

# HARAMATA



BULLETIN OF THE DRYLANDS: PEOPLE, POLICIES, PROGRAMMES

No. 47. November 2004

*What does the future hold for Senegalese farmers?*



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Cover: Agricultural workers in Senegal.  
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# EDITORIAL

You should notice a difference in the way this issue of Haramata looks! We've updated the design and layout, increased the size of the font and generally tried to create a bit more space so that it doesn't look overly crammed with information – one of the major critiques to come out of Haramata's recent evaluation.

But looks are not the only thing that has changed. We've restructured the bulletin to make it simpler to follow. There are now six sections in addition to the **Editorial**. A short **News** section highlighting key events. Three central sections, **People**, **Policies** and **Programmes**, which constitute the heart of the bulletin where a broad range of subjects of direct relevance to dryland areas are covered in more depth. The **Resources** section, where you'll find book reviews and information on a range of other materials or events and the **Back Page** introducing each of the accompanying Issue Papers. Tell us what you think about it!

The "new look" Haramata is setting itself a challenge – to get you, the readers, more involved in the production of the bulletin. You can contribute short articles describing the work you are doing, send us interesting photos or striking cartoons to illustrate an issue close to your heart, or even suggest ideas of topics we should be covering or further improvements to be made to the publication. So long as your contribution is relevant to the drylands and makes a positive contribution to on-going debates on policies or development practice, we will publish it. And to ensure that this is the case, we've developed some guidelines to help you (see opposite). But will you take the challenge?

# Get involved in Haramata!

## Guidelines for contributions

Please send us short articles, about 500 words, on topics you think are important to the lives and livelihoods of people living in dryland areas. Tell us about:

- **Policies** or laws on land, natural resources, education, health, tourism, government finances, taxation, etc. What problem is it trying to resolve? How was it designed? Is it being properly implemented? What impact will or is it having?
- A **programme** of work you are involved in or know about that is trying to improve the lives of people in your country. This can be the results of a research project or the impacts of development or training activities. Tell us why it is important, what has worked and what hasn't.
- **Resources** you have used to good effect such as videos, CD-roms, books, leaflets, posters, policy briefs, training courses, etc. Tell us what inspired you and why, and how other readers can access them.

You can also send us interesting **photos** or **cartoons** if you think they capture an important message that would interest other readers. The information should be relevant to the drylands of Africa, but it doesn't always have to come from there. Ideas and information from other countries such as India, Mongolia, Bolivia or even Scotland may also be useful if they deal with an issue facing people living in drylands – e.g. management of common property, eviction of pastoralists, tools for participatory policy making, etc.

Haramata is published twice a year in October and April. Send your contributions to **Haramata, IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD, UK** or [drylands@iied.org](mailto:drylands@iied.org).

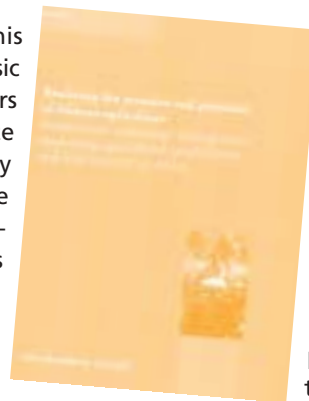


## No 'green revolution' for Africa!

Using science and technology to launch Africa's 'green revolution' is not the simple, quick fix solution to addressing the continent's food security problems! This is the main conclusion of a study implemented by the InterAcademy Council at the request of United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan: **Realising the promise and potential of African agriculture.**

The sheer diversity of crop and livestock production systems, dominated by small family farming units, each tailored to local ecological conditions as well as an ever-changing market context, make any search for a simple technical fix unrealistic and misguided. African agriculture, according to the report, is more likely to experience numerous evolutions depending on the nature of the farming system rather than one green revolution as in Asia.

