the issue has been approached predominantly from an economic perspective, without consideration for the larger social factors that contribute to the problem, such as women's lack of access to land, seeds, markets and credit.

National private sector-led growth strategies for the agricultural sector, supported by the World Bank, also do not adequately target women, in which women represent only 17 per cent of the beneficiaries.<sup>206</sup> Such investment strategies should be reviewed and implemented with a view to empowering women to become more productive economic agents in a sector they actually dominate. Investments should also be accompanied with targeted training and education programmes for women.



Figure 1: One programme on three concurrent tracks



Yet support for women’s productive activities in the agricultural sector is often sorely lacking in peacebuilding contexts.<sup>207</sup> In rural Côte d’Ivoire for instance, where women play a pivotal role in the production and distribution of food crops, national efforts to increase agricultural productivity through the provision of improved seeds or farming and management training have largely centered on traditionally male-dominated cash crops such as cocoa, palm oil and rubber.<sup>208</sup> Women frequently find themselves having to negotiate temporary use of marginal land to grow their crops and lack access to productive inputs.<sup>209</sup> In this case, technical support, access to productive land and access to financial resources could greatly help improve women’s productivity (see Case study 14).

In other cases, collective organizing can help provide women with the support needed to grow their activities and find alternative access to capital. In Namibia for example, linking a women’s cooperative directly to the buyers of its marula oil and targeting “niche” fair-trade markets has resulted in the cooperative capturing five times the normal value-added rate of return.<sup>210</sup> Similar approaches can be used to gain access to communal natural resources. Case study 14 highlights some of the economic and legal challenges that can be addressed to help women engage productively in the agricultural sector, even when they do not own land.

Peacebuilding programmes should also be careful to consider women’s roles in other informal employment sectors discussed in Part 1, especially where efforts are being made to formalize them. In the ASM sector, for instance, efforts to identify and organize ASM miners often target those working in the mines (some of whom may be women), but tend to neglect women working in secondary service sectors.<sup>211</sup> Furthermore, as women tend to be relegated to mining the least valuable deposit areas in a mining site, they often cannot amass the

collateral necessary for bank loans that would help grow their businesses.

To be effective, it is essential that all livelihoods and economic revitalization programmes targeting women be grounded in a thorough understanding of the obstacles presented by women’s household responsibilities or prevailing cultural norms,<sup>212</sup> as these may limit women’s employability in certain natural resource sectors: cultural norms or perceptions of what is appropriate may dissuade women from engaging in sectors such as mining or forestry, for example; women may also be less “employable” in areas where their mobility is restricted due to the need for consent from male relatives to take public transport.<sup>213</sup>

Finally, although it is often challenging for women to engage directly in them, community infrastructure development and rehabilitation projects can play an important role in improving the enabling conditions for women’s economic recovery. Indeed, evidence from Nepal shows that road infrastructure can lead to substantial indirect economic benefits for women, including in terms of their ability to establish or grow SMEs by participating in local women’s credit and microfinance groups or gaining access to markets.<sup>214</sup> Development of all basic service infrastructure, however, should be accompanied by consultations with a variety of women’s groups, taking specific steps to accommodate women from marginal or stigmatized groups, with regular review processes to ensure that interventions actually meet women’s needs.

Similarly, access to sustainable energy can be important for small business development and women’s economic independence, particularly if women are engaged in decision-making. In both Sierra Leone and Afghanistan, the India-based Barefoot College has teamed up with

local women to train them as solar panel engineers, allowing them to run micro-enterprises charging mobile telephones.<sup>215</sup> Barefoot College is also using mobile phones – which are more and more common in rural communities worldwide – to support water quality monitoring systems. This type of intervention is particularly relevant for peacebuilding contexts, where shares of aid budgets targeting gender equality-related interventions in infrastructure sectors are typically very small (only 10 per cent of total aid in 2007-2008 from OECD-DAC contributing members, for example).<sup>216</sup>

Ultimately, livelihoods recovery programmes in peacebuilding contexts should seek to respond to

women's specific needs and ensure that they are able to access the financial and technical resources necessary to support themselves in the natural resource sectors. This requires careful assessments of women's roles in these sectors, with specific attention paid to informal activities. At the policy level, this entails the inclusion of women's specific activities in efforts to direct support to specific economic sectors, as well as representation of women from varied socio-economic groups. This is especially important in areas where the economy is heavily dependent on natural resources, as women's livelihoods and well-being, as well as that of their families, hinge on their ability to use natural resources as productive assets.



# Conclusions and recommendations



# Conclusions and recommendations

This report presents an overview of the challenges faced by many women with regard to natural resources in post-conflict contexts, and an initial identification of the opportunities for enhancing women's empowerment through natural resource management in the peacebuilding phase. While it is acknowledged from the outset that each peacebuilding setting is different – as gender dynamics, culture, land rights and tenure systems, legal frameworks, economic opportunities and the social toll of violent conflict differ greatly from one country to another – it is clear from the evidence presented in this report that women's empowerment can be supported through more secure access and rights to natural resources, especially land. Women's involvement in the management of natural resources also constitutes a critical entry point for supporting their increased participation in decision-making. Together with promoting more inclusive governance, harnessing women's economic potential can contribute to stronger recovery and more effective peacebuilding.

More specifically, the main conclusions of this report are as follows:

- **Coupled with gender discrimination, conflict-related changes to natural resource access, use and control can significantly increase women's vulnerability and undermine their recovery.** In many conflict-affected contexts, women's livelihoods and their ability to meet expectations for their gendered roles and responsibilities are directly dependent upon natural resources. Constraints in their access and rights to these resources, or degradation of the quality of natural resources, can force them into increasingly marginalized situations with higher levels of personal risk. The structural discrimination and barriers to entry that women face regarding resource rights and access also limit their economic productivity, thereby hindering their recovery.
- **Lack of access and rights to land lie at the heart of women's poverty and exclusion, limiting their ability to benefit equally from peacebuilding processes and to invest in community welfare.** Land underpins rights to all other natural resources and is a key asset for securing access to productive inputs. Women's ability to inherit, own and contest rights to land is therefore critical for them to recover from

conflict and contribute to peacebuilding, especially considering the large number of female-headed households in conflict-affected settings. Peace negotiations and peacebuilding efforts often fail to consider these implications, which can deepen women's marginalization.

