

ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEMAKING IN LIPTAKO GOURMA

PRESS RELEASE

Bamako / Luxembourg / Geneva / Brussels, 15th March 2022

NEW INITIATIVE PROMOTES ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEMAKING IN LIPTAKO GOURMA REGION

- Luxembourg, the European Institute of Peace (EIP) and TrustWorks Global are partnering to promote innovative approaches to tackle the underlying root causes of ongoing conflicts in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso.
- For the past seven years this region has been caught in the grips of an intensifying spiral of violence, which has cost thousands of lives.
- Most efforts to address the conflict have revolved around military-dominated and particularly counter-terrorism operations, but conflict prevention and resolution focused on better management of land and natural resources may help to create the conditions for sustainable peace.

On Tuesday 15th March 2022, the European Institute of Peace, TrustWorks Global and the Directorate of Defence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg are launching an 18-month project to promote the inclusion of land and natural resource issues in conflict prevention and resolution in the border region (called Liptako Gourma) of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger in West Africa.

Since 2015, violence previously contained in north Mali has spread southwards into Burkina Faso and eastwards into Niger. As violence has escalated and activities of armed groups proliferated, the international community's response has become dominated by counter-terrorism approaches.

Despite vast investments by the international community across the main facets of the 'triple nexus' – peace, development, and humanitarian interventions – there is little evidence to suggest that these efforts have contributed to a reduction in violence. On the contrary, as the number of initiatives continue to proliferate and the amount of financial investment continues to rise, the situation has deteriorated further.

EIP and TrustWorks, with financial support from the Directorate of Defence of Luxembourg's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are launching an 18-month, root-cause based approach to re-orienting international efforts in the Liptako Gourma through the lens of environmental peacemaking.

Environmental peacemaking seeks to pursue more effective prevention and resolution of conflict by addressing core climate, environmental and natural resource drivers of conflict. This includes bringing divided communities together and support them to find new ways for sharing and governing the natural resources (such as land, water and minerals) of their territory in a sustainable manner and jointly address common environmental pressures and climate-related challenges, such as desertification and the lack of water.

The protection, equitable sharing and sustainable management of land and natural resources are the essential and long-term conditions for sustained peace and economic growth in the region, and these issues will continue to intensify as a result of climate change. More needs to be done to engage new and powerful actors on the ground in ways that support local solutions, contribute to identifying peace dividends and designing investments that can sustain agreements.

- **François Bausch**, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence of Luxembourg: “We are convinced that by finding a way to integrate land and natural resources governance into existing peace making approaches, we will contribute to significantly increase the chances of peace in the Sahel region. I hope that the lessons learnt through this project will also contribute to a more comprehensive approach in our foreign, security and defence policy”.
- **Paul Seils**, Director of Peace Practice and Innovation of the European Institute of Peace (EIP): “This initiative develops a fresh approach to conflict prevention and resolution in the Liptako-Gourma region. It integrates an understanding of deep-rooted natural resource issues and the increasing crisis created by climate change. By doing so, we hope it will inspire new ways of operating – in the region and beyond – that are based on solving and preventing conflicts by addressing the needs of people, and the root causes of conflict and insecurity. We are excited to set out on this path with Luxembourg and TrustWorks Global and to engage with a wide range of actors to make it a reality”.
- **Josie Lianna Kaye**, Founder and Director of TrustWorks Global: “We are delighted to be partnering with Luxembourg and EIP on this important new initiative. We look forward to working with diverse local, national, regional, and international partners on the ground to advance environmental peacemaking, and our shared efforts to bolster a sustainable peace in the Liptako Gourma region”.

----- ENDS -----

Press enquiries: Paul Nolan, Public Affairs and Communications Officer: paul.nolan@eip.org (+32 (0) 4 75 94 69 81

NOTE TO EDITORS

- The European Institute of Peace designs and delivers sustainable peace processes and agreements. It provides practical experience, technical expertise and policy advice on conflict resolution and aims to be a centre of excellence for European peacemaking.
- TrustWorks engages public and private actors across sectors to prevent conflict, promote peace and foster sustainability.
- The Directorate of Defence of the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs coordinates and implements Luxembourg’s security and defence policy.