



**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme**

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**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme**
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**2/15. Protection of the environment in areas affected by armed
conflict**

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Mindful of the importance of safeguarding the natural environment in times of armed conflict for the sake of future generations and to consolidate efforts for the protection of our common environment,

Recognizing the role of healthy ecosystems and sustainably managed resources in reducing the risk of armed conflict,

Expressing its deep concern about environmental damage inflicted by certain means and methods of warfare, in particular during armed conflict,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals listed in General Assembly resolution 70/1, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 47/37, entitled “Protection of the environment in times of armed conflict”, which urges States to take all measures to ensure compliance with the existing international law applicable to the protection of the environment in times of armed conflict, to consider becoming parties to the relevant international conventions, and to take steps to incorporate such provisions into their military manuals; and General Assembly resolution 56/4, entitled “Observance of the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict”,

Taking note of General Assembly resolution 50/70, entitled “General and complete disarmament”; General Assembly resolution 53/242, entitled “Report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements”, which reaffirms that, in accordance with its mandate, the United Nations Environment Programme should not become involved in conflict identification, prevention or resolution; and General Assembly resolution 57/337, entitled “Prevention of armed conflict”, which recognizes the need for mainstreaming and coordinating the prevention of armed conflict throughout the United Nations system and calls upon all its relevant organs, organizations and bodies to consider, in accordance with their respective mandates, how they could best include a conflict prevention perspective in their activities, where appropriate,

Stressing the importance of the implementation by all Member States of international law applicable to the protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflict in line with Member States’ legal responsibilities, and in this regard welcoming efforts by the United Nations Environment Programme to build capacity and provide expertise to all Member States upon request,

Taking note of the 1994 Guidelines for Military Manuals and Instructions on the Protection of the Environment in Times of Armed Conflict of the International Committee of the Red Cross,

Recognizing the significance of the work on environmental protection carried out in the framework of the United Nations system and within other international bodies, including the work of the United Nations Environment Programme on providing assistance in monitoring, reducing and mitigating the impacts of environmental degradation from armed conflicts, and on post-conflict assessments, as well as its activities in response to crisis situations throughout the world, including through delivering wide-ranging environmental expertise to national Governments and partners in the United Nations system,

Welcoming the work of the United Nations Environment Programme on the protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflict,

Acknowledging the need for mitigating the environmental impact of activities of transnational and other organized criminal groups, including illegal armed groups, as well as the illegal exploitation and trade of natural resources in areas affected by armed conflict, and noting the role that the United Nations Environment Programme can play, within its mandate, to support Member States in addressing these challenges upon request,

Taking note of the ongoing process in the relevant sphere being undertaken by the International Law Commission, including its 2015 report on the protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts,

Recognizing that sustainable development and the protection of the environment contribute to human well-being and the enjoyment of human rights,

Recognizing also the need to mitigate and minimize the specific negative effects of environmental degradation in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict on people in vulnerable situations, including children, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons, and migrants, as well as to ensure the protection of the environment in such situations,

Recognizing further the specific negative effects of environmental degradation on women and the need to apply a gender perspective with respect to the environment and armed conflicts,

1. *Stresses* the critical importance of protecting the environment at all times, especially during armed conflict, and of its restoration in the post-conflict period, including from the unintended collateral impacts of human displacement resulting from armed conflict;

2. *Emphasizes* the need for raising greater international awareness of the issue of environmental damage during armed conflicts and the need to adequately protect the environment when it is affected by armed conflict;

3. *Urges* States to take all appropriate measures to ensure compliance with the relevant international obligations under international humanitarian law in relation to the protection of the environment in times of armed conflict;

4. *Calls on* all Member States to implement applicable international law related to the protection of the environment in situations of armed conflict, including in their domestic legislation as appropriate and in line with international obligations which they have signed on to, and to consider expressing consent to be bound by relevant international agreements to which they are not yet parties;

5. *Invites* Member States to consider reflecting the Guidelines for Military Manuals and Instructions on the Protection of the Environment in Times of Armed Conflict of the International Committee of the Red Cross;

6. *Also invites* all Member States to cooperate closely on preventing, minimizing and mitigating the negative impacts of armed conflicts on the environment;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in partnership with Governments, scientific institutions, United Nations agencies, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, within available resources and in conformity with the mandate of the Programme, to continue providing enhanced assistance to countries affected by armed conflict and countries in post-conflict situations, including those affected by the unintended collateral impacts of related human displacement, at their request, for post-crisis environmental assessment and recovery;

8. *Also requests* the Executive Director, in partnership with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Governments and relevant stakeholders, within available resources and in conformity with the mandate of the Programme, to continue providing enhanced assistance to countries within whose territory natural World Heritage Sites affected by armed conflict are located, including those affected by the environmental impacts of the illegal exploitation of natural resources, at those States' request;

9. *Calls on* all Member States to continue to support, where appropriate, the development and implementation of programmes, projects and development policies aimed at preventing or reducing the impacts of armed conflicts on the natural environment;

10. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue interaction with the International Law Commission, inter alia by providing relevant information to the Commission at its request in support of its work pertaining to the protection of the environment in relation to armed conflict;

11. *Also requests* the Executive Director to report to the United Nations Environment Assembly as soon as possible, but no later than at the fourth session, on progress by the United Nations Environment Programme in the implementation of the present resolution.

*6th plenary meeting
27 May 2016*
