

III-G. Profile of UNEP

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1. Overview

The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** has as its mission:

“To provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.”

UNEP addresses the area of environment and security through a number of initiatives. These include:

- Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative
- UNEP’s Division of Early Warning and Assessment
- UNEP’s Post-Conflict Assessment Unit

2. Environment and Security Initiative

The **Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative**¹ was developed in 2003 to increase co-operation and security within and between communities by assessing and addressing the interdependency of natural environment and human security. ENVSEC is an initiative UNDP, UNEP, OSCE, NATO, UNECE and REC.

ENVSEC addresses environmental problems that pose security risks or which offer challenges or opportunities for cooperation in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, South Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus. The work is carried out through a multi-stakeholder approach and includes the following activities:

- Identification of environment and conflict hotspots through desk and field assessments and presentation of assessment results to key decision-makers;
- Support to societies to dealing with priority issues by raising awareness, building capacities and strengthening institutions;
- Support for concrete action and the development of specific solutions for the identified security-relevant environmental problems on the ground.

Today the ENVSEC portfolio includes over 40 projects and many of the projects are already under implementation. Recent initiatives include the following:

- Sub-regional conference "Reducing Environment and Security Risks from Mining in South Eastern Europe and the Tisza River Basin" in Cluj-Napoca, Romania 11-13 May 2005;
- Launch of an in-depth assessment report of environment and security risks in the Fergana valley in Central Asia. The focus is on risks stemming from industrial

¹ The ENVSEC website is at: <http://www.envsec.org/index.php>

pollution, uranium mining and abandoned waste sites, natural disasters as well as promoting sound water and land management in the river basin of upper Syr-Darya;

- the ENVSEC Southern Caucasus Regional meeting in Tbilisi on June 30 2005 brought together ENVSEC Partners, National Focal Points and various project implementers to agree on continuing in the region with regards to pollution and natural resource management;
- Desk assessment of the state of trans-boundary mountain ecosystems, main threats and current management practices in the region in South- Eastern Europe involving a team of biodiversity experts from the region;
- Publication and launch of two reports; "Mining for Closure – Policies, Practices and Guidelines for Sustainable Mining and the Closure of Mines";
- Desk assessment "Reducing Environment and Security Risks from Mining in South Eastern Europe"; as well as exploratory work and consultations for in depth assessments of selected mining "hot spots";
- Start of first-stage environment and security assessments in Eastern Europe (Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine) and possibly the Circumpolar Arctic.

See the chapter on the ENVSEC Initiative for more information and a complete list of projects.

3. UNEP's Division of Early Warning and Assessment

UNEP's **Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA)**² focuses its efforts on improving access to meaningful environmental data and information as well as assisting the capacity of governments to use environmental information for decision-making and action planning for sustainable human development. Besides analysing state of the global environment and assessing global and regional environmental trends, DEWA also provides policy advice, early warning information on environmental threats, and works to catalyse and promote international cooperation and action based. The DEWA works in Europe, Africa, North and Latin America, Asia and the Pacific, West Asia, the Caribbean and the Polar Region. Its focal areas include air, water, biodiversity, land and mountains.

DEWA's focus on emerging environmental threats includes the following: (i) environmental degradation that increases the vulnerability of ecosystems; (ii) cumulative environmental threats where the accumulation of pollutants collectively increases the vulnerability of ecosystems; (ii) environmental threats that have not been perceived as such in the past, but new evidence has indicated that they must now be considered as potentially deleterious to ecosystems; and (iv) more speculative, long-term issues where scientific evidence may be inadequate at present, but where discussions and assessments have identified a possible environmental problem.

4. UNEP's Post-Conflict Branch

UNEP's **Post Conflict Branch (PCoB)**³ was established as a result of its work in the Balkans in 1999, which assessed the environmental consequences that resulted from the

² See: <http://www.unep.org/dewa/>

³ See: <http://postconflict.unep.ch/>

Kosovo conflict, in particular the "hotspots" from bombed, abandoned or mismanaged industrial sites, impacts to biodiversity from air strikes, environmental risks from depleted uranium, impacts from refugees, and institutional capacities for environmental management and protection. Since 2001, the PCoB has conducted environmental assessments in 13 post-conflict zones (including Afghanistan, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and the Former Republic of Yugoslavia and Bosnia-Herzegovina).

The work seeks to address the environmental consequences and their related economic and social implications in post-conflict regions, in order to reduce environmental degradation, improve public health and impart as well sustainable development practices in the post-conflict restoration period.

PCoB's work can be described according to 6 "pillars":

1. Conducting environmental assessments
2. Building institutions for environmental governance
3. Strengthening environmental law and policy
4. Strengthening international and regional environmental cooperation
5. Supporting environmental information management
6. Integrating environmental considerations in reconstruction

Once requested by a post-conflict nation, PCoB's approach involves three phases:

- 1. Assessment phase (1 year)**
 - UNDG Needs Assessment
 - Rapid environmental impact assessments
 - Environmental governance assessments
- 2. Recovery phase (2-4 years)**
 - Provide environmental technical advice
 - Strengthen institutional capacity
 - Assist in policy development
 - Conduct coordination and advocacy
 - Implement risk reduction / clean-up projects
 - Environmental diplomacy
- 3. Handover phase (1 year)**
 - Transition to national management supported by UNEP Regional Office

Key features of PCoB assessments are:

- Rapid and strategic
- Build on lessons learned from previous work
- Use of national and international experts
- Integrated within UN humanitarian framework
- Distribution of all information collected
- Dynamic and readable reports – sustain interest
- Translation of final reports into local languages

The target audience of PCoB assessments are:

- Host government
- Donor community
- National NGOs
- Humanitarian and development communities

Current operations are underway in:

- Afghanistan
- Iraq
- Lebanon
- Liberia
- Occupied Palestinian Territories
- Somalia
- Sudan

The full reports of past operations and details of current operations are available on the website at: <http://postconflict.unep.ch/>

The Post-Conflict Branch's work is funded mainly by the European Commission and the Governments of Canada, Finland, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

5. Training in Environmental Diplomacy

UNEP is a partner in the organization of a Training Course in Environmental Diplomacy. The first course is being held in Geneva from July to December 2006.

The objective of this joint UNEP/UNITAR/University of Geneva programme is to teach the skills necessary to participate in international negotiations in environment, sustainable development and related fields to present or future diplomats, negotiators, policy and decision makers in governments, regional intergovernmental bodies, local authorities, the private sector, NGOs, trade unions and UN bodies. Practical information about the Environmental Diplomacy Training Course and modalities for application are included in the brochure. The deadline for application is 31 May 2006.

Module 10 in the course deals with environment and security. This section covers analysis of the relationship between environmental security and peace, the security implications of environmental changes, environmental stress and conflict, and the need for micro- and meso-diplomacy in areas such as Central Asia and international river basins.

For more information concerning the course, contact:

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