

FACT SHEET

FORESTS FOR PEACE: Conflict Prevention and Recovery

Investments in good governance of natural resources can help people avoid and recover from civil conflict. Community institutions developed to manage forests have helped maintain order during conflict, and have been critical to restoring governance systems in other sectors. Elsewhere, the process of forest restoration literally helps heal the land damaged by conflict.

Some examples from the field include:

- After a ten year civil war in **Nepal**, it was discovered that community forestry user groups (CFUGs), in which USAID invested heavily over the years, provided governance stability, even in Maoist controlled areas. During the Maoist insurgency, CFUGs were able provide a structure for local governance and decision-making when the central government was absent. Now, as the country moves into a more peaceful future, CFUGs provide a strong foundation for development.
- As **Liberia** emerges from decades of war and unrest, USAID is helping ensure that development rests on a foundation of sound management of forests and biodiversity, including strengthening government institutions such as the Forest Development Authority and helping local communities to manage forests.
- Along the **Ecuador-Colombia border**, agreements brokered with USAID support reunited the Awa and Cofan indigenous groups and strengthened their joint natural resources management authority. Protection of land rights and better governance are mitigating conflicts and maintaining cultural and territorial integrity despite threats from illegal logging, coca cultivation and drug trafficking.
- In southern **Lebanon**, USAID in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service is training local organizations how to rehabilitate selected cedar reserves and other forested areas damaged by cluster munitions and related remnants of conflict.
- In **Afghanistan**, USAID support has improved the management of 350,000 hectares of natural pistachio woodlands—through community protection from encroachers, animals, and illegal cutting and early harvesting of nuts, resulting in increased in productivity and income.
- In **Afghanistan**, USAID is working in the eastern provinces to analyze illegal logging and timber smuggling that is providing major funds to insurgents in order to find ways to slow or reverse this pernicious problem.