

SHARED SECURITY
POLICY BRIEF

Central African Republic Crisis: Managing Natural Resources for Peace



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

The Central African Republic (CAR) is a resource-rich country, endowed with mineral wealth, vast expanses of timber, fertile lands and wildlife. CAR is also trapped in cycles of violent conflict and political crises that date back to the 1990s. Poor governance, chronic insecurity and migration have led to escalating disputes over shared resources. Grievances and competition over natural resources are among the most persistent and commonly overlooked root causes of the ongoing violence.

While mismanagement of CAR's natural resources contributed to the current conflict, effective management can set CAR on a path to recovery. As CAR seeks to emerge from a protracted cycle of violent conflict, the inclusive management of its natural resource endowments will be imperative to this transition and central to building a lasting peace. Three key priorities at the heart of sustained recovery are:

1. Establishing transparent and accountable systems to manage high-value natural resources and revenues and preventing armed groups from funding violence by smuggling minerals and poaching.
2. Jumpstarting economic recovery by promoting natural resource-related occupations and creating inclusive institutions and processes to manage shared resources, resolve disputes and establish land and resource rights.
3. Minimizing the damage to natural resources caused by emergency response efforts and integrating sustainable natural resource management into recovery efforts.

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BACKGROUND

The current crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR) began in late 2012, as Séléka forces swept down from northern CAR towards the capital, Bangui. Since then, the country has been embroiled in violence between Séléka forces and Anti-Balaka militias that is estimated to have claimed over 2,500 lives and displaced about 907,000 people.¹

Out of a total estimated population of 4.6 million, half of CAR's population is in need of humanitarian assistance. The conflict narrative is often centered on ethno-religious aspects of the violence, but this narrow focus obscures deeper conflict dynamics.

The current conflict is the most recent in a series of civil wars and political crises that date back to the 1990s. Since its independence in 1960, following over 100 years of French colonial rule, CAR has suffered from chronic insecurity, multiple coup d'états and poor governance. This void in effective governance and general instability has created increasing tensions over natural resources that remain a significant underlying cause and contributor of the ongoing conflict.

In a country where the population relies on natural resources for exports, livelihoods and subsistence, the weak central state lacks the capacity to regulate access to, and exploitation of, natural resources. This puts millions of people dependent on CAR's natural resources at risk. In 2011, it was estimated that prior to the conflict diamond mining directly and indirectly supported between one-half and two-thirds of the population of CAR.² About 4,000 people work in the formal sector of forestry in CAR.³ Similarly, CAR's artisanal forestry sector and the value chain for bushmeat combined to constitute an estimated 2 percent of CAR's GDP.⁴

Political leaders have a long history of managing public institutions for their own personal enrichment. This corruption has further eroded already weak, or non-existent, systems of natural resource management in the country. It has translated into grievances over the mismanagement of high-value resources: diamonds; gold; wildlife, including elephant ivory; and timber. The lack of effective government regulation and oversight for these resources has led to widespread illicit exploitation. Natural resources are often traded illicitly to fund armed groups across the country, instead of benefitting Central Africans.

Outside of high-value resources, the breakdown of effective and legitimate institutions for the management of shared resources in many rural areas, has led to food and water scarcity. It has also reduced the population's ability to peacefully resolve disputes over shared natural resources. Disputes between farmers and herders over land and water have increasingly escalated into armed conflict. These divisions are particularly explosive because they tend to align along ethno-religious differences. Farmers are predominantly Christian, while herders are most frequently Muslim. Herders are often perceived to be from Chad or other neighboring countries, although they are frequently from CAR, creating tensions based on perceptions of nationality.

The conflict itself is adding to further degradation of, and tensions over, natural resources. The influx of displaced refugees into host communities has strained and deteriorated an already poor water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) conditions. Internal displacement has also increased the stress on scarce resources through deforestation and inadequate waste management. As peacekeepers and humanitarian actors struggle to provide essential life-saving support to displaced and vulnerable populations, more attention is required

to maintain the productive capacity of water resources, arable land and natural resources on which both displaced persons and host communities rely for survival.

Natural resources can, and must, serve as the foundation for CAR's recovery from the current conflict and its transition to sustainable growth

1. MANAGING HIGH-VALUE NATURAL RESOURCES TO STARVE THE CONFLICT AND FUND THE FUTURE

The Central African Republic is rich in high-value natural resources, including diamonds, timber, gold, uranium, possible oil deposits and endangered wildlife. Timber and diamonds are particularly essential to CAR's economy. Before the current crisis, CAR exported US\$64.6 million in wood products and US \$51.8 million in diamonds, totaling 40 percent and 32 percent respectively, of CAR's total export value in 2011.⁵



Lumber transfer station Search for Common Ground

and development. However, this can only be successful if they are managed transparently and with accountability. Natural resources can be used to consolidate peace through confidence and trust-building activities, creating platforms for cooperation among once conflicting factions and reestablishing relationships between the government and the wider community.

Until its suspension as a result of the current crisis, CAR was a member of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)⁶ and used the framework to track government revenues for diamonds and gold.⁶ However, the larger problem of smuggled gems continued unabated despite EITI compliance. In 2011, the World Bank estimated that diamonds sold in the informal market⁷ could represent between one quarter and one half of the country's diamond production and may have included many gems of higher value than the diamonds sold in formal markets.⁷ This led experts to raise the possibility that even before the newly revived conflict the majority of the value of diamond exports may have been channeled through the informal market.⁸ Weak government controls and fraud at local level mining sites were identified as key contributors to the robustness of the informal market.⁹ Diamond smuggling has expanded during the current conflict, as insecurity has further reduced the barriers to smuggling. Armed groups have turned to these resources to finance their operations. In May 2013, the Kimberley Process (KP)¹⁰ suspended CAR in an effort to curb the trade in conflict diamonds.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the illegal flow of diamonds continues unabated.

