Re: Including natural resource governance in the UN Peacebuilding Commission’s mandate

Dear Excellency,

Please find below some specific suggestions on the role of natural resources in funding conflict for consideration in the Peacebuilding Commission’s mandate. Global Witness believes the inclusion of natural resource governance in the resolution currently being negotiated is key to address resource-driven conflict around the world more effectively and would significantly enhance many UN peace and security initiatives.

An EU Presidency statement recently stressed that an effective Peacebuilding Commission should have the ability to assess the situation on the ground in the country concerned to identify and then enable the key conditions needed for a lasting peace (EU Presidency Statement, 21/10/2005).

We agree as part of this strategy, where predatory and illicit resource exploitation has driven conflict, so the Peacebuilding Commission should be empowered to address these issues. We note that neither of these problems has been adequately addressed in post-conflict environments such as Democratic Republic of Congo, where exploitation of resources has been intimately connected with recent conflicts.
In bold (below) is the language that we propose could be inserted into the draft resolution to come out of the Revised Options Paper of October 28th:

(...)

Expressing concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and are increasingly targeted by combatants as armed elements, and recognising the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation.

**INSERT**

Reaffirming the Security Council’s (S/RES/1625(2005)) determination to take action against illegal exploitation and trafficking of natural resources and high-value commodities in areas where it contributes to the outbreak, escalation or continuation of armed conflict,

Further recognizing the devastating role of [conflict resources, understood to be] the systematic exploitation and trade of natural resources in a context of violent conflict in contributing to, benefiting from or resulting in the commission of serious violations of human rights, international humanitarian law, or violations amounting to crimes under international law,

Highlighting that best practice initiatives such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and the Kimberley Process help improve natural resource revenue governance thus preventing conflict and contributing to sustainable post-conflict recovery.

(...)

We thank you for your kind attention and would be happy to discuss this with you at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Alex Yearsley
Senior Manager