Recognition of this diversity, and its intrinsic value in helping farmers respond to risk and seize opportunities as they arise, must therefore be at the centre of any technological improvements to agricultural productivity. And the report, while identifying a number of technologies that could lift animal and crop production, does concede that for the more diversified farming systems in Africa more research is needed before recommending blueprint measures to improve their productivity. The report further stresses that one should not make the mistake of thinking that small-scale mixed farming systems are just subsistence based. Indeed many mixed smallholders in Africa produce for the market as well for their families and as such if



technologies for increasing productivity are to be taken up, other enabling policies to promote markets and marketing also have to be created.

New technologies, however, will only improve food security in Africa if farmers agree to adopt them, and while it is pleasing to see the importance the report attaches to the need for agricultural research institutions to involve farmers, it fails to analyse why they continue to bypass rural producers. The fact that many farmers and pastoralists are poorly organised is certainly a contributing factor to their inability to engage with and influence the research agenda. But their marginalisation is exacerbated by the absence of appropriate tools and methods allowing them to identify and frame their research requirements according to their priori-

ties, as well as the attitudes of many agricultural researchers and extension agents. Furthermore, the balance of power over the decision-making process and allocation of funds resides with the agricultural research community. Until farmers are able to play a part in the management of research activities or hold agricultural researchers to account, their ability to participate will be limited. Let us hope that the call for a much-needed increase in the levels of investment for agricultural research (1.5% of agricultural GDP by 2015) specifically recommending the design of national agricultural science systems that involve farmers, bears fruit in the coming years.

Many of the report's recommendations recognise that the role of science and technology in increasing agricultural productivity in Africa is contingent on broader political, economic, environmental and institutional issues. Improved market and rural infrastructure, a fairer international trade system free of barriers and subsidies,

investing in communication and information technology at all levels are just a few of the proposals. However, where the report is disappointing is in its failure adequately to recognise that land and resource tenure lie at the heart not only of all agricultural activity but people's livelihoods as well as the broader social and economic development of Africa. In a context where land, and especially high-value land, is becoming increasingly scarce, giving rise to greater competition and conflict, clarifying property rights to address food security and the peaceful co-existence of communities is possibly the most important issue for African governments today.

*Copies of the report can either be downloaded from the internet ([www.interacademycouncil.net/report.asp?id=6959](http://www.interacademycouncil.net/report.asp?id=6959)) or hard copies ordered from the InterAcademy Council, P.O. Box 19121, 1000GC Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Email: [secretariat@iac.knaw.nl](mailto:secretariat@iac.knaw.nl).*

## Get involved in the 4th World Water Forum

Preparations for the 4th World Water Forum, to be held in Mexico in March 2006,

have started. The organisers of the Forum say they want to achieve multi-stakeholder involvement in its preparation as well as broad participation in the event itself to ensure that the knowledge and experience of local actors shape the thematic content of the discussions.

This global event will focus on identifying how best to involve local actors in the design of a global vision for sustainable water development as well as ways to support specific local actions for its implementation.



The Forums' central theme **Local Actions for a Global Challenge** will be addressed through the examination of five core issues, each referring to a major global water challenge:

- **Water for development** in recognition that governments need to pay more attention to ensuring that water contributes to social and economic development. We need to have a better understanding of the contribution of water related services to national, regional and local development, of the minimum levels of investment needed in water infrastructure to kick-start and sustain development, and of ways in which to help government design a more holistic and cross-sectoral approach to water development.
- **Integrated water resource management** is a conceptual tool to manage water and other related resources in a more effective and sustainable

manner, particularly as competition for water use is rising between different users. But how have different countries approached IWRM, how far have they got in the process and in what way have these plans actually improved water management and for whom?

- **Water supply and sanitation** for all. Many people in the world still do not have adequate access to safe water and sanitation. Why is this the case? What are the political, financial, technological, institutional or cultural blockages and how can they be overcome?
- **Water management for food and the environment.** Irrigated agriculture is the largest consumer of water in the world, but as food needs rise with population growth how is it going to



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be sustained, and competition between different uses and the environment reconciled? More needs to be done to improve the productivity of water in agriculture while ensuring environmental protection.

