



UNEP lessons learned: Environment and peacebuilding in Afghanistan



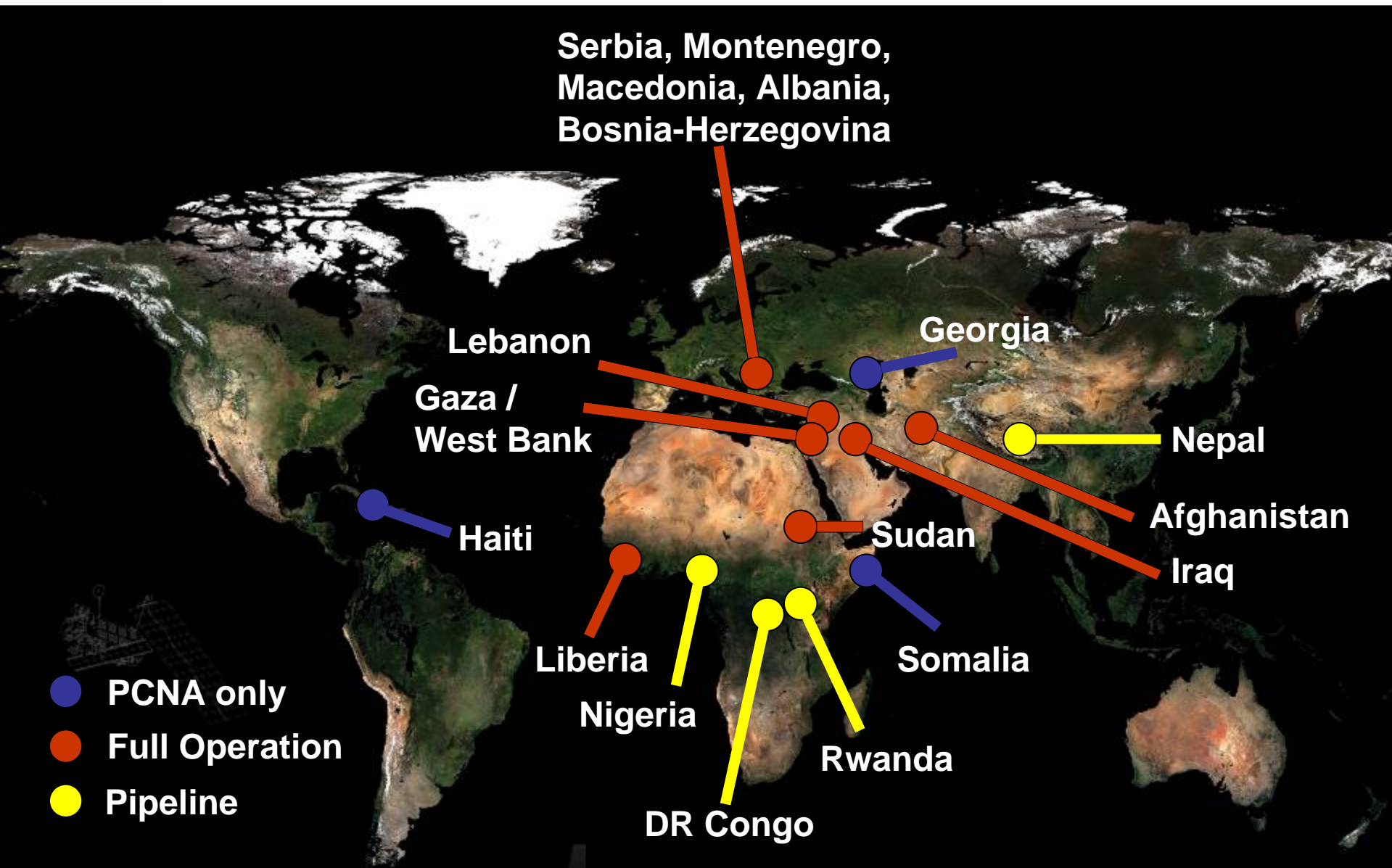
**David Jensen, Policy and Planning Coordinator
UNEP Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch**

7 October, Barcelona, World Conservation Congress

Outline:

- 1. Is environment on the peacebuilding agenda in Afghanistan?**
- 2. Eight Lessons Learned in Afghanistan**
- 3. UNEP and peacebuilding**

18 post-conflict operations



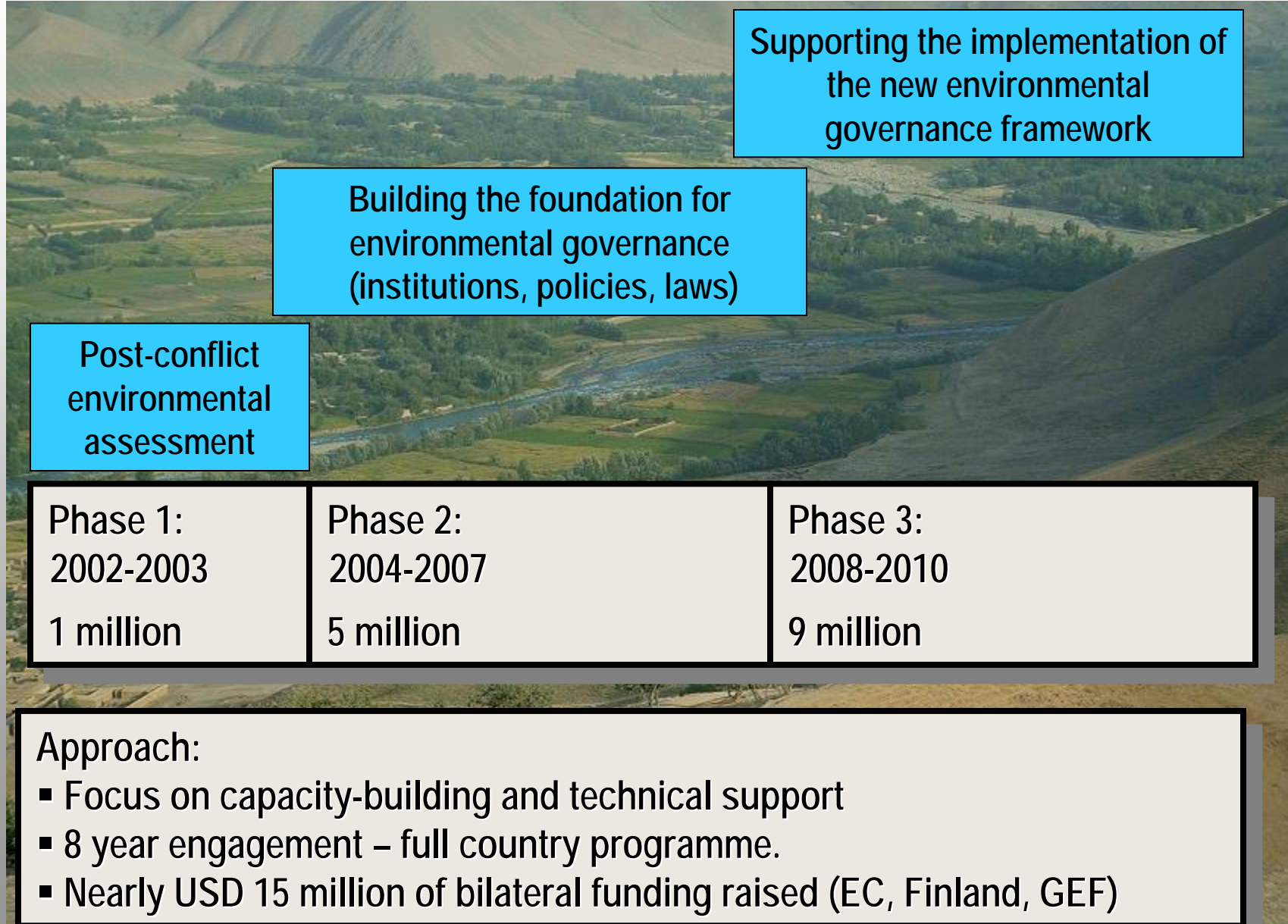


Play Video clip

UNEP's Programme in Afghanistan: Video Highlights

UNEP's largest post-conflict operation

Three-phased approach



Is environment on the agenda?

