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Environment and Security in South-east Afghanistan

by Ulrich Kindermann, Program Officer with the Tribal Liaison Office

Afghanistan provides yet another example of the numerous linkages that exist between environment and security. The Post Conflict Environmental Assessment published by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) in January 2003 made this amply clear. Indeed, in south-east Afghanistan, taken here as the region comprising the provinces Paktya, Paktika and Khost, conflicts are often directly related to the environment and natural resources. South-east Afghanistan is located along the border with Pakistan and is more or less exclusively inhabited by Pashtun tribes. Together with southern Afghanistan it is considered one of the most unsafe regions in the country. Since all Pashtuns tend to be labelled as Taliban supporters, the significant differences between the two regions are often overlooked. While local militias and a few family clans wield great influence in southern Afghanistan, they play little or no role in the south-eastern part of the country. Tribal elders and traditional institutions are all-important here; their involvement is crucial to achieving stability and security.

The representatives of tribes and communities in the south generally pursue the same objectives as the government and the donor community when it comes to development projects. They desire stability and security, and they oppose terrorism, lawlessness, and drug cultivation. The elimination of the drug cultivation problem, in fact, illustrates just how much influence the tribes have. According to the Opium Survey 2005 conducted by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 38 hectares were under opium cultivation in the Paktya province in 2002. These increased to 720 in 2003 and to 1200 hectares one year later. In 2005 opium cultivation in Paktya suddenly ceased. The survey does not mention any reasons, but in November 2004, a jirga - large assembly - attended by representatives from all tribes in Paktya was convened at the initiative of the governor. The participants resolved to ban opium cultivation. And they were successful, as subsequent developments proved, in contrast to almost all other parts of the country.

The large number of conflicts between different tribes and communities in the region is therefore all the more surprising. The causes in most cases are natural resources - primarily forest and land. Many of these conflicts have been continuing for decades, some have persisted for over 100 years. Many conflicts turn violent, resulting in fatalities and injuries.

Simultaneously, several new conflicts have emerged and are still emerging. Over the last decade uncontrolled deforestation took place in the formerly densely forested region, often resulting in soil erosion and other environmental damage. The growing resource scarcity in turn heightened the potential for conflict. The "neo Taliban" is already attempting to exploit existing and nascent conflicts for destabilizing the Paktya province - so far regarded as relatively secure. Doubtlessly the drug mafia would also be interested in such a development, as it would allow it to conduct its smuggling activities unhindered into neighbouring Pakistan. Thus, improbable as it may sound, an important step towards stabilization and development in south-east Afghanistan is environmental protection and reforestation. This will reduce the potential for conflict, since virtually all local conflicts in Afghanistan revolve around resource sharing. Reforestation projects can act as a first step towards mediating existing resource conflicts, especially in the south-eastern region, where forests are frequently the root cause. Once both conflicting parties have access to more forest, the disputed forest area - and consequently the conflict - loses significance.

A further positive fall-out is the creation of new income generation opportunities for the communities, either directly through employment in forest activities or indirectly, e.g. gathering pine nuts and other forest produce.

In practice, however, it is very difficult to implement such projects in the region. The main hurdles are usually bureaucratic red tape and opposition from those sitting in far away offices. On the other hand, there is no lack of support from the government, the population and the local tribes. UNEP's plans to implement a community-based resource management project in Paktya ran aground due to UN security regulations. Compliance with the regulations would have pushed costs up so much that the project would have been financially unviable. Efforts by the Green Afghanistan Initiative (GAIN), a joint programme of six UN organizations and the Tribal Liaison Office, an Afghan NGO, have been similarly unsuccessful in establishing a large scale reforestation project and centre in Paktya. One of the biggest donors rejected the proposal on the grounds that no funds were available for that particular sector in Paktya. Other donors refused due to security concerns or because the planned activities did not coincide with their own priorities or promotion criteria. Environment and security in south-east Afghanistan consequently continues to be an area with tremendous yet virtually untapped potential.

