

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ
Environmental Safety

October 19, 2024
Helsinki, Finland

Grounded in the results of the high-level Summit on Peace in Ukraine held on 15 and 16 June 2024 in Switzerland;

Building on the common path delineated below at the Summit in Helsinki, Finland, on 19 October 2024 dedicated to the eighth point of Ukraine's Peace Formula on the immediate protection of the environment;

In the face of widespread devastation to the environment and climate caused by the ongoing war of aggression perpetrated against Ukraine by the Russian Federation;

United by a common commitment to achieving a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine;

Recognizing the threat that war and military actions can pose to the environment, carbon sinks and climate;

Reaffirming our joint commitment to call for the urgent halt to the Russian Federation's military actions that are causing irreversible harm to natural resources, ecosystems and human health;

Recalling UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/ES-11/2 "Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine";

Noting that armed conflicts can present formidable obstacles to achieving climate ambitions;

Acknowledging that, similarly, environmental degradation and climate change, in turn, are drivers and amplifiers of armed conflicts;

Noting the Environmental Compact Ukraine finalized on 9 February 2024 and developed by the international High-Level Working Group on Environmental Consequences of the War;

Noting the principles of protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts adopted by the International Law Commission at its seventy-third session in 2022;

Having regard to our discussions, we have reached a consensus to bolster collaboration across the following vital domains:

1. Impact assessment of damage and destruction to the natural environment in Ukraine caused by the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine

We acknowledge the importance of establishing a universal platform/tool for the methodological assessment of the environmental and climate impact of the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine.

Thus, Ukraine should receive support in the assessment of environmental impact and in restoring its ecosystem, taking into account its carbon storage capacities. In this regard, we support the implementation of UN Environment Assembly resolution 6/12 on "Environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflict" and call upon states to make contributions in support of the UN Environment Programme's ongoing work in Ukraine.

In addressing the extensive damage and destruction caused by the Russian Federation's aggression, including damage to the environment and natural resources, we are committed to supporting the implementation of the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/ES-11/5 "Furtherance of remedy and reparation for aggression against Ukraine" and the operation of the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

We find it relevant to strengthen cooperation with the Register of Damage, established by Resolution CM/Res (2023)3 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe dated 12 May 2023 "On the Establishment of an Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine," to work towards ensuring the receiving, processing and recording of evidence and claims information on all damages caused to the environment and climate as a result of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

We note the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Resolution "Environmental impact of armed conflicts," sub-item 10.1.6. of item 10.1: *"build and consolidate a legal framework for the enhanced protection of the environment in armed conflicts at national, European and international levels by supporting the establishment of standard methodologies for the collection of evidence of environmental harm."*

2. Ensuring Accountability for War Time Environmental Damage Caused by Russian aggression against Ukraine

War crimes that cause widespread, severe and long-lasting damage to the natural environment not only harm nature but also directly affect people's health, cause air, water, and soil pollution, destroy unique ecosystems, protected zones and natural resources.

With the aim to enhance protection of the environment in armed conflicts at national, European and international level we are committed to supporting the establishing of standard methodologies for the collection of evidence of environmental harm.

Moreover, we are committed to supporting the Ukrainian investigative and prosecutorial efforts, and call for supporting the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC in its efforts to address war crimes that cause widespread, severe and long-term damage to the natural environment in Ukraine, while fully acknowledging the independence of national and international prosecuting authorities.

These environmental impacts may cross borders and could influence regional and global security.

Therefore, we encourage countries in the position to do so to pay attention to the category of war crimes that cause widespread, severe and long-term damage to the natural environment in Ukraine.

3. Restoration of the Environment Damaged by Military Actions

Restoring natural ecosystems is critically important in light of the serious environmental damage caused by the war against Ukraine. It is essential to take a comprehensive approach that involves fostering global cooperation on employing technologies to revive soils, plants, animals, and water resources.

The challenges stemming from the conflict necessitate immediate efforts to ensure environmental health, adopt sustainable development practices, safeguard biodiversity and restore or enhance carbon storage capacities.

The invasion by Russia has resulted in widespread pollution with mines and explosive ordnance, necessitating initial assessments, non-technical and technical surveys on the presence and nature of contamination. Humanitarian demining efforts may be needed before potential clearance and restoration initiatives can commence. It is imperative for the international community to assist Ukraine in assessing, surveying and, where feasible, clearing the affected lands of mines. Assessments and non-technical and technical surveys in particular are the first steps towards enabling safe return of refugees and other displaced persons, recovering impacted areas.

We call for activating international cooperation to implement technologies for restoring soils, flora, fauna, and water resources. The use of cutting-edge environmental technologies will help reduce the damage from pollution and improve the state of the environment.

We acknowledge the importance of establishing a special financial facility. Such a facility would focus on funding, ecosystem restoration, rehabilitation of polluted water

sources, and initiatives to protect biodiversity, including, where relevant, in line with Ukraine's national mine action strategy adopted in June 2024.

Engaging international experts and organizations with expertise in ecosystem restoration is vital in formulating effective strategies.

4. Ensuring Environmental Resilience and Sustainability

Ensuring environmental resilience is a key priority as Ukraine faces numerous environmental challenges, including the aftermath of military actions. In this context, developing effective strategies to respond to environmental risks is essential not only for the restoration of affected areas but also for enhancing resilience to climate change and ecological disasters.

Military actions brought on by the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine often result in significant alterations to landscapes, which can destabilize natural environments. Developing strategies that promote ecological resilience involves measures aimed at restoring and supporting natural ecosystems resilient to climate change.

These issues are particularly important for the most vulnerable, who often experience heightened vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

In such circumstances, it is important to implement policies that integrate mechanisms of ecosystem restoration, protection and sustainable use into security policies.

We call on the international community to engage in collective efforts to ensure environmental sustainability and recovery in Ukraine, and enhance efforts on supporting Ukraine in the implementation of its environmental restoration and recovery, in line with the objective of reaching climate neutrality by 2050, with the principles of resilience to climate change and "do no significant harm." The "Ukraine Green Recovery Platform," launched at the "Ukraine Recovery Conference 2024" in Berlin, provides a good basis for effective and efficient support of Ukraine in this regard.

Our commitment is not only to achieve peace, but also to emphasize the importance of the environment in this process. We call on the international community to come together to ensure the protection of the environment and the mutual restoration of affected ecosystems in Ukraine.

Adhering to the above objectives in the context of war or acts of aggression is also important to the achievement of sustainable development goals for Ukraine and for the integration of environmental and climate aspects into policies governing efforts to reduce poverty, ensure food security and protect health and minimize negative impact on the climate.