



The Role of Natural Resources in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

Addressing Risks and Seizing Opportunities



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About this report

This report focuses on the role of natural resources in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes and illustrates how the management of natural resources can be used to promote more effective and sustainable reintegration. Part 1 of the report explores the relationship between natural resources, conflict economies and armed groups. Part 2 introduces the linkages between various natural resource sectors and DDR programmes, covering both potential risks as well as opportunities. Part 3 elaborates on the key entry points for DDR programmes to engage different natural resources sectors, particularly for reinsertion and reintegration activities. The recommendations put forward in Part 4 help policy makers and practitioners to effectively integrate the opportunities and mitigate the risks from natural resources to ensure more sustainable and effective DDR programmes.

The development of this report was supported jointly by UNDP and UNEP's Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding (ECP) Programme. It is the first outcome of the UNDP-UNEP Joint Initiative on DDR and Natural Resources and was conducted within the framework of the UN Inter-agency Working Group on Reintegration, Livelihoods Recovery and Natural Resources. Specific guidance for DDR practitioners on incorporating natural resources into the full DDR planning and implementation process can also be found in the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) Module 6.30, which builds on and was drafted in parallel with this report by UNDP and UNEP.

UNDP and UNEP are grateful for the generous contributions from the European Union and the Governments of the Netherlands and Finland that enabled the realization of this report. This report can be downloaded from:

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Table of contents

Foreword	5
Acknowledgements	6
Acronyms	7
Executive summary	8
Recommendations	9
Introduction	12
Policy context	12
Overview of report	13
Part 1. The natural resource-conflict nexus	16
Natural resources as triggers or drivers of conflict	16
Natural resources and conflict economies	16
Armed groups and natural resources	19
Civilian impacts	22
Natural resource management in post-conflict recovery	24
Part 2. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and natural resources	26
Disarmament	27
Demobilization	27
Reintegration	28
Part 3. Natural resource management and reintegration	36
Post-conflict employment creation	36
Reintegration opportunities in natural resource sectors	38
Findings and recommendations	50
Summary of main findings	50
Recommendations	51
Annexes	
1. Key terms and definitions	56
2. List of contributors	58
3. References	60
Case studies	
1. Natural resource grievances in the Province of Aceh, Indonesia	17
2. Natural resources, armed groups and DDR in the DRC	18
3. Natural resources and conflict in Côte d'Ivoire	20
4. Ex-combatants in rubber plantations in Liberia	21
5. DDR and criminality in Colombia	23
6. Promoting natural resource management in cantonment camps in Nepal	29
7. Employing ex-combatants through de-mining in Afghanistan	30
8. Former Lord's Resistance Army combatants and access to land in Northern Uganda	31
9. Supporting gender-responsive reintegration through the development of non-timber forest product value chains in the Province of Aceh, Indonesia	39
10. Lessons in the sanitation sector from Sierra Leone	40
11. Ending natural resource exploitation in Sapo National Park, Liberia	44
12. Ex-combatants as community rangers in conservation response units	45
13. Reforestation, conservation, and employment of ex-combatants in Afghanistan	46

Foreword

Natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable, offer enormous potential for helping people in developing countries to escape from poverty and build resilient societies. Natural resource management is a multidisciplinary endeavour which becomes particularly complex in conflict settings, where risk factors for conflict, corruption, and resource degradation are typically high, and specialized capacity and skills are typically low. In the past, promoting effective and sustainable natural resource management has not traditionally been prioritized within the post-crisis recovery process. However, as this report notes, the international community should perhaps look more closely at the immense economic recovery and peacebuilding potential of natural resources – particularly in the context of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) efforts.

Experience shows that ex-combatants need social and economic incentives to permanently lay down their weapons. This report discusses how the natural resources sector can be an important catalyst in the immediate aftermath of conflict for generating attractive jobs for ex-combatants and returnees, when grounded in broader post-conflict recovery support to entire communities, including women and other vulnerable groups.

In this context, the main purpose of this report is to assist policymakers and practitioners to maximize the peacebuilding synergy and impact of natural resource management and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) opportunities, in the context of broader early recovery and recovery interventions.

Of all the risks to development that natural resources have been known to heighten, none is more pernicious than the risk of conflict. Natural resources have not only fuelled major conflicts, but have also contributed to recurrent outbreaks of violence, both within and between communities. By financing the rise of rebel groups and militias in fragile settings, natural resources have played a key role not only in instigating but also in prolonging conflict and violence.

As this report discusses, natural resources, in and of themselves, are rarely a cause of conflict. However, when they are mismanaged and misused – for instance, to finance the rise of rebels or militias, or to promote specific group interests – they can have a multiplier effect on other causes and drivers, including underlying social divisions, governance deficits, fragile institutions and more.

The negative impact of natural resources is far from inevitable, even in the most challenging environments. A number of countries featured in the report, including, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Liberia, and Rwanda have leveraged natural resources into a platform for the generation of jobs, revenues, basic services, and infrastructure. Their experiences demonstrate the enormous potential – as yet not fully realized – by many other fragile countries to transform their natural resource wealth into the peace dividends needed to unite fractured societies and fuel post-conflict recovery.

The report reflects UNDP and UNEP's integrated and multidimensional approach to post-conflict recovery, which includes support to livelihoods and economic recovery, social cohesion, institutional capacity development, restoration of local governance, and environmental sustainability. This report has been developed under the *UNDP-UNEP Joint Initiative on Reintegration, Livelihoods Recovery and Natural Resources*, which operates within the framework of the UN Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR

We are sure that the report's findings will strengthen the ability of all those who read it in respect to identifying and addressing both the risks and opportunities related to natural resources and reintegration in fragile and post-conflict contexts.



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