A 2014 report by the Enough Project documented diamond smuggling and poaching among armed groups in CAR. The report investigated diamond production and poaching expeditions that secured assets through looting, threats and, sometimes, forced labor.¹¹ It found that Séléka and its allies control many of the diamond-rich areas in the western part of the country, as well as national parks, where poaching is prevalent.¹² The diamonds and ivory recovered illegally are then smuggled into neighboring Chad, Sudan, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo before being exported around the world.¹³ The revenues acquired from diamonds and poaching are used to purchase weapons and to pay and equip soldiers and mercenaries.¹⁴ Ending the exploitation of these resources, particularly by armed groups, will be critical to resolving the conflict.

Once violence abates, government revenues from the taxation of formal markets for high-value resources like diamonds and timber will become a key financial resource to support CAR's recovery. In 2010, diamonds contributed about 3.4 percent (US\$20 million) of the government's tax revenues.¹⁵ That number is expected to increase if diamonds move from informal to formal markets. Taxation of the timber industry contributes approximately 14 percent of state revenues.¹⁶ These resources represent a significant source of funds, which the government of CAR can use to fund its basic

operations, rebuild institutions, restore basic services and jumpstart the economy.¹⁷

The government of CAR, however, will need to break from a history of mismanagement and inequitable distribution of benefits. For decades, the diamond industry and the government revenues it generated have been used to enrich those in power and support their patronage networks instead of advancing the country's economic development. This has led to grievances related to exclusion and inequality across groups.¹⁸ Séléka initially played on these systemic inequalities to gain support and power, but their interests have since evolved to include personal enrichment through widespread corruption and looting. A senior leader of Séléka, in an anonymous interview with the Enough Project, noted that "[w]hen we started this movement about the exclusion of the north, we brought local communities together and they gave us some support, but it was not enough. Then slowly we started to trade diamonds and it became like a business for us."¹⁹

Transparent and accountable systems will be needed to allocate natural resource revenues to support extracting communities, reduce longstanding structural inequalities and address the root causes of conflict. CAR's 2008 law governing forestry and the 2009 mining code both provide for community benefit sharing in general terms. However, uneven implementation of the benefit

⁵The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative is a coalition of concerned governments, civil society groups, and companies that work towards increasing transparency and accountability management of natural resources. By adhering to the EITI standard, governments publically report payments made to them by companies for natural resources. Annual EITI reports are intended to inform public discourse on natural resource wealth and how it can be used for inclusive growth.

⁶Diamonds sold in the informal market include diamonds that go unreported in their extraction and sales, normally sold to unlicensed, unregulated buyers that smuggle diamonds out of CAR.

¹⁰The Kimberley Process is an international coalition made up of governments, companies and civil society groups that created a set of certification requirements for the diamond trade (Kimberley Process Certification Scheme), aimed at stopping illicit and conflict diamonds from entering the legitimate production and trading channels.

sharing requirements has prevented the laws from meaningfully addressing economic and social marginalization.²⁰ Exclusion has been identified by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) as “a powerful incentive to engage in destructive and unlawful activities.”²¹

Forestry and mining are separate sectors with unique needs. In both cases, the government of CAR needs to address suspicions of mismanagement and corruption with transparency and accountability. Each sector will require a detailed review of the laws and institutions that regulate and manage revenues to develop systems that deliver clear and measurable public benefits and reduce suspicions that revenues are being mishandled. A robust communications strategy can manage expectations and address perceptions of inequality.

2. REBUILDING LIVELIHOODS AND ALLEVIATING TENSIONS BETWEEN HERDERS AND FARMERS

While high-value natural resources constitute most of CAR’s export revenue, agriculture and pastoralism support the livelihoods of 80 percent of the population.²² Central Africans frequently employ mixed livelihood strategies, relying on artisanal mining or forestry, as well as agriculture or pastoralism.

Intercommunal conflict between herders and farmers has a long history, but has become more prominent in recent years for several reasons. Population growth among farmers, pastoralists and their livestock has led to encroachment on traditional grazing routes, damage to crops and increased competition for land and water.²³

The government should release clear, publicly available data disclosing the amount of revenue collected, the subnational allocation of revenues and the public benefits that are financed as a result.

Livelihoods are closely connected with high-value natural resources in CAR and will require special attention as the government begins to regulate mining and forestry and manage, review, or issue concessions in the aftermath of the current conflict.

Developing a conflict-sensitive approach to the management of high-value resources in CAR will require the inclusion of all stakeholders, including artisanal miners and loggers, forest dwelling communities, concessionaires and farmers who hold competing claims to the same land or water sources.

Increased climate variability over the past 30 years has altered pastoralist migration routes, affecting paths where pastoralists drive their livestock, the duration of migrations and the interactions with sedentary farming communities.²⁴ In the years preceding the most recent crisis, a breakdown in local government authority and deteriorating security conditions in northern CAR led to an increase in weapons among pastoral and agricultural communities. Members of pastoralist groups have also begun settling in sedentary communities more permanently, out of necessity and government policies. These newly sedentary populations have contributed to community-level resource pressures. The occasionally tense coexistence with local populations drives new issues of indigeneity, especially in disagreements over customary land rights.

Ambiguous legal frameworks and weak conflict resolution systems exacerbate tensions over natural resources. Less than 0.1 percent of land in CAR is legally registered,²⁵ and the existing legal framework governing land rights contains gaps in the laws governing land use and occupancy.²⁶ These ambiguities make it difficult to establish ownership or resolve disputes over land and natural resources through the formal legal system. In practice, informal or customary institutions govern the use and allocation of land and natural resources. However, the diverse ethnic and religious groups within CAR have different customary traditions and there are no adequate systems to resolve conflicting customary claims to land or natural resources.²⁷ The lack of resilient legal frameworks and institutions to resolve disputes over land and water has contributed to the escalation of conflicts into violence.

Increased migration due to climate variability, urbanization and, eventually, the return of refugees and internally displaced persons from the current conflict are likely to intensify intercommunal tensions. Such tensions occur between and among many groups, including farmers, herders,[†] artisanal miners and forest dwellers. Legal frameworks and institutions are needed to recognize and resolve disputes between competing informal and traditional systems of land and natural resource ownership inclusively. Regional-level negotiations are also needed to address the transboundary migration of pastoralist groups between Chad, CAR and other neighboring countries.

