

# Annex 2-I: Illustrative Theories of Change for Environmental Peacebuilding

The theories of change shared here are intended to provide a high-level sample of commonly recurring themes and are grouped according to peacebuilding priorities. This is not a comprehensive list of theories of change but instead is intended to be **illustrative**. As such, some theories of change are more general,

while others are more specific. Note that the same cross-cutting principles—namely conflict sensitivity, gender sensitivity, participation, and inclusion—apply across theories of change in much the same way as they apply across the various aspects of design, monitoring, evaluation, and learning for environmental peacebuilding.

| ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEBUILDING PRIORITIES   |  |  |
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| Category<br>(With sample activities)   | Sample Theory of Change  | Considerations & Phases of Conflict Related Categories   |
| <b>Basic Safety &amp; Security</b>   |  |  |
| <b>Provision of peace dividends and incentives</b><br><br>Quick impact projects<br><br>Providing basic services, access to water, etc. | <i>If</i> quick gains supporting livelihoods and the delivery of basic services are achieved in the peace process through sustainable natural resource management <i>then</i> social cohesion, stability, trust in the peace process, and state legitimacy are increased <i>because</i> stakeholders have additional incentives to sustain negotiations, cooperation, and other peacebuilding processes (McCandless 2012, p. 16; UNSG 2009). | <u>Conflict Phase</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● During and post-conflict</li> </ul> <u>Assumptions/Risks</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The provision of livelihoods and basic services must be inclusive and consider varied effects on different stakeholder groups.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Establishment of early warning systems</b>  | <i>If</i> early warning systems can identify environmental, fragility, and conflict risks before they escalate, <i>then</i> stakeholders can take steps to increase their resilience and avoid violent conflict <i>because</i> the early warning system provides timely information to support coordination and collective action at different scales to mitigate or otherwise address risks.  | <u>Conflict Phase</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pre-conflict</li> </ul> <u>Assumptions/Risks</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider the benefits and challenges or risks of community participation in early warning. Spoilers or those benefiting from conflict may use the information in adverse ways.</li> <li>● To be effective at preventing conflict, early warning systems need to feed into response mechanisms.</li> </ul> |

## Basic Safety & Security

### Control of conflict resources

Securing sites of extraction, transit, and trade

*If* legitimate and effective control is established over natural resources that some actors have used to finance or otherwise sustain conflict in the past, *then* security will increase *because* these actors will lack the means to continue to pursue violence.

### Conflict Phase

- All phases

### Assumptions/Risks

- It is necessary to support alternative livelihoods to not destabilize local economies that may depend on conflict resources.
- Conflict resources are various, spanning renewable and non-renewable resources and land. Lootability favors resources that have a high-value-per-weight, ease of extraction with minimal investment, and diffuse geographic availability (Le Billon 2012), but the breadth and variability of conflict resources indicate that these criteria are to be interpreted flexibly (Bruch et al. 2019).
- Consider how different groups are connected to and affected by conflict resources. These groups include women, youth, Indigenous communities, and other marginalized groups. Inclusive natural resource management is key to sustainable benefits.

### Remediating environmental damage and degradation

Remediation of the toxic byproducts of warfare

Addressing landmines and unexploded ordinances (Unruh & Williams 2013)

*If* steps are taken to address environmental damage and degradation from conflict, *then* communities have increased access to land and other resources areas that may support agricultural and other livelihoods *because* land is now accessible and no longer leaches toxic material into soil and groundwater or poses imminent health threats.

### Conflict Phase

- Post-conflict

### Assumptions/Risks

- Consider ownership rights and land tenure governance in advance to avoid land-grabbing and new land-related conflicts (Shimoyachi-Yuzawa 2011).
- Access to land and resources can be a peace dividend and thus a key point of entry for dialogue.



## Basic Safety & Security

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| <p><b>Supporting migration with dignity for climate and conflict migrants</b></p>  | <p><i>If migration is managed proactively and appropriately, IDPs and returnees are protected, and sending and receiving areas are adequately prepared and supported, then the influx of new populations will not be destabilizing or ignite conflict over scarce natural resources because adequate measures are in place both to reduce large numbers of migrants that might otherwise overwhelm and destabilize host communities and to limit potential backlash by host communities.</i></p>                               | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All phases</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Host communities require adequate support, without which they can become hostile to IDPs and returnees.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Disaster Risk Reduction</b></p>  | <p><i>If an effective disaster risk reduction strategy is developed through collaborative and integrated multi-risk analysis tools, tailored capacity building, and partnerships across humanitarian, development, and formal and informal institutions, then security and resilience in the face of climate and conflict shocks and disasters will increase because communities, institutions, and the state will be better able to anticipate, mitigate, and adapt to environmental, social, and economic pressures.</i></p> | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All phases</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shared interests in reducing disaster risks can bring communities together and build peace.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Reducing gender-based violence</b></p> <p>Providing secure opportunities for women and girls to collect water or fuel wood</p> | <p><i>If security is provided for groups of women and girls when they undertake activities associated with their roles as resource users, then gender-based violence will decrease because there are fewer opportunities for them to be attacked or otherwise harmed.</i></p>  | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All phases</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is essential to consult women and girls about how best to reduce gender-based violence as they undertake daily activities. For example, different well-meaning efforts to reduce gender-based violence by providing water points in the center of settlements have been criticized by (1) women as reducing opportunities for them to socialize, and (2) young people as reducing opportunities to court.</li> <li>● While it is critical to reduce gender-based violence, it is also essential to build women's leadership.</li> </ul> |

