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Environment, Conflict, and Cooperation: The next steps

Following the launch of the information portal "Civilian Crisis Prevention - Environment and Resources" (www.krium.de) one year ago, this is the first newsletter on Environment, Conflict, and Cooperation published jointly by Adelphi Research and Germanwatch. The partnership is intended to broaden the range of issues covered, turn the spotlight on civilian approaches to preventing and transforming environmental conflicts and integrate this issue in the activities of German and international non-governmental organizations. The newsletter will appear every two months starting with this edition and provide information on political initiatives, new publications and events. In addition, a series of dialogues and events involving NGOs, representatives from government, parliament, and business on "environment and resource conflicts" and "environmental cooperation and peace building" will be organized jointly with Germanwatch over the next three years in Germany.

The German edition of this newsletter has over 600 subscribers, and this speaks volumes of the level of interest regarding these issues in the country. Germany is not alone in according priority to this issue in its development assistance. Foreign and multilateral donor institutions and implementing organizations are also increasingly focusing on how to integrate approaches for conflict management in projects and programmes on environmental cooperation. In keeping with this trend, the Environment, Conflict, and Cooperation portal and the newsletter will henceforth appear in English as well as in German (<http://www.krium.de>). Partners in the environment and development cooperation sector can access information on relevant developments in Germany and the world at www.ecc-platform.org. We plan to gradually expand the platform by adding regional portals, which will be created locally together with other partner organizations. Our objective is to strengthen networking among relevant stakeholders across the world. We would urge you to inform your partners in other countries that the information at this portal is now also available in English. This information platform is being funded till March 2008 as part of the Federal Environmental Agency's and the Federal Environment Ministry's programme for the promotion of non-profit associations. This will facilitate the long term establishment of an international network.

We would like to thank our readers and members of the Advisory Board for their constructive suggestions which have helped us to develop this information portal over the last 12 months.

The editorial team

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POLICY & RESEARCH

On Conflict and Collaboration in the Management of Natural Resources

The viability of collaborative socio-environmental conflict management depends to a large extent on the possibility of overcoming the large power asymmetries existing in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is one of the key results obtained from a programm

launched by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC-Canada) and the University for Peace (UPEACE) in Costa Rica in 1999. This program aims to support research about conflict and collaboration (C&C) in natural resource management in Latin America and the Caribbean and has awarded a total of 30 grants to research projects. C&C is supported by an advisory Committee of renowned researchers who provide orientation and select the grantees from a wide array of proposals. UPEACE, IDRC, and UNDP have prepared a comprehensive analysis of the lessons learned in the research process. The projects contribute to a better understanding of the achievements - and limitations - of collaborative natural resource management.

Interestingly, the projects reveal different ways of dealing with conflict resolution. The differences reflect a latent tension in the region between what is collaborative and what is adversarial, as possible ways of resolving socio-environmental conflicts. State stakeholders tend to go with strategies that favor a more efficient, organized, and in some cases, more equitable environmental and territorial management. On the other hand, NGOs, and grassroots organizations, tend to go with strategies that seek greater respect for and attention to local perspectives (DT/ UPeace).

Complete information about C&C and all supported projects can be found at:

<http://www.upeace.org/cyc/>

The results have just been published as a book (both in Spanish and English versions), including case studies and research methodologies. Copies can be obtained from UPEACE (<mailto:smontero@upeace.org>).

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On tour: The "Environment, Conflict and Cooperation" Exhibition

Why do changes in our natural environment threaten human security? Does the exploitation of natural resources lead to violent conflict? How can sustainable development and environmental cooperation contribute to stability and peace? These are the key questions of the exhibition "Environment, Conflict and Cooperation". The exhibition visualizes the dramatic impacts of global environmental change. Using the subjects of water, climate, land, forests, and minerals, the exhibition shows the way in which environmental degradation and resource scarcity lead to conflicts and new security threats, but also how environmental cooperation and sustainable development can contribute to peace and stability.

The exhibition was conceived and realized by Adelphi Research, Adelphi Consult, and Weltformat.Design at the initiative of the German Foreign Ministry. Besides the initial opening at the Foreign Ministry in Berlin, the exhibition was shown in Dushanbe (Tajikistan), at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Berne, and (Slovakia) during the Advisory Board meeting of the EnvSec Initiative of UNDP, UNEP, OSCE, and NATO in Bratislava. Next stops include Mainz, Washington and The Hague (DT).

The complete tour dates, visual impressions, and information on booking the exhibition are available at <http://www.ecc-exhibition.org/de>

On the opening of the exhibition in Berne, see

<http://www.deza.ch/events.php?IID=1&navID=544&&eventID=226>.

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Forest Landscape Restoration for environmental security?

Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) can serve as a tool to resolve disputes over resources property rights. In many situations, unclear property rights and rights on natural resource use lead to local conflicts. In recognition of this problem, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) promotes FLR as an innovative tool with potential for resolving disputes. FLR is an approach to managing the dynamic and complex interactions between the people, natural resources and competing land-uses that comprise a landscape. It makes use of collaborative approaches to harmonise the different land-use decisions of stakeholders with the aim of restoring ecological integrity and enhancing the development of local communities and national economies. In this, FLR might offer an added value for poverty reduction, local economic growth as well as environmental security.

The links between FLR and environmental security are quite obvious. As forest land is degraded and fragmented, the velocity and rate of site-level run-off increases, soil erosion accelerates, slope stability reduces, and water quality declines. The disasters that grab headlines are therefore not just a consequence of, for example, one particularly heavy rainfall but are symptomatic of a long-term erosion of ecological integrity. FLR can help reverse this trend by increasing not only landscape-level resilience to shocks, but also by enhancing landscape-level adaptability so that both government and local communities are in a better position to respond to such shocks. As the ITTO emphasizes in its latest newsletter, convincing policymakers of the value of FLR is important not only for the success of restoration initiatives, but also for continuous support for forestry activities in general. The ITTO underlines the importance of convincing governments of the real value of forests and the need to restore degraded forest landscapes - otherwise the cut back of forest department budgets is likely to continue (DT).

For the ITTO newsletter "Tropical Forest Update", see

<http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageId=243>

Read more about forests and the problem of illegal logging at <http://www.illegal-logging.info/>

See also "Civil Society Mobilises against Illegal Forest Exploitation" in "The Post" (Bureau/Cameroon) as of September 29 at

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200509300224.html>

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Environmental income and human security

Environmental income is the key for human security and economic empowerment of the rural poor. This is one of the main results of the report "World Resources 2005: The Wealth of the Poor: Managing Ecosystems to Fight Poverty" recently published by the World Resources Institute (Washington, D.C). Harvests from forests, fisheries, and farm fields are a primary source of rural income, and a fall-back when other sources of employment falter. Hence, ecosystems are not only a survival mechanism but in particular also an asset to create wealth for the poor. Based on case studies, the report points out that the current debate about aid debt relief and trade reform is only one side of the coin. Additionally, to combat the roots of poverty an increased focus on local natural resources is needed. Poverty reduction programs often fail to recognize the link between environment and livelihoods. "The time has come to reverse the course of worsening diseases, depleted natural resources, political instability, inequality, and the social corrosion of angry generations that have no means to rise out of poverty," Klaus

Toepfer, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), commented the publication of the report.

The report further underlines the importance of governance factors for sustainable ecosystem management. Good governance ensures adequate representation, access to information, and public participation. Moreover, the provision of tenure rights is another key aspect for increasing human security and regional stability. The poor often lack legal rights to ecosystems and are excluded from decisions about ecosystem management. Without addressing these failures through changes in governance, there is little chance of using the economic potential of ecosystems to reduce rural poverty. This report shows again the need to stop dealing with environment and development as separate policy areas. The promises of an integrated approach are illustrated by a huge number of concrete examples (DT).

The report is available at <http://population.wri.org/worldresources2005-pub-4073.html>

For more information about the work of the World Resources Institute, see <http://www.wri.org/>

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CONFERENCE REPORTS

To Dam or Not to Dam?

Water experts from around the world found themselves at a crossroads at the annual World Water Week in Stockholm in August. Eight of the workshops and one high-level panel discussion focused on hard versus soft solutions for the billions of people without adequate access to water and sanitation services – or, as the conference organizers put it, “to dam or not to dam”. The majority of speakers and participants chose the road marked “large-scale infrastructure,” leaving “soft solutions” to the world’s water crises mostly unexplored. Big money for big projects was announced, the social and environmental costs associated with dam building were hardly ever mentioned. As Jamal Saghir, the World Bank’s water and energy director put it: “If Kenya wants our money for large-scale infrastructure, no problem.”

And yes, not only Kenya wanted the World Bank’s money for dams. Ministers from several African countries made a point to say it wasn’t the Bank pushing them toward expensive dams, but that they had chosen this development path of their own free will. The strategies they announced were based on big infrastructure, to divert water from one region of the country to another, or to feed regional power grids that are yet to be developed. Sunita Narain from the Centre of Science and Development in New Delhi, India, and the winner of this year’s Stockholm Water Prize, promoted a soft solution to water scarcity: rain-water harvesting. But she remained an exotic outlaw, an NGO poster child: She explained how more and more houses in Indian cities collect rainwater on their rooftops and how villages in Rajasthan are blooming thanks to hand-made rainwater storages. And she stressed that small-scale, decentralised solutions are much cheaper and can be scaled up as finances allow.