- **Water security** has three different but interrelated features. First, the issue of how better to respond to the effects of extreme natural events (floods,

droughts) as a result of climate change, especially for poor and vulnerable communities. Second, the need to find ways better to protect water systems and related infrastructure in the event of war. And finally, the notion of “hydro-solidarity”, a concept seeking to develop a set of principles among citizens for the ethical use of water for the sake of peaceful coexistence.

*For more information visit: [www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx](http://www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx). Alternatively, you can write to: 4th World Water Forum Secretariat, Av. Insurgentes Sur No.2140, 2nd Floor, Mexico City 01070, Mexico. Email: [feedback@worldwaterforum4.org.mx](mailto:feedback@worldwaterforum4.org.mx).*

## Locust focus

Over the past few months, several Sahelian countries have been swept by swarms of desert locusts, in what is the worst locust crisis in the region since 1987-89. The situation is particularly critical in Niger, where serious and widespread crop damage has been reported in several regions (Tahoua, Maradi and Tillabery). With harvests seriously jeopardised and food prices increasing dramatically, the Nigerien government recently launched an appeal to the international community, requesting food aid to prevent famine. Mali, Mauritania and Senegal have also been affected by the crisis.

Successions of good rainfall first in the Sahel and then in Northwest Africa gave the locust ideal breeding conditions. This changed a rare solitary harmless insect into the swarms so feared by farmers. Efforts by Northwest African countries during winter and spring to stop the progression of locusts



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did not prevent some swarms from escaping to the Sahel early in June where there were good conditions for locust reproduction.

However, the crisis cannot be blamed on ecological factors alone. The affected area includes some of the poorest countries in the world, which do not have the resources to control this pest. Despite early warnings, donors were slow to respond. Locusts



breeding in the Sahel are now migrating back to Northwest Africa. In October, swarms moved from Mali and Niger into Southern Algeria, and strong winds may push them to Morocco and Western Sahara. No surprise that Morocco and Algeria have been providing help to their sub-Saharan counterparts, in the form of crop dusting planes and technical teams.

Desert locust control calls for effective action and cooperation from all affected countries. For this purpose, the FAO established the “Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases” (EMPRES programme – Desert Locust Component) to strengthen national control teams and improve the early warning system. Using satellite images and Geographical Information Systems, desert locust officers in the affected countries and at the FAO were able to follow the locust situation from the onset. Yet clear warnings coming from the FAO as early as February 2004 have been largely ignored by donors and development agencies. Locusts capture public attention in times of crisis but tend to be forgotten in quieter periods – not exactly an attitude conducive to effective crisis prevention.

*This article was contributed by Pietro Ceccato, Associate Research Scientist at Columbia University (USA), and Joyce Mayor, Locust Expert at the Natural Resources Institute (UK). For more information, contact Pietro Ceccato at [pceccato@iri.columbia.edu](mailto:pceccato@iri.columbia.edu).*

## Reforming the reform

The Kenya Land Alliance (KLA), a network of NGOs and individuals advocating land policy reform in Kenya, issued a press release in August calling for a comprehensive land reform programme.

*“The history of Kenya – argues the KLA – is fundamentally one of land dispossession and subsequent staking of individual claims of title to property that legitimately belongs to others through a mechanism of land registration”.*

Land dispossession started during the colonial period, with the first settlers and the Anglo-Maasai treaties, and continued after independence with a long-standing land tenure reform centred on titling and registration. The recent work of two prominent review commissions (the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission and the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into the Land Law System) and the ongoing National Land Policy Formulation



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Process provide an excellent opportunity to redress this historical injustice. For this reason, the KLA proposes a land reform programme based on three pillars, along the lines of the ongoing South African land reform: redress of historical land claims, either by returning land or by compensating victims; land redistribution through state-supported land purchases; and land tenure reform to improve tenure security.