## Provision of Basic Services

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| <p><b>Basic services delivery</b></p> <p>Providing water and sanitation</p> <p>Providing energy</p> <p>Engaging the private sector to invest in basic services</p> | <p><i>If the government provides communities with sustainable and equitable access to basic services, then this will foster stability and trust in government institutions because conflict-affected communities have their basic needs for livelihoods, health, and well-being met.</i></p> | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All phases</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Basic services include water, sanitation, shelter, and energy.</li> <li>● This approach can complement post-conflict rehabilitation with longer-term sustainable development (McCandless 2012).</li> <li>● The external provision of basic services risks weakening central governance structures and underscoring local perceptions of ineffective government. Capacity strengthening of local and national institutions to deliver basic services builds trust in them.</li> </ul> |
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| <p><b>Climate-resilient ecosystem services</b></p> | <p><i>If the ability of communities and countries to adapt to climate change is strengthened in ways that conserve local ecosystems, then communities and countries will be more resilient to changes in climate, environment, and natural resources as well as the knock-on social effects because climate change adaptation and the essential services it provides support local and national actors in anticipating and adapting to shocks.</i></p> | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All phases</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Anticipate and manage the adverse impacts associated with increasing or decreasing value or quantity of natural resources.</li> <li>● Ensure activities do not fuel competition over new resource availability or displacement due to elite capture.</li> <li>● Activities should complement efforts to improve governance.</li> </ul> |
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## Sustainable Economies and Livelihoods

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| <p><b>Supporting alternative livelihoods</b></p> <p>Providing livelihood alternatives to producing illicit narcotics</p> <p>Expanding opportunities to provide value added</p> | <p><i>If different or improved and sustainable livelihood activities are used to meet the economic needs of groups in conflict, then conflict will decrease, because their needs are being met, the incentives for engaging in conflict are lessened or removed, and engaging in conflict is more costly.</i></p> | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● During and post-conflict.</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This approach assumes new or improved livelihood activities are at least or more lucrative (financial, social, cultural).</li> <li>● Value-added activities (e.g., turning raw logs into furniture) may require additional equipment and training, as well as development of international markets.</li> <li>● It is important to make sure steps to control the conflict economy will not be destabilizing.</li> <li>● Relevant communities include IDPs, ex-combatants, migrants, and returnees.</li> <li>● Often a community-level approach is used.</li> </ul> |
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| <p><b>Strengthening livelihoods and food security</b></p> <p>Ensuring rights to land and other resources</p> <p>Providing seed, fertilizer, and other inputs</p> <p>Building capacity</p>   | <p><i>If communities have access to sufficient and sustainable livelihoods and food security, then the threat of inter-communal violence will be reduced because unemployment, food insecurity, and a weak economy are key determinants of violence and peacebuilding failure and often a foundation for recruitment of combatants.</i></p>  | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All phases</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There should be sufficient access to land, water, and other necessary resources.</li> <li>Sufficient knowledge. For example, sometimes ex-combatants that were recruited as child soldiers lack the necessary knowledge to succeed in agriculture.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Restoring and diversifying the economy</b></p> <p>Reviewing resource concessions and their governance</p> <p>Rebuilding the Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry sectors (including non-timber forest products)</p> <p>Building infrastructure to develop industry and access to markets</p> <p>Sustainable and socially responsible value-chains</p> <p>Renewable energy</p> | <p><i>If environment and natural resource management investments are made to diversify the economy, mobilize financing, and engage formal and informal economies in a manner that is sustainable and equitable, then this will foster increased stability and resilience because post-conflict economies often depend on the extraction of natural resources to rebuild and generate government revenue and livelihoods (World Bank 2022, p. 53).</i></p>  | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All phases, especially post-conflict.</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conflict may have led to unfavorable resource contracts and concessions due to the urgent need for cash, weak negotiating power in a high-risk environment, and reduced public oversight.</li> <li>Consider the importance of non-renewables for the national economy and renewables for local communities, while ensuring investments are sustainable and equitable.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Just transition</b></p>   | <p><i>If a country's economy is diversified to be less dependent on fossil fuels, then the likelihood of conflict will be reduced because governments will be able to continue generating revenues, governing, and providing services in a carbon-neutral world.</i></p> <p><i>If the governance of minerals necessary for the transition in a carbon-neutral world are managed in a transparent, participatory, and equitable way with the sharing of benefits with local communities, then the likelihood of conflict will be reduced because many of the primary causes of the green resource curse will be proactively addressed (Stein, Bruch, &amp; Dieni 2023).</i></p> | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All phases</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The transition to a carbon-neutral economy can have a profound effect on national economies that depend on oil, gas, and other fossil fuels.</li> <li>It is essential to ensure that diversification is sustainable, equitable, and inclusive.</li> </ul>   |