- **Failure to recognize the specific natural resource-related challenges and opportunities for women in conflict-affected settings can perpetuate discrimination and exacerbate inequality in the peacebuilding period.** The accumulation of biases that women typically face in conflict-affected contexts, including exclusion from decision-making and governance, lack of investment in women's and girls' education and insufficient capacity-building, can prevent them from effectively placing their natural resource needs on the political agenda. This begins with marginalization from peace negotiations and can extend throughout the peacebuilding process. As a result, women's resource-related concerns and the unique risks they face often go unaddressed, potentially posing challenges for sustainable peace and recovery.
- **In the peacebuilding period, natural resource management provides a key entry point for enhancing women's empowerment by capitalizing on shifting gender roles and investing in women's productive capacity.** In times of conflict, coping strategies may require women to assume new roles and responsibilities related to natural resources, which can contribute to breaking down existing barriers to their political, social and economic participation. Unless they are recognized and supported in the peacebuilding phase, these potential gains are easily reversed, yet economic revitalization programmes often allocate the lowest amount of funding for women's specific needs and issues, including those related to natural resources.<sup>217</sup>

To respond to these risks and seize opportunities in the peacebuilding period, it is recommended that the following actions be taken by national governments and the international community:

1. **Promote women's participation in formal and informal decision-making structures and governance processes related to natural resource management**

**in peacebuilding:** Working with natural resource management authorities can help increase women's participation in decision-making at the sub-national and national levels. However, targeted support is needed for overcoming the structural, social and cultural barriers to women's formal and informal political participation in conflict-affected settings, including the following measures:

- a. Include women and gender specialists early on in peace negotiations in a variety of positions – as negotiators, as expert advisors and as civil society observers – and in mediation support teams, and support their capacity to engage effectively in these processes;
- b. Ensure the representation of women in relevant decision-making bodies, including through the use of quotas;
- c. Solicit inputs from a broad range of women's groups and networks when elaborating natural resource management policies;
- d. Include gender experts in teams charged with developing policies and other governance tools around natural resource management in peacebuilding contexts, including in supply-chain certification mechanisms, benefit-sharing schemes and transparency initiatives;
- e. Provide training and capacity-building to increase women's participation in local decision-making and political processes related to natural resource management; and
- f. Support the advocacy efforts of women's organizations and networks.

**2. Adopt proactive measures to protect women from resource-related physical violence and other security risks early in the peacebuilding period:**

Women in conflict-affected settings routinely experience physical insecurity, including sexual violence, when carrying out daily tasks linked to the collection and use of natural resources. Moreover, while the impacts of environmental contamination and pollution adversely affect all, women are particularly vulnerable, due to heightened exposure in their gendered roles and responsibilities. Protecting women from these risks is not only important to their health, but also key to ensuring that they are able to safely carry out economic and social activities linked to natural resource management. This can include the following measures:

- a. Conduct assessments to identify specific resource and environment-related security and health threats for women in conflict-affected contexts;
- b. Ensure that women have safe access to key resources, such as fuel wood and water, in IDP and refugee camps;

- c. Support the dissemination of innovative technologies, such as improved cook stoves, that protect women from adverse health impacts in carrying out their roles;
- d. Increase women's participation and capacity in security sector institutions and conflict resolution processes; and
- e. Support awareness-raising and training on women's rights among the staff of government institutions and the national security sector, as well as at the community level, in order to increase gender-sensitive operational effectiveness and security service delivery by the army and police.

**3. Remove barriers and create enabling conditions to build women's capacity for productive and sustainable use of natural resources:**

Access to credit, technical support and benefits from natural resource exploitation is essential to improving women's economic productivity, which in turn is key to their empowerment. Likewise, legal support for enforcement of land rights and other resource rights underpins women's ability to productively use natural resources for their recovery. In order to achieve these goals, the following measures should be considered:

- a. Ensure that gender experts are involved in the development of natural resource management policies in peacebuilding settings;
- b. Identify women's specific roles in key natural resource sectors, with attention to the roles and needs of different groups of women – particularly the most vulnerable – and how those roles may have been affected during conflict (including in secondary service economies);
- c. Establish regular consultative mechanisms with a variety of women's networks and groups – taking specific steps to accommodate women from marginal or stigmatized groups – on the development of basic service infrastructure in their communities and establish regular feedback and review processes to ensure that interventions meet women's needs;
- d. Prioritize land negotiation and reform processes that improve women's rights to own and access land, including through strengthening the capacities of customary and statutory systems;
- e. Provide legal aid, conflict management, negotiation and mediation services to women to enable them to enforce their resource-related rights and access dispute resolution mechanisms to address any violations;
- f. Prioritize access to finance, inputs and skills training for women and men equally and consult women on the types of finance and extension services they need most;