To complement the development of more resilient institutions, development projects must be designed to reduce the direct competition between groups, while strengthening local and national economies to provide for all Central



UN Photo, Evan Schneider

Africans.²⁸ For example, in the water sector, engaging stakeholders in consensus building to improve water infrastructure for people, cattle and crops reduces competition over water supply sources. The total amount of water available for consumption can be increased by developing infrastructure for rainwater collection. Water infrastructure construction must, however, be coupled with baseline surveys and monitoring to ensure that additional water use does not deplete water resources beyond their recharge rates, as overuse can lay the groundwork for future conflicts.

Similarly, efforts to increase the productive capacity of farmland and diversify livelihoods can reduce competition over land. While transhumance corridors may create additional pressure on natural resources, increasing the capacity of

[†] Herders follow transhumance corridors as they migrate across regions and between countries with their livestock.

The evolution of disputes between pastoralists and farmers in CAR

Pastoralism in CAR and across the continent is changing. The Central African government, farming communities, and herding communities have been unable to keep up. This is a root cause of the recurring conflicts in CAR in recent years: clashes over access to arable land and water.

According to some estimates, approximately 10 percent of the population of CAR is Peul (Fulani), the largest clan of which is the Mbororo (Spittaels and Hilgert 2009). Since the 1970s, increasing numbers of pastoralists have also traveled seasonally through CAR from Chad and other neighboring countries (Spittaels and Hilgert 2009). The Mbororo people are often the subject of prejudice because they are Muslim and speak a different language than the farming communities they traverse (African Union 2007).

Droughts and armed banditry have forced nomadic and semi-nomadic herders to leave traditional transhumance corridors, plunging deeper into CAR and migrating in greater numbers. Herders and farmers alike have armed themselves. As the number of herders and the size of herds have grown, more damage to crops and national parks has occurred (Jensen, Halle, and Lehtonen 2009). Due to the increased competition for land, violent conflicts have flared-up across the country. Occasionally clashes with host communities occur as pastoralist groups can be confused with illegally armed groups and mercenaries who roam the parks to poach ivory (Agger 2014).

Dating back at least as far as 2007, pastoral groups, bandits, farmers, hunting communities, poachers, and park guards have been purchasing more armaments, and the competition over shared resources has led to increasingly violent clashes (Spittaels and Hilgert 2009).

farmlands can create more room for negotiation over transhumance corridors and cattle migration routes. Initiatives that rebuild market linkages between farmers and pastoralists can create platforms for cooperation and improved relations. Disputes will still arise, but dispute resolution and negotiations will seem less like a zero sum game outside the context of scarcity and distrust. When traditional natural resource-related infrastructure and economic development projects focus on providing both peacebuilding and livelihoods benefits, they can reduce intercommunal tensions.

Before the conflict reignited in 2012, projects were underway to support the economic and social development of communities through improved infrastructure, basic services and agricultural production. These projects, however, did not reach northern CAR due to security concerns, and they did not effectively address the sense of marginalization there. Trust, inclusion and social cohesion will maximize peacebuilding potential of infrastructure projects, basic services and agricultural production.

3. DESIGNING EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY TO REDUCE CONFLICT-RELATED PRESSURES ON NATURAL RESOURCES

In the midst of conflict, displacement, humanitarian assistance and short-term recovery programs can deplete and degrade natural resources, thus exacerbating tensions and scarcity. However, when such programs are designed to be sustainable, they can also lay the foundations for cooperation and recovery.

Shared natural resources serve as the building blocks for livelihoods, food security and basic survival. Humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons (IDP) in CAR must be designed to avoid overexploiting natural resources, thereby creating tensions. As of August 2014, approximately 20 percent of the population of CAR has been displaced, including more than 490,000 IDPs and more than 416,000 refugees.²⁹ The mass movement and longer-term displacement of people has serious implications for CAR's natural resources and post-conflict recovery.

The influx of IDPs has increased environmental stress and aggressive competition over limited resources. This competition has exacerbated or contributed to the new development of intercommunal conflicts between host and displaced populations in the region.³⁰ To cope with displacement, IDPs often undertake strategies such as cutting trees for fuel and producing brick for income. The resulting deforestation and unmanaged soil erosion is intensifying ongoing desertification in CAR.³¹

Even before the escalation of the current crisis, only about a third of the population had access to safe drinking water, a proportion that is likely to have declined with the protracted conflict.³² Camps in Bangui and elsewhere are also generating large quantities of solid waste, which pose dangers to public health and the environment.³³ The increased pressure on water supplies means that efforts to

provide IDP camps with access to water must be designed with care to avoid overburdening water resources and reducing the integrity of water supply points on which neighboring communities rely.

More than 35 percent of the population (1.7 million people) is facing food insecurity. The violence and unrest has disrupted traditional food cultivation practices among both displaced and sedentary populations.³⁴ In July 2014, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) predicted that crisis levels of food insecurity will continue until at least December 2014 due to the ongoing conflict.³⁵ This insecurity is driven by a multitude of factors. Violence limits access to fields, agricultural inputs and markets for the distribution of crops.³⁶ Food availability is further undermined with the closure of the CAR-Chadian border, a consequence of the ongoing conflict.³⁷ Most poor and displaced households cannot meet basic needs as a result of reduced income levels and their heavy dependence on market-based food supplies. Support for food security is essential, not only for immediate necessity, but also for long-term vitality and economic recovery.