Policy indicators:

1. **New Constitution and Institution**

- Article XV: State must safeguard forests and environment
- National Environmental Protection Agency established reporting directly to President

2. **Afghanistan National Development Strategy Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper**

- Environment is one of eight sectors, plus cross-cutting

3. **UN Common Country Assessment**

- Unsustainable use of resources one root cause of poverty
- UN support to Afghanistan should focus on three areas, including social services and environmental sustainability

4. **UN Development Assistance Framework**

- Natural resource management one of four top priorities
- 370 million of UNDAF budget for ENR (28 % of total)

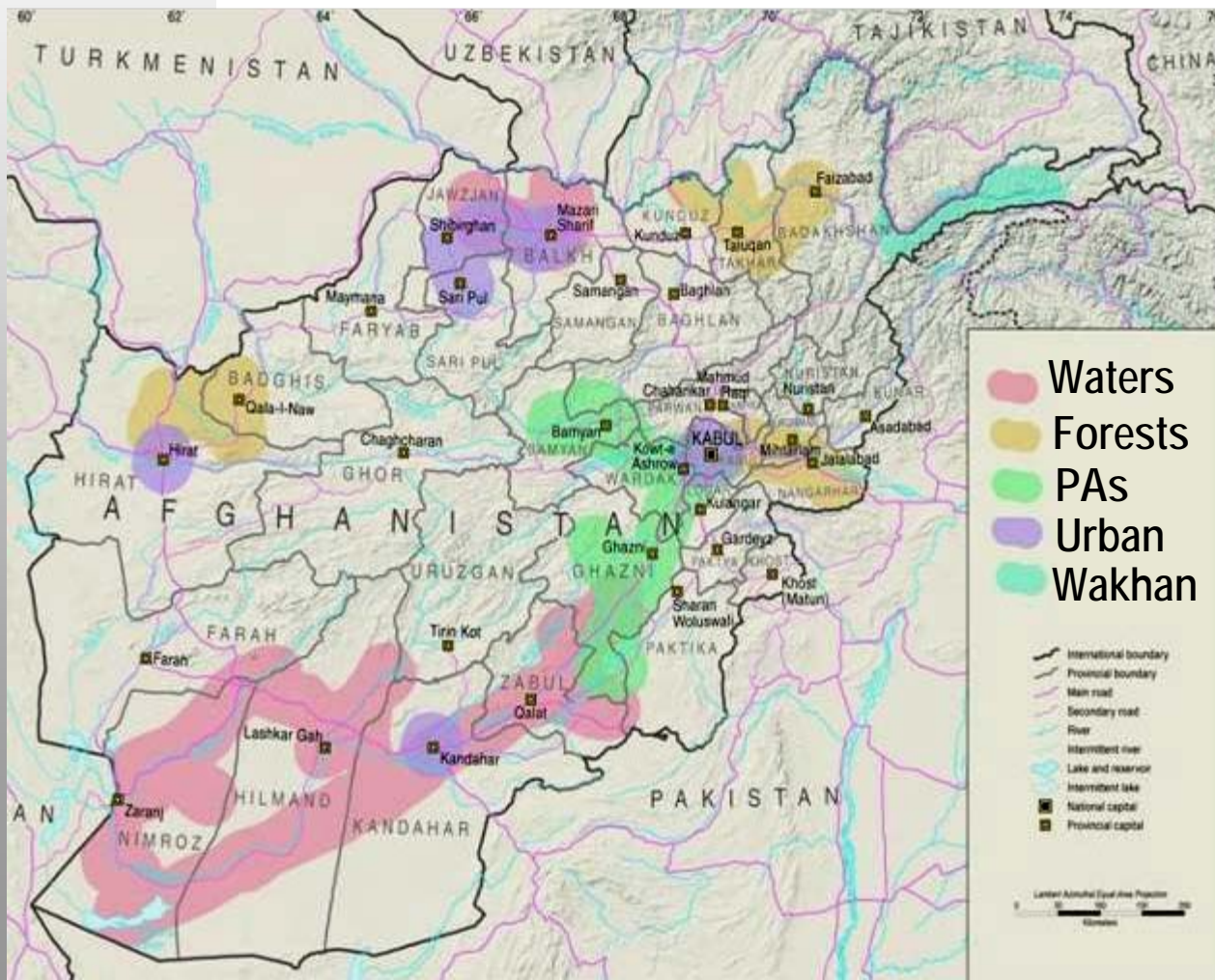


Afghanistan: Eight Lessons Learned

- 1. Start with the facts**
- 2. Establish country presence**
- 3. Maintain a flexible and demand-driven approach**
- 4. Mix of training and mentoring**
- 5. Active policy mainstreaming**
- 6. Community-based pilot projects**
- 7. Partnerships and public participation**
- 8. Focus on the development agenda**

