Armed Conflict and the Environment

Co-Chairs: Carl Bruch, Michael Bothe

Year in Review 2015

In 2015, the work of the Specialist Group on Armed Conflict and the Environment (SGACE) focused on two themes: (1) legal protection of the environment in times of armed conflict (led by SG Co-Chair Michael Bothe), and (2) the role of natural resources in post-conflict peacebuilding (led by SG Co-Chair Carl Bruch).

1) Legal protection of the environment in times of armed conflict

As far as the part of the SG work relating to the protection during armed conflicts is concerning, the essential activity was to establish contact and cooperation with the UN International Law Commission (ILC) which is dealing with the topic of “protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts”. In 2014 and 2015 the ILC Special Rapporteur, Marie Jacobsson published two reports, the first concerning protection of the environment before armed conflict breaks out and the second dealing with protection during armed conflict. The SG commented on both of these reports, and the results of these reports were also the subjects of a seminar co-sponsored by the SG in New York in October 2015. As a result of these reports, the ILC Drafting Committee provisionally adopted a set of principles, although in relation to some of those there seems to be room for improvement.

The SGACE also co-sponsored a Seminar on the Protection of the Environment in relation to Armed Conflict. Held at the UN Headquarters, this event was co-sponsored with the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Norway, Rutgers University, and the Environmental Law Institute.

2) The role of natural resources in post-conflict peacebuilding

With relation to management of natural resources and the environment after conflict, the most substantial achievement was the completion of a book on Governance, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding (edited by Carl Bruch, Carroll Muffett, and Sandra S. Nichols). This is the sixth and final book in a series of six edited volumes published by Routledge/Earthscan. It is more than 1,000 pages in length and comprises more than 40 chapters, including chapters by Cymie Payne and Carl Bruch. The manuscript was submitted to the publisher in December, and publication is anticipated in the first half of 2016.

In 2015, the SG started to reach out to UNEP, universities, and other organizations interested in the broad set of relationships between the environment, conflict, and peace. There appears to be interest and momentum in developing a new conceptual and operational framework around what we are referring to as environmental peacebuilding. Discussions have started about the conceptual framework (how would this overarching framework relate to existing frameworks more narrowly addressing, say, the resource curse?) and about how to develop dedicated institutional mechanisms

Other SG events and outreach in 2015 included:
- Presentation on "Emergence of Environmental Peacebuilding“ (International Studies Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans; February 2015).

**Goals**

- Support the efforts of the International Law Commission in its work on the protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts
- Advance protection of protected areas during armed conflict
- Build the Environmental Peacebuilding Community of Practice
- Expand the library of resources on environmental peacebuilding
- Develop curricula and training materials on environmental peacebuilding

**Resources**

- [Environmental Peacebuilding Knowledge Platform](#)
- “Addressing the Role of Natural Resources in Conflict and Peacebuilding”
- “Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory and Analysis of International Law”
- “International law protecting the environment during armed conflict: gaps and opportunities”