## Social Cohesion, Cooperation, and Trust Building

### Bridging (contact hypothesis)

*If groups in conflict participate in joint activities, then there may be a reduction in intergroup conflict and more positive intergroup attitudes and relationships because that hostility between groups is perpetuated by unfamiliarity and separation and engagement with those groups can increase understanding of the other and challenge negative stereotypes (USAID 2013, p. 20).*

If confidence-building measures, peacekeeping and verification missions, monitoring mechanisms, and problem-solving dialogues are used, then conflict groups or actors will not resort to force because these measures allay fears that the “other” group or actor is not committed to peace and will exploit it in the future (USAID 2013, p. 22).

### Conflict Phase

- All phases, especially post-conflict

### Assumptions/Risk

- It is possible to manage the risks of violence between conflict groups while cohesion is being built.
- It is important that the different groups are treated equitably and engaged in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the intervention in ways that are conflict sensitive.
- Peacebuilding impacts may be limited if the underlying causes of conflict are not resolved.

### Functionalism

*If conflict groups cooperate on the technical and non-political aspects of environmental or climate change interventions, then conflicts between those groups will decrease or be peacefully managed because they will have developed communities and institutions across political, cultural, and other boundaries that make the use of force in resolving conflicts impractical or even unimaginable.*

### Conflict Phase

- All phases, especially after conflict

### Assumptions/Risk

- Peacebuilding impacts may be limited if the underlying causes of conflict are not resolved.
- Costs of defection can be different between conflicting parties, i.e. the stakes for avoiding conflict may be asymmetrical.



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| <p><b>Transforming power relations</b></p> <p>Laws governing procedural and substantive resource rights</p> <p>Natural resource committees or user groups</p> <p>Environmental, women, and youth advocacy organizations</p> | <p><i>If communities' social capital, capacities for collective action, platforms for effective and transparent participation, and stake or ownership in natural resource management are increased, then more inclusive institutions and processes can reduce the possibilities for conflict because communities have more power and are increasingly able to influence and participate in institutions and processes governing those resources.</i></p> <p><i>If new and inclusive institutional arrangements are used in managing natural resources and their access, use, benefits, and stewardship, then there will be fewer conflicts over those resources and between user groups because power relationships have changed as power and authority are redistributed, there is expanded participation in natural resource management, and groups have enhanced capabilities to engage in deliberation and decision making (USAID 2022, p. 25).</i></p> | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All phases</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● These approaches assume that if groups are perceived as functioning with effectiveness, transparency, and accountability, then social trust and larger networks will develop and result in changes to the state-society relationship (USAID 2022, p. 29).</li> <li>● Pre-existing social capital can help develop institutional arrangements, improve shared access to information, services, and resources, and build trust, but they must be inclusive and not replicate existing unequal societal structures (USAID 2022).</li> <li>● A lack of capacity or inadequate processes is a significant obstacle in negotiation, peacebuilding, and consensus-building (USAID 2013, p. 23).</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Increasing public participation in natural resource decision-making</b></p> <p>Community-based natural resource management</p> <p>Notice-and-comment rulemaking</p>   | <p><i>If natural resource management institutions are inclusive, then people will feel able to address grievances nonviolently, thereby promoting peace because people in society can express their will and exert control over those making decisions in governing institutions and because under such a structure, people will be less likely to either revolt against the government or address their grievances violently, thereby creating a more peaceful nation (USAID 2013, p. 24).</i></p>   | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All phases</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Possible platforms for cooperation and trust: participatory, inclusive processes for decision-making; opportunities to voice concerns; representation in mechanisms, roles, and voting; new mechanisms for monitoring and surveillance; and new mechanisms to interact with the government (USAID 2022, p. 69).</li> </ul>  |

