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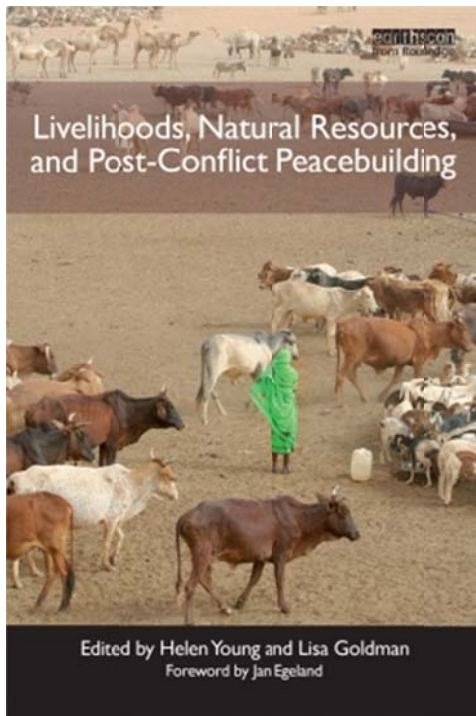
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### Managing Natural Resources for Livelihoods: Helping Post-Conflict Communities Survive and Thrive

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# Managing natural resources for livelihoods: Supporting post-conflict communities

*Helen Young and Lisa Goldman*

Reestablishing livelihoods is critical to post-conflict redevelopment and peace-building. In the wake of violent conflict, there is both an immediate need to address humanitarian concerns, and a longer-term need to rebuild local, regional, and national capacity for development. Promoting production and providing employment, particularly to former combatants, is paramount. Addressing competition and grievances over access to land, water, forests, and other natural resources—the building blocks of livelihoods in many developing countries—is another priority. All of these challenges involve livelihoods, the focus of this book.

Livelihoods provide the means through which people can rebuild their lives and local communities in the aftermath of conflict. Supporting livelihoods thus promotes local, regional, and national stability and is also key to reintegrating excombatants and other vulnerable groups into post-conflict society, thereby reducing the likelihood of future conflict. Moreover, providing viable livelihood strategies for vulnerable populations may prevent or mitigate further conflict by reducing the incentives to join armed groups.

Rehabilitating areas damaged by conflict requires more than simply restoring physical infrastructure and disbanding militant groups; effective redevelopment must also address the human element of conflict by enabling former adversaries to again live side by side, with both a sense of hope for the present and an opportunity to thrive in the future. In addition to meeting basic needs, livelihoods are important to identity: they contribute to self-worth, confidence, and dignity. Finally, livelihoods offer opportunities for interaction between former warring groups—whether through migration, trade, the exchange of labor, or the shared governance and use of natural resources.

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## 2 Livelihoods, natural resources, and post-conflict peacebuilding

This introductory chapter contains three principal parts: (1) a description of the nexus between livelihoods, natural resources, and peacebuilding; (2) a review of the objectives and scope of this book; and (3) a brief conclusion.

### LIVELIHOODS, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND PEACEBUILDING

According to one widely accepted definition, a livelihood comprises “the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living” (Scoones 1998, 5).<sup>1</sup> Violent conflict frequently damages or destroys the natural resources and infrastructure—including local institutions—that support livelihood systems. When traditional livelihoods are no longer accessible or are severely undermined, conflict-affected populations are forced either to adapt their current livelihoods or to adopt new, and often unsustainable, strategies. In such cases, existing local grievances may be exacerbated, contributing to ongoing insecurity and potentially fostering further conflict. Similarly, when members of local communities engage in maladaptive or illicit means of supporting themselves—including joining local armed groups—further insecurity may result.

Following conflict, recovery programs designed to strengthen existing livelihoods can help ensure that communities are more resilient to future conflict. Both the livelihood systems available in a particular geographic area and the process of designing livelihood-related peacebuilding interventions are influenced by a number of factors, including the local ecology; access to physical and social infrastructure; and a combination of social, economic, and political influences. In post-conflict and conflict-prone regions, livelihoods (or the absence or loss of livelihood opportunities) can substantially shape—and be shaped by—conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. (For an overview of key terms and concepts related to natural resources and post-conflict peacebuilding, see sidebar.)

