Environment, Conflict & Cooperation: Experiences From The Greater Horn of Africa

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Outline

- Context for Environment, Conflict & Cooperation

- UNEP Environment, Conflict Prevention Initiative

- Ongoing Africa Assessment
  - The Virungas
  - Informal and Formal Cooperation

- Conclusion

Context for Environment, Conflict & Cooperation

- GHA countries and Africa in general has long history of cooperation for diverse purposes
  - River basin management – Zambezi, Niger, Volta, Nile
  - Economic – RECs (SADC, ECOWAS, EAC, COMESA)
  - Conflict Prevention, Management and resolution – AU
  - Human Rights – ACHPR & Optional Protocol on Women's Rights
  - MEAs and Regional Envtl agreements
  - Management of transboundary resources – forests, wildlife
  - Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN)
- RECs have taken on environment & peace agenda
  - EAC, IGAD, COMESA

Context for Environment, Conflict & Cooperation (2)

- Need to link environment, conflict and cooperation by
  - Developing environment-focussed tools for conflict prevention & management
  - Exploring ways of using environmental resources to build peace
- Link between environmental quality, peace & security articulated by policymakers in UN Conference on GLR in 2004
  - 1. Environmental quality and sustainable NRM as precondition for peace and security in the GLR
  - 2. Peace and security as precondition for good environmental quality and sustainable resource management

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Context for Environment, Conflict & Cooperation (3)

- Encourage equitable access to & sharing of benefits to avoid competition for natural resource control
- Identify and support opportunities for environmental management to build peace
  - 3. Political commitment to democracy & good governance critical for sustainable environmental management
    - National levels
    - Regionally focusing on strategic transboundary resources such as lakes, river basins, mountains, protected areas etc

Context for Environment, Conflict & Cooperation (4)

- 4. Environmental management & protection as integral to economic development and regional integration
  - Use of sustainable TBNRM as an opportunity for regional economic development and integration
- 5. Armed conflicts result in increased environmental degradation, poverty, unplanned development & overharvesting of resources
  - Need for effective responses
    - On location & establishment of refugee camps
    - Cooperation between host and refugee populations

UNEP Environment, Conflict Prevention Initiative

- UNEP Initiative to mainstream environment into the security discourse

- As part of DEWA's Initiative on Environment and Conflict Prevention (E&CPI)
  - 3 regional case study assessments for:
    - Latin America and the Caribbean; Asia and the Pacific; & Africa

- To increase understanding of ways in which the environment can act as an important catalyst for **cooperation**, **trust building** and **conflict prevention**
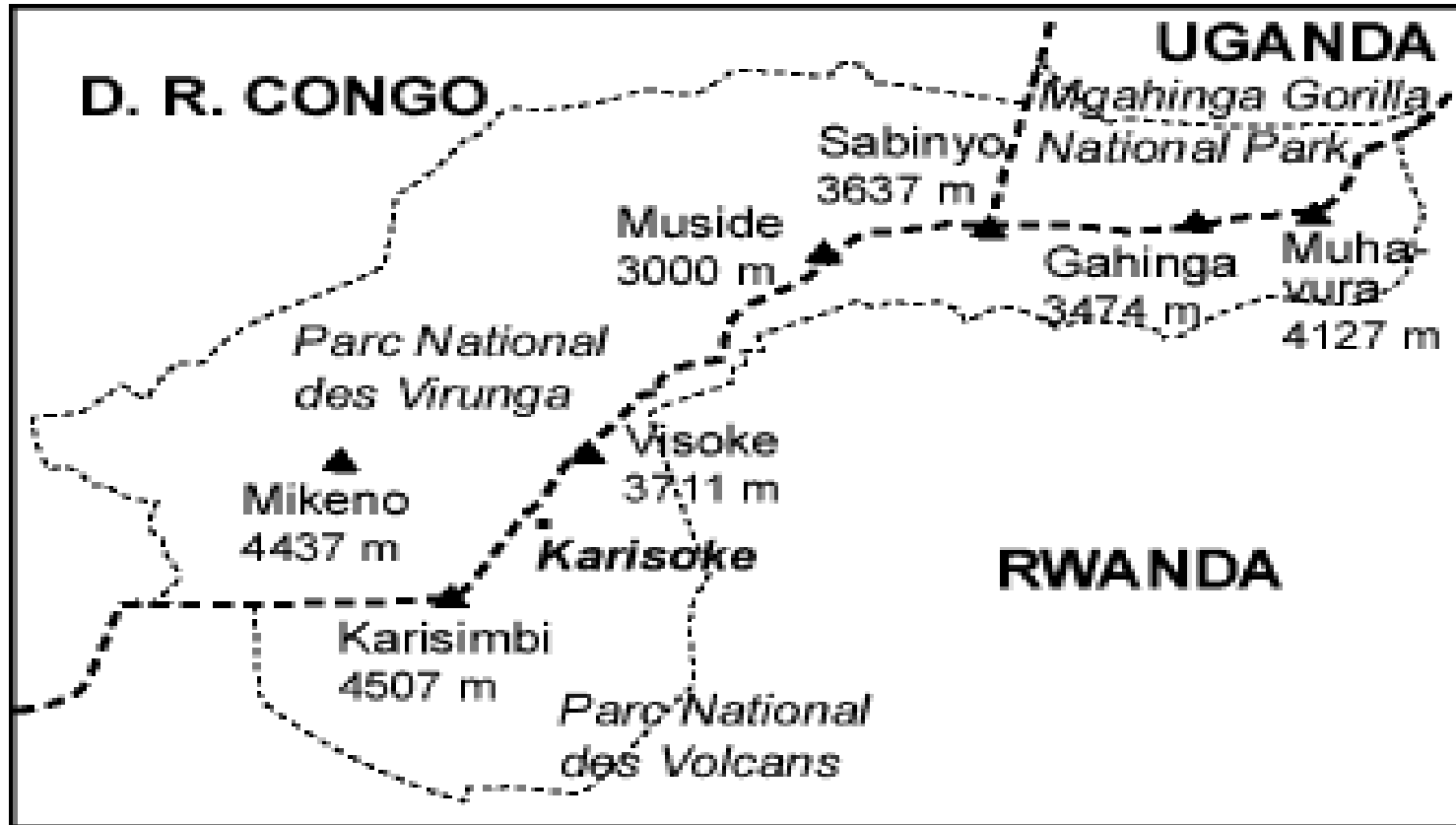
African Assessment

- Virunga Conservation Area as a case study
  - The Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); The Mgahinga Gorilla National Park in Uganda; &The Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda
  - Broader ecosystem has Bwindi Impenetrable Forest NP
- Ecological importance as habitat of the Mountain Gorilla
- Under severe pressure from people living in and around the shared ecosystems concerned
  - Population density; human encroachment; poaching; deforestation; & ongoing civil unrest
  - Poaching – bushmeat trade
  - Refugee camps located in the region

African Assessment (2)

African Assessment (3)

- Diverse interests at play
  - 1. Protected Areas managed by different states
  - 2. International Conservation Agencies (AWF, FFI, WWF, WCS, IUCN & UNEP initiatives in countries
  - 3. Resource extracting companies - Pharmaceutical companies seeking resources for drug dev't; mining & logging companies
  - 4. A refuge and strategic target for the militias in times of conflict offering cover & escape route
  - 5. Surrounding communities
    - Not homogenous
    - Seeking to eke out livelihood in already constrained, diminished & unsafe environment
  -

Cooperation in the Virungas

- Context for cooperation in the UN Conference on the Great Lakes; AU; NBI; AMCEN
- Shared history of violence & conflict
- Informal transboundary cooperation in management of PAs Cooperation through local consultation arrangements
  - Grass-roots liaisons to build familiarity & mutual trust, promote close contact between local communities & support flexible and innovative approaches to local development
    - Create basis and provide incentive to "upgrading" cooperation to higher level
  - Field level collaboration between administrative authorities such as Park Managers

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Cooperation in the Virungas

- Formal cooperation creates context inter-state initiatives providing the necessary political capital
  - High-level government declarations bilateral treaties
- 2005 Tripartite Declaration on the TBNRM of the Central Albertine Rift Transfrontier critical formal mechanism for cooperation
  - Effective management of shared natural resources to adequately protect and preserve ecosystem which comprises the natural habitat of the Mountain Gorilla
  - Contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and the common goal of **poverty reduction** in the three countries

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Cooperation in the Virungas

- No normative legal framework but affirmation of efforts to **coordinate** & **collaboratively** manage these protected areas as one ecosystem under a **Transboundary Strategic Plan**
- The states have undertaken to initiate the development of a **collaborative protocol** to 'ensure' **formal agreement** for transboundary protected area network
- Might this cooperation lead to the establishment of a transboundary protected area/peace park?
  - Need to maximise peace dividend

Conclusion

- African assessment is ongoing
  - Mapping different actors and their roles in ECC
    - States; local communities; international organisations; private sector; illegal actors
    - Exploring the role of gender in ECC
    - Identifying data needs for monitoring & tracking ECC

- Need to explore more localised and informal cooperative arrangements
  - Common values that make ECC possible among stakeholders

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