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POLICY & RESEARCH

Taking stock: Inventory of Environment and Security Policies and Practices

The Institute for Environmental Security (IES) in The Hague has launched a report compiling an overview of different governments' and organisations' strategies regarding environment and security. The report has offers profiles of 13 OECD countries and 7 international or intergovernmental organisations, allowing readers to compare different concepts, policies, and actions taken in regard to the links between environment, development, and security. The profiles are structured around a range of relevant policy areas, from mainstreaming conflict prevention and livelihood protection in development cooperation, over environmental monitoring and early warning, to natural disaster and conflict mitigation and adaptation. The countries' heterogeneous policies and initiatives reveal different extents of policy integration. The report will shortly be completed by a database containing more detailed information on selected governmental and international agencies' initiatives as well as an 'essential reading list' for those interested to learn about environment and security.

The aim of the profiles and data base is to provide governments, IGOs, NGOs and researchers with useful tools to compare and assess ongoing environment and security efforts, assist those wishing to develop new work in this field, and stimulate further international cooperation. In particular it will support efforts to mainstream environmental and sustainable development factors into European foreign and security policy. (by Moira Feil)

Our Environment, Our Wealth: Africa is not poor!

The UN's recently published report "Africa Environment Outlook 2 – Our Environment, Our Wealth (AEO-2)" shows how Africa's environmental resources are an asset that can support the region's development as well as the objectives of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The report provides a comprehensive assessment of environmental 'state-and-trends', and points out its implications for human well-being and development. At the media launch of the report in Nairobi, Achim Steiner, UNEP's Executive Director stated: "The report challenges the myth that Africa is poor. Indeed, it points out that its vast natural wealth can, if sensitively, sustainably and creatively managed, be the basis for an African renaissance." He continued: "The economic importance of the environment is increasingly recognized by Africa's leaders as an instrument for development, for livelihoods, for peace and for stability."

Besides this positive message, the report does not deny the worrying state of the region's environment, as chapter 12 "Environment for Peace and Regional Cooperation" illustrates. The chapter underscores the adverse effects of conflict on Africa's society, economy and environment, and states that peace breaches, dependency on oil and mineral exports as well as illegal logging and "blood diamonds" make it difficult to achieve peace and (environmental) cooperation.

However, the chapter also points out advancements in regional cooperation, such as trans-boundary wildlife management. An example for such an approach is the Ai-Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier Park between South Africa and Namibia, which was set up in 2003. Regional processes, such as the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW) provide leadership on environment and freshwater and mobilize political and technical support to address environmental issues. It is concluded that Africa has made considerable progress towards building peace. (by Christiane Röttger)

For the report "Africa Environment Outlook 2", please see http://www.unep.org/dewa/africa/aeo2_launch

For the fact sheet on "Environment for Peace and Regional Cooperation", please see here
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Be prepared: A Handbook for Conflict Prevention and Transformation

The international community's experience in post conflict transition is much broader than its experience in adequately applying preventive measures. This is partly due to the cumbersome implementation of general guidelines on preventive peacebuilding to specific local action. Therefore, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) decided "let us focus on concrete ways of implementing violence prevention before conflicts seriously get hot." To do so, the SDC published a 'Working Aid – a Handbook on Conflict-Sensitive Programme Management (CSPM)'.