A significant percentage of the population in many developing countries, including those affected by conflict, depends directly on natural resources for subsistence and livelihoods. In post-conflict countries, 60 to 80 percent of livelihoods rely on agriculture and natural resources (Bruch et al. 2009; USAID 2009). In such settings, conflict often has devastating implications for livelihoods, and for economic well-being in general. On average, conflict leads to production losses of 12 percent and slows agricultural growth by 3 percent per year (Huggins et al. 2006)—troubling statistics, given the significant role agriculture plays in post-conflict countries.

Armed conflict undermines livelihood security. Landmines are often planted in rural areas, threatening life and health, as well as limiting access to farmland, roads, drinking water, and forestry resources. Safely removing millions of unexploded landmines could greatly expand land available for agriculture—by between 88 and 200 percent in Afghanistan, 135 percent in Cambodia, 11 percent in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 4 percent in Mozambique (Messer, Cohen, and Marchione 2001).

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<sup>1</sup> This definition draws upon definitions by Chambers and Conway (1992) and others.

**Post-conflict peacebuilding and natural resources: Key terms and concepts**

Following conflict, peacebuilding actors leverage a country’s available assets (including natural resources) to transition from conflict to peace and sustainable development. Peacebuilding actors work at the international, national, and subnational levels and include national and subnational government bodies; United Nations agencies and other international organizations; international and domestic nongovernmental organizations; the private sector; and the media. Each group of peacebuilding actors deploys its own tools, and there are a growing number of tools to integrate the peacebuilding efforts of different types of actors.

A post-conflict period typically begins after a peace agreement or military victory. Because this period is often characterized by intermittent violence and instability, it can be difficult to pinpoint when the post-conflict period ends. For the purposes of this book, the post-conflict period may be said to end when political, security, and economic discourse and actions no longer revolve around armed conflict or the impacts of conflict, but focus instead on standard development objectives. Within the post-conflict period, the first two years are referred to as the *immediate aftermath of conflict* (UNSG 2009), which is followed by a period known as *peace consolidation*.

According to the United Nations, “Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development” (UNSG’s Policy Committee 2007). In many instances, this means addressing the root causes of the conflict.

There are many challenges to peacebuilding: insecurity, ethnic and political polarization (as well as marginalization), corruption, lack of governmental legitimacy, extensive displacement, and loss of property. To address these and other challenges, peacebuilding actors undertake diverse activities that advance four broad peacebuilding objectives:\*

- *Establishing security*, which encompasses basic safety and civilian protection; security sector reform; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; and demining.
- *Delivering basic services*, including water, sanitation, waste management, and energy, as well as health care and primary education.
- *Restoring the economy and livelihoods*, which includes repairing and constructing infrastructure and public works.
- *Rebuilding governance and inclusive political processes*, which encompasses dialogue and reconciliation processes, rule of law, dispute resolution, core government functions, transitional justice, and electoral processes.

Although they are sometimes regarded as distinct from peacebuilding, both peacemaking (the negotiation and conclusion of peace agreements) and humanitarian assistance are relevant to peacebuilding, as they can profoundly influence the options for post-conflict programming. Peacemaking and humanitarian assistance are also relevant to this book, in that they often have substantial natural resource dimensions.

Successful peacebuilding is a transformative process in which national and international actors seek to address grievances and proactively lay the foundation for a lasting peace. As part of this process, peacebuilding actors seek to manage the country’s assets—as well as whatever international assistance may be available—to ensure security, provide basic services, rebuild the economy and livelihoods, and restore governance. The assets of a post-conflict country include natural resources; infrastructure; and human, social, and financial capital. Natural resources comprise land, water, and other renewable resources, as well as extractive resources such as oil, gas, and minerals. The rest of the book explores the many ways in which natural resources affect post-conflict peacebuilding.