Interestingly enough, even the financial argument did not seem to carry much weight with the institutions present in Stockholm, such as African governments, the World Bank and the World Water Council. Soft solutions were discussed as if they were a mere add-on, something civil society should deal with. It was therefore somehow appropriate that

the World Water Week featured a poster exhibition for NGOs to showcase their small-scale success stories, whereas the World Bank's approach was discussed in the main conference hall. Before the start of the conference, the organizers claimed: "Diversity will be on display at the 2005 World Water Week in Stockholm". New and diverse strategies to solve water-related development issues and increase poor people's access to water and sanitation were indeed on display. Anders Berntell, representing the organizers, called for a "people-centred approach to dam building". He called for the application of the World Commission on Dams guidelines to ensure that the interests of the poor are at the centre of water development. Yet, his calls remained unanswered by representatives from governments and the development-aid industry. They appeared more interested in looking at posters of people (*Ann Kathrin Schneider, International Rivers Network*).

For more information on the world water week, see <http://www.worldwaterweek.org>
Further information on the International Rivers Network could be obtained at <http://www.irn.org/>

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Water, War, but where are the Women?

On 8.- 10. September the Heinrich-Boell Foundation and the Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies at Berlin's Humboldt University held the international congress 'Femme Global' to discuss gender perspectives in the 21st century. Under one of the major conference themes 'peace and security', the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) organized the workshop on 'WWW - Women, Water, War'. The first presentation by Roula Zoubiane, a Lebanese Lawyer focussed on the historical development of water politics in the Middle East, highlighting Israel's control of water sources and arguing that water, not oil, bears the potential for major future wars in the region: while oil fields are mapped and their ownership settled, many water sources are still unidentified. The second speaker, Regina Bircherm, Biologist and President of WILPF, highlighted women's plight in developing countries as providers of water to their families. She pointed to the burden of having to carry water for miles, the health risks of polluted water and the negative impact of water privatization for the provision of affordable water in many developing countries.

Both presentations pointed to important topics: the role of water in the Middle East future war or peace developments and women's (and their families') health risks from insufficient and dirty water. While the presenters provided interesting facts on water and war on the one hand, and women and human security on the other, only when pushed by the audience did they make some indirect links between all three elements of the panel's title: by emphasizing the lack of women in the political system regulating Middle East politics and in the corporate system of water privatization. The impression that water (or other natural resources), wars, and women are still not really thought together was reinforced by the discussion taking place in another, larger panel: the 'feminist critique of new security concepts' recognized a broad security concept, however, the specific role of our natural environment did not feature. (MF)

Femme Global congress website:

http://www.glow-boell.de/en/rubrik_2/813_993.htm

Link to WILPF's environment programme:

<http://www.wilpf.int.ch/environment/eindex.htm>

Link to the German discussion paper for a feminist perspective on new security concepts
http://www.glow-boell.de/media/de/txt_rubrik_2/Sicherheit_fuer_alle.pdf

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A Question of Access: Civil Societies and Conflict Prevention

A key advantage that NGOs have over governmental agencies in crisis prevention is their proximity to local communities. It allows them to win the confidence of groups in conflict regions to whom government organisations have little access. This was one of the findings of the conference on the role of civil society in crisis prevention that took place in Berlin in mid June. The conference was organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. The federal government's Action Plan for "Civilian Crisis Prevention" thus emphasises the need for enhanced cooperation between different policy sectors and stakeholders. To facilitate this process, the Action Plan now has an institutional framework, which includes an Interministerial Steering Group and an Advisory Board comprising researchers and civil society representatives.

The opportunities and limitations of such an institutional setup were one of the main themes of the conference. The conference took positive note of the fact that the Interministerial Steering Group includes ministries, such as for those for economic affairs or environment, which traditionally have not been directly involved in civilian conflict management. Their involvement considerably facilitates information dissemination and coordination; it also supports a more cohesive approach to crisis prevention. The Advisory Board provides expert inputs for the Interministerial Steering Committee and also plays an important role in ensuring multiplier effects. It was acknowledged, however, that the involvement of civil society cannot be restricted to this body alone. Decision makers must seek a much more broad-based dialogue with civil society. Apart from their proximity to local communities, civil society groups often have the added advantage that their activities are long term in nature and consequently tend to outlive governments. Leveraging this advantage in a systematic manner will continue to be critical to strengthening crisis prevention (DT).

For more information on the action plan "Civilian Crisis Prevention", see
http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/aussenpolitik/friedenspolitik/ziv_km/aktionsplan_html

Friedrich Ebert Foundation: <http://www.fes.de/> (in German).