The handbook is composed of four sections: It starts with the SDC Guidelines on Peacebuilding. Published already in February 2003, these policy guidelines help to better understand the inter-linkages between conflict, peace, and development cooperation. The second section introduces Conflict-Sensitive Programme Management (CSPM) in order to prevent and mitigate violence and transform conflicts in the context of SDC's work. The CSPM puts an emphasis on power (shift, asymmetry, distribution, access, struggle) as

one of the main sources of violent conflict in the local context of development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

The third section comprises an open series of Tip Sheets. Methodological Tip Sheets provide guidance for the best use of the CSPM instrument whereas thematic ones highlight the main aspects of a specific topic, e.g. land, water, and minerals and their linkages to violent conflicts. The Tip Sheets are prepared by COPRET (Conflict Prevention and Transformation) in collaboration with consultants as well as by the donor community in the DAC/CPDC framework (the OECD Tip Sheets are called Issues Briefs). In order to promote an internationally shared understanding in the thematic field of action, SDC decided to integrate an entire "Resource Pack" in section four. These "Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding" were developed in consortium with partner organisations such as the Africa Peace Forum, International Alert and Saferworld. As the SDC points out, the aim of combining the CSPM and Tip Sheets is two-fold: first, it should help in planning a conflict-sensitive country programme, and second, it should facilitate implementing violence prevention concretely and appropriately in a given context. (by Dennis Taenzler)

For more information on, please see

 $\frac{\text{http://www.deza.admin.ch/index.php?navID=92682\&langID=6\&userhash=c58af85e4a20}}{11b1db9a8c992c37051d}$

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German Bundestag ratifies UN watercourse convention

In May this year an important event went largely unnoticed: the German Bundestag ratified an international convention containing key norms for preventing potential water conflicts. The convention in question is the "Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses" of 1997. One reason for this discreet silence may well be that Germany has ratified the convention only now - although it did not have any reservations towards the contents.

The official explanation is that the basic principles of the Convention were in any case being adhered to. These principles obligate states to prevent or peacefully resolve conflicts over the scarce resource water. States must take due consideration of the interests of other riparian countries when using international watercourses and prevent harm to neighbouring countries through excessive pollution and withdrawal of water.

The Convention is significant not just because of the internationally binding commitments, but rather in its political impact. The imperative of cooperation has been expressed in subsequent political declarations, such as the Petersberg Declaration, following the adoption of the Convention. More importantly, it also helped shape a "transboundary water management" concept, which was subsequently embodied in the Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses. According to Jörg Barandat, a member of the German delegation at the negotiations to the Convention, it will play a key role as an "institutionalized mediation" process in external water policy. Therefore, a little more fanfare after Germany's ratification would not have been out of place. More so because opposition from several - mostly upstream - countries with transboundary watercourses makes it unlikely that the Convention will enter into force in the near future. There is still a long way to go to achieve the 35 necessary ratifications. (by Dennis Taenzler)

For the "Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses", please see

http://untreaty.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/8_3_1997.pdf

For the ratification by the German Bundestag, please see http://dip.bundestag.de/btd/16/007/1600738.pdf

The Petersberg Declaration was issued by the "International Dialogue Forum on Global Water Politics, Cooperation for Transboundary Water Management", held at Petersberg near Bonn, Germany from 3 to 5 March 1998. For the declaration text, please see http://www.krium.de/upload/PetersbergE-CN-17-98-17.pdf

Environmental Cooperation to Facilitate Peacemaking?

"Environmental Cooperation as an Instrument of Crisis Prevention and Peacebuilding: Conditions for Success and Constraints" is the title of a new paper published by the Berlin based think-tank Adelphi Consult and commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The objective of the study is to identify the conditions under which environmental cooperation can facilitate conflict transformation and peacebuilding. It also examines specific forms of negotiation or stakeholder constellations which have proved particularly successful. The study is primarily an attempt to systematize the role of environmental cooperation with regard to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, to define its scope, and to intensify the debate on this subject area in Germany and within the respective OECD fora.