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\* This framework draws substantially from the *Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict* (UNSG 2009), but the activities have been regrouped and supplemented by activities articulated in USIP and U.S. Army PKSOI (2009); Sphere Project (2004, 2011); UN (2011); UNSG (2010, 2012); and International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (2011).

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Syria, where the agricultural sector has suffered gravely as a result of the civil war,<sup>2</sup> provides a vivid example of the economic and livelihood impacts of conflict. Despite favorable climatic conditions, wheat production has dropped by 40 percent in comparison to pre-crisis levels, and the shrinking supply of labor, physical capital, and arable land has led to diminished harvests for all crops since the conflict began (ACAPS 2013). Similarly, in Wajir District, Kenya, the effects of localized conflict—including livestock raids—have been severe and widespread: the majority of households have experienced reduced access to food (69 percent), trade (63 percent), education (61 percent), and health care (59 percent) (Omosa 2005).

In many instances, livelihood insecurity is both a driver of armed conflict and its result. In the Darfur region of Sudan, for example, 80 percent of the population relies on natural resources for livelihoods (UNDP 2008). In the decades preceding the outbreak of conflict in 2003, national government policies marginalized the Darfuri population socially, politically, and economically. The combination of marginalization, expansion of agriculture, and population growth among Darfuris led to the breakdown of local systems for managing natural resources, and to increased competition for land, water, fodder, and pasture (UNEP 2007). Furthermore, climate variability, including frequent droughts, has exacerbated tensions between farming and herding groups, which have historically shared natural resources. The long-term failure to address the grievances between Darfuri groups—including grievances focused on natural resources—generated localized tribal conflict; when the rebellion erupted in 2003, the dividing lines between those who supported the Darfuri rebels and those who supported the government were clearly drawn.

In the context of Sudan's national conflict, access to natural resources continues to be a crucial issue—particularly for internally displaced persons, many of whom are confined to camps with restricted access to land and other natural resources. Among those who have not been displaced, conflict over natural resources—between pastoralists and farmers, as well as between different pastoralist groups—has continued to undermine livelihoods.

In short, more than a decade of protracted conflict and insecurity has severely weakened livelihoods, forcing conflict-affected populations to adopt coping strategies—many of which are short-term and environmentally unsustainable, and which have actually increased livelihood insecurity for some groups. This growing insecurity is especially harmful to women, for whom the threat of gender-based violence has substantially limited access to natural resources (UNEP et al. 2013).

In 2009, the United Nations Environment Programme reported that at least 40 percent of all intrastate conflicts during the previous sixty years had involved natural resources, and that at least eighteen violent conflicts since 1990 had been fueled by natural resource exploitation (UNEP 2009a). Resolving disputes over

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<sup>2</sup> The Syrian civil war began in 2011 and is ongoing as of this writing.

natural resources and strengthening natural resource management are thus essential to peacebuilding. Given the extent to which livelihoods in post-conflict countries depend on access to and use of natural resources, the revitalization or sustainable development of natural resource-based livelihoods is valuable not only for helping to address local vulnerabilities, but also for promoting cooperation between former adversaries. At the same time, however, unsustainable resource use can degrade the natural resource base, exacerbating local tensions and grievances and potentially contributing to ongoing insecurity and recurring conflict.

In the absence of good governance systems and institutions, land, pasture, forests, and other natural resources central to livelihoods are often a source of local conflict, which can present risks to peacebuilding. However, as discussed later in this book, the interconnections between livelihoods, natural resources, and conflict also present opportunities. In Afghanistan, for example, 85 percent of the population engages in natural resource-based livelihoods, including agricultural production, and 53 percent of the rural population lives in poverty (UNEP 2009b). An estimated two-thirds of Afghan households own livestock (Sexton 2012), and as much as 70 percent of the land in Afghanistan is used for grazing or fodder (UNEP 2009b). Chronic drought has significantly affected natural resource-based livelihoods, decreasing wheat production and the price of livestock by as much as 70 percent. This, in turn, has limited farmers' and pastoralists' purchasing power, as well as their ability to generate sufficient income to meet basic needs (Rassul 2010). Under these difficult and complex economic circumstances, it is not surprising that between 28 and 36 percent of local conflicts in Afghanistan are linked directly to land access and use (Sexton 2012). A 2008 survey found that land and water were the greatest sources of local conflict in Afghanistan (Waldman 2008).

