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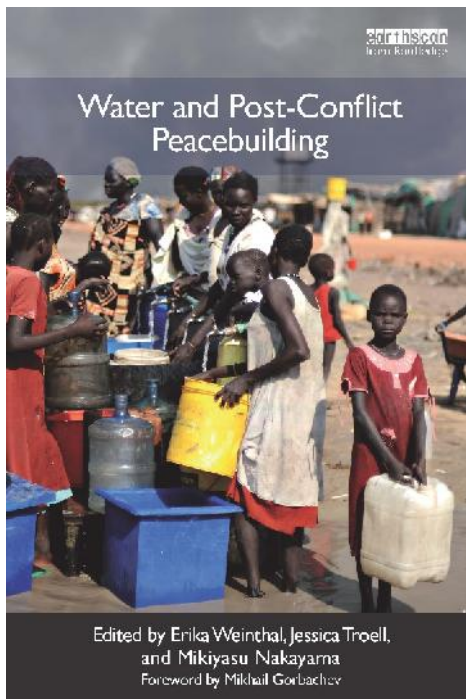
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Foreword

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Foreword

Mikhail Gorbachev

*Former president of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Founding president of Green Cross International*

I am delighted to write the foreword for *Water and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, the title of which aligns with objectives I have worked on for the past twenty years through Green Cross International. Since its founding in 1993, Green Cross and its worldwide network have worked on seemingly divergent goals: security, poverty eradication, and the environment. Yet the ongoing struggles in the Horn of Africa and Sudan, as well as the cases examined in this book, make clear that the links among conflict, water, human rights, and development are many and multifaceted. This book provides clear evidence of the need for more integrated action between the fields of water management and peacebuilding, as well as guidance on how to achieve such collaboration.

WATER AND SANITATION AS A HUMAN RIGHT

Access to safe drinking water and sanitation is a human right. However despite the adoption of this vital principle by the United Nations in 2010, the deficit of fresh water is becoming increasingly severe and widespread. And, unlike other resources, there is no substitute for water.

When I addressed the Sixth World Water Forum in Marseille in March 2012, I stressed that the water problem should not be considered in isolation from other global challenges and from the overall international context. Politics has often exacerbated water crises, and water crises have also had a reciprocal impact on politics that should not be overlooked. It is high time for us to help the 800 million people without access to potable water and the 2.5 billion people lacking access to basic sanitation, and to prioritize these issues at all levels. If this deprivation remains unchecked, the water crises can overstretch many societies' adaptive capacities in the coming decades.

The problems caused by inadequate water supplies and water mismanagement tend to be dramatically accentuated in post-conflict situations. In the aftermath of war, ensuring access to water and sanitation services is vital not only for meeting basic human needs and maintaining public health, but also for restoring economic livelihoods and alleviating poverty over the long term. The provision

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of water and sanitation services requires establishing, or reestablishing, cooperation at the community level, which may have been interrupted by conflict. The need for cooperation extends to the many institutions and stakeholders involved with water, since the absence of a formal mechanism to work together can lead to misuse of resources and missed opportunities to build capacity and social capital at many levels.

Access to water as a human right is not merely a theoretical matter; it also has very real implications for implementation. A rights-based approach to water services means that governments and other actors are obliged to ensure that clean water is widely available. We must clarify this obligation and enable governments to finance and carry out projects and policies that bring water and sanitation to people who need them most. Such a rights-based approach must also translate into national, regional, and local policies that foster access to sufficient water, support sustainable livelihoods in post-conflict situations, and maintain governance mechanisms to promote transparent and accountable water management practices that prevent corruption.

The UN General Assembly's resolution that declared access to water to be a human right also urged states and international organizations to secure that right by providing financing, capacity building, and technology transfer through international assistance and cooperation, especially to developing countries. Efforts should now be targeted at enforcing those rights in national legislation and action plans. This is particularly important for post-conflict countries because a rights-based approach, accompanied by the requisite assistance to realize that right, can provide a platform for redressing historical inequalities and discrimination in access to water as well as a means for fostering reconciliation and accountability.

TRANSBOUNDARY WATER

Water management across borders, especially during and immediately following conflicts between states, has been a key mechanism for promoting ongoing cooperation between riparian neighbors despite their differences. Many times third parties, notably NGOs and international organizations, have played a critical role in facilitating cooperation over shared waters. Indeed, civil society has consistently played a vital role in all post-conflict cooperation over cross-border water management. Green Cross is implementing the ideal of water as a human right through its work on many transboundary water issues around the world—from the Volga and the Indus to the Amazon and the Jordan rivers.

We often think of the environment and sustainable livelihoods in terms of how our grandchildren will be affected. There are about 1 million schools around the world, but less than half have access to clean drinking water and sanitation. Providing water and sanitation services to schools is an important step in engaging children and communities to improve their water security and to work for transformational change. The cases in this book highlight the importance

of community-level projects in post-conflict, cross-border basins such as the Jordan River. Education programs, in particular, provide unique opportunities to enhance environmental and health awareness in children and their communities, and ultimately to build trust and confidence among the broader communities in post-conflict societies.

Green Cross has also been instrumental in promoting the 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (generally referred to as the UN Watercourses Convention), the only global treaty governing the use, management, and protection of international watercourses. The convention aims to establish basic standards and rules for cooperation between states for the sustainable and mutually beneficial management of transboundary waters. While it has not yet entered into force, the convention is widely considered to be an umbrella instrument to reinforce regional agreements and foster cooperation where basin treaties are absent. In post-conflict situations, adherence to the convention's governance principles of equitable use, access to information, technical cooperation, and accountability around shared waters could help facilitate reconciliation and provide a baseline for deepening relations among parties that share a basin.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND WATER

Climate change is affecting all of our lives. I experienced this firsthand in Moscow when, in the summer of 2010, the city was choked for weeks by the heavy smog from wildfires in nearby regions. The city seemed immersed in a different reality. People, plants, and animals all bore the imprint of suffering, frustration, and fear. Until then, many in Russia, including members of the ruling elite, were skeptical about global warming, and held the scientific data in disdain. Since the summer of 2010, the number of skeptics has shrunk. Of course, that Moscow summer was just one weather anomaly among many—mudslides in China, unprecedented drought and flooding in Australia and Pakistan, further deluges in Central Europe, more ferocious and frequent storms and cyclones in the Western Pacific and Gulf of Mexico. The list goes on, and almost all of the effects can be mediated through effective management of water resources.

The rising number of incidents of climate-induced disasters serves to underline the urgency. Each disaster once again raises the question of the costs of *not* taking action on climate change. What if the 2010 Russian heat wave and drought, which caused more than seventy deaths and indirectly affected thousands through the destruction of one-third of the country's wheat crop, or the catastrophic floods in Australia, China, and Pakistan, are just glimpses of future havoc from unchecked global warming? Everyone seems to understand that the climate problem cannot be wished away.

It may be that climate change, through its effects on water resources, will act as an additional stressor to harnessing water's peacebuilding potential. Steps to improve access to safe drinking water and sanitation in post-conflict situations

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will need to build resilience to climate impacts on the water sector. This will be vital for post-conflict countries such as Afghanistan and Sudan as they strive to meet the 2015 Millennium Development Goal targets for water and sanitation, as well as those in the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals.

Despite disappointments among some who advocate urgent action to save humanity, we cannot afford failure or pessimism. There are enough people in civil society who have not succumbed to defeatism and are ready to act to make governments listen. This instinct of global self-preservation must finally force world leaders to consider the role of water in post-conflict peacebuilding if we are to build a sustainable and peaceful future. I am delighted that this book goes a long way toward furthering those goals.