Given the wealth of experiences from cooperative environmental projects and programmes in conflict regions and against the background of existing methodological limitations, an action orientated research approach is suggested. Here, systematic research on the peace and conflict impacts of environmental projects and programmes seem to be a promising approach. Hence, the next step should be a systematic analysis of existing case studies and actual environmental cooperation projects, e.g. in water and nature conservation. In addition, the conflict classification mechanism, which was introduced in the BMZ cross-sectoral strategy published in 2005, provides an important tool for such integrated assessment methodologies for assessing conflict relevance and conflict and peacebuilding impacts in development programmes and projects. Both conflict and environmental experts and research institutes should jointly participate in operationalising and testing the still to-be-defined criteria for concrete project and programme evaluation. A programme or project will only achieve conflict prevention or mitigation through environmental cooperation when it is designed to do so and indicators to measure successes - both in the environmental and conflict spheres - are already defined in its design. For this reason it is important for both environment and conflict experts to participate in fact-finding missions, programme planning, progress monitoring, reviews, and initial evaluations of projects and programmes that are meant to positively influence conflict through environmental cooperation. At the same time, conflict analysis should take account of and integrate environmental and resource aspects. (by Alexander Carius)

For the complete study, please see http://www.ecc-platform.org/images//adelphi_report_environmental_peacemaking.pdf http://www.ecc-platform.org/images//adelphi_report_environmental_peacemaking.pdf

Sustainable Development and Security: Challenges (not only) for the Finish EU Presidency

The current Finnish EU Presidency will have to increase understanding both inside the EU and globally regarding the emerging environmental security challenges. This is one of the results of the "Symposium on Sustainable Development and Security: Challenges and Opportunities" at the European Parliament in Brussels on 31 May 2006. The meeting, coorganised by Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE-EU) and the Institute for Environmental Security (IES), was called to help initiate a political process to promote the better integration of environment and sustainable development into European foreign and security policies. In this context, MEP Mrs. Satu Hassi who described the major environmental security-related challenge for the incoming Finnish EU Presidency. Mrs. Hassi stressed in particular, the need for "intelligent institutions" to respond more effectively to environmental conflict. She also noted the irony that "we have more knowledge than ever before, and yet the average citizen or politician does not have enough knowledge to bring about the necessary changes."

The second environmental security priority for the Finnish Presidency is to develop reliable early warning systems to enable the EU to react before there is an actual conflict. Environmental degradation is a good indicator of potential conflict. However, there are other key "soft" issues that must be addressed in the security context, e.g. the rise in infant mortality. Mrs. Hassi emphasised that if early warning systems examined these soft issues as well, this would contribute to more effective conflict prevention.

Third, the Finnish Presidency must address the worsening global water crisis. Mrs. Hassi pointed out that the Himalayan Glaciar sources eight major Asian rivers, which in turn provide water to a heavily populated region. Should there be a decline in the water source, five hundred million people would be directly affected. Thus, the shared impacts of climate change and other major risks to the environment will either lead to new outbreaks of conflict or to new forms of cooperation. Now that China is beginning to recognise its own particular vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, there are new opportunities for the EU to advance new modes of environmental cooperation and global governance.

In terms of concrete recommendations, Mrs. Hassi endorsed the establishment of IPCC-like bodies for other environmental sectors, in order to generate the necessary data for policymakers to make informed decisions and to enable them to respond more effectively to global challenges. She asserted that one of the key issues is to ensure that environment and security challenges are properly mainstreamed into other relevant policy spheres and that global governance systems are duly strengthened. (*by Johannah Bernstein, Institute for Environmental Security*)

For the complete conference report by Johannah Bernstein, please see http://www.envirosecurity.org/ges/symposium/SDSSymposiumSummaryReport.pdf

For more information on the symposium, please see http://www.envirosecurity.org/ges/symposium

Stakeholders in Climate Change Conference Address Climate Variability

Recent heat waves in the United States and Europe, drought in Africa, and severe monsoons in Asia are examples for extreme weather events that emphasise the increasing urgency to better manage climate variability. The UN World Meteorological Organization, together with the Finnish Meteorological Institute and the International Research Institute for Climate and Society, gathered together more than 250 stakeholders for "The Living with Climate Variability and Change Conference" in July to discuss practical ways of achieving better management of climate risks in their short- and long-term operations.