*To know more about this campaign, contact Odenda Lumumba at the Kenya Land Alliance, P.O. Box 2177, Nakuru, Kenya or email [klal@africaonline.co.ke](mailto:klal@africaonline.co.ke). More information on the Kenya Land Alliance can be found on [www.caledonia.org.uk](http://www.caledonia.org.uk) and [www.oxfam.org.uk](http://www.oxfam.org.uk)*

## Other news....

The **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture** finally came into force on the 29th June 2004.

Heralded by many governments and the international research and development community as a major step forward in contributing to global food security through the conservation, exchange and sustainable use of the world's plant genetic resources, it is criticised by others as being too narrowly focused and failing sufficiently to safeguard small farmers from global financial interests.

The Treaty has been under negotiation for over 7 years where a lot of the discussion centred on whether or not to extend intellectual property rights (IPR) to seeds and other genetic materials covered by the Treaty. Farmers' groups and their supporters world-wide consistently argued against this on the grounds that this would severely restrict local farmers' rights to freely use, exchange and further develop the seeds they manage at farm-level. Already many farmers are losing out to international corporations who are making huge fortunes on the sales of patented seeds and other materials they have genetically modified. To many, the final wording of the Treaty is a disappointing compromise failing to resolve these and other issues.

*To find out more visit these websites from which you can get further links as necessary: [www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/itpgr.htm](http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/itpgr.htm) or [www.grain.org/seedling](http://www.grain.org/seedling).*



## Putting policies on trial: the case of citizens' juries

Can local people really have a say in the policies and technologies that affect their lives? This is the problem many of us try to address everyday through our work with communities across Africa. Over the past 25 years a number of 'participatory' methods have been developed to try to achieve this. Some of these include citizens' juries, neighbourhood forums, consensus conferences, and scenario workshops. But what are these approaches? And how do they empower people to move beyond being recipients of development policies, to becoming active "makers and shapers" of the decisions that affect them?

An example from India of a citizens' jury shows how this tool can enable local people make their voices heard.

### Citizens' Jury on GMOs, Karnataka, India

Are Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) a good idea for small-holder farmers? On a farm in a small village in the state of Karnataka, Chitradurga district, India a citizens' jury discussed this question.

As it was the lives of small-holder farmers that would be primarily affected by the introduction of GMOs, a jury, composed

of fourteen farmers, six men and eight women representing a variety of farming traditions, income levels and social group-

#### Everybody deserves a fair trial: Broad principles for a fair debate

- Participants should set terms of reference for the whole exercise.
- The organising group should include people with different interests on the subject being discussed.
- The ideas and views of participants and specialists should be shared in the spirit of mutual learning and exchange.
- The process should be transparent to those not involved.
- The information for participants should come from a range of sources.
- The process must not be used as a way for policy-makers to legitimise existing assumptions or policies.
- All groups involved in the process should be open to learning, development and change.
- An "audit" trail should be able to explain whether policies were changed as a result of the process and how participants were able to make a difference.

ings, was assembled. The jury also included expert witnesses (scientific institutes, commercial biotechnology corporations, development NGOs, Farmers Unions and Government agencies) who presented evidence for and against GMOs. A panel was established to ensure that the event was conducted in a fair manner and all deliberations were filmed and made publicly available to ensure transparency.

## No to GMOs

Having heard four days of evidence, the jury gave its verdict on the question: Would you sow the new commercial (GMO) seeds proposed by the Indian Department of Biotechnology and by Monsanto on your fields? The results were 4 yes, 9 no, 1 invalid ballot paper (by secret ballot). The jury's rejection of the GMO seeds was supplemented by a list of actions that would result in better acceptance for the new seeds.