Lesson 1: Start with the facts

- Rapid environmental assessment: snapshot of key challenges
- Platform and justification for further work: calling card
- Involvement and ownership by national experts



Lesson 2: Country presence

- Invested in mix of international and national staff
- Work hand in hand with NEPA staff on daily basis
- Seven year commitment
- Embedded in NEPA compound but separate building
- Allows other Ministries to have access to UNEP experts



Lesson 2: Country presence

The Afghanistan Team



Lesson 3: Flexible and demand-driven

- Mix of programmed and demand-driven activities
- Able to respond to political needs of NEPA (e.g. visibility) and strengthen hand when possible
- Able to capitalize on new opportunities and partnerships
- Donor willing to accept flexible implementation and unknown phase-out strategy



Lesson 4: Training and mentoring

- Paired international and national experts, rather than top-down
- Encourage nationals to find Afghan solutions – “learn by doing”
- Mix of technical and professional skills, plus office equipment
- Immediate application of skills at field level
- Gradual handover of technical aspects



UNEP training room



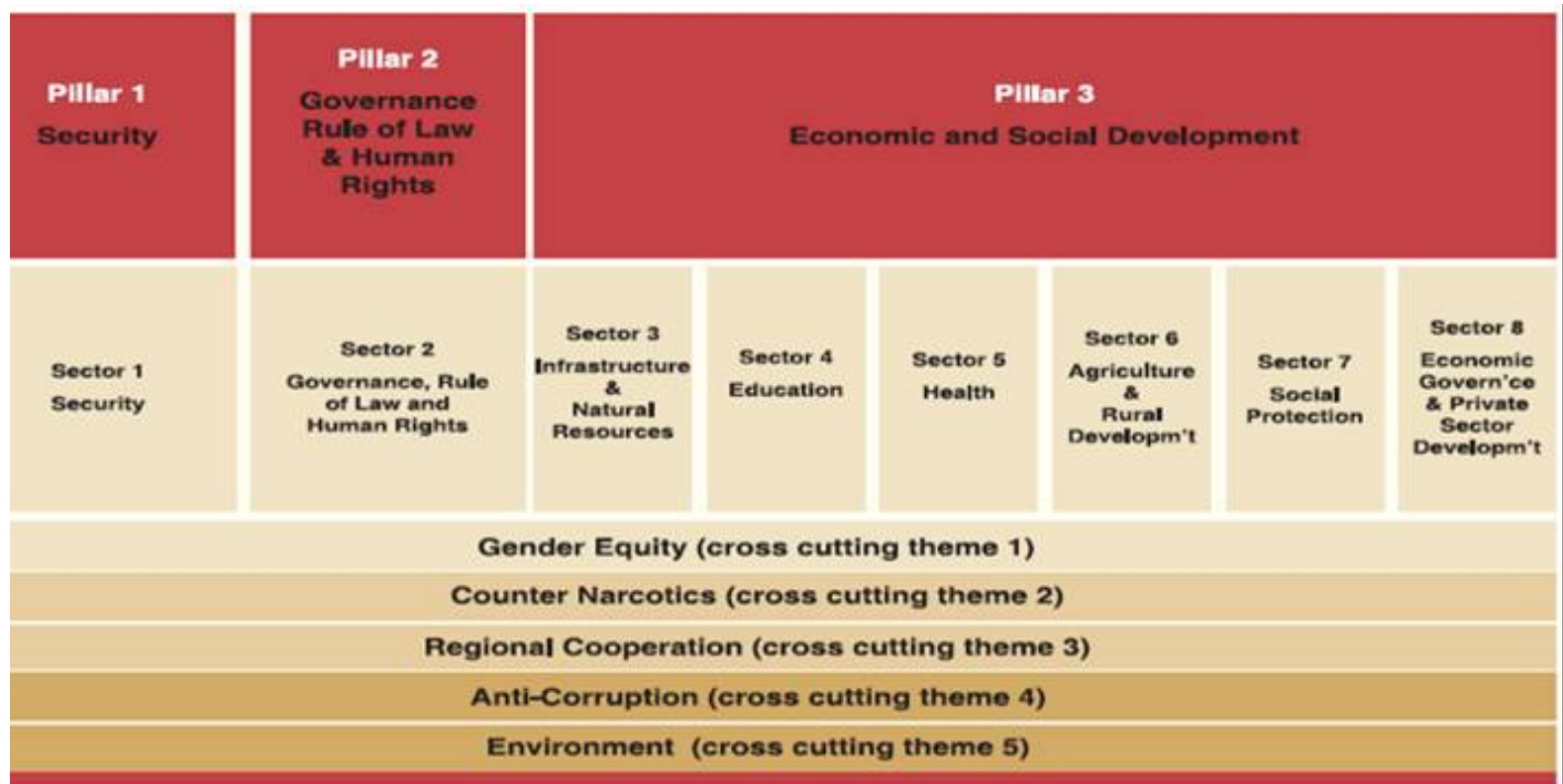
Immediate field-level application

Weapons and fuel dump site, Panjeer Valley, Afghanistan



Lesson 5: Policy mainstreaming

- Attend all key policy development and coordination platforms (Government, UN, NGO, donors)
- Constant advocacy of environmental needs based on facts
- Provide draft text to process & understand decision-making chain
- Treat environment as both a sector and a cross-cutting issue.



Lesson 6: Pilot projects

- Demonstrate how communities can benefit from investments in natural resource management
- Focus on alternative energy, reforestation, irrigation
- Community designs and implements project, UNEP provides cash grants and technical training

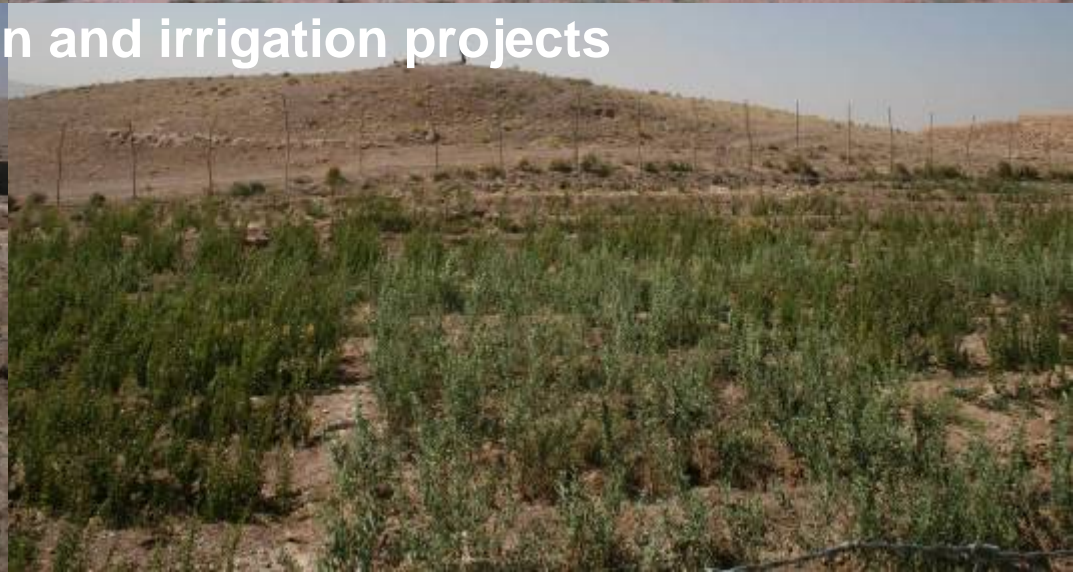




Solar panels to reduce demand for fuelwood



Reforestation and irrigation projects



Lesson 7: Partnerships and participation

- Cooperative rather than competitive approach
- Use partners to extend capacities and reach
- Focus on technical expertise and coordination
- Invest heavily in public consultation processes and national ownership of policies, laws, projects