## Good Governance & Inclusive Political Processes

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| <p><b>Enhancing Good Governance</b></p> <p>Improving benefit sharing</p> <p>Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative</p>   | <p><i>If good governance processes for the environment and natural resources are put into place, then conflicts will be better prevented and resolved because responsive, responsible, transparent, accountable, and inclusive governance fosters trust in government institutions that are better equipped to handle disputes and grievances reliably and peacefully.</i></p>                     | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All phases</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The UN definition of good governance includes responsiveness, transparency, accountability, participation, and responsibility (UNEP 2019).</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Improving resource ownership, access, and management</b></p> <p>Recognizing customary resource tenure and working with communities to manage land</p> <p>Improving and updating land cadastres</p> <p>Mediating disputes between ex-combatants and IDPs post-conflict</p> | <p><i>If there is equitable redistribution of and access to land, forests, minerals, and other natural resources and their revenues, then the risk of new and renewed conflict is minimized because resource-based grievances would be addressed and the opportunity costs of future conflict would be increased.</i></p>  | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All phases</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governance vacuums resulting from conflict can lead to the neglect of key resource management functions, the expansion of illegal and criminal exploitations, and the loss of tenure security.</li> <li>This approach assumes equitable governance that recognizes local knowledge and institutions—e.g., Indigenous rights—and facilitates their articulation within formal institutional structures.</li> <li>This approach represents a peace dividend.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>(Re)building environmental governance at all levels</b> (statutory and customary)</p>   | <p><i>If environmental governance is rebuilt to be more equitable, inclusive, and effective, then both peace and environmental rule of law can be supported because revising laws and rebuilding governance can help address the environmental causes of conflict (e.g., inequitable benefit sharing or access to resources), as well as to strengthen governance for a sustainable peace.</i></p> | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All phases</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often the most difficult aspect is the implementation and enforcement of new provisions.</li> </ul>   |





**Customary and traditional natural resource governance**

*If institutions are based on customary governance structures that are familiar to and reflect the values of the people they govern, then the likelihood that people will use violence to change or reject institutions is reduced because people will be more likely to feel allegiance, ownership, and legitimacy for those institutions (USAID 2013, p. 24).*

*If environmental governance is aligned with the traditions and practices of Indigenous and resource-dependent local communities, then it is more likely for a successful framework to be developed that peacefully resolves disputes and protects Indigenous rights while responding to national governance systems and international environmental goals, because local communities can be best suited to manage and steward natural resources (USAID 2022, p. 33).*

Conflict Phase

- Conflict prevention and post-conflict

Assumptions/Risk

- This approach assumes institutions will retain the benefits of customary institutions when integrated with formal institutional arrangements.
- It is important to consider how long-standing or traditional institutions and norms address women and other groups who are historically marginalized.

**Implementing community-based natural resource and climate governance**

*If communities are brought together around climate scenario planning and natural resource management decisions, then there is stronger support of and better compliance with regulations and norms in the face of challenges because collaborative planning increases local ownership and buy-in of management strategies and practices (USAID 2022, p. 5).*

Conflict Phase

- All phases

Assumptions/Risk

- Communities often need capacity development support to craft, implement, and enforce policies.
- Communities must be brought together under the right conditions; collaboration alone is not sufficient. Conflict sensitivity is very important.

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| <b>Transitional justice</b>                    | <p><i>If transitional justice institutions address environmental grievances, then the likelihood of violence re-emerging in the future will be reduced because ad-hoc institutions provide a bridging function, which is both backward and forward looking, to help society deal with historic and unresolved grievances so that they will not impede progress toward peace (USAID 2013, p. 25).</i></p>   | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Post-conflict</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Historically, transitional justice mechanisms have been reluctant to address environmental dimensions (Harwell 2016).</li> </ul> |
| <b>Joint management of interacting systems</b> | <p><i>If interacting systems at the subnational, national, or regional level are jointly managed, then countries will be better prepared to withstand a variety of social and economic pressures while avoiding the destabilization of their governing institutions and social structures because collaborative mechanisms support a cohesive approach to effectively target risks and needs.</i></p>  | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pre- and post-conflict</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Flexibility and adaptability are key.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Diffusion of transnational norms</b>        | <p><i>If global norms for social and environmental safeguards and inclusive policies are supported and advanced, then the risks of bad governance will be addressed (reducing conflict) and opportunities to promote peace will be strengthened because greater community empowerment, better-defined resource rights, and local input on rules and regulations often result in better conflict and environment outcomes by addressing underlying causes of conflict and grievances.</i></p> | <p><u>Conflict Phase</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All phases</li> </ul> <p><u>Assumptions/Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This approach requires attunement with local political contexts.</li> </ul>   |





## Appendix 2-1 References

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