



Press Release: Natural Resources a Blind Spot in Peace Agreements

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Of the 800 peace agreements signed around the globe since 1945, fewer than 15 percent address natural resources -- even though those resources (oil, gas, timber, diamonds) increasingly are recognized as a major factor in armed conflicts, according to [a new study by the non-profit organization Forest Trends](#).

The failure to reform management of these resources could help explain why half of all peace agreements collapse within five years, according to the Forest Trends study released today and [previewed in Foreign Policy](#). The few peace agreements that do address the management of forests, minerals and other resources have been largely ineffective, the report found. This is in large part because they do not also address the underlying grievances of local populations who are missing out on the profits the trade from these commodities. In addition, the revenues from their sales tend to fund the purchase of arms which, in turn, often leads to the escalation or resumption of armed conflicts.

“This blind spot has tragic consequences,” said Arthur G. Blundell, an expert on conflict and natural resource management who co-authored the report for Forest Trends, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit that monitors global forest issues. “All too often natural resources become the ‘booty’ used to entice parties to the negotiating table and to hopefully jump-start war-torn economies. But without the necessary reforms to properly regulate these natural resources, the simmering grievances and the readily available revenues return as the engine financing the continuing conflict.”

“The impact of climate change is going to create even greater political struggles and wars over natural resources in the future,” said Forest Trends President Michael Jenkins. “It is critical that the proper management of those resources be part of every peace agreement.”

###

*To interview Dr. Blundell about the new Forest Trends report, please contact:
Anne Thiel, 202 446 1982, athiel@forest-trends.org*

Forest Trends is a non-profit organization that aims to expand the value of forests to society, promote sustainable forest management and conservation by creating and capturing market values for ecosystems, and enhancing the livelihoods of local communities who depend on forests.

For more information visit: www.forest-trends.org