Economies of all societies are vulnerable to climate change, but with limited resources, developing countries are particularly at risk of incurring higher losses, both in human life and economic investment, noted keynote speaker Jeffrey D. Sachs, director of The Earth Institute. Climate variability has led to dire consequences, both direct and indirect, including devastating famines, epidemics, social unrest and armed conflict in many underserved areas of the world. In Espoo, Finland, representatives from over 60 countries agreed that better understanding, operational integration of climate information, collaboration, and increased and ongoing dialogue are currently among their best weapons for dealing with climate variability and change. A lack of awareness of climate-related risk management has been a major obstacle to improved prevention and reduction of loss.

"This conference is significant because it is the first occasion where the opportunities, challenges, and experience to date in managing climate related risks could be presented and shared among diverse sectors and decision settings," said Stephen Zebiak, Director General of the International Research Institute for Climate and Society, part of The Earth Institute. "And we hope, moving forward, that it has set the stage for continued meaningful collaboration among these stakeholders."

Over the course of five days, dialogue among experts in the fields of agriculture and food security; natural disasters; water resources; energy and the built environment; public health; and decision making and policy resulted in a statement of agreement that captured the spirit of discussion and commitment to enabling their local communities — as well as the wider international community — to increase awareness of climate risk and help translate this awareness into real action. A second conference on climate risks will take place in Madrid in 2007. (by Clare Oh, The Earth Institute)

For more information on the conference, please see http://www.livingwithclimate.fi or contact Clare Oh at coh@ei.columbia.edu

For the "Espoo statement", please see http://www.livingwithclimate.fi/en/en_18.html

For more information on The International Research Institute for Climate and Society, please see http://iri.columbia.edu,

on the UN World Meteorological Organization, please see http://www.wmo.ch, and on the Finnish Meteorological Institute, please see http://www.fmi.fi/

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Energy Security according to the G8

The focus of the G8 meeting in St. Petersburg in July was supposedly on energy security, but the meeting instead was overshadowed by the violence in Lebanon, Israel, and the Gaza Strip. Against this background, the final statement asked for "investment in all stages of energy supply" and put a strong emphasis on transparency and good

governance in the energy sector. However, the statement obviously lacks any requirements for countries to make this really happen. In addition, the section on "Global Energy Security Principles" fails to explicitly mention renewable energies as a corner stone of sustainable future energy supply. Although the Global Action Plan refers to the promotion of all energy sources and the implementation of energy saving measures, the meeting focused primarily on how to bring more oil on the world markets.

In the light of the growing energy demand in many countries of the world this objective might be one dimensional but legitimate. Even Achim Steiner, executive director of UNEP admitted in an environmental security article published on the occasion of the G8 meeting, that a comprehensive understanding of energy security is unavoidable: "It is a fact that while one's heart may plead for a carbon-free world, the head knows that fossil fuels will, to a greater or lesser extent, be part of the energy mix for the foreseeable future." However, even in this light the results of the G8 meetings are hardly encouraging. A Joint Oil Data Initiative should provide the necessary data on reserves that are still available in the ground. Moreover, activities should be taken to prepare the world for potential oil shocks. Such activities make sense. However, only one month later the world could observe that shocks not only derive from disruptions in the oil economy. The shutdown of the important Prudhoe Bay oil field in the State of Alaska was followed by serious incidents in a nuclear power station in Sweden. Both events underline the pressing need to promote sustainable energy policies. In view of the challenge at hand, energy security was not really on the agenda in St. Petersburg. Next year there is another chance for G8 heads of government to address this issue when they are guests of the German government, which was the only country at the G8 summit this year that intends to phase out of nuclear energy. (by Dennis Taenzler)

For the results of the G8 meeting in St. Petersburg, please see http://en.g8russia.ru

For the Report "G8 summit 2006 – Issues and Instruments" including the article on "Environmental Security" by Achim Steiner, please see http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/scholar/agora2006.pdf

UPCOMING EVENTS

"Private Sector Development and Peacebuilding - Exploring Local and International Perspectives" in Berlin (14-15 September)

There is a growing acknowledgement that although often bound up with conflict dynamics, local business actors can also have an interest in securing peace. To date, this complex of relationships between local business and conflict has not been well understood. A new body of research commissioned by International Alert shows that different types of businesses have taken creative steps towards trying to promote peace and stability locally. One aim of the conference - Hosted by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) - is to highlight a local business perspective by drawing on recent research in over 20 countries affected by, or emerging from, conflict.