IUCN: Environmental law

WCS: Protected Areas and wildlife management

WWF: Field Assessments on parks, forests and wildlife

Barefoot College: Solar panel training

FAO/WFP: Afghanistan Conservation corps

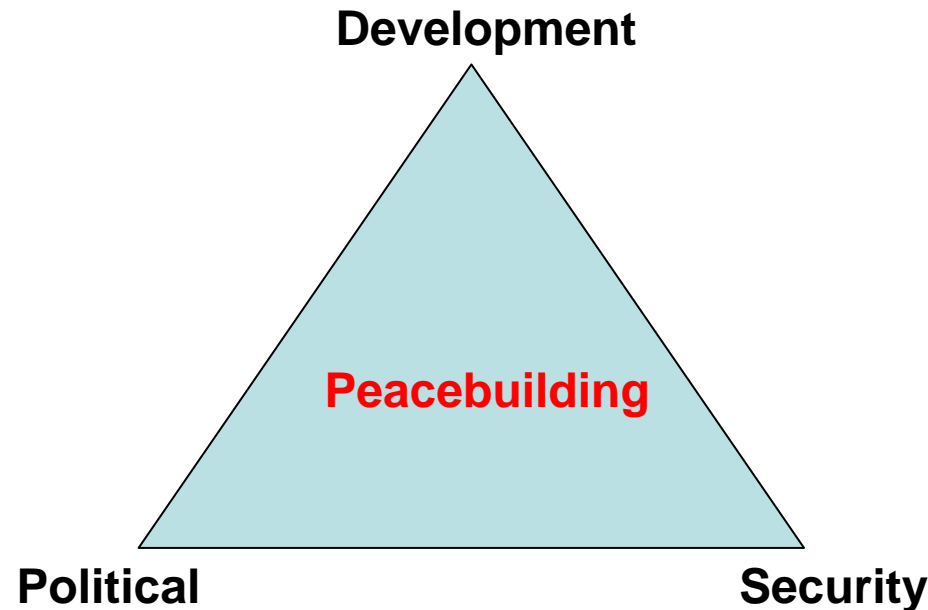
HABITAT: CBNRM

Save the Environment Afghanistan: Policy

Spietz Laboratory: Field sample analysis

Lesson 8: Focus on development agenda

- Majority of focus on development agenda (e.g. natural resources contributing to human well-being)
- Avoid getting caught in political issues (e.g. capture)
- Minimize exposure to security risks and keep distinct from security operations



UNEP and peacebuilding

Conclusions

1. Expanding UN partnerships:

- UN Peacebuilding Commission (Secondment)
- Department of Peacekeeping Operations
- UNDP and Early Recovery

2. Expanding experts and networks:

- UNEP Expert Advisory Group
- UNEP, ELI, IUCN, University of Tokyo
- UNEP and Earth Institute at Columbia University

3. Expanding operations:

- “Disasters and conflicts” one of six strategic priorities of UNEP
- Current programmes in Afghanistan, Sudan and Rwanda, expanding to DR Congo, Haiti, and Nigeria

New publication: UNEP Expert Advisory Group

“What is the role
of natural
resources and the
environment in
conflict and
peacebuilding?”



From Conflict to Peacebuilding

The Role of Natural Resources
and the Environment



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Welcome to the Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch website

The Post-Conflict & Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB) extends UNEP's work in areas of the world where the environment is impacted by conflicts and disasters, or where the environment is a factor contributing to conflicts and disaster impacts.

PCDMB has worked in post-conflict settings such as Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq and Lebanon, as well as in countries affected by major disasters such as Pakistan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Maldives. Because conflicts and disasters are so closely intertwined with the environment, proper environmental management and governance is essential for long-term peace, stability and security in any conflict- or disaster-prone country.

PCDMB conducts environmental assessments in crisis affected countries and strengthens national environmental management capacity through institution building, promoting regional cooperation, technical legal assistance, environmental information management and integrating environmental concerns and risk reduction measures in reconstruction programmes.

PCDMB is based in Geneva, Switzerland, with field offices in Kabul, Monrovia and Colombo.

In Focus



• [Field Notes, Issue 01 PCDMB Newsletter](#)

