



Programme

Dresden International Forum 2025 From Conflicts to Cooperation: The Resource Nexus as a Pathway to Peace

Frauenkirche Dresden, Germany

8 April 2025, 19:00 hrs

Language:

English

BACKGROUND

Reliable access to environmental resources is fundamental for our lives and one of the driving forces behind economic development and prosperity. Yet these valuable assets also hold immense potential for conflict. History has shown that the fight for resources has often resulted in violence and bloodshed.

The term „blood diamonds“ exemplifies how the trade of precious raw materials has financed civil wars and terrorism. Conflicts over water are no less alarming: in water-scarce regions such as Northeast Africa, tensions over rivers and dams threaten peace, currently illustrated by conflicts around the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project. Even in densely populated areas of Asia, like the Indian subcontinent, hydrological projects in one country can have drastic repercussions for neighbouring states.

Access to energy infrastructure and fuels has been a contributing factor to conflicts such as the Gulf War between Iraq and Kuwait. More recently, the Russian war against Ukraine has triggered a global energy crisis, underscoring the critical importance of securing access to energy resources. Yet, conflicts related to natural resources extend beyond energy. Disputes over biota, driven by large-scale deforestation, and soil, related to erosion or salinization, further illustrate the complexity of these issues.

The globally rising demand for rare earth elements – essential for green technologies and digital infrastructure – leads to an increased scarcity of crucial resources. This exacerbates global dependencies and amplifies the global risk of conflicts even further. The consequences of such conflicts are far-reaching: migration, political instability, human rights violations and long-term economic setbacks.

However, resource-related conflicts are not an inevitable fate. Integrated resource management and nexus approaches, fair trade, or sustainable supply chains can help mitigate conflict potential. At the same time, we must question the responsibility of states, industries, and individual’s consumption and consider how the global community can work toward a solution-oriented future. Why and how do resources repeatedly lead to tensions and wars? And most importantly: how can we defuse these conflicts or even prevent them through integrated and sustainable management of environmental resources?

CONTEXT: DRESDEN NEXUS CONFERENCE – DNC 2025 AND THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The Dresden International Forum forms a part of the Dresden Nexus Conference „The Future of Resources - Resources for the Future“. From 8-10 April 2025, the global Resource Nexus community will come together to discuss the future of integrated approaches to environmental resources management in research, education, capacity building and practice. DNC 2025 marks the 10th anniversary of the Dresden Nexus Conference, which first took place in 2015 with a focus on Nexus approaches to Global Change and the SDGs.

DNC 2025 will coincide with other major events and anniversaries. DNC 2025 – the Future Nexus aligns with the United Nation’s mission to develop a post-2030 agenda for sustainable development, which was initiated by the Summit of the Future (2024) and the Pact for the Future. DNC will be one milestone event in the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of United Nations University, with UNU Rector and UN Under-Secretary-General Prof. Tshilidzi Marwala among our guests of honor.