



# Summary Report

Rwanda : From Post-Conflict to  
Environmentally Sustainable Development

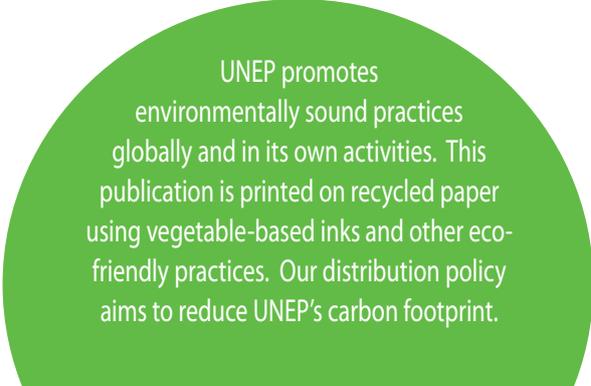
United Nations Environment Programme

The basis for this *Summary Report* is the full report *Rwanda: From Post-conflict to Environmentally Sustainable Development* and is meant as a synthesis of its key findings. The report has been subject to extensive review within UNEP as well as by the Government of Rwanda and other stakeholders.

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>CASM</b>	Communities and Small-Scale Mining
<b>CBFP</b>	Congo Basin Forest Partnership
<b>CBO</b>	community-based organisation
<b>CDM</b>	Clean Development Mechanism
<b>CFL</b>	compact fluorescent lamp
<b>CGIS</b>	Centre for Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing
<b>CITES</b>	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
<b>CNG</b>	compressed natural gas
<b>DMU</b>	Disaster Management Unit
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community
<b>EDPRS</b>	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
<b>EIA</b>	environmental impact assessment
<b>ENRSSP</b>	Environment and Natural Resources Sector Strategic Plan
<b>EWB</b>	Energy and Water Board
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>GDP</b>	gross domestic product
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System
<b>GoR</b>	Government of Rwanda
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>IWRM</b>	Integrated Water Resources Management
<b>LPG</b>	liquefied petroleum gas
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goal
<b>MINICOM</b>	Ministry of Trade and Industry
<b>MININFRA</b>	Ministry of Infrastructure
<b>MININTER</b>	Ministry of Internal Security
<b>MINIRENA</b>	Ministry of Natural Resources
<b>NAFA</b>	Rwanda National Forest Authority
<b>NAPA</b>	National Adaptation Programme of Action
<b>NBI</b>	Nile Basin Initiative
<b>NCPC</b>	National Cleaner Production Centre
<b>NELSAP</b>	Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organisation
<b>NUR</b>	National University of Rwanda
<b>ORTPN</b>	Rwanda Office of Tourism and National Parks
<b>PCEA</b>	post-conflict environmental assessment
<b>PES</b>	Payment for Ecosystem Services
<b>RDB</b>	Rwanda Development Board
<b>REIN</b>	Rwandan Environment Information Network
<b>REMA</b>	Rwanda Environment Management Authority
<b>RMS</b>	Rwanda Meteorological Service
<b>SEA</b>	strategic environmental assessment
<b>SHS</b>	solar home systems
<b>SWAp</b>	sector-wide approach
<b>SWG</b>	Sector Working Group
<b>SWM</b>	solid waste management
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>USD</b>	United States dollar
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>cm</b>	centimetre
<b>ha</b>	hectare
<b>m</b>	metre
<b>MW</b>	megawatt
<b>°</b>	degree
<b>°C</b>	degrees Centigrade

# Summary Report

## 1. Introduction

Fifteen years after the 1994 genocide, Rwanda is today a resurgent nation that is stable, pursuing innovative reconciliation efforts and radiating with ambitious determination. This remarkable turnaround from a devastated, war-torn country into a promising showcase of African development is an exceptional story.

Vision 2020 is Rwanda's long-term national development plan, prioritising rapid economic growth and poverty alleviation that is broadly aligned to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Its overriding aspiration is to catapult Rwanda within one generation from a least developed into a middle-income country by 2020. The groundwork for good governance is now well in place. Completion of debt reduction programmes in 2005 further marked a symbolic turning point in the country's evolution from the recovery phase to a solid development track.