To break the cycle of conflict, emergency humanitarian assistance must complement, not replace, long-term social planning services and sustainable development. The recent violent conflict has contributed to CAR's estimated US\$70 million budget deficit and a 36 percent drop in expected revenue.³⁸ The recurring conflicts have taken their toll on civilian populations, governance structures, infrastructure, economic advancement and natural resources. The economic strain faced by the state, both in the time of conflict and its immediate aftermath, make it challenging to finance and physically undertake the operation and maintenance of public infrastructure and basic

Reintegrating Ex-Combatants Into Natural Resource–Related Livelihoods

In September 2014, a UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSCA) was deployed in CAR to consolidate and build upon the ongoing peacekeeping missions led by the African Union (MISCA) and the French (Sangaris). Efforts to reintegrate ex-combatants are an essential component of MINUSCA's mission (UNSC 2014). Between 15,000 and 20,000 Séléka combatants may need support reintegrating into civilian life (UNSC 2013b). Anti-Balaka forces will also require reintegration programs. Reintegration will be particularly challenging in this context because it will also need to support child soldiers. As of May 2014, armed groups released 1,000 children from their ranks, and estimates suggest that up to 6,000 more children may still be taking part in the conflict (UNICEF 2014). Of those released, 20 percent are young girls.

Delays to the reintegration of ex-combatants from previous conflicts have been identified as a grievance in the current conflict (UNSC 2013a). Natural resource–related projects can be used to reintegrate ex-combatants into jobs where they work alongside community members on agriculture, aquaculture, value-added production, operation and maintenance of water and sanitation infrastructure, or other long-term income generating activities as well as short-term infrastructure initiatives (UNEP and UNDP 2013; AfDB 2012). Reintegration programs must be gender sensitive and provide significant training in civics and job skills such as farming or aquaculture to address ex-combatants' lack of education and training (UNEP and UNDP 2013).

Critical to the success of these reintegration efforts is regular, transparent and open donor coordination. The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping has neither the expertise, nor mandate, to develop conflict or transition-sensitive income generating activities. The World Bank and many international development organizations operating in CAR, however, do have this expertise. Ensuring that MINUSCA, major donors, and implementing actors are regularly sharing their strategies, learning, and funding outlooks throughout the response will be critical to seeing successful natural resource sensitive reintegration and recovery outcomes.

services. Lapses in publicly supplied basic services are replaced by unsustainable coping mechanisms that damage natural resources to meet basic needs. State legitimacy suffers due to the lack of services and the increasing stress on communities, as the natural resources they rely on for survival are further damaged. The erosion of public legitimacy can then feed back into the conflict's original

grievances related to inequitable distribution of benefits and feelings of marginalization and exclusion. Aid will be needed to restore natural resources and the basic services and livelihoods that rely on them. Moreover, that aid will need to be well governed and quickly and equitably deployed to build public legitimacy, restore livelihoods and reduce the risk of relapse into conflict.

CONCLUSION

Natural resources are the backbone of the Central African Republic's economy and they have the potential to be its engine for recovery when managed properly. Peace can be achieved, but only if the joint goals of sustainability and shared decision-making are the focus of natural resource management. The government of CAR will need the technical and financial support of the international community to expand sustainable livelihoods, rebuild basic services, resolve natural resource–related disputes and ensure that all Central Africans benefit from their nation's natural wealth. A post-conflict environmental assessment is necessary first step for mapping recovery. The assessment will be critical in identifying (1) the state of natural resources in CAR at a subnational level, (2) the current institutional capacities of the statutory and traditional authorities that manage natural resources, (3) the social relationships and conflict dynamics affecting natural resource management and (4) opportunities for natural resource management to support peacebuilding. A study should draw on and update UNEP's 2009 mission report on natural resources and peacebuilding in CAR.³⁹ The findings of the study will then be used to help donors tailor their support natural resource management at the local, national and regional levels in three key categories:

- 1. High-Value Natural Resources:** Establish transparent and accountable systems to manage high-value natural resources and revenues and prevent armed groups from funding violence by smuggling minerals and poaching.
- 2. Livelihoods and Dispute Resolution:** Jumpstart economic recovery by promoting natural resource–related livelihoods. Create inclusive institutions and processes to manage shared resources, resolve disputes and establish land and resource rights.
- 3. Emergency Response and Recovery:** Minimize the damage to natural resources caused by emergency response efforts. Integrate sustainable natural resource management into recovery efforts.

Designing support packages to address these challenges will require conflict-sensitive approaches that are mindful of past grievances and take care to avoid creating new ones. It will require a dedicated and sustained investment by the international community. Nevertheless, sustained investments in natural resource management have the potential to provide a greater return on investment if they are rapidly deployed in the immediate aftermath of the current conflict before the parties' political positions become hardened.

The government of CAR will ultimately determine the success of any recovery efforts, and success will turn on the international community's ability to engage the government of CAR throughout the planning and implementation of any recovery and development initiatives. If the international community helps CAR seize this opportunity and build the institutional capacity to manage its natural resources in the public interest, the government of CAR will eventually be able to chart a clear course toward economic and social development.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



Children in the camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) located at M'poko Airport in Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic. UN Photo, Catianne Tijerina

The current situation in Central African Republic is evolving rapidly. As the UN Peacebuilding Fund, the U.S. Government, and other bilateral and multilateral development institutions coordinate, commission, and prepare conflict assessments, natural resources should be examined as a potential cause, driver, and casualty of the ongoing conflict. The peacebuilding potential of natural resources will also be key to CAR's recovery. The Central African government could also benefit from requesting the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to lead an in-depth post-crisis environmental assessment (PCEA) as a follow on to UNEP's 2009 mission report on natural resources and peacebuilding in CAR. The PCEA will be instrumental to the identification and prioritization of natural resource-related needs within the context of the current situation on the ground.

Programming will be needed in three main areas of programming: (1) high-value natural resources, (2) livelihoods, agriculture, and pastoralism, and (3) emergency response and rapid recovery.