- Microbes and beneficial insects should not be damaged. Also new seeds should not cause damage to animal populations and other environmental elements.
- They should be lawfully released only after extensive field

trials for 5-10 years in which farmers should be involved in field assessments, safety, environmental and other aspects.

- They should not damage the other crops that are grown on the same field or in adjoining fields.
- The success of the new seeds should be judged under lab conditions and on fields involving farmers.
- The technology must be easy to adapt.



Giving evidence to the jury

A proportion of the jury felt that there was no use for such technologies since they were inherently eco-unfriendly, and would destroy biodiversity. Others in the jury were ready to grow the new seeds so long as certificates from the concerned company were issued to protect them from any potential risk to their livelihood. Yet others felt that GM crops were OK, so long as they were non-food crops.

The jury responded cautiously to the issue of increasing farmer confidence in multinational corporations (MNCs) and biotechnology:

- A proportion of the jury was afraid of any contact with MNCs. They felt that the powerful MNCs, could ultimately gain control over seeds and farmers' sovereignty.

- If the seeds fail for any reason, whether to do with the technology itself, or weather conditions, the MNCs should not only compensate for the losses, but also buy the whole crop at double the price.

There were also follow up activities to the event than ensured that the results were disseminated and that policy makers actually took the decisions and recommendations made into account.

## Some key lessons

- a) The voices of small and marginal farmers influence policy processes when appropriate methods are used. For example:
  - Putting the perceptions, priorities and judgement of ordinary farmers at centre stage.
  - Conducting the events in a rural setting.
  - Getting government bureaucrats, scientists and other expert witnesses to travel to farmers to present evidence on the pros and cons of new technologies.
  - Using television and video technology to ensure



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The jury visit the field to talk to farmers

transparency and free circulation of information on the process and the outcomes.

- b) The jury process demonstrated the competence with which farmers, many of whom had not finished basic schooling, could discuss technical issues. They asked each witness for information relevant to their livelihoods. Rather than trying to build up a knowledge of genetics, they asked whether the 'new seeds', could address their needs, such as returning organic matter to their soils, and reducing their susceptibility to rapidly changing market prices for their harvested produce.

- c) As in the case of a controversial technology such as GMOs, an understanding of the linkages between technology, corporations, and local power structures is more likely to be achieved by considering different scenarios. In Karnataka, the scenarios compared were of two different technological approaches to agriculture – one based on genetically modified seed and continued chemical use, the other on saved indige-

nous seeds, traditional technologies and organic methods. GMOs were thus not taken and judged in isolation – they were perceived and evaluated as an integral part of a wider agricultural system.

d) In a recent briefing paper on GM crops and the Third World, the Overseas Development Institute, UK, called for greater research toward providing sound evidence and good information on the risks and potential benefits of genetically modified crops for the South. Citizen juries, scenario workshops etc. clearly offer one way to address this information deficit. More fundamentally, these methods can help strengthen democratic policy processes. At the very least they move beyond “listening to the voices of the poor” to actually planning, funding and acting more on the basis of poor people’s own definitions of life and well being.

e) Once citizens’ juries reach their conclusions it is essential that appropriate individuals and channels act between the jury and those with the power to create change. NGOs, federations of farmers’ organisations and consumer organisations



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### Considering the options

have a democratic right, and sufficient knowledge, to judge the issue for themselves. The jury outcomes will hopefully encourage more public debate on policies which address poverty, food and agriculture, thus contributing to better democratic governance.

have a role to play and can use the findings of the juries for their campaigns and lobbying activities.

