



Programme

Dresden International Forum 2025 **From Conflicts to Cooperation:** **The Resource Nexus as a Pathway to Peace** **and Prosperity in Africa**

Frauenkirche Dresden, Germany

8 April 2025, 19:15 - 20:45 hrs

Language:

English

BACKGROUND

Reliable access to environmental resources is fundamental for our lives. Just south of Europe, Africa is exceptionally rich in resources, holding immense potential for economic development and prosperity. Yet, the continent faces various challenges in harnessing these resources, with resource-related conflicts among the most pressing. The continent's history has shown that competition over minerals, water and land has often resulted in violence and war.

The term „blood diamonds“ exemplifies how the illicit trade of precious raw materials has financed civil wars and terrorism. Similarly, the race for renewable energy sources – critical for Africa's sustainable future – is entangled in geopolitical struggles, as countries vie for access to rare earth minerals needed for solar panels, wind turbines, and batteries. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for instance, Coltan has been at the heart of conflicts, where armed groups, state actors and private companies compete for access. This competition has only intensified with the global rise in demand for rare earth elements, which are essential for green technologies and digital infrastructure.

Water conflicts are no less alarming. Disputes over rivers and dams threaten regional stability, as illustrated by the tensions between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Further south, Lake Chad – a vital resource for millions across Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger – has dramatically shrunk due to climate change and overuse, exacerbating conflicts involving Boko Haram and other militant groups. Thus, water scarcity in the Sahel is not only an environmental but also a security issue. Other examples include conflicts over biota, deforestation, and degrading soil.

However, efforts are underway—both within Africa and internationally—to address resource-related conflicts. Integrated resource management and nexus approaches, fair trade, or sustainable supply chains are among the most promising strategies. At the same time, we must examine the responsibility of states, industries, and individual consumers.

How can the global community contribute to long-term solutions? How can we defuse or prevent conflicts through integrated and sustainable resource management? And how do we ensure that the local communities are the primary beneficiaries of these efforts?

PANEL DISCUSSION

Prof. Tshilidzi Marwala

Rector of the United Nations University and UN Under-Secretary-General

H.R.H. Princess Dr. h.c. Abze Djigma

Initiator and leader of the MAMA-LIGHT Initiative, Co-Chair of the UNFCCC Paris Committee on Capacity-Building

Lars Bergmann

Founder and CEO, VIADUCT Technologies GmbH

Chair

Sonja Hahn-Tomer

Executive and Liaison Officer, United Nations University

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.