1. HIGH-VALUE NATURAL RESOURCES

Breaking the conflict cycle will depend, in part, on the government of CAR's ability to build and maintain inclusive, consensus-based legal frameworks and institutional capacity for the management of high-value natural resources. If the government is able to manage CAR's high-value natural resources transparently and accountably, it will have made major strides towards improving state legitimacy and creating the economic foundations needed to finance government operations. Moreover, preventing the illegal smuggling of high-value natural resources will reduce the sources of financing for illegally armed groups in CAR. The government of CAR will also need technical and financial support from development partners:

1.1 Prevent smuggling: International support and pressure is needed for regional and national-level negotiations and capacity-building to prevent poaching and the transboundary smuggling of ivory, diamonds and gold.

The Government of CAR

- Reinstatement of formal government oversight and regulation mechanisms including the deployment of the Diamond Anti-Fraud Security Forces (Unité Spéciale Anti-Fraude, USAF).

The Governments of Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and South Sudan

- Request appropriate domestic authorities exercise enhanced vigilance in procuring and reporting any shipments of illicit and conflict minerals flowing from CAR before in the interest of regional security and stability. The Governments of Cameroon, Republic of Congo, and Democratic Republic of Congo have particular obligations as KP participants. Report any diamond shipments seized and actions taken against any actors complicit in smuggling to the KP Chair.

The Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC)

- Convene a meeting of the Council of Ministers of COMIFAC to appraise the progress and state of CAR's efforts to comply with the Regional

Action Plan to prevent illegal wildlife trade and identify actions that can complement CAR's peacekeeping and DDR programming and processes.

Multilateral and Bilateral Partners

- Provide technical support needed to study the investments required to develop and maintain an ecotourism industry that incentivizes communities to support conservation and reduce poaching. Such a study would examine what infrastructure, marketing, technical and other investments are needed to develop an ecotourism industry that shares meaningful benefits with communities and supports livelihoods.

The United States Government

- Call for COMIFAC to convene a meeting and assessment of CAR's status and contributions in the Regional Action Plan for Strengthening National Wildlife Law Implementation and determine next steps and areas of support needed.
- Appropriate funding, in accordance with the new National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking through the newly created Wildlife Trafficking Fund, for deployment of technical experts from the United States Fish and Wildlife Services. Restart efforts in implementing the COMIFAC Regional Action Plan for Strengthening National Wildlife Law Implementation, in which CAR participates.

- Deploy legal and law enforcement experts and advisors to assist CAR in streamlining and consolidating legislation regarding wildlife protection and enforcement.
- Provide institutional capacity building support to Central African and neighboring diamond-producing authorities to increase their vigilance to ensure that diamonds from CAR do not enter the legitimate market in compliance with the Kimberley Process Administrative Decision to suspend trade in diamonds from CAR. Assist countries in the region to review their processes for identifying and reporting shipments of diamonds containing diamonds from CAR.

1.2 Manage high value resources transparently, accountably, inclusively and equitably:

The government of CAR will require international support for high-level discussions and mediation to develop systems regulate and manage mining and forestry. The principles of transparency, accountability, inclusivity and equity will need to guide (1) the issuance, implementation, and enforcement of concessions and (2) the collection and management of resource revenues. CAR should work towards reinstatement as a member of both the Kimberley Process and the Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and to expand EITI to include the timber industry and possibly other high-value resources.

The Government of CAR and Multilateral Development Banks

- Go beyond EITI and the Kimberley Process by requesting assistance from multilateral development banks and development partners to implement EITI++⁴ to address past

grievances and the associated public distrust of the government's management of extractives. The World Bank and the African Development Bank have significant experience in providing technical assistance and support to fragile states pursuing EITI compliance.

The UN Peacebuilding Fund, the United States Government, and other Bilateral and Multilateral Development Partners

- Ensure that all conflict assessments for CAR include analyses of the role of natural resources in the conflict and recovery, including an assessment of existing mechanisms for revenue management and benefit sharing for diamonds, gold, timber and possibly agricultural cash crops. Assessments may also need to consider the potential effects of the development of uranium and hydrocarbon deposits through future concessions.⁴⁰ This would address a critical gap in the current management of natural resources and could be used to launch a national dialogue on the management of such revenues.

Multilateral and Bilateral Development Partners

- *To The African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa:* Leverage technical expertise from the African Peer Review Mechanism to support the effective implementation of the principles of the African Mining Vision in legal and policy reforms for the mining sector.
- Provide expertise and advice to the transitional government of CAR in creating appropriate foundations for establishing legal and institutional reforms for its different natural resource sectors.

- Assist CAR in identifying options for reforming the laws governing revenue management and benefit sharing. This will include adding clear procedures for maintaining local and national government accountability for how revenues are spent.

The United Nations

- Support the establishment of a legal framework to allow for transparent benefit sharing with producing communities. This will include the redeployment of local administrative institutional capacity in accordance with the UN Peacebuilding Commission's priorities in CAR and based on in-depth stakeholder consultations with producing communities. The creation of checks and balances will be needed to ensure that natural resource revenues provide measurable benefits at the local level.

The United States Government

- Call for peace and transition-oriented negotiations to articulate and map out the development of transparent, equitable legal frameworks and institutions responsible for the management of high-value natural resources. Prioritize socially and environmentally-responsible, inclusive development.
- Assist CAR's Ministry of Energy and Mining in restoring its status as a participating country eligible for trade in rough diamonds under the Clean Diamond Trade Act of 2003.

1.3. Incentivize formal markets for artisanal mining:

Because mineral production in CAR is largely artisanal, support will be needed to give miners incentives to sell in the formal markets, establish property rights and resolve disputes over ownership and reduce the environmental, health, labor and social risks associated with mining.

The Government of CAR

- Enact legal reforms and implement programs to help miners affordably register with the government, secure property rights, and sell their products in the formal market with help from appropriate governing bodies such as the *Direction Générale des Mines*. Extension agents for the mining authority can also provide capacity building support to build relationships with miners and help them implement health and safety precautions. Model projects that engage communities in environmental assessment, remediation, restoration and reconstruction can assist in developing and enhancing domestic skills and capacity for sustainable mining.
- Request that INGO and NGO programs include both traditional capacity building and more non-traditional facilitative approaches that build platforms and relationships between civil society and government actors at all levels: local, prefectural and national. Donor efforts in this area must be coordinated.