### Finally

Citizens’ juries are an innovative attempt to include the genuinely poor and socially excluded into policy formulation processes. Bringing perspectives of farmers to national and global debates about the pros and cons of GM crops is based on a belief that rural people in the South

For further information on citizens’ juries please visit [www.iied.org/sarls](http://www.iied.org/sarls) or write to the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Programme at IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London, WC1H 0DD, UK or email [sustag@iied.org](mailto:sustag@iied.org)



# POLICIES

## Towards a fairer deal on agricultural trade?

Developing countries have plenty to gain from world trade rules ensuring fair access to the markets of their richer counterparts. Unfortunately, while agricultural trade is particularly important for many developing countries (where agriculture contributes a major share of the national economy and of people's livelihoods), it is also the privileged arena of richer countries' protectionist instincts, which are translated into an array of tariffs, domestic support measures and export subsidies. Recent blows to some of these devices provide encouraging signs that the wind may be starting to shift.

### **Good news for West African cotton farmers**

In April 2004, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) ruled that a range of domestic and export subsidies granted by the US to its cotton farmers were illegal under WTO rules. The complaint had been brought by Brazil, the fifth-largest cotton producer in the world, in what was the first challenge of richer countries' agricultural subsidies from a developing country. Brazil argued that the \$12.4 billion that the US threw at its cotton farmers between 1999 and 2003 (nearly as much as the total value of the US cotton production itself!) were damaging Brazilian

farmers by depressing world cotton prices and by giving an unfair advantage to US cotton growers. The WTO sided with Brazil, although the US already announced that it would appeal. While the ruling has no immediate practical consequences pending the appeal, the message is clear: richer countries can no longer get away with unfair agricultural policies that frustrate the development efforts of poorer countries.

This is very good news for West African cotton farmers and precious help for the WTO "Cotton Initiative", an initiative launched last year by Mali, Chad, Benin and Burkina Faso. The Initiative calls for cotton subsidies to be eliminated and for compensation to be paid to cotton-producing countries while the subsidies are still in place.

### **Bitter sugar for the EU**

The cotton case may also pave the way for other complaints from developing countries that are negatively affected by the unfair trade practices of richer countries. In August 2004, Brazil won another landmark case, this time against the EU sugar export subsidies. As Haramata goes to press, the WTO is to issue the final report on this case, although the EU is likely to appeal.



These cases may strengthen the bargaining power of those developing countries – including the four musketeers of the Cotton Initiative – seeking the elimination of agricultural subsidies in the ongoing round of WTO trade negotiations, launched in 2001 and expected to be completed over the next few years (the "Doha Round"). After the collapse of trade talks in Cancun last year,<sup>1</sup> WTO states reached a deal on a "framework" agreement in August. The framework sets broad principles that will guide negotiations in the next few months. It contains some good news, such as the elimination of export subsidies on agricultural products, although (crucially) without an agreed timeframe.

## Divide and rule?

At a deeper level, two key lessons can be learned from these cases. First, the sugar case shows how developing countries, far from constituting a monolithic block, may have different trade interests. Part of the illegal EU sugar subsidies concerned the re-exportation of sugar produced by African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) under a preferential

trade agreement. Although the preferential import regime for ACP sugar was not challenged as such, the case brought back the memory of the "banana war", a longstanding trade dispute that a few years ago opposed the US and the EU over the preferential treatment granted by the latter to some developing countries (the ACP States) over others.

Secondly, the cotton case raises questions as to the legality of "decoupled" subsidies. Classical agricultural subsidies in the EU and the US are linked to production levels (the more you produce, the higher the subsidy); this creates an incentive for farmers to overproduce and distorts international trade. Rather than reducing the amount of domestic support to their politically vocal farmers, the US and the EU are reforming their agricultural policies by "decoupling" subsidies from production levels, arguing that this is permitted under WTO rules. Yet, as *The Economist* pointed out,<sup>2</sup> some of the US cotton subsidies challenged by Brazil were "decoupled", i.e. payments were based on plot size and other criteria rather than on current production. This suggests that the WTO "decoupling" test is a very demanding one. When the WTO rulings will become publicly available in full, decision-makers in the EU and the US will need to read them very carefully.

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1. Read Haramata 44, September 2003, "Talks at the WTO ministerial conference in Cancun collapse", p. 3.

