Environmental Security: Dimensions and Priorities

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- Changing climate
- Degrading environment
- Failure of urban planning
- Rising urbanization
- Man-made environmental disasters
- Energy price shock
- Water crises
- Food crises
- Extreme weather events
- Large-scale involuntary migration
- State collapse or crisis
- Failure of critical infrastructure
- Critical information infrastructure breakdown
- Terrorist attacks
- Adverse consequences of technological advances
- Cyberattacks
- Fiscal crises
- Unemployment or underemployment
- Increasing polarization of societies
- Failure of national governance
- Failure of regional or global governance
- Interstate conflict
- Weapons of mass destruction
- Spread of infectious diseases
- Natural disasters
- Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse
- Rising chronic diseases
- Increasing national sentiment
- Changing landscape of international governance
- Shifting power
- Profound social instability
Well-being

Vulnerability

What’s *environmental security* about?

Conflict

Cooperation
“Environmental security views ecological processes and natural resources as sources or catalysts for conflict and as barriers or limits to human well-being, and conversely as a means to mitigate or resolve insecurity.”

- Scott & Thapa 2015

What’s environmental security about?

- not limited to violent conflict or its absence
- includes the roots of sustainable livelihoods, health, and well-being among households and communities
- the environmental dimension of “human security”
Four dimensions of environmental security from the perspective of the GEF

(a) Ecosystem goods & services fundamentally underpin human **well-being** and human security

(b) **Conflict** affects the viability or sustainability of investments in environmental protection, and their outcomes—regardless of its source

(c) Ecosystem degradation, resource competition or inequitable distribution of benefits can increase **vulnerability** and conflict risk

(d) Environmental **cooperation** can increase capacity for conflict management, prevention and recovery
Environmental security is centrally important to the GEF

Relevant to **all focal areas**
- International waters and transboundary cooperation
- Biodiversity hotspots and civil strife
- Land degradation, food and water security, climate resilience
- Pollution, green energy minerals, and environmental justice

Many GEF operations **exposed to conflict risk**
- Half of GEF recipients (77 countries) experienced armed conflict since GEF inception in 1991
- Over one-third of GEF recipients (61 countries) proposed and implemented GEF projects while armed conflict was ongoing somewhere in the country
- Nearly one-third of all GEF funding has been invested in projects during years when recipient countries experienced conflict

...and the GEF is already deeply engaged
How should the GEF respond?
Addressing environmental security in an **explicit**, **consistent** and **integrated** manner is essential to delivering global environmental benefits – including the long-term sustainability of GEF project investments.
1. Explicitly address environmental security in project and program design

- Express benefits of GEF investment in terms of environmental security, as component of broader human security
- Link global environmental benefits to more immediate concerns of employment, livelihoods, equity, social stability and effective governance
- Integrate into the project theory of change where relevant
2. Assess conflict risk among investment risks beyond the scope of GEF intervention

- Integrate expectations for analysis of generic conflict risk in project design & implementation
- Make use of protocols from GEF agencies including UNDP, UN Environment and World Bank, as well as specialized agencies such as the International Crisis Group
3. Evaluate relationships between environmental change and vulnerability within GEF interventions

- Build capability for focused environmental security assessment
- Build upon existing tools, such as Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Assessment (RAPTA), which recognizes “uncertainty, plural values and competing interests”
- Aim to mainstream project-level analysis on how project interventions might mitigate or reverse environmental trends affecting the vulnerabilities of different stakeholder groups
4. Contribute to conflict prevention through environmental cooperation

- Where conflict risk is salient, strengthen institutions of environmental cooperation
- Building capacity for conflict management includes institutions and policies to achieve transparency, equity and accountability in natural resource allocation and governance
- Same assessment tools & practices contribute to cooperation & conflict prevention
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