In many conflict-affected countries, the lack of statutory recognition of customary rights to land and other natural resources is a key challenge. In Cambodia, approximately 90 percent of the population, most of whom depend on agriculture and agricultural production (IFAD 2007), live in rural areas. As of 2000, more than 8.5 million Cambodians depended on natural resources for their livelihoods, including 7 million who relied on natural resources for subsistence (McKenney and Tola 2002). In 2002, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries made up 30 percent of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) and supported 77 percent of all livelihoods; agriculture alone accounted for 23 percent of the GDP and 74 percent of livelihoods (McKenney and Tola 2002). As of 2004, however, despite this dependence on land-based resources, as many as 80 percent of rural households lacked statutory title to land, and 20 percent of rural households lacked access to land—a number that was expected to rise by 2 percent annually (WFP 2013). Given these figures, disputes over land ownership and access could very well lead to violent conflict in the future.

By 2050, the world's population is expected to reach 9 billion. Natural resources—both for agricultural production and other livelihoods—will be essential to meeting the needs created by population growth, particularly as resource



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consumption is expected to intensify as countries undergo rapid economic development. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, by 2050, demand for agricultural production in ninety-three developing nations will require an annual investment of more than US\$200 billion (FAO 2012).

Between 2000 and 2012, agricultural production in Latin America grew by more than 50 percent, including 70 percent in Brazil alone; by more than 40 percent in sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia; and by 54 percent in the world's least developed countries (FAO 2012). Despite this progress, however, demographic and economic factors will continue to increase pressure on the finite natural resource base, fueling competition over access to and use of natural resources.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the projected consequences of global change highlight the importance of wider recognition (and harnessing) of the strong links between natural resources and livelihood needs, in order to address disputes over resource access and use and to develop peacebuilding strategies. The resulting strategies will need to take into account not only the capacity of natural resources to support the basic needs of growing populations, but the role that these resources may play in future conflict.

The interconnections between livelihoods, natural resources, and conflict provide a valuable opportunity to enhance peacebuilding initiatives during the post-conflict period over both the short and the long term. Understanding these linkages is an important first step in resolving natural resource disputes, so as to promote cooperative management, equitable access, and sustainable natural resource use. Supporting sustainable, natural resource-based livelihoods is one means of addressing the connections between a lack of livelihood opportunities and conflict.

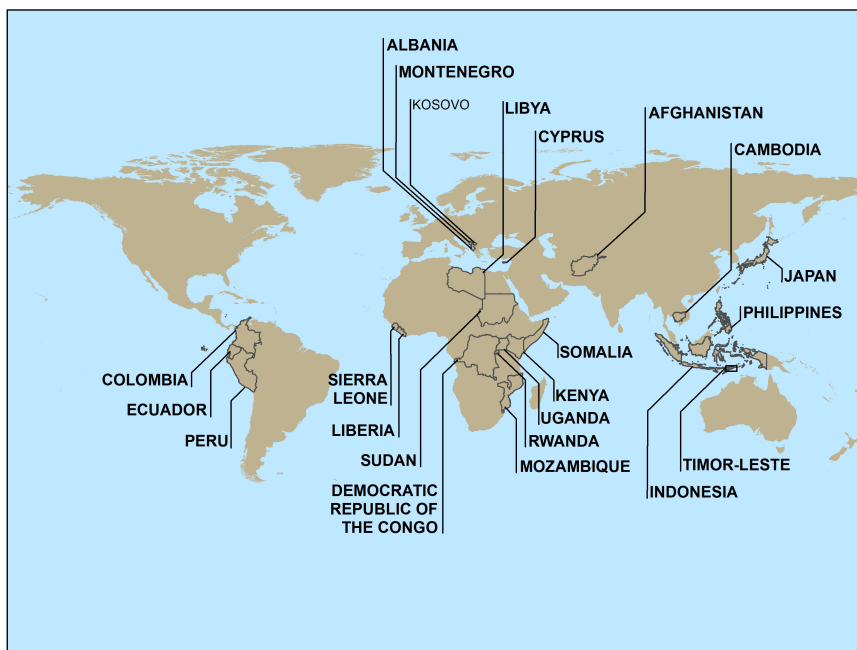
### ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