## Conclusions and recommendations

- g. Uphold and promote human rights and minimum labor standards for women's involvement in the extractive sectors, especially in global due diligence and transparency initiatives, and ensure that key national (and regional) policy documents related to natural resource management (e.g. the African Mining Vision and Action Plan) promote good practices and reflect gender considerations, including barriers to participation;
  - h. Ensure private companies operating in the extractives sector engage both men and women at the national and sub-national levels during environmental and social impact assessments, as well as throughout the project cycle;
  - i. Promote women's representation on and the provision of gender expertise to commissions established for wealth-sharing at national and sub-national levels to ensure women have a say in how the benefits from natural resource extraction are distributed and are consulted in the formulation of community development plans; and
  - j. Support awareness-raising and sensitization of women at the community level on sustainable natural resource management, and ensure that women are included in community-based natural resource management initiatives in conflict-affected settings.
- 4. Within the United Nations, increase inter-agency cooperation to pursue women's empowerment and sustainable natural resource management together in support of more effective peacebuilding:** Existing inter-agency mechanisms at the global and country levels should be tasked to address the risks and opportunities presented to women by natural resource management in peacebuilding contexts more systematically in their work, including through the following measures:
- a. Conduct pilot programmes to learn lessons on how to integrate the linkages between women, natural resources and peacebuilding in joint assessments and country programming;
  - b. Ensure that 15 per cent of all funding towards UN-supported natural resource management programmes in peacebuilding is allocated to women's empowerment and gender equality in line with the Secretary-General's Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding;
  - c. Require the collection of sex and age-disaggregated data for baseline development and monitoring and evaluation of peacebuilding and recovery programmes that address and/or have an impact on natural resource management;
  - d. Develop specific targets related to the participation of women and gender experts in natural resource management in post-conflict countries, in line with the priorities and goals set in the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States and the goals for the post-2015 development agenda;
  - e. Support further research on the nexus of women, natural resources and peacebuilding, particularly in areas where significant knowledge gaps remain, such as the positive impacts on peacebuilding of women's involvement in the management of natural resources; the differential health impacts of environmental contamination and pollution on men and women; linkages between women and extractive industries (including mining, oil and gas); and how climate change could further impact this nexus; and
  - f. Integrate gender equality and women's empowerment issues in high level meetings and conferences of actors working on addressing the linkages between natural resources, conflict and peacebuilding.

# Annexes



# Annex 1

## Glossary of terms used in this report

### Conflict and peacebuilding

**Conflict:** Conflict is a dispute or incompatibility caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests. In this report, the term “conflict” is understood to mean violent conflict. The predominant form of violent conflict has evolved over time from national armies fighting each other (inter-state wars); to armies fighting for independence, separation or political control (intra-state or civil wars); to violence involving non-state actors such as rebels, gangs and organized crime. Given the changing nature and cycles of conflict, the post-conflict phase is not always easy to identify, particularly when there is no peace agreement.

**Peacebuilding:** Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving these objectives. The five priority areas of peacebuilding are: safety and security, political processes and inclusive dialogues, the provision of basic services, the restoration of core government functions and economic revitalization, jobs and livelihoods.

**Peacemaking:** Peacemaking is the diplomatic process of brokering an end to conflict, principally through mediation and negotiation, as foreseen under Chapter VI of the UN Charter.

**Peacekeeping:** Peacekeeping is both a political and a military activity involving a presence in the field, with the consent of the parties, to implement or monitor arrangements relating to the control of conflicts (cease-fires, separation of forces), and their resolution (partial or comprehensive settlements), as well as to protect civilians and the delivery of humanitarian aid.

### Natural resources and the environment

**Environment:** The environment is the sum of all external conditions affecting the life, development and survival of an organism. In the context of this report, “environment” refers to the physical conditions that affect natural resources (climate, geology, hazards) and the ecosystem services that sustain them (e.g. carbon, nutrient and hydrology cycles).

**Natural resources:** Natural resources are actual or potential sources of wealth that occur in a natural state, such as timber, water, fertile land, wildlife, minerals, metals, stones and hydrocarbons.

**Natural resource management:** Natural resource management refers to the sustainable utilization of natural resources, such as land, water, air, minerals, forests, fisheries, and wild flora and fauna. Together, these resources provide the ecosystem services that underpin human life.

**Natural resource governance:** Natural resource governance refers to the capacities, norms, rules and institutions that regulate the decisions, actions and interactions of government, civil society and the private sector in relation to natural resources.

**Extractive resources:** Extractive resources comprise natural resources that are often of high economic value and are extracted through industrial or artisanal means, such as oil, natural gas, metals and minerals. Extractive resources are most often non-renewable, though they can include renewable resources as well (e.g. timber).

**Land tenure:** The concept of land tenure defines the legal or customary relationship that people, as individuals or groups, have to land. Land tenure regimes define how property rights to land are allocated within societies, including how rights are granted to access, use, control and transfer land, as well as associated responsibilities and restraints. It is important to keep in mind that land tenure does not necessarily grant ownership. For example, forest concessions may grant the right to harvest timber from specific areas, but the ownership of the land itself rests with the government or the community granting the lease.

**Renewable resources:** Renewable resources are natural resources that are replaced or replenished by natural processes or human action. Fish and forests are examples of renewable natural resources, depending on their extraction rates and methods used. Some aspects of the environment – soil quality, assimilative capacity, ecological support systems – are considered “semi-renewable” because they are regenerated very slowly on a human time scale.

**Sustainable development (sustainability):** Development can be considered sustainable when it meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

## Gender

**Gender:** Gender refers to the socially constructed roles ascribed to women and men, as opposed to their biological and physical characteristics.

**Gender equality:** Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration – recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men.

**Gender roles:** Gender roles are the “social definition” of women and men. They vary according to socio-economic, political and cultural contexts, and are affected by other factors, including age, race, class and ethnicity. Gender-specific roles and responsibilities are often conditioned by household structure, access to resources, specific impacts of the global economy, and other locally relevant factors such as ecological conditions. They are learned and changeable.

## Livelihoods and the economy

**Formal economy:** The formal economy refers to activities and incomes that are taxed, regulated and monitored by a government and are included in a country’s gross domestic product.

**Informal economy:** The informal economy refers to activities and incomes that are partially or fully outside government regulation, taxation and monitoring, and are often not included in the gross domestic product.

**Livelihood:** A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. It is considered sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base. Livelihoods include five different dimensions, or types of capital: human capital, social capital, natural capital, physical capital and financial capital.

**Resilience:** Resilience refers to the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards, shocks or stresses to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of those hazards, shocks or stresses in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.