2. "Unpicking cotton subsidies", *The Economist*, 30 April 2004.

For more information, visit [www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org).



# What does the future hold for Senegalese farmers?

In a bid to inject new life into farming in Senegal, a framework law on agro-sylvo-pastoral production was introduced on 25th May 2004. For the first time ever, the government decided to discuss its proposals for reform of the agricultural sector with stakeholder representatives. Even so, this new law raises many questions.

## Two visions of agriculture

The main aim of the reform is to modernise agriculture, using the law to make family-run, industrial and commercial farms all switch to modern forms of production so that they are more competitive. The government seems very clear about the need to transform family farming while also creating an *"attractive environment conducive to the emergence of agricultural and rural enterprise"*. Its approach to this, however, is somewhat ambiguous.

The law juxtaposes two visions of agriculture: family-run farms on the one hand, and industrial and commercial farming on the other. It gives no clear indication of which is to be encouraged, but reading between the lines and judging by the preamble to the bill, it seems that family-run farming is seen as obsolete and agri-business is to be prioritised. The idea

of promoting commercial agriculture at the expense of family farming was clearly expressed in the first version of the law, which was modified after consultations with the Conseil National de Concertation et de Coopération des Ruraux, the CNCR (see Box 3). The law may talk about *"promoting family-run farming"*, but Mr Ndigou Fall, president of the Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA), believes that the government is actually sidelining family farms, despite numerous consultations with rural producers (see Box 1).

For or against it, there is no denying the importance of family farming, which is the main source of activities and revenue in rural areas. Moreover, claims that it is *"outdated"* take no account of the major changes this mode of production is undergoing in West Africa. Despite a lack of government support, the smallholding food crops sub-sector *"is progressively moving from subsistence farming to supplying produce for the regional market economy"*.<sup>1</sup>

The idea that large-scale farms are more productive is also being challenged. According to recent studies conducted in the Niayes area of Senegal, *"the economic performance of family-run farms outstrips that of large agricultural holdings"*.<sup>2</sup> So it

seems that the size of these small farms may be an economic asset.

Family-run farms should be given more support. After all, individual farmers continue to invest in them despite their lack of resources and the numerous natural disasters they have to contend with. We need to question the kind of *"private investment"* for which the law is seeking to develop a *"favourable environment"*, and recognise that the physical and financial effort farmers put into their land also constitutes an investment (see Box 2).

### Something new for herders

The framework law does have the merit of recognising pastoral activity as a valid mode of productive land use - filling a gap in the legislation on public lands, which has always been very vague about the notion of productive use. But while this is a first step towards a review of the rights of pastoral communities, it leaves many questions about the future of pastoralism unanswered. How will productive use be defined? And what arrangements have been made to facilitate peaceful cohabitation between pastoralists and large-scale farmers?

### Land reform at an impasse

The most sensitive issue in this law, land reform, has been postponed until some future date. As Philippe Lavigne Delville points out (see Box 3), much of the uncertainty surrounding this law pertains to land. Is agricultural reform possible without defining an appropriate land tenure regime? The goal of agricultural reform may be to encourage potential agri-businesses

#### Box 1. It's time for farmers to make themselves heard!

While producer organisations welcome the idea of a law setting out the general principles for agro-sylvo-pastoral activities, we regret that this law encourages farming for export and agri-business, and that it does not take full account of the views of producer organisations. The farmers' movement believes that the vital importance of family farming must be recognised as it enables farmers to supply both internal and external markets, despite their continual problems. The value of this form of farming should be reasserted and upheld.

We must keep talking so that small producers are not put at a disadvantage by future reforms. Our movement is leading a national awareness-raising and information campaign on the land tenure situation so that positive elements of the law on public lands can be used as the basis for future land reform. With so much at stake, it is crucial that reform is undertaken in an intelligent and progressive manner.

