



Security in Africa through a sustainable environment



Community participation is the cornerstone of the design and management of the park Mafia Island Marine Park Tanzania.

This sheet will give a few insights¹ into environment-security linkages as well as an indicative list of suggestions, based on best practices and lessons learned in ways of addressing environmental challenges to security.

It is meant to be a tool for promoting dialogue between WWF and other stakeholders/ decision-makers in the process of sustainable development in Africa.

Human, social, and economic security cannot be achieved without managing the environment. The mismanagement of natural resources, unequal and unclear access to land and resources, and misappropriation of revenues have promoted grievances, war, civil strife, and insecurity.

Human, social, and economic security cannot be achieved without managing the environment. Instead of bringing prosperity, natural resource wealth in various African countries has financed war, especially in countries with weak governance.

Disasters - whether man-made (e.g., war) or natural (e.g., floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and climate change) - exacerbate poverty and economic loss and degrade the environment.

Darfur

The conflict in Darfur in the Sudan has been called the first 'environmental war'. What catches the eye is that the conflict in Darfur is between Arabs and Africans, between the government, various armed militia groups, and civilians. Below this surface, however, lies the desertification that has taken place in the last few decades, especially in northern Darfur. The desert has spread southwards, forcing Arab nomads further and further south year by year, bringing them into conflict with African farmers.

Kenya

Scarcity of water and unclear landownership often leads to violence and conflicts. Mid July, for example, conflicts have resulted in 14 deaths and burned down houses, when drought and scarcity of fertile lands triggered violence between the Masai and Kikuyu west of Nairobi, Kenya.

Angola

The civil war in Angola was primarily funded by natural resources: oil revenues were used by the government and diamonds profits by the rebel group UNITA, which used an estimated US\$3.7 billion to finance its activities. The war resulted in 500,000 deaths and significant economic losses. Land mines have maimed thousands².

Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, diamond revenues funded the decade-long war (1991 – 2002) that resulted in the deaths of more than 75,000 people, displacement of an estimated 5 million others, and abduction of some 10,000 children.

MDGs

In light of the global effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, it is crucial to identify that environmental sustainability (MDG 7) will be essential for achieving MDG 1-6. Only then will long term substantial revenues be generated to support economical recovery and security, secure food supply (MDG 1) and decrease health risks (MDG 4-6) for the world's poor.



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Environmental linkages

CONFLICT

While the root causes of conflict are complex, the desire to control lucrative natural resources such as fish, water, fertile land, timber, oil and diamonds has fueled and prolonged hostilities. In 2001 it was estimated that of the world's 50 wars and armed conflicts, 25 per cent were financed, triggered, or exacerbated by revenues from natural resources. Trade in valuable minerals has recently even been linked to terrorism - a report by Global Witness has connected diamond trading with the financing of Al Qaeda cells.

By improving accountability of natural resource wealth, equitably distributing that wealth, clarifying land rights and resources access, encouraging participation, and promoting other principles of good environmental governance, peaceful and sustainable development may be achieved.

DISPROPORTIONATE DEATH AND DAMAGE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Although rich industrialized countries are primarily responsible for emitting high levels of carbon dioxide - the principal cause of climate change - **low-income countries** are expected **to suffer most** from the impacts of this phenomenon. Small countries are especially vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change because of their remoteness, isolation and limited diversification.

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NATURAL DISASTERS

The incidence of natural disasters has risen over the past 10 years, attributable in part to social factors and climate change. Deaths and damage associated with natural disasters occur mainly in developing countries, where an estimated 97 per cent of all natural disaster-related deaths occur.

Disasters cause extensive environmental damage, tremendous human suffering and great economic loss. Conflicts, civil strife, and the impacts of natural disasters displace large numbers of people (who may then seek haven in refugee camps), place unsustainable food and fuel demands on the local environment, destroy infrastructure and open the way for opportunists to exploit resources unsustainably.

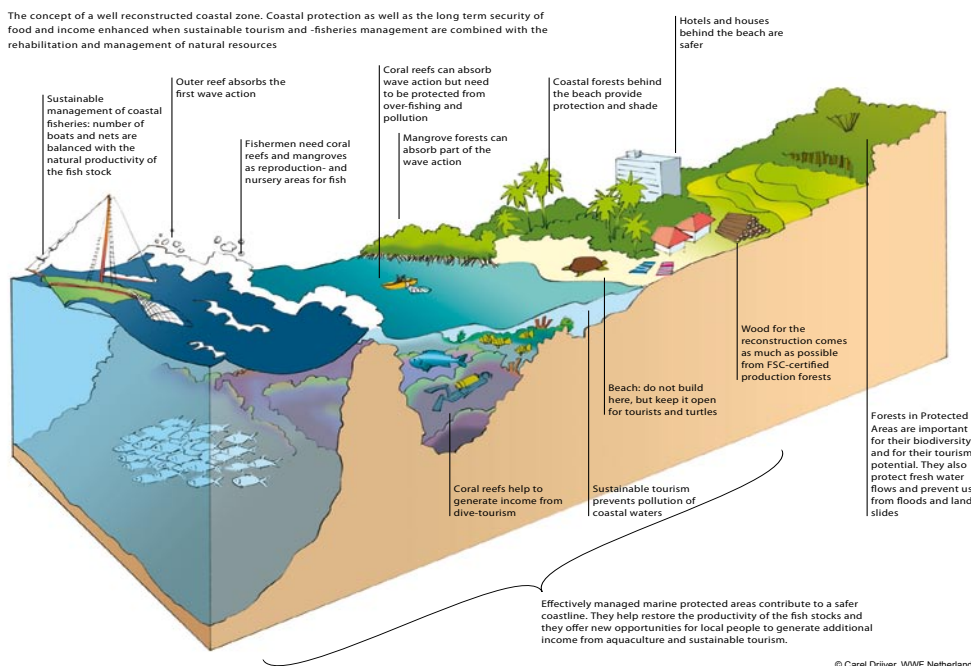
By maintaining intact natural ecosystems, the social and ecological costs of natural disasters can be minimized.

Poor people who depend significantly on natural resources for their daily survival suffer the brunt of disasters' impacts through disproportionate illness, infrastructure damage, displacement and, ultimately, death.

While catastrophes such as the recent Indian Ocean tsunamis cannot be prevented, the conservation and management of mangrove forests and coral reefs (both of which buffer the impacts of storm waves and tsunamis) - coupled with careful land use planning, educational programmes and early warning systems - can significantly reduce human casualties and economic losses in the event of similar disasters.

Securing the future after Tsunami

The concept of a well reconstructed coastal zone. Coastal protection as well as the long term security of food and income enhanced when sustainable tourism and fisheries management are combined with the rehabilitation and management of natural resources



'Peace on earth depends on our ability to secure our living environment.'

*Wangari Maathai,
Nobel Peace Prize winner 2004
for her contribution to sustainable
development, democracy and peace.*

Reports indicate that places less impacted by the recent Indian Ocean tsunami were those with intact coral reefs and mangroves.

The best defense against the impacts of natural disasters is nature and its conservation³.

The case of Somalia

Somalia has suffered triple disasters. First, it had been affected by four years of drought, displacing many people from their areas of origin. Following the drought, their livestock perished in considerable numbers and finally came the tsunami. Its waves not only devastated homes, roads, other infrastructure and fishing gear, but also dragged with them large amounts of nuclear and toxic waste along the coastline, which had been dumped in sea. The dumping is providing Somali warlords with money to finance the clan wars. The waste has seriously affected the marine resources (and its economic potential) as well as caused severe health problems.



SUGGESTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

In times of war and ethnic strife, WWF's Environmental Programme for Virunga National Park (PEVi) in Central Africa has helped **keep communities together** by involving them in conservation efforts with park authorities⁴. PEVi's achievements are remarkable, particularly its work to increase mountain gorilla populations. Environmental management is a foundation towards achieving security: transboundary environmental issues can be used to facilitate conflict resolution, pro-poor conservation initiatives can help transcend ethnic, social, and political tensions,

while natural resources-based revenues can be used to promote sustainable development.

The efforts of the Okavango River basin commission used **regional and transboundary water management** issues as an entry point for amiable cooperation, joint planning, and peacemaking⁵.

Under colonial rule traditional grazing areas used by pastoral Masai and Samburu tribes in the valley were declared as wildlife reserves or acquired for large-scale cultivation. Each Masai now has **insufficient**

area to herd their cattle – a source of resentment **and conflict**. Providing access to land for seasonal livestock grazing will not only help resolve disputes but also maintain savanna areas⁶.

In Argentina a **cost-benefit analysis** by the World Bank indicated that **investment in**

disaster prevention pays off. It was estimated that US\$187 million (1993 dollars) was avoided in damages from the 1997 flood due to improved risk reduction. This more than covered the US\$153 million in risk reduction investment.



Recommendations

Developing solid institutional capacity to support sustainable development is critical towards achieving security. A focus on preventing conflicts and the impacts of natural disasters is in particular needed. This entails:

- 1 integrating environmental management and conservation in conflict mitigation, disaster prevention, and risk management
- 2 using environmental issues as an entry point for building peace
- 3 enabling local participation in decision-making, especially by those who depend most on environmental resources
- 4 ensuring that natural resource-based revenues are transparent
- 5 clarifying property and access rights to land and natural resources
- 6 developing and improving early warning and environmental monitoring systems, and
- 7 encouraging land use and housing standards

References

1. This sheet has been developed with support from WWF UK for the WWF Africa Madagascar Programme (S. Kanyambwa). Text by M. Snel, consultant for WWF. Editing by P. Denton. Supervision by C. Talens (WWF EPO). Printing and lay out by Ipsosgraphics, Brussels. Special thanks to all others for their input.
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WWF crew filming Masai boy taking his herd back home, during the On the Ground "Conflict & Conservation in Masai Mara" mission. Human-elephant conflict is viewed as a major obstacle to elephant conservation. WWF is studying human-elephant conflict in the Mara ecosystem and testing a range of simple solutions. Transmara, Kenya

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*a global coalition dedicated to increasing the safety of vulnerable communities and to reducing the impact of disasters in developing countries

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption



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