## Annex 2

# Key UN policy decisions and documents on women and on natural resources in the context of conflict and peacebuilding

### UN Security Council Resolutions

**S/RES/2100 (2013):<sup>218</sup> On the establishment of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA):** “Requests the Secretary-General to consider the environmental impacts of the operations of MINUSMA when fulfilling its mandated tasks and, in this context, encourages MINUSMA to manage them, as appropriate and in accordance with applicable and relevant General Assembly resolutions and United Nations rules and regulations, and to operate mindfully in the vicinity of cultural and historical sites.”

**S/RES/1888 (2009):<sup>219</sup> Security Council Resolution 1888 on Women, Peace and Security:** “*Noting* with concern the underrepresentation of women in formal peace processes, the lack of mediators and ceasefire monitors with proper training in dealing with sexual violence, and the lack of women as Chief or Lead peace mediators in United Nations-sponsored peace talks; [...] *Recognizing* that the promotion and empowerment of women and that support for women’s organizations and networks are essential in the consolidation of peace to promote the equal and full participation of women and encouraging Member States, donors, and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to provide support in this respect [...].”

**S/RES/1625 (2005):<sup>220</sup> Declaration on strengthening the effectiveness of the Security Council’s role in conflict prevention, particularly in Africa:** “*Reaffirming* the need to adopt a broad strategy of conflict prevention, which addresses the root causes of armed conflict and political and social crises in a comprehensive manner, including by promoting sustainable development, poverty eradication, national reconciliation, good governance, democracy, gender equality, the rule of law and respect for and protection of human rights; [...] *Recognizing* the important supporting roles played by civil society, men and women, in conflict prevention, and the need to take into account all possible contributions from civil society [and] strengthening the capacities of civil society groups, including women’s groups, working to promote a culture of peace, and to mobilize donors to support these efforts.”

**S/RES/1325 (2000):<sup>221</sup> Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security:** “*Expressing* concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and recognizing the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation; [...] *Reaffirming* the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution; [...] *Recognizing* that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.”

### Reports of the UN Secretary-General

**S/2013/525 (2013):<sup>222</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security:** “To enhance women’s contributions to and the gender-responsiveness of conflict prevention efforts, I encourage Member States [...] to ensure that the women, peace and security agenda is incorporated into dialogues on the post-2015 development agenda; [...] with regard to the United Nations, I encourage [...] the United Nations Environment Programme, UNDP and UN Women to document good practices on promoting women’s participation in natural resource management, climate change adaptation and extractive industry decision-making in post-conflict contexts; [...] I call upon the Security Council [...] to include women, peace and security issues in all thematic debates, such as those relating to [...] conflict prevention and natural resources.”

**A/67/792 – S/2013/149 (2013):<sup>223</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict:** “Attention is [...] drawn to the nexus between sexual violence and the illicit extraction of natural resources, the displacement of civilian populations and the inadequacy of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform efforts. [...] In some countries, available information indicates that there is a correlation between spikes in incidents of sexual violence and military activity linked to the illegal extraction of natural resources. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, rape has been used by armed groups to punish civilians for preventing poaching and mineral trafficking. In Colombia, illegal armed groups have used sexual violence to forcibly displace populations from lucrative mining or agricultural zones and from areas of strategic importance for drug trafficking. Despite some efforts made by companies and Governments over the past 18 months to diminish armed groups’ ability to generate income from conflict minerals, policymakers and industry leaders must redouble their efforts to better monitor the illegal extraction process.”

**A/67/499 – S/2012/746 (2012):<sup>224</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict:** “I noted in my 2010 progress report that land and natural resources were key drivers of conflict and, even more so, of relapse into violence (A/64/866-S/2010/386, para. 44). Important substantive progress has been made since then to address this emerging concern, reflected in a number of reports, policies, resolutions and practical guidance for mediators working on resource-related conflicts and for practitioners addressing land, renewable resource and extractive issues. In 2011, for example, the United Nations-European Union partnership on natural resources, conflict and peacebuilding produced four sectoral guidance notes, on extractive industries, renewable resources, land and capacity-building. Work is under way to integrate those various approaches into country programmes. Within the United Nations system, a major obstacle concerns the need to more consistently reflect expertise gained in the area of natural resources management between United Nations entities. I call on United Nations entities to collaboratively leverage their respective skills and knowledge to inform natural resources management assistance. I also call on the private sector and peacebuilding actors to deepen their interaction. [...] UN Women, with relevant United Nations partners, to address the achievement of the 15 per cent funding target for gender-specific programmes. I call on the executive boards of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to consider this issue in their forthcoming discussions. I encourage all stakeholders, including Member States, to work towards this target.”

**A/64/866 – S/2010/386 (2010):<sup>225</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict:** “Women’s capacities to engage in decision-making or contribute to economic recovery, which are often overlooked, require particular attention. [...] There continues to be a serious gap in national capacities to ensure a stable transition from conflict to sustainable peace and development: the inability of national and community level actors to manage or resolve new or recurrent tensions that might spark renewed conflict. The United Nations has accelerated work to address this gap, developing guidance and training programmes to reinforce national capacity in conflict management, from natural resources to implementation of peace agreements.”

**A/64/350 (2009):<sup>226</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on climate change and its potential security implications:** “Climate change is often viewed as a “threat multiplier,” exacerbating threats caused by persistent poverty, weak institutions for resource management and conflict resolution, fault lines and a history of mistrust between communities and nations, and inadequate access to information or resources. [...] Many Member State submissions recognize that the possible security implications of climate change need to be examined in the context of pre-existing social, economic and environmental threats, or stresses, which are key factors in the security of individuals, communities and States. These include the factors that were highlighted by the Millennium Summit — the persistence of poverty, hunger and disease; the rapid growth of informal urban settlements with substandard shelter and inadequate infrastructure and services; high unemployment, particularly of youth; and the growing scarcity of land, water and other resources.”