The United States Government

- Request the development and funding of a joint USAID/State Department program to enhance legal and economic incentives for artisanal miners and buyers to sell diamonds on the formal market. Program development can build on the findings and knowledge of the Property Rights and Diamond Development (PRADD) program in CAR.

⁴EITI++ expands on EITI by expanding transparency requirements to include more of the resource value chain in addition to concessionaires' payments to governments. Examples of new topics addressed by EITI++ include the processing of extractive resources and government utilization of extractive resource revenues.

2. LIVELIHOODS, AGRICULTURE AND PASTORALISM

To broker a long-term peace in CAR, consensus building is needed to develop common norms providing all social groups with access to sustainable livelihoods. Peacebuilding based on affected livelihoods must foster a strong sense of community collaboration, working to build social cohesion and reduce tensions between different livelihood groups. These efforts must be sensitive to and address the impacts of changes in land use and herd size, as well as climate change and variability.

2.1 Engage stakeholders in regional transhumance corridor negotiations:

The Governments of CAR and Chad

- Engage representatives from all levels of the Chadian and Central African governments, traditional authorities, local farming communities, local pastoralist groups, the National Federation of Livestock Producers from CAR and the Confederation of Livestock in Chad in evaluations and negotiations of transhumance corridors. Transhumance corridors demarcation must include a later phase whereby careful design and placement of veterinary services, tanneries, slaughterhouses, watering holes, security patrols to reduce banditry and other infrastructure benefits and services can encourage herders to use designated transhumance corridors.



A young man tending his livestock in Bangui, Central African Republic UN Photo, Evan Schneider

The United States and French Governments

- Create international pressure for urgent negotiations for regional transhumance corridor. Deploy experienced State Department mediators to assist in regional transhumance corridor negotiations. Urge the French Government to deploy their own negotiation trainers in order to offset power imbalances with neighboring countries that possess greater negotiating capacity.

The United Nations

- To *The UN Peacebuilding Commission's Country Specific Configuration for the Central African Republic: Advocate for the urgent of regional transhumance corridors and assist in recruiting relevant Chad and CAR government stakeholders and regional institutions as a means of revitalizing the economy.*

Regional institutions

- Convene transboundary negotiations between the governments of CAR and Chad over the demarcation of migratory routes and research on international transhumance corridors and migration.⁴¹ The negotiation of transhumance corridors should include the following actors: Economic Commission for Livestock, Meat and Fisheries Resources (CEBEVIRAH), which is part of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC); the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC); the Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS); and the Central Africa Protected Areas Network (RAPAC).

- Establish and design rapid response conflict resolution teams that can respond and resolve disputes between and among farmers and herders in CAR and Chad.

Multilateral and Bilateral Development Partners

- Collaborate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to assist regional institutions in program development, financing, and technical capacity for the collection and dissemination of apolitical data on the current state of joint resources and livestock migration. This would include the production of up-to-date maps of migration routes, drawing on experience from several different pastoralist formation management systems projects.
- Support the preparation of (1) initial needs assessments, (2) transhumance corridor negotiations, and (3) land and natural resource reform processes with the FAO. This should include efforts to coordinate with the government of Chad, the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the FAO to utilize and build upon available data and relevant lessons learned from current and previous pastoralist information management systems projects, including the AfDB-funded Rural, Pastoral, and Transhumance Infrastructure Project (PIRPT) in Chad and FAO's The Livestock Environment and Development (LEAD) program.

2.2 Build national capacity to govern natural resources that support livelihoods:

The Government of CAR

- Reform laws governing land use, land tenure and land titling, integrating legal and institutional capacity building for the management of transhumance corridors into broader national reforms.
- Enact procedures to designate land for core uses such as agriculture, grazing, forestry, mining and conservation with input and participation from affected stakeholders and their representatives.
- Establish realistic boundaries and rules governing protected areas,
- Regulate transhumance corridors, forests, and protected areas.
- Coordinate and support local governments to ensure the implementation of land and natural resource reforms, including (1) creating a role for them in decision-making; (2) consulting them regarding resource governance reform; and (3) giving local communities enough autonomy to develop institutional structures that have public legitimacy within the local context.

Multilateral and Bilateral Partners

- Provide technical support to the Government of CAR as it prepares national-level land use plans, harmonizes fragmented laws governing land tenure, and develops effective systems for resolving disputes over natural resources. Such dispute resolution systems must recognize both statutory and customary claims for rights to land and natural resources.

“Agriculture and rural development are driving the recovery of our country. Currently, agriculture is the main source of our social cohesion and return to peace.”

– Marie-Noëlle Koyara, Minister of State for Rural Development

2.3 Link national and local institutions for dispute resolution:

The government of CAR will need support to build linkages between national and local institutions and develop mechanisms that are accepted by all sides and have the resources, authority and legitimacy to rapidly resolve disputes over land and natural resources before they escalate.

The Government of CAR

- Develop intercommunal natural resource management committees that represent all stakeholders to improve dialogue and reduce tensions. Such committees would be trained to conduct consultations and support local level mediations channels where disagreements cross community boundaries. The composition and training of committees would focus on building mutual understanding between pastoralist groups, sedentary farming communities, forest dwelling communities, civil society leaders, and local administration representatives.
- Support trainings for intercommunal committees to help them conduct consultations and support local level mediation channels where disagreements cross community boundaries.

The UN Peacebuilding Fund, the United States Government, and other Bilateral and Multilateral Development Partners

- Ensure that all conflict assessments for CAR examine the roles of traditional and statutory institutions that still hold public legitimacy in CAR. These assessments can be used to direct donor organizations and the Peacebuilding Fund to develop tailored programming that builds on those institutions.⁴²

The United Nations

- *To The Peacebuilding Fund:* Support financially INGOs and NGOs that help local governments develop conflict-sensitive approaches to allocating land, managing shared resources, developing and managing local infrastructure and resolving conflicting claims over land and disputes over shared resources.⁴³

2.4 Rebuild social cohesion and strengthen economic linkages:

At the local level and throughout value chains, efforts are needed to rebuild social cohesion and economic linkages surrounding the use, management and trade of natural resources. Traditionally, traders who are largely Muslim have been the main actors responsible for moving manufactured goods and food between communities in CAR.⁴⁴ Much of the Central African Muslim community has been displaced, thereby disrupting trade networks and local food procurement.

The UN Peacebuilding Fund, the United States Government, and other Bilateral and Multilateral Development Partners

- Ensure that all conflict assessments include a focus on the peacebuilding implications of the political economy, natural resources, trade networks, markets and value chains within the Central African Republic.

Bilateral and Multilateral Donor Partners

- Activate early recovery planning and funding now. Chronic underdevelopment, economic stagnation and socioeconomic marginalization are among the key drivers of violence in CAR. Short-term emergency interventions alone will not address these systemic issues.

- Prioritize support for projects that rebuild value chains and market linkages that connect Muslim and Christian populations across group and ethnic divides to build trust and economic interdependence. Such projects can build mutual understanding between pastoralist groups, traditional leaders from sedentary farming communities, civil society leaders and local administration representatives.⁴⁵ Parallel projects could be used to build social cohesion and mediate groups between farming communities and entrepreneurs and farming communities and forest dwelling groups such as the BaAka at both the intercommunal and local levels.

- Establish explicit mandates for carefully sequenced, multi-year, multi-sector assistance. This funding should be used to help communities transition from relief to long-term development and can help unlock procurement and management obstacles that implementing NGOs face.

The United States Government

- Activate early recovery funding for CAR as soon as possible, including through mechanisms like the Economic Support Fund, so that US-supported humanitarian organizations can begin planning for the programmatic transition from relief to recovery.



OCHA, Nicholas Rost

3. EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RAPID RECOVERY

Emergency responses rely on natural resources. How emergency response initiatives are designed and implemented will determine whether they create linkages to long-term recovery and whether they degrade the natural resources on which communities rely. Response actors will need to keep natural resource considerations in mind at every level of the response to the crisis. Namely, humanitarian actors should maintain a facilitative role wherever possible and plan all interventions with an exit strategy in mind. Even amidst the worst emergency conditions, the dangers of creating dependency on external aid actors remains a key consideration. This is particularly critical in Central African Republic, a country in which INGOs have become excessively entangled within local market systems. All international actors should see themselves as facilitators and catalysts of local problem solving and seek to advance local ideas and ownership at every step of the response.

3.1 Focus on the sustainability of support to displaced persons:

The United Nations

- *To The Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic:* Integrate natural resource-related considerations into intervention and implementation plans as part of the renewed MINUSCA mandate in April 2015. This includes effective management of water use, solid waste disposal and sanitation to avoid public health risks and damage to natural resources relied upon by nearby communities. International standards such as the SPHERE Project Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response can be used to identify basic practices to reduce the environmental impacts of humanitarian responses; however, depending on the local context of individual humanitarian aid sites, additional response measures may be needed to address impacts on natural resources.⁴⁶
- Assist regional partners to implement projects to address environmental tensions arising from a growing number of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

- Create mechanisms to identify and resolve tensions between host communities and refugee and IDP camps over competition for scarce resources, deforestation and pollution. Projects should support IDPs as they return to their homes and to support the restoration of natural resources around IDP camps.⁴⁷

3.2 Reduce the impacts of recurring shocks by mainstreaming considerations of resilience into food security initiatives:

The United Nations (including the U.N. Peacebuilding Fund) and other Bilateral and Multilateral Development Partners

- Support projects to improve access to quality seeds, credit and transportation to markets for households, communities and agricultural groups. These supports should be coupled with projects that help households and communities better mitigate and manage risk through improved water management and agricultural practices.

3.3 Reintegrate ex-combatants into natural resource-related livelihoods:

The Government of CAR in Coordination with the United Nations, the U.S. Government, and other development partners

- Provide funds that are deployed rapidly and support long-term, gender-sensitive reintegration through training on natural resource-related income generating activities. The livelihoods components of reintegration programs for ex-combatants need to include civilians in their implementation, such as disadvantaged youth, women, returning refugees and IDPs to rebuild the social fabric and avoid creating incentives for participation in armed groups.

3.4 Improve rural livelihoods and infrastructure to reduce urbanization, and sustainably manage the urbanization that does occur:

While urbanization is a common trend in many countries, conflict-affected countries with large IDP and refugee populations often experience particularly rapid urbanization.⁴⁸ Reducing urbanization is important because the influx of IDPs into cities can make it more difficult for the government of CAR to provide subsistence and basic services to urban populations. While targeted assistance can reduce urbanization, some urbanization is inevitable. Projects to reduce urbanization must also be paired with support to help government of CAR sustainably manage influxes into urban centers. Since approximately 20 percent of the population of CAR has been displaced, a two-pronged approach is needed. Projects are needed to minimize urbanization by ensuring that opportunities for livelihoods and basic services are available for those who wish to return to their homes.

Multilateral and Bilateral Development Partners

- Deploy rural livelihood recovery programs as part of humanitarian assistance in the immediate aftermath of the conflict to help reduce incentives for mass urban migration and create incentives for people to stay in rural communities.
- Rebuild and expand infrastructure and basic services with a focus on efficiency. In urban areas, natural resource exploitation can lead to lapses in services and food insecurity in the immediate aftermath of conflict, which can further undermine already weak state legitimacy and threaten the precarious peace.

3.5 Integrate assets-for-work with microcredit initiatives and natural resource management:

Multilateral and Bilateral Development Partners

- Design projects to rebuild infrastructure and support livelihoods as assets-for-work programs. These projects can provide construction employment to returning refugees, IDPs, disadvantaged youth and ex-combatants, while restoring damaged natural resources and improving severely debilitated public services such as drainage, roads and waste disposal systems. These programs should be coupled with training on alternative livelihoods, savings and microcredit, in addition to cash payments to encourage workers to transition into natural resource-related livelihoods.⁴⁹
- Continue to assess the security situation and take action to ensure that any assets provided to project beneficiaries will not make them targets of violence moving forward.⁵⁰

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16 Blaser, Sarre, Poore, and Johnson 2011.