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"Less dependence on oil" - new consensus on old demand

"Climate change is not an illusion; it is happening before our eyes." With this statement (*translated by the editors*), Klaus Toepfer inaugurated the annual conference of the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE), evoking images of the catastrophic hurricanes and floods that struck the United States. Toepfer, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), demanded that environmental disasters such as this should propel decreased dependence on oil and a move towards low carbon energy supply. He also underlined the link between natural resource utilisation and global security. In light of the predictions of future 'water wars' he asked, "What disarmament instruments do we really possess for such wars?" According to Toepfer, the efficient use of and equitable access to natural resources are critical for global security.

Toepfer was not alone in calling for decreased dependence on oil. In his speech, Chancellor Schroeder demanded an energy policy that promotes regenerative resources and renewable energy. The Political Forum of the conference, comprising representatives from the parties in parliament, also dealt with the issue of a shift away from oil. Although party positions on environmental issues diverged considerably a couple of weeks before the elections for the Lower House of German Parliament, there was consensus on the goal of reducing oil dependency. Consequently, and given its relevance for energy supply in the future, consensus could also be achieved on the motto of the 5th annual conference of the Council for Sustainable Development: "From more to better" (EM).

For more information on the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE), see <http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/english.html>

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UPCOMING EVENTS

"The Human Right to Water" in Berlin (21. – 22. October)

Between the 21st and 22nd of October an international conference on "The Human Right to Water" will take place at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany in Berlin. The aim of this conference is therefore to foster and substantiate the ongoing debate on a human right to water.

For further information and the programme please see http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/aussenpolitik/menschenrechte/konferenz_wasser_html

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"11. World Lake Conference " in Nairobi (31. October – 4. November)

Between the 31st of October and the 4th of November the 11. World Lake Conference takes place in Nairobi. The conference with a keynote message by peace nobel price winner Wangari Maathai focuses on "Management on Lake Basins for their Sustainable Use: Global Experience and African Issues."

For further information and the programme, please see <http://www.ileckenya.go.ke/>

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"Asia Europe Environment Forum" in Jakarta (23. - 25. November)

The conference "1/3 of Our Planet: What Can Asia and Europe do for Sustainable Development?" will take place at the Bidakara Convention Center in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 23-25 November 2005. The conference aims to serve as a platform for dialogue on environment and sustainable development issues affecting Asia and Europe.

For further information, please see <http://env.asef.org/>

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"Civil Society, Governance and Integration in Africa" in Addis Ababa (28-30. November)

Three pan-African research organisations-the Pan-African Strategic and Policy Research Group (PANAFSTRAG); the Development Policy Management Forum (DPMF) and the African Association of Political Science (AAPS) will hold the conference "Civil Society, Governance and Integration in Africa" from 28. until 30. November in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).

For more information, please see <http://www.aaps.org.za/civilconference.htm>

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FOCUS

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

"Human Security Projekt" at the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF)

In 2005, the Institute for Development and Peace initiated the project *Human Security: Theory and Practice*. The project benefits from the members' previous work on state failure, global governance, smart sanctions and environmental security.

Since the mid 1990s, the human security approach has been promoted by various actors, most prominently by UNDP and the Japanese and Canadian government. Though this concept is relatively well established as a political leitmotif, in the academic world the approach and especially its definition is criticized for being too ambiguous.

The INEF project perceives human security as a challenge to more traditional security concepts within the theories of international relations. The project distinguishes six dimensions of human security which have the potential to existentially threaten the individual's physical and mental well-being. One goal of the project is to establish an easy manageable way to measure human (in)security through specific thresholds for each dimension. On a national or regional level, these will be based on aggregated data of international organisations. The second goal is to establish a tool for a rapid "bottom-up" assessment of the human security situation at the local level, which can contribute to the formulation of policy strategies. The project is conducted by Tobias Debiel, Sascha Werthes and Annabelle Houdret.

Further information: <http://inef.uni-duisburg.de>

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The Newsletter "Environment, Conflict, and Cooperation" is published every two months.

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<http://ecc-platform.org/>

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Adelphi Research recommends to visit the websites linked via this newsletter. However, following a judgment by Hamburg Regional Court (Landgericht), we must dissociate ourselves from the design and contents of linked pages in order to counter future compensation claims.

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Contact

Publisher:

Alexander Carius
Adelphi Research gGmbH
Caspar-Theyss-Strasse 14a
D - 14193 Berlin

Phone +49-30-89 000 68 0
Fax +49-30-89 000 68 10

office@adelphi-research.de
www.adelphi-research.de

Editorial team:

Dennis Tänzler (DT), taenzler@adelphi-research.de
Moirä Feil (MF)
Annika Kramer (AK)
Alexander Carius (AC)
Eileen Maternowsky (EM)
Judith Winterstein (JW)
Anja Köhne (KOE)
Translation by Anya Malhotra

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