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Outline

- Context for Environment, Conflict & Cooperation
- UNEP Environment, Conflict Prevention Initiative
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Context for Environment, Conflict & Cooperation

- GHA countries and Africa in general has long history of cooperation for diverse purposes
 - River basin management – Zambezi, Niger, Volta, Nile
 - Economic – RECs (SADC, ECOWAS, EAC, COMESA)
 - Conflict Prevention, Management and resolution – AU
 - Human Rights – ACHPR & Optional Protocol on Women's Rights
 - MEAs and Regional Env'tl agreements
 - Management of transboundary resources – forests, wildlife
 - Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN)
- RECs have taken on environment & peace agenda
 - EAC, IGAD, COMESA



Context for Environment, Conflict & Cooperation (2)

- Need to link environment, conflict and cooperation by
 - Developing environment-focussed tools for conflict prevention & management
 - Exploring ways of using environmental resources to build peace
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Context for Environment, Conflict & Cooperation (3)

- Encourage equitable access to & sharing of benefits to avoid competition for natural resource control
 - Identify and support opportunities for environmental management to build peace
- 3. Political commitment to democracy & good governance critical for sustainable environmental management
- National levels
 - Regionally focusing on strategic transboundary resources such as lakes, river basins, mountains, protected areas etc



UNEP Environment, Conflict Prevention Initiative

- UNEP Initiative to mainstream environment into the security discourse
- As part of DEWA's Initiative on Environment and Conflict Prevention (E&CPI)
 - 3 regional case study assessments for:
 - Latin America and the Caribbean; Asia and the Pacific; & Africa
- To increase understanding of ways in which the environment can act as an important catalyst for **cooperation, trust building and conflict prevention**



African Assessment

- Virunga Conservation Area as a case study
 - The Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); The Mgahinga Gorilla National Park in Uganda; & The Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda
 - Broader ecosystem has Bwindi Impenetrable Forest NP
- Ecological importance as habitat of the Mountain Gorilla
- Under severe pressure from people living in and around the shared ecosystems concerned
 - Population density; human encroachment; poaching; deforestation; & ongoing civil unrest
 - Poaching – bushmeat trade
 - Refugee camps located in the region

WORLDWIDE
WILDLIFE
FUND
ORGANIZATION



Cooperation in the Virungas

- Context for cooperation in the UN Conference on the Great Lakes; AU; NBI; AMCEN
- Shared history of violence & conflict
- Informal transboundary cooperation in management of



Cooperation in the Virungas

- No normative legal framework but affirmation of efforts to **coordinate & collaboratively** manage these protected areas as one ecosystem under a **Transboundary Strategic Plan**



Conclusion

- African assessment is ongoing
 - Mapping different actors and their roles in ECC
 - States; local communities; international organisations; private sector; illegal actors
 - Exploring the role of gender in ECC
 - Identifying data needs for monitoring & tracking ECC
- Need to explore more localised and informal cooperative arrangements
 - Common values that make ECC possible among stakeholders