**A/63/881 – S/2009/304 (2009):<sup>227</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict:** “The immediate post-conflict period offers a window of opportunity to provide basic security, deliver peace dividends, shore up and build confidence in the political process, and strengthen core national capacity to lead peacebuilding efforts thereby beginning to lay the foundations for sustainable development. [...] The situation is fluid, the peace is often very fragile, and the needs of the people are far greater than the capacity to meet them. The threats to peace are often greatest during this early phase, but so too are the opportunities to set virtuous cycles in motion from the start.”

**A/62/644 (2008):<sup>228</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations Activities in relation to climate change:** “The challenge of climate change is unlikely to be gender-neutral, as it increases the risk to the most vulnerable and less empowered social groups. In the formulation of global and national approaches, as well as in the strategic responses to specific sectors, gender awareness, substantive analysis and inclusive engagement will be necessary, [...] recognizing that a holistic approach is critical to poverty alleviation, conservation and gender equality in many countries. [...] If not properly managed, the switch in use of productive land from food to biofuels production risks increasing prices of food crops, aggravating food insecurity, and exacerbating rural poverty and gender inequality. [...] The multifaceted nature of the relationship between climate and human settlements (over a spectrum ranging from infrastructure, economic stability and natural resources use to large population movements, migration, gender equality and human security) and the complementary needs of increasing resilience and reducing emissions require an integrated approach.”



**A/61/583 (2006):<sup>229</sup> Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence: Delivering as One:** *Environment:* There is an increasingly compelling case for urgent action on the environment. Environmental priorities have too often been compartmentalized away from economic development priorities. However, global environmental degradation – including climate change – will have far-reaching economic and social implications that affect the world's ability to meet the MDGs. Because the impacts are global and felt disproportionately by the poor, coordinated multilateral action to promote environmental sustainability is urgently required. *Gender:* [...] We consider gender equality to be central to the delivery of effective development outcomes."

**A/60/891 (2006):<sup>230</sup> Progress report on the prevention of armed conflict:** "The most effective way to prevent crisis is to reduce the impact of risk factors. [...] These include, for instance, international efforts to regulate trade in resources that fuel conflict, such as diamonds; attempts to stem illicit flows of small arms and light weapons. [...] The looting of commodities such as diamonds, coltan and timber was found to be an important source of revenue for armed groups and a major incentive in the continuation of armed conflict. [...] I urge Member States to more comprehensively address the primary sources of tension for conflict-vulnerable regions and countries. Such actions should include, inter alia, stepping up efforts to regulate trade in natural resources that fuel conflict, offering more support to private sector initiatives on conflict-sensitive business practices, [...] addressing environmental degradation, paying more attention to the nexus of prevention and migration, redoubling efforts for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and strengthening respect for human rights."

## Statements of the UN Security Council

**S/PRST/2011/20:<sup>231</sup> Women and peace and security:** "The Security Council welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security of 29 September 2011 (S/2011/598), and takes note of the analysis and recommendations it contains on progress in implementing commitments on women and peace and security, including on the representation and participation of women in decision-making forums, institutions and mechanisms related to the prevention and resolution of armed conflict and to peacebuilding. [...] The Security Council reiterates the need to support, as appropriate, local women's peace initiatives, processes for conflict resolution and initiatives that involve women in implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements, [...] and encourages Member States, international and regional organizations to take measures to increase the numbers of women involved in mediation efforts and the numbers of women in representative roles in regional and international organizations. The Security Council therefore stresses the importance of creating enabling conditions for women's participation during all stages of peace processes and for countering negative societal attitudes regarding full and equal participation of women in conflict resolution and mediation."

**S/PRST/2011/15:<sup>232</sup> Maintenance of international peace and security:** "The Council reaffirmed that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was the key instrument for addressing climate change. Nonetheless, it also noted that conflict analysis and contextual information on, inter alia, the possible security implications of climate change was important when climate issues drove conflict, challenged implementation of Council mandates or endangered peace processes. [...] The Council issued a presidential statement in which it recalled that conflict prevention remained a primary responsibility of States, and reiterated the key components of a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy as including, inter alia, early warning mechanisms, preventive deployment, respect for and protection of human rights and rule of law, poverty eradication, national reconciliation, good governance, democracy and gender equality. The Council expressed its determination to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in preventing the eruption of armed conflicts, their escalation or spread when they occurred, and their resurgence once they had ended. It also encouraged greater synergy with regional organizations, as well as all other relevant players both at the strategic level and on the ground, including civil society, youth and women."

**S/PRST/2007/22:<sup>233</sup> Maintenance of international peace and security: Natural resources and conflict:** "[T]he Security Council recognizes the role that natural resources can play in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. [...] Moreover, the Security Council notes that, in specific armed conflict situations, the exploitation, trafficking and illicit trade of natural resources have played a role in areas where they have contributed to the outbreak, escalation or continuation of armed conflict. The Security Council, through its various resolutions, has taken measures on this issue, more specifically to prevent illegal exploitation of natural resources, especially diamonds and timber, from fuelling armed conflicts and to encourage transparent and lawful management of natural resources, including the clarification of the responsibility of management of natural resources, and has established sanctions committees and groups and panels of experts to oversee the implementation of those measures. [...] The Security Council acknowledges the crucial role that the Peacebuilding Commission, together with other UN and non-UN actors, can play, in post-conflict situations, in assisting governments, upon their request, in ensuring that natural resources become an engine for sustainable development. [...] The Security Council recognizes, in armed conflict and post-conflict situations, the need for a more coordinated approach by the United Nations, regional organizations and governments concerned, in particular the empowerment of governments in post-conflict situations to better manage their resources."

## UN Peacebuilding Commission

**PBC/7/OC/L.1 (2013):<sup>234</sup> Declaration on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding:** "We, the members of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission [...] recognize that the economic empowerment of women greatly contributes to the effectiveness of post-conflict economic activities and economic growth, and leads to improving the quality and social outcomes of economic recovery measures and policies as well as to sustainable development; [...] call upon Member States to take measures to promote sustainable livelihoods for households led by women, especially widows, in post-conflict societies, including through financial support and access to productive resources and sustainable income-generating activities; [...] further stress the need to provide particular support to women in rural areas in post-conflict situations, including, inter alia, through vocational training, training on income-generating activities, access to land, long- and short-term credit facilities, productive resources and other business support services, including agricultural extension services."

## Commission on the Status of Women

**Resolution (E/CN.6/2011/L.1): Mainstreaming gender equality and empowerment of women in climate change policies and strategies:<sup>235</sup>** "Reaffirming also principle 20 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which recognizes that women have a vital role in environmental management and development, and in this regard recalling the objectives of Agenda 21 relating to women, particularly with regard to women's participation in national ecosystem management; *Stressing* the need to ensure women's full enjoyment of all human rights and their effective participation in environmental decision-making at all levels and the need to integrate their concerns and gender equality perspectives in sustainable development policies and programmes; [...] *Underscoring* that gender equality and the effective participation of women and indigenous peoples are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change; [...] *Calls upon* Governments to integrate a gender perspective in environmental and climate change policies, and to strengthen mechanisms and provide adequate resources to ensure women's full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels on environmental issues, in particular on strategies related to the impact of climate change on the lives of women and girls."

## UN Conventions

**Convention on the Eliminations of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979):<sup>236</sup>** "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right: (a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels; (b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counseling and services in family planning; (c) To benefit directly from social security programmes; (d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency; (e) To organize self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment; (f) To participate in all community activities; (g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes; (h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications. [...] The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration."

**CEDAW General recommendation no. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (2013):<sup>237</sup>** "Rural women are often disproportionately affected by the lack of adequate health and social services and inequitable access to land and natural resources. Similarly, their situation in conflict settings presents particular challenges with regard to their employment and reintegration as it is often exacerbated by the breakdown of services, resulting in food insecurity, inadequate shelter, deprivation of property and lack of access to water. [...] The Committee recommends that States parties [...] ensure the economic recovery strategies promote gender equality as a necessary pre-condition for a sustainable post-conflict economy, and target women working in both the formal and the informal employment sectors. [...] Equal access to property [...] is particularly critical in post-conflict situations, given that housing and land are crucial to recovery efforts. Women's limited and unequal access to property becomes particularly damaging in post-conflict situations, especially when displaced women who have lost husbands or close male relatives return to their homes to find they have no legal title to their land and, as a result, no means of earning a livelihood. [...] The Committee [...] recommends that States parties [...] adopt gender-sensitive legislation and policies that recognize the particular disadvantages that women face in claiming their right to inheritance as well as their land in post-conflict contexts, including the loss or destruction of land deeds and other documentation owing to conflict."

**Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995):**<sup>238</sup> “Women and children constitute some 80 per cent of the world’s millions of refugees and other displaced persons, including internally displaced persons. [...] During times of armed conflict and the collapse of communities, the role of women is crucial. [...] The deterioration of natural resources displaces communities, especially women, from income-generating activities while greatly adding to unremunerated work. In both urban and rural areas, environmental degradation results in negative effects on the health, well-being and quality of life of the population at large, especially girls and women of all ages. Particular attention and recognition should be given to the role and special situation of women living in rural areas and those working in the agricultural sector, where access to training, land, natural and productive resources, credit, development programmes and cooperative structures can help them increase their participation in sustainable development. Women have often played leadership roles or taken the lead in promoting an environmental ethic, reducing resource use, and reusing and recycling resources to minimize waste and excessive consumption.”

**UNFCCC COP Decision 23/CP.18 (2012): Promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol:**<sup>239</sup> “*Noting* [...] that women continue to be underrepresented in bodies established under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol; *Recognizing* the need for women to be represented in all aspects of the UNFCCC process; [...] *Also recognizing* the importance of a balanced representation of women from developing and developed country Parties in the UNFCCC process so that gender responsive climate policy responds to the differing needs of men and women in national and local contexts; *Considering* the importance of ensuring coherence between the participation of women in the UNFCCC process and the principles and objectives of international instruments and relevant multilateral processes; [...] *Acknowledging* the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in particular the recognition of women’s leadership and their vital role in achieving sustainable development and the emphasis on the impact of setting specific targets and implementing temporary measures, as appropriate, for substantially increasing the number of women in leadership positions, with the aim of achieving gender parity; *Recognizing* the advances made by Parties in the promotion of gender balance and the empowerment of women [...].”

**UNFCCC COP Decision 36/CP.7 (2001): Improving the participation of women in the representation of Parties in bodies established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol:**<sup>240</sup> “1. Invites Parties to give active consideration to the nomination of women for elective posts in any body established under the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol; 2. Requests the secretariat to bring this decision to the attention of Parties whenever a vacancy arises for any elective post in any body established under the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol; 3. Further requests the secretariat to maintain information on the gender composition of each body with elective posts established under the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol, and to bring this information to the attention of the Parties whenever such a vacancy occurs.”