This book focuses on the opportunities and challenges of using natural resource-based livelihoods as a potential peacebuilding tool. The chapters examine livelihood-related peacebuilding initiatives in over twenty post-conflict countries and territories (see map on page XX). The case studies and analyses were written by more than thirty practitioners, scholars, and other experts from governmental entities, academic institutions, private enterprises, and nonprofit organizations around the world.

The book is organized into three parts: (1) “Natural Resources, Livelihoods, and Conflict: Reflections on Peacebuilding”; (2) “Innovative Livelihood Approaches in Post-Conflict Settings”; and (3) “The Institutional and Policy Context.” The chapters examine the use of natural resource-based livelihoods as a platform for promoting peacebuilding on a broader scale. In particular, the case studies present lessons from context-specific scenarios—some successful, some

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<sup>3</sup> For an overview of the literature on conflicts driven by competition over dwindling natural resources, see Webersik and Levy (2015).



**Post-conflict and conflict-affected countries and territories from which lessons have been drawn in this book, either through case studies or broader thematic analyses**

*Note: UN member states are set in bold.*

unsuccessful—in which attempts were made to integrate natural resource-based livelihood approaches into a peacebuilding framework. The book concludes with a comprehensive, global, and forward-looking analysis of the lessons learned from the various experiences presented in the chapters.

### **Natural resources, livelihoods, and conflict: Reflections on peacebuilding**

The link between natural resources, livelihoods, and conflict creates an extraordinary opportunity to develop sustainable livelihood systems that support broader peacebuilding objectives. The benefits of livelihood initiatives undertaken during the post-conflict period include the following:

- Supporting natural resource-dependent livelihoods—including restoring local access to natural resources—can foster and strengthen relationships between former adversaries.
- Strengthening governance institutions and improving natural resource management can help to resolve disputes, promote equitable access to natural resources, and support sustainable economic opportunity and redevelopment.



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- Joint management of shared natural resources can increase cooperation and goodwill—and thereby improve relations—between former combatants or warring factions.
- The provision of income-generating alternatives can help conflict-affected communities move away from maladaptive livelihood strategies (especially those that are linked with intimidation or violence, or that destroy natural resources).
- Increasing economic, educational, and capacity-enhancing opportunities and social standing among previously disempowered demographic groups, such as women and unemployed youth, can improve both livelihood security and empowerment among members of such groups.
- Reestablishing financial services (in particular, microfinance) and the flow of income can facilitate redevelopment.

Thus, incorporating the promotion of sustainable, natural resource-based livelihood systems into peacebuilding approaches can foster economic opportunities while also supporting recovery in general. That said, such approaches must be responsive to the unique context of each conflict. The lack of a one-size-fits-all solution generates many questions about the most effective uses of livelihood interventions as a foundation for peacebuilding. For example, how can natural resource-related livelihood initiatives be scaled up so as to promote peacebuilding more broadly? How can livelihood interventions reduce underlying conflict drivers, and thereby sustain livelihood security and peacebuilding? Can natural resource-based livelihood systems be rebuilt in ways that minimize the potential for conflict relapse? What kinds of livelihood approaches are best suited to resolving natural resource-related disputes and enhancing political, economic, and social stability? Finally, how can livelihood initiatives address the natural resource-dependent economic needs of displaced populations without increasing competition, and thereby fueling conflict, with nondisplaced populations?