In order to register and for all organisational matters, please contact Mascha Peters at Mascha.Peters@gtz.de

For information on the conference in terms of its content, please contact: Sabine Becker, GTZ, at Sabine.Becker@gtz.de or Canan Gündüz, International Alert, at cgunduz@international-alert.org ATOP

"Washington Summit on Climate Stabilization" in Washington, D.C. (18-21 September)

The science symposium organized by the Climate Institute in Washington, D.C. will explore the implications of changes in the intensity of hurricanes and other severe weather events, in the melting rates of glaciers and ice sheets, in the incidence and severity of drought, and in the impacts on ecosystems and human health. The symposium aims inter alia at -building partnerships with others committed to collaboration in coastal protection, climate adaptation, and climate stabilization, including members of civic and religious groups and universities in the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, and throughout Europe.

For further information and the programme, please see http://washington_summit.climate.org
http://washington_summit.climate.org

"NATO advanced study institute course on overexploitation and contamination of shared groundwater resources" in Varna (1-12 October)

This course is organized by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Advanced Study Institute and aims at acquainting participants with an integrated approach for the monitoring and management of shared groundwater resources. Via a combination of lectures and problem-based learning exercises it will also provide the various stakeholders with the means to harmoniously reach decisions about groundwater use which are economically and socially sustainable.

For further information and the programme, please see http://www.nato.int/science/calendar_of_workshops/asi-2006.htm \$\triangle Top

"KOFF-Training: 'Strategic conflict analysis'" in Berne (9-10 October)

This two-day training organized by swisspeace is divided into parts: The first one will give an overview of different tools of participatory conflict analysis. Selected tools will be chosen and applied to a concrete case study. Their analytical advantages and disadvantages will be discussed. The second part will develop an organizational-specific strategy based on the previous conflict analysis. It will help to set and reflect upon work priorities vis-à-vis the organization's own strengths and challenges.

For further information and the programme, please see http://www.swisspeace.org/training/default.htm
http://www.swisspeace.org/training/default.htm

FOCUS

This section serves as a platform for Institutions and Initiatives to present their activities on Environment, Conflict, and Cooperation.

Nile Basin Initiative (NBI)

Formally launched in February 1999 by the Council of Ministers of Water Affairs of the Nile Basin States, the Initiative provides a unique forum for the countries of the Nile to move forward a cooperative process to realize tangible benefits in the Basin and build a solid foundation of trust and confidence. For the first time in history, all ten Nile basin countries -- Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda - expressed a serious concern about the need to work together to fight poverty. The Initiative is developing an agreed basin-wide framework and is guided by the countries' Shared Vision "to achieve sustainable socioeconomic development through the equitable utilization of, and benefit from, the common Nile Basin water resources."

To translate the NBI's shared vision into action, a Strategic Action Program has been launched to identify and prepare cooperative projects in the Basin. The program consists of two complementary sub-programs:

- 1) Basin-wide projects "Shared Vision Program" (SVP) to help create an enabling environment for action on the ground.
- 2) Sub-basin projects "Subsidiary Action Program" (SAP) is aimed at the delivery of actual development projects involving two or more countries.

From 21- 25 November 2006 the Nile Basin Initiative, in collaboration with its partners, is convening an International Conference on the Nile "The Nile Development Forum". The Conference will take place in Addis Ababa Ethiopia.

For more information, please see http://www.nilebasin.org
http://www.nilebasin.org

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