It is within the context of finding an environmentally sustainable path to Vision 2020 that the Government of Rwanda (GoR) requested UNEP to carry out a countrywide post-conflict environmental assessment (PCEA). Although 16 years have elapsed since the end of the conflict in 1994, its environmental consequences continue

to pose significant challenges. What this multi-disciplinary assessment aims to offer is an independent, critical analysis of the most pressing environmental issues facing Rwanda. With due consideration to its post-conflict context, the assessment assumes a forward-looking approach and suggests scientifically-based and practical recommendations to tackle concrete problems.

This report is a summary of the full assessment study, *Rwanda: From Post-conflict to Environmentally Sustainable Development*, to which readers should refer for more detailed analysis as well as statistical data and illustrations. Addressed primarily to national decision makers and international development partners, this summary begins by highlighting the priority areas for intervention together with an implementation strategy. It then outlines the assessment's overall messages and elaborates on theme and sector-specific findings, which constitute the basis for the report's technical recommendations.

While this assessment should assist Rwanda chart an environmentally sustainable course to its national development goals, it is not prescriptive. Implementation of Rwanda's recently adopted Environment and Natural Resources Sector Strategic Plan (ENRSSP) is to be implemented by Rwandan stakeholders in collaboration with development partners based on a sector-wide approach (SWAp). In moving this process forward, strategic action planning should consider this assessment's findings and recommendations amongst other sources.



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*Underlying Rwanda's verdant landscapes and abundant water supplies are serious environmental pressures*

Map 1. Great Lakes and Eastern Africa



REGIONAL MAP

- ★ National capital
- Cities with more than 250,000 inhabitants
- Cities with less than 250,000 inhabitants
- ++++ Railway
- International boundary



Datum: WGS84  
Geographic projection.

Sources:  
ETOPO1, VMap0,  
ESRI Data & Maps 9.3.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement by the United Nations.

## 2. Assessment process

This PCEA is the product of a consultative process involving the GoR, academic and research institutions, United Nations (UN) and international agencies, donors, civil society organisations and private sector representatives. UNEP's national counterpart in this process was the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA), working under the overall leadership of the Ministry of Environment and Lands (MINELA).

The assessment process was carried out between March 2008 and April 2009. Following an initial scoping study identifying priority themes, UNEP commissioned 12 national experts to prepare a comprehensive desk study, which was completed in June 2008. The desk study served to advise the fieldwork phase of the assessment and was also subsequently used by REMA as an input for preparing the government's national State of Environment Report.

Fieldwork was primarily conducted over a two-week period in August 2008 by a multi-disciplinary UNEP team of ten scientific experts. It involved site reconnaissance visits, extensive stakeholder interviews and field documentation. Soil and water samples were collected for site-specific snapshots of land contamination, water quality and soil sedimentation rates, and analysed both in the field and at international laboratories. Extensive mapping and satellite image analysis was conducted in collaboration with the Centre for Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing (CGIS) of the National University of Rwanda (NUR), including national-scale Geographic Information System (GIS)-based modelling of soil erosion. Draft reports were

subject to national review at two major workshops (August 2008 and March 2009) to elicit feedback and input from stakeholders. While the array of perspectives expressed in these consultations are by and large reflected in the final text, this assessment report remains, however, first and foremost an independent UNEP study.

## 3. Priority areas and implementation

As it strives to make up for lost time during the conflict years, Rwanda is pushing for fast-track economic growth that is imperative to lift the majority of its population out of poverty and improve their quality of life. Inspired largely by the experience of the 'Asian Tigers', the government aims to maintain high economic growth and transform Rwanda from a subsistence agrarian economy into a regional service and knowledge-based hub. This accelerated development process will most likely create profound social and environmental change, with sustainability dependent on the country's ecosystems' continuous delivery of economic and social benefits. The challenge is to unlock the environmental degradation trap of "rapid population growth, resource over-exploitation and scarcity" that has caused the poor to "mine" the environment and has stymied Rwanda's potential for decades.

This assessment identifies three priority areas for intervention that should help decision makers pursue an environmentally sustainable course towards Vision 2020. These core priority areas were in turn used to categorise individual recommendations per issue and sector into a more structured and costed plan that is tabulated in Annex 1 of this report.

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