Through case studies from Afghanistan, Cambodia, Kenya and Uganda, and the Aceh territory of Indonesia, part 1 of this book offers insight into these challenges.

### **Innovative livelihood approaches in post-conflict settings**

The types of livelihoods that develop and take hold vary considerably among post-conflict countries, territories, and regions. Thus, natural resource-based livelihood initiatives must take into consideration the varying geographic, economic, political, and social factors that influence livelihood systems—including, for example, local infrastructure, the type and availability of natural resources, and cultural restrictions on who can engage in various livelihood activities.

Because the uniqueness of local circumstances may make it difficult to reproduce the successful outcomes of livelihood initiatives implemented elsewhere, there is a continuing need to develop innovative approaches that address specific local needs and concerns. In keeping with this goal, a number

of conflict-affected countries and their peacebuilding partners have developed or adapted creative approaches to rebuilding natural resource-related livelihoods. The case studies in part 2 of this book highlight a number of such initiatives, including transboundary and cross-border natural resource management in Albania, Montenegro, and Kosovo, as well as in Rwanda, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and other innovative projects implemented in Afghanistan, Colombia, Indonesia, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone.

### **Institutional and policy context**

Rebuilding institutional capacity and natural resource governance is central to post-conflict recovery. Because most livelihood initiatives require a degree of political stability and a governance system that supports the sound management of the natural resource base, it is critical to ensure that institutions and policies developed or reformed during the post-conflict period support the sustainable use of natural resources for livelihoods.

Part 3 of this book explores the ways in which institutional and policy reform can enhance natural resource management and livelihoods and promote peacebuilding on a broader scale. Case studies from Afghanistan, Cambodia, Somalia, the Philippines, and post-World War II Japan examine challenges, opportunities, and lessons from the institutional and policy perspective.

### **LIVELIHOODS AND PEACEBUILDING: LOOKING FORWARD**

The post-conflict period provides a unique window of opportunity to promote peacebuilding by addressing the underlying causes of conflict; establishing the conditions for a lasting peace; and facilitating consensus on a new economic, political, and social vision for the future. In many cases, natural resources represent a source of conflict; as such, they also represent an opportunity. Although unresolved disputes over natural resources can spark conflict or fuel ongoing conflict, successfully addressing such disputes—including through equitable and sustainable natural resource management—can advance peacebuilding. Revitalizing the natural resource base can also restore livelihoods, providing visible peace dividends that will highlight and reinforce the value of peace. The case studies in this book reaffirm the linkages between livelihoods, natural resources, conflict, and peacebuilding, and provide a strong argument for using livelihood approaches as a platform for broader-scale peacebuilding initiatives.

Livelihood interventions are most effective in strengthening peacebuilding when they are developed and implemented as early as possible—building on humanitarian livelihood interventions implemented during conflict. Competition and other tensions over natural resources can provoke conflict, exacerbate existing grievances, or fuel ongoing conflict. Given that many communities, especially in poor and rural regions, depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, livelihood initiatives must be incorporated into the peacebuilding process from the

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outset in order to resolve any remaining natural resource-based disputes. Otherwise, as the recovery period progresses, it can become much more difficult to incorporate sound natural resource management and sustainable livelihood initiatives into the redevelopment framework.

Faced with potential conflict scenarios, peacebuilding actors must bear in mind the lessons from past conflicts and post-conflict recovery, in order to ensure that peacebuilding initiatives reflect an understanding of the causes, consequences, and opportunities associated with conflict. Through case studies and analyses, this book advances current knowledge of the connections between livelihoods, natural resources, conflict, and peacebuilding; examines innovative livelihood programs that promote both peacebuilding and sustainable natural resource management; and illustrates how institutional and policy reform can help support sustainable livelihoods and peacebuilding more broadly. While livelihood approaches are often overlooked as a peacebuilding tool, this book demonstrates how sustainable natural resource management can facilitate peacebuilding and strengthen community redevelopment by providing economic opportunity, promoting social equity, and, most importantly, giving despairing populations hope for a brighter future.

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