*For more information, please contact: Mr Ndigou Fall, Président du ROPPA, BP A269, Thiès, Sénégal, Tel: 00221 951 12 37 E mail: fongs@sentoo.sn*

## Box 2. Farmers respond to incentives

Studies carried out by Drylands Research and its partners show that farmers, without government assistance, invest in their farms. For example, building farm structures, improving soil fertility and structure, introducing new technologies such as animal traction, and fattening livestock by purchasing fodder and paying for drugs, health services. Such investments may be made in small increments over many years and cannot be accurately quantified, because money values change over time.

More significantly, official government statistics also support this fact. For example, official data collected in Senegal under the Programme Agricole (1960-80) show how farmers in the last six years of the PA invested heavily in livestock, where the number of cattle kept for fattening in Diourbel Region increased from 350 to 10,000, and of sheep from 1,500 to 31,500! These levels of investment further increased under the Nouvelle Politique Agricole (when State subsidies to agriculture were drastically cut), where data show how in Diourbel region, over the period from 1960 to 1998, the

numbers of small ruminants increased by a factor of about 4, and those of cattle by two, while the hectares available per tropical livestock unit (UBT) fell by 75%. This increase has supported a growing trade in animal feed, as well as providing more organic material for fertilizing the fields.

The significant shift to livestock was supported by buoyant meat prices throughout the period. This shows that, given incentives, farmers invest their own resources in profitable agricultural enterprises. In recent years, where physical conditions permit, higher value crops (e.g. Hibiscus) and fruit trees have been adopted on a significant scale. On the other hand, investment in the traditional food staple, bulrush millet, has continued to lag behind other sectors because of the government's policy to favour imported rice. This has prevented Senegalese farmers from responding to depressed groundnut prices by shifting to domestic food staples, as their northern Nigerian counterparts have done successfully.

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to invest in rural areas, but it is hard to see how this can be achieved without clarifying the status of land. This framework law is ambiguous about the main direction the future land reform will take. What it should do is concentrate on protecting the rights of family farmers and rural communities' authority over their lands, while encouraging the use of land as a guarantee to obtain credit. Another concern is how the needs of community land management can be reconciled with those of commercial farming. All we can be sure of at the moment is that the future is uncertain, not just for family farmers' rights, but for customary land rights too.

## The debate must go on

The use of legislation to back up agricultural reform is to be encouraged. Whether the Senegalese government will be able to pay for this initiative or deal with the potential risk of conflict between the different systems – between smallholders and industrial-scale farming, and traditional land management and commercial management – is another matter. However, since the reform is already under way we must ensure the debate continues so that the future law will be equitable.

*This article was written by Oumar Sylla (intern at IIED). We would also like to thank Samba Mbaye, President of the Union des Groupements des Paysans de Mekhé, Sénégal, (Mekhé Farmers Union) for his contribution to this paper.*

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1 Soulé, B.G., *Le rôle de l'Agriculture dans la compétitivité ouest africaine*, OCDE/Club du Sahel, 2003.

2 Oussouby Touré, Sidy Mohamed Seck, *La cohabitation entre les exploitations paysannes familiales et les entreprises agricoles dans la zone des Niayes au Sénégal*, IIED/Sahel programme (forthcoming).

### Box 3. An incomplete reform

The first version of the law setting out the general principles for agro-sylvo-pastoral activities was entirely geared towards supporting commercial agriculture, putting in place a national agency responsible for mobilising available land and leasing it out to entrepreneurs. This kind of technocratic vision not only removes the land prerogatives of rural communities in one fell swoop, but also makes highly questionable assumptions about the potential of agri-business.

The stir caused by this reform led the government to suppress any mention of land tenure in the draft bill. But how can the process of drafting a law setting out the guidelines for agriculture move forward with no clarification of the type of farming to be encouraged, and no mention of land tenure?

The consultation process with farmers led by CNCR has produced a raft of constructive and relevant proposals that seemed to have been well received by the government. However, