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UN chief stresses role of peacekeeping in ensuring just use of natural resources



The United Nations marks International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict on 6 November

6 November 2011 –

[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon on Sunday stressed that ensuring equitable and sustainable management of natural resources is a key part of the work of the United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions in countries emerging from war, given the tendency of natural wealth to fuel conflict.

“Given their critical role in supporting countries emerging from conflict, United Nations peacekeeping operations are well placed to positively influence how the environment is protected and natural resources are managed,” Mr. Ban said in a [message](#) to mark the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict.

Mr. Ban noted that since the Day was first declared 10 years ago, the UN had made important progress in understanding the complex relationship between war and the environment and the role that natural resources play in fuelling and financing instability and violence.

“From Sierra Leone to Timor-Leste, countries have been helped to mitigate the environmental risks to building peace and to harness the economic potential of using their natural resources sustainably,” the Secretary-General pointed out.

The environment, however, continues to be one of the casualties of warfare, even as demand for natural resources continues to grow to meet the needs of a rising global population.

Fragile nations, including those emerging from conflict, could face significant resource competition in the coming decades, a phenomenon that could be exacerbated by the predicted consequences of climate change on the availability of water and food, as well as sea-level rise and increasing population.

“As we mark this International Day, let us recognize the wide-ranging and long-term consequences of damaging the environment – both in peace and times of war.

“And let us reaffirm our commitment to the sustainable management of natural resources as a critical element of durable peace and security,” Mr. Ban emphasized.

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