# Annex 3

## Acknowledgements

### Report development team

<b>Silja Halle</b> . . . . .	Programme Officer, UNEP
<b>Adrienne Stork</b> . . . . .	Project Advisor, UNEP
<b>Cassidy Travis</b> . . . . .	Programme Advisor, UNEP
<b>David Jensen</b> . . . . .	Head, Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding, UNEP
<b>Anne-Marie Goetz</b> . . . . .	Chief Advisor, Peace and Security Section, UN Women
<b>Sarah Douglas</b> . . . . .	Policy Specialist, UN Women
<b>Tracy Raczek</b> . . . . .	Partnership Development Specialist, UN Women
<b>Rachel Dore-Weeks</b> . . . . .	Programme Specialist, UN Women
<b>Henk-Jan Brinkman</b> . . . . .	Chief, Policy, Planning and Application Branch, PBSO
<b>Cécile Mazzacurati</b> . . . . .	Policy Officer, Youth & Gender, PBSO
<b>Gérald Pachoud</b> . . . . .	Senior Policy Adviser, PBSO
<b>Leontine Specker</b> . . . . .	Livelihoods and Environment, Programme Specialist, UNDP
<b>Nika Saeedi</b> . . . . .	Conflict Prevention and Recovery, Gender Specialist, UNDP
<b>Glauca Boyer</b> . . . . .	Programme Officer, Conflict Recovery Partnerships Specialist, UNDP

### Peer reviewers

<b>Zahed Yousuf</b> . . . . .	Senior Programme Officer, International Alert
<b>Henri Myrntinen</b> . . . . .	Senior Research Officer for Gender in Peacebuilding, International Alert
<b>Mariska van Beijnum</b> . . . . .	Director/Senior Research Fellow, Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute
<b>Rosan Smits</b> . . . . .	Deputy Director/Senior Research Fellow, Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute
<b>Anette Hoffmann</b> . . . . .	Research Fellow, Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute
<b>Jennifer Klot</b> . . . . .	Consulting Senior Advisor, Gender, Security and HIV/AIDS, Social Science Research Council
<b>Joanne Lebert</b> . . . . .	Director, Great Lakes Programme, Partnership Africa Canada
<b>Ken Conca</b> . . . . .	Professor of International Relations, American University
<b>Steve Lonergan</b> . . . . .	Retired Professor, University of Victoria
<b>Richard Matthew</b> . . . . .	PhD, Professor, Social Ecology, and Director, Center for Unconventional Security Affairs, University of California Irvine
<b>Erika Weinthal</b> . . . . .	Associate Professor of Environmental Policy, Duke University
<b>Patricia I. Vasquez</b> . . . . .	Independent expert on extractive industries and conflict
<b>Oli Brown</b> . . . . .	Independent expert on natural resources and conflict
<b>Siri Aas Rustad</b> . . . . .	Senior Researcher, Peace Research Institute Oslo
<b>Sandra Ruckstuhl</b> . . . . .	PhD, Senior Specialist for Development and Aid, Group W Inc.
<b>Rachel Perks</b> . . . . .	Mining Specialist, Sustainable Energy Oil, Gas and Mining Unit, World Bank
<b>Dyan Mazurana</b> . . . . .	PhD, Associate Research Professor, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and Research Director, Feinstein International Center, Tufts University
<b>Susan Bazilli</b> . . . . .	International Women's Rights Project, Director and Adjunct Professor, Albany Law School
<b>Cate Owren</b> . . . . .	Executive Director, Women Environment and Development Organization



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- Soon-Young Yoon** . . . . . UN representative & Chair, International Alliance of Women & NGO Committee on the Status of Women
- Susan Maples** . . . . . Natural Resource Advisor, Office of the Legal Advisor to the President, Liberia
- Janet Macharia** . . . . . Head, Gender and Social Safeguards Unit, UNEP
- Yunae Yi** . . . . . Programme Officer, UNEP
- Magda Nassef** . . . . . Programme Officer, UNEP Sudan
- Andrew Morton** . . . . . Programme Officer, UNEP
- Christine Musisi** . . . . . Regional Director, UN Women East Africa Regional Office
- Simone Ellis Oluoch-Olunya** . . . . . Deputy Regional Director, UN Women East Africa Regional Office

## Other contributors

- Haddijatou Jallow** . . . . . Executive Chairperson, Sierra Leone Environment Protection Agency
- Julie Weah** . . . . . Head, Foundation for Community Initiatives, Liberia
- Rama Omonya** . . . . . National Campaigns Officer, Oxfam GB Kitgum Field Office, Uganda
- Judy Odoko** . . . . . Executive Director, Land and Equity Movement of Uganda
- Ziad A. Mimi** . . . . . Associate Professor, Birzeit University, Palestine
- Ahmed AlYaqoubi** . . . . . General Director, Water Resources Directorate Palestinian Water Authority
- Ghada Snunu** . . . . . E-WASH Advocacy Task Force Officer – Oxfam Gaza
- Hélène Zomahoun-Ekouedjim** . . . . . DDR Officer, ONUCI, Côte d'Ivoire
- Salih A. Magied Eldouma** . . . . . Executive Director, SOS Sahel Sudan
- Tatiana Santos** . . . . . Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas, Government of Colombia
- Laura Seay** . . . . . Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Morehouse College
- Lindsay Stark** . . . . . Assistant Professor, Program on Forced Migration and Health, Mailman School of Public Health, and Director, Child Protection in Crisis (CPC) Network, Columbia University
- Mike Wessells** . . . . . Professor, Program on Forced Migration and Health, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University
- Dean Peacock** . . . . . Co-Founder and Co-Director, Men Engage Network
- Gina Torry** . . . . . Gender and Peacebuilding Expert, Policy and Mediation Division, UN Department of Political Affairs and Executive Director, Peace Research Endowment
- Noëlle Rancourt** . . . . . Independent expert on gender, social research and learning
- Bessma Mourad** . . . . . Project Advisor, UNEP
- Mey Ahmed** . . . . . Climate Change Focal Point, UNEP Sudan
- Caroline Sessions** . . . . . Research Assistant, UNEP
- Hanna Helsingen** . . . . . Research Assistant, UNEP
- Niloufar Bayani** . . . . . Research Assistant, UNEP
- Urjasi Rudra** . . . . . Campaign Coordinator, UN Women
- Hanny Cueva-Beteta** . . . . . Policy Adviser, UN Women
- Gerald Gunther** . . . . . Programme Specialist, Women, Peace and Security, UN Women Kyrgyzstan
- Laura Ronkainen** . . . . . Conflict Partnerships and Gender Consultant, UNDP
- Catalina Gil** . . . . . Junior Professional, UNDP
- Nasser Faqih** . . . . . Team Leader, Poverty Reduction, UNDP Palestine
- Amita Gill** . . . . . Crisis Governance Programme Specialist, UNDP
- Marije van Kempen** . . . . . Rule of Law Programme Analyst, UNDP
- Srinivas Kumar** . . . . . DDR Programme Manager, UNDP Sudan
- Cyprien Gagnon** . . . . . Programme Officer, UNDP DRC
- Philibert Mundanda** . . . . . GEF/Small Grants Programme/Burundi, National Coordinator, UNDP
- Aissata De** . . . . . Deputy Country Director, UNDP Côte d'Ivoire
- Abdul Hameed Omar** . . . . . Programme Manager, UNIRP/UNDP Nepal
- Bal Krishna Sharma** . . . . . National Gender Advisor, UNIRP/UNFPA Nepal

