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UN Environment Management Group Nexus Dialogue

Environment, Peace and Security: The environment as an entry point to implementing SDG 16

24 January 2019, 13.00 – 17.30

Venue, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Geneva, Switzerland

Maison de la Paix, Petal 4

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a transformative vision for people and planet-centred, human rights-based, and gender-sensitive sustainable development policy for more sustainable and resilient societies. The SDG 16 aims at "promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and builds effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels".

The SDG 16 will be difficult to achieve without addressing environment, peace and security nexus challenges. These challenges are disproportionately felt in the most vulnerable countries and by the least privileged groups of populations across the globe such as minorities, women and children. In the past 60 years, 40 per cent of conflicts have been tied to natural resources and these are twice as likely to relapse into conflict within the first five years. In the past decade, environmental degradation is increasingly linked to violent extremism, internal conflicts and forced migration. The recent IPCC report talks about possible disastrous consequences for humans and other species if the global warming is not limited to 1,5°C. Consequently a better understanding of the links between environment and security, both human and state, is vital for effective conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction and promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.

The link between the SDG 16 with environment, peace and security agenda is mutually reinforcing. First, the efforts to bring a deeper understanding of environment and security nexus are not met with a tangible political action. This gap needs to be addressed on local, national, regional and global levels. Addressing the intersection between environment, peace and security will allow for a better fulfilment of the SDG 16 in the area of promotion of the rule of law, development of transparent institutions, improvement of decision making, to name a few SDG 16 targets. Second, strengthened institutions, rule of law and enforcement contribute to support the implementation of multi-lateral environmental agreements and progress towards internationally agreed global environmental goals. Combining the two will result in a virtuous circle promising a more peaceful and sustainable future.

Objectives

This Nexus Dialogue aims to contribute to a common understanding of ways in which the interplay between environment, peace and security can accelerate the achievement SDG 16. The dialogue will help connect the dots to allow policy makers, international organisations and government to promote effective, cross-sectoral action. To facilitate this, the outcome of the dialogue will be captured in 10 key messages to guide policy advice, future research, partnerships, and advocacy. The outcome may also contribute to the review of SDGs at the 2019 High-Level Political Forum in July.

Structure and Content

The Nexus Dialogue will be a half-day public event consisting of two panel discussions. The first panel will discuss current trends in environment, peace and security practices which aim at breaking silos among specialist from different international organisations. The second panel will explore ways in which environment, peace and security nexus challenges could facilitate meeting the objectives of SDG 16.