



Addressing Conflicts' Contributions to the Triple Planetary Crisis at UNEA-6

Policy Recommendations for Member States from Civil Society

The ambitious theme of the Sixth Session of the UN Environmental Assembly (UNEA-6) centres around effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle the interconnected planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, presenting a unique opportunity to comprehensively address the causes of these challenges. It is crucial that such efforts include effective policies and measures to deal with the environmental impacts of armed conflicts and military activities that significantly exacerbate the triple planetary crisis. Current conflicts and legacy impacts from past conflicts underscore the importance of addressing the environmental dimensions of war, and its effects on the health and livelihoods of current and future generations. From recognising conflicts' contributions to pressing environmental challenges in UNEA-6 deliberations to setting up operational mechanisms to deal with them through UNEA-6 resolutions, Member States can forge a path toward tackling these challenges through a more coherent, efficient and implementable approach.

Interlinkages between armed conflicts and the triple planetary crisis

Armed conflicts and military activities worldwide are among the drivers of the triple planetary crisis. They result in widespread environmental pollution, contaminate air, water, and soil, leave a trail of toxic remnants of war, destroy ecosystems and worsen biodiversity loss, lead to degradation and overexploitation of natural resources, and render huge areas inaccessible due to mine contamination. Additionally, these activities generate substantial military greenhouse gas emissions and prompt human displacement, often leading to unsustainable coping strategies. Fragility and conflict undermine environmental governance, which can compound underlying environmental challenges, weaken systems of environmental protection and sustainable resource use, and hamper societies' abilities for climate adaptation and achieving internationally agreed environmental goals. In turn, all of this fuels more insecurity and conflict, as acknowledged in the report¹ by the Executive Director of UNEP for UNEA-6. The cycle of conflict and environmental degradation perpetuates instability and impedes efforts toward sustainable development.

Conversely, addressing the environmental implications of conflicts helps to alleviate the triple planetary crisis and is essential for protecting people and ecosystems. Strengthening national and international policies and measures as well as ensuring respect for international humanitarian and human rights laws to protect the environment in relation to armed conflicts is important to prevent and minimise environmental harm. Similarly, the timely identification, monitoring and assessment of conflict-linked environmental degradation is vital for supporting prevention and mitigation measures to reduce risks to the environment and human health. Meanwhile, peacebuilding interventions based on nature-based solutions, biodiversity protection and sustainable and equitable management of ecosystem services can help communities recover from conflict and support sustainable development.

The role for UNEA-6

In the past, UNEA resolutions on **the protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflicts** and **conflict-pollution** have helped reaffirm UNEP's mandate and the role of UNEA as a forum to address issues impacting the environment, peace and security. However, existing multilateral approaches to managing the relationship between armed conflicts and the triple planetary crisis remain fragmented and underdeveloped. UNEA-6 can help improve this, catalysing global and regional efforts by the international community to enhance environmental assistance and recovery in response to the demands of the triple planetary crisis. In addition, the focus of UNEA-6 on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) also provides a useful vehicle for discussion on how MEAs could incorporate conflict sensitivity considerations to make sure that conflict-linked environmental issues are more effectively addressed through existing mechanisms.

Altogether, addressing armed conflicts' contributions to the triple planetary crisis as part of UNEA-6 would not only add to better analysis of the nature and genesis of these global challenges, but also help to strengthen international responses to them. It will also encourage the identification of new solutions and policy pathways. This issue has already been highlighted by civil society groups in the **inputs** to the draft Ministerial Declaration and in the joint regional statements² from Major Groups and Stakeholders in preparations for UNEA-6, and we continue to call on Member States to act on these policy recommendations. The speed and devastation of environmental degradation that current and future generations face demand a robust, comprehensive and cross-cutting approach to the environment, peace and security agenda.

Recommendations for Member States:

- 1 In the **UNEA-6 Ministerial Declaration** and **national statements**: Recognize the inherent interlinkages between armed conflict and the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and advocate for coherent and effective multilateral actions to address them.
- 2 During the **MEA high-level dialogues**: Highlight the importance of addressing the specific needs of fragile and conflict-affected areas in the implementation of relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements, and propose establishing a specialised working group within relevant MEAs to identify ways to do so.
- 3 In the **discussions over UNEP's programming and budget allocation**:
 - Provide resourcing that is commensurate with the scale of work on the environmental dimensions of conflicts required to support conflict-affected states, and with UNEP Medium Term Strategy's goal of mainstreaming this work across its thematic sub-programmes on water, climate, nature and chemicals.
 - Initiate a consultative process under the auspices of UNEP in consultation with other relevant bodies with the aim of organising a working group to monitor environmental damage caused by past and on-going armed conflicts, guide necessary assessment and verification processes, and inform interested parties of outcomes of the above processes.
- 4 In considering **UNEA-6 draft resolutions**:
 - Support the UNEA-6 resolution "Environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflicts".
 - Identify and incorporate language on conflict sensitivity in other relevant resolutions, such as those on Nature-based Solutions, strengthening policies to manage water resources, addressing land degradation and improving management of chemicals and waste.

¹ UNEP/EA.6/2

² UNEP/EA.6/INF/3

Signatories

<i>Afrihealth Optonet Association (AHOA)</i>	<i>European Environmental Bureau (EEB)</i>
<i>Afrique Esperance</i>	<i>Geneva Water Hub</i>
<i>Arava Institute for Environmental Studies</i>	<i>Hidden Hero in each kid</i>
<i>Association For Promotion Sustainable Development</i>	<i>Institute for Environmental Security (IES)</i>
<i>Balkan WASH Network</i>	<i>Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability (IDIS) Inc.</i>
<i>Black Sea Women's Club</i>	<i>International Youth Council Yemen (IYCY)</i>
<i>Centre for Earth Works (CFEW)</i>	<i>National Ecological Centre of Ukraine (NECU)</i>
<i>Centre for Environmental Initiatives "Ecoaction"</i>	<i>PAX</i>
<i>Centre for Human Rights and Climate Change Research</i>	<i>PeaceNexus</i>
<i>Conflict and Environment Observatory</i>	<i>Professional Association of Environmentalists of the World (PAEW)</i>
<i>CSO Interecocentre</i>	<i>Society for Conservation and Sustainability of Energy and Environment in Nigeria (SOCSEEN)</i>
<i>Dr Uzo Adirieje Foundation (DUZAFFOUND)</i>	<i>Somali Greenpeace Association</i>
<i>EAGLES 2030</i>	<i>Soroptimist International</i>
<i>Earth Forever Foundation</i>	<i>Syrians for Truth and Justice</i>
<i>Eco-Tiras International Association of River Keepers</i>	<i>Terra-1530</i>
<i>Eco-union</i>	<i>Union des Amis Socio Culturels d'Action en Developpement (UNASCAD)</i>
<i>Emirates Environmental Group</i>	<i>Youth and Environment Europe (YEE)</i>

