

SIDE-EVENT

Environmental Security in War and Armed Conflict

November 6, 2024, 13:15 – 14:30, CR6, UNHQ

Co-sponsors

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine
Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the UN
Permanent Mission of Finland to the UN
Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the UN
Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN
World Information Transfer
Ukrainian Peace Council
PAX

Background

Yearly on November 6, the world observes the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict. This day serves as a reminder of the devastating impact that war and conflict can have on our environment.

The UNGA resolution 56/4 that established this Day in 2001, stresses that damage to the environment in times of armed conflict impairs ecosystems and natural resources long beyond the period of conflict, and often extends beyond the limits of national territories and the present generation.

The UNEA resolution 2/15 recognized the role of healthy ecosystems and sustainably managed resources in reducing the risk of armed conflict. More recently, in March 2024, UNEA6 adopted a resolution 6/12 on Environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflict:

- highlighted that environmental degradation in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict can have an impact on human health, well-being and livelihoods
- acknowledged that the important role that effective, inclusive and sustainable environmental assistance can play in conflict recovery and sustainable development in areas affected by armed conflict.

In Action 10 of the UN Pact for the Future, the states expressed deep concern about rapid environmental degradation and committed to accelerating efforts to restore, protect, conserve and sustainably use the environment.

Among other international organizations, IAEA plays an important role in environmental protection, including in promoting radiation safety, environmental remediation, monitoring emissions, treating nuclear waste.

War against Ukraine caused large-scale environmental damage resulted in unprecedented pollution, disruption of ecosystems and physical destruction of biological species both on the territory of Ukraine and on the scale of the entire region and the world. Destruction of the environment is prohibited in the international law.

Ukraine's Peace Formula attaches great importance to the issue of environmental security as one of the elements of the peace framework. In its point 8 entitled "Ecological safety", key directions are highlighted on ensuring environmental security and countering the environmental consequences of the war.

The side-event also serve as a follow-up discussion to the thematic conference on Environmental Safety, hosted by Finland, co-organized by Germany, Bulgaria and Ukraine in Helsinki on 19 October 2024.

Objectives

- Assess and raise awareness of the environmental damage and its immediate consequences to human health inflicted on Ukraine by the Russian war of aggression. Emphasize its regional and global impact including on climate change and biodiversity conservation.
- Highlight the necessity of appropriate legal assessment of caused environmental damage for the sake of bringing perpetrators to accountability.
- Provide updates on measures undertaken by the Government of Ukraine with the support of international partners to address the environmental recovery and renewal, including land remediation and demining, revival of destroyed forests and nature reserves, creation of new national parks and nature protection zones, rivers, lakes and sea waters purification. Highlight important role of green economy transition.
- Promote global cooperation and international action with the aim of protection of environment in war and armed conflict.

Run-of-show

- 13.15 - 13.25 Brief introduction by the moderator, Mr. Pekka Haavisto, MP and former Foreign Minister of Finland.
- Opening remarks by H.E. Mr. Sergiy Kyslytsya, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the UN
- Opening remarks by H.E. Ms. Elina Kalkku, Permanent Representative of Finland to the UN
- Demonstration of video materials
- 13.25 - 14.10 Panel discussion moderated by Mr. Pekka Haavisto:
1. Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine (VTC)
 2. Minister of Climate and the Environment of Finland (VTC)
 3. Representative of UNEP (TBC)
 4. Representative of IAEA (TBC)
 5. Dr. Christine K. Durbak, Chair and Founder of World Information Transfer
 6. Mr. Mykhailo Zgurovsky, Head of the Ukrainian Peace Council, also on behalf of the Council of Environmental Security of Ukraine (VTC)
 7. Ms. Brittany Roser, UN Advocacy Advisor, PAX
- 14.10 - 14.27 Interventions by the UN Member States
- 14.27 - 14.30 Closing remarks