# Annex 4

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### **About UNEP's Disasters and Conflicts Programme**

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) seeks to minimize threats to human well-being from the environmental causes and consequences of conflicts and disasters. Through its Disasters and Conflicts Programme, it conducts field-based environmental assessments and strengthens national environmental and resource management capacity in countries affected by conflicts and disasters. Since 1999, UNEP has operated in more than 35 countries and published over 20 environmental assessment reports. Based on this expertise, UNEP provides technical assistance to a number of UN and international actors, including the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the Department of Field Support (DFS), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Commission, in assessing the role of natural resources and the environment in conflict and peacebuilding. The main objective of this technical cooperation is to help member states identify conflict risks and peacebuilding opportunities from natural resources and the environment, and to promote uses of natural resources that create jobs, sustain livelihoods and contribute to economic recovery and reconciliation while avoiding new forms of grievances or major environmental degradation.

### **About UNDP's crisis prevention and recovery work**

UNDP's approach to reintegration, livelihoods and economic recovery programming combines early stabilization efforts with a longer-term vision for sustainable development and inclusive growth, in line with the UN Policy on Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration. In all of its efforts in crisis and post-crisis situations, UNDP seeks to help develop both national and local capacities. It aims for programming that has a greater impact, is nationally owned, crisis-sensitive, gender-sensitive, replicable, well-tuned to market conditions, and well-coordinated with other partners. It places crisis-affected men and women at the centre of livelihoods and economic recovery, working with them to devise sustainable solutions that are suitable to their own contexts and priorities, and promoting their own resilience to disasters and conflicts. UNDP has also made commitments to environmental sustainability throughout its scope of work and recognizes the risk that climate change and environmental degradation can pose to conflict-affected areas.

### **About UN Women's work on women, peace and security**

UN Women's programmes on women, peace and security are guided by a series of commitments to women's rights. These include resolution 1325, and six supporting UN Security Council resolutions: 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106 and 2122. Around the world, UN Women acts to build women's participation and influence in decision-making to prevent and resolve conflicts, and support women's engagement in all aspects of peacebuilding, towards more inclusive, egalitarian societies that can end gender discrimination and resolve conflicts without violence. UN Women's programmes foster women's peace coalitions and prepare them to engage in peace processes. The organization also reaches out to peacekeepers to detect and stop conflict-related sexual violence. Other initiatives back justice and security institutions that protect women and girls from violence and discrimination, public services fully responsive to women's needs, women's greater access to economic opportunities, and women's engagement in all forms of national and local public decision-making.

### **About the UN Peacebuilding Support Office**

The UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) helps to sustain peace in conflict-affected countries by garnering international support for nationally owned and led peacebuilding efforts. The office assists and supports the Peacebuilding Commission, administers the Peacebuilding Fund, and supports the Secretary-General's efforts to coordinate the UN System in its peacebuilding efforts. Strengthening women's participation in peacebuilding is high on the agenda of the PBSO. As outlined in the Secretary-General's report on Women's participation in peacebuilding women are crucial partners in shoring up three pillars of lasting peace: economic recovery, social cohesion and political legitimacy. PBSO together with UN Women are supporting the implementation of the Secretary-General's Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding, the commitment of the United Nations to improve women's situations in post-conflict countries.

### **Further information**

Further technical information may be obtained from the UNEP Disasters and Conflicts Programme website at: <http://www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts> or by email: [postconflict@unep.org](mailto:postconflict@unep.org)





Thirteen years after the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, investment in women as agents of change in peacebuilding remains inadequate. One of the unexplored entry points for strengthening women’s contributions to peacebuilding relates to the way in which they use, manage, make decisions on and benefit from natural resources. Indeed, women’s relationship to natural resources, coupled with shifting gender norms in conflict-affected settings, provides opportunities for enhancing their political participation and enabling them to engage more productively in economic revitalization. With this report, UNEP, UN Women, UNDP and PBSO invite the international community, national governments and civil society to ensure that peacebuilding efforts fully include women, especially when it comes to managing natural resources.

*“On this international day, we stress the critical importance of protecting the environment in times of armed conflict and restoring the good governance of natural resources during post-conflict reconstruction. We also recognize the important role that natural resources play in supporting the livelihoods and resilience of all members of society, especially women, and the implications of sustainable natural resource management for conflict prevention and peace.”*

Message of the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon,  
on the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation  
of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict  
6 November 2013



United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office

[www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org)

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality  
and the Empowerment of Women  
220 East 42nd Street  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
Tel.: +1 646 781 4400

[www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso](http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso)

United Nations Peacebuilding  
Support Office  
United Nations, 30th floor  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
Tel.: +1 212 963 0936  
Email: [brinkman@un.org](mailto:brinkman@un.org)



[www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

United Nations Development Programme  
One United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
Tel.: +1 (212) 906 5000  
Email: [publications.queries@undp.org](mailto:publications.queries@undp.org)

[www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org)

United Nations Environment Programme  
P.O. Box 30552 Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel.: +254 (0)20 762 1234  
Fax: +254 (0)20 762 3927  
Email: [uneppub@unep.org](mailto:uneppub@unep.org)



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