17 World Bank 2011.

18 International Crisis Group (2010, 2014a) documents how former Presidents Patassé, Bozizé, and Djodotia misused revenues from the diamond industry.

19 Agger 2014, 9.

20 Code Forestier de la République Centrafricaine, Loi No. 08-022, Art. 191 (2008). Code minier de la République Centrafricaine, Loi No. 09-005 Article 121 (29 Avril 2009). <http://faolex.fao.org/faolex/index.htm>. For a discussion of implementation, please see Blaser, Sarre, Poore, and Johnson (2011) and Jensen, Halle, and Lehtonen (2009).

21 Jensen, Halle, and Lehtonen (2009).

22 USAID 2010.

23 International Crisis Group 2014; Jensen, Halle, and Lehtonen 2009.

24 International Crisis Group 2014; Jensen, Halle, and Lehtonen 2009.

25 USAID 2010.

26 The 1964 statute governing the public domain repealed two 1960 statutes which had established rules related to land tenure and occupancy rights, based on the assumption that subsequent legislation would address the gaps in the law on public domain. No subsequent legislation was enacted to fill the gap, although piecemeal legislation and ordinances have addressed narrow or sector-specific topics such as forestry, mining, and pastoralism. USAID 2010. "Loi n° 139-60, portant Code domanial et foncier" addressed land tenure more comprehensively but was repealed by "Loi no 63-441 du 9 janvier 1964 relative au domaine national," article 87. <http://faolex.fao.org/faolex/index.htm>. For examples of sector specific legislation, please see Décret n° 64-174, fixant pour les terrains urbain et ruraux le montant minimum de la mise en valeur et les prix minima de vente et de location. Ordonnance No. 86.057, portant institution et organisation des zones d'action agro-pastorale en abrégé "ZAGROP" en République Centrafricaine; Code Forestier de la République Centrafricaine, Loi No. 08-022, Art. 191 (2008). Code minier de la République Centrafricaine, Loi No. 09-005 Article 121 (29 Avril 2009). <http://faolex.fao.org/faolex/index.htm>.

27 Woodburne (2009) discusses how majority Bantu interpretations of customary law require land clearing to establish ownership, preventing traditional forest dwellers of the BaAka tribe from establishing tenure. Likewise, USAID (2010) discusses the different approaches to water management depending on whether communities follow customary or Islamic legal principles.

28 The United Nations Interagency Framework Team for Preventative Action (2012) examines the interaction between the scarcity and governance of renewable resources and conflict.

29 UNHCR 2014; OCHA 2014. To arrive at the 20 percent figure, the UNHCR (2014) tally of displaced persons at 907,000 was calculated as a proportion of the OCHA (2014) estimate of the current population of CAR at 4.6 million.

30 UNEP/OCHA JEU 2014.

31 UNEP/OCHA JEU 2014.

32 UNEP/OCHA JEU 2014.

33 UNEP/OCHA JEU 2014.

34 OCHA 2014.

35 FEWS NET 2014.

36 FEWS NET 2014.

37 FEWS NET 2014.

38 Agger 2014.

39 Jensen, Halle, and Lehtonen 2009.

40 Agger 2014.

41 ICG (2014b) provides detailed recommendations suggesting a coordinating role for Economic Commission for Livestock, Meat and Fisheries Resources (CEBEVIRAH), which is part of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC).

42 For example, conflict-resolution training has been an important component of peacebuilding in Sierra Leone and Sudan; however, in Sierra Leone, training was directed to paralegals, and in Sudan, the focus was on training traditional authorities. Maru 2006 (Sierra Leone); Eldin 2013 (Sudan).

43 For example, local institutions would use conflict sensitive approaches to mediate community-level agreements on when cattle can graze on fields without harming crops. Conflict-sensitive approaches to capacity building involve focusing on community-based natural resource management and engaging stakeholders from all groups in decision-making processes related to shared resources. In areas experiencing high rates of polarization over shared resources—such as where pastoralist-farmer disputes are prevalent—institutional capacity building may need to start with grassroots peace programs, including workshops to improve dialogue and promote reconciliation and efforts to provide educational and outreach activities on the benefits of interactions between groups, such as the fertilizer and aeration benefits of having cattle graze on farmland during certain times of year.

44 Gabsis and Shaw 2014; FAO/WFP 2014.

45 ICG 2014b.

46 Sphere Project 2011.

47 For example, a project in Sudan provided refugees with income generating activities associated with agroforestry associated with reforesting areas that had been cleared to support the camp. UNEP 2007.

48 Haysom 2013.

49 For example, a multi-donor initiative in Burundi sought to help workers transition from temporary cash-for-work construction into long-term cooperative activities by creating a communal account for program participants. Participants received business skills training and, after the temporary labor component of the project was complete, the participants invested the funds from the communal account in cooperative agricultural and value-added production activities. AfDB 2014.

50 Hammill et al. 2009.

(ENDNOTES)

1 MSF 2014; UNHCR 2014; OCHA 2014.

2 World Bank 2010, 2011. Indirect reliance on mining includes the sectors that supply artisanal miners, ranging from mining inputs to produce and meat. A more conservative estimate from Matthysen and Clarkson (2013) suggests that only approximately 13 percent of the population of CAR depend in whole or in part on mining for their livelihoods.

3 Blaser, Sarre, Poore, and Johnson 2011.

4 Blaser, Sarre, Poore, and Johnson 2011.

5 Simoes n.d.

6 Fair Links 2012; EITI Secretariat 2013.

7 World Bank 2011.

8 World Bank 2011.

9 World Bank 2011.

10 Kimberley Process 2013.

11 Agger 2014.

12 Agger 2014.

13 Agger 2014.

14 Agger 2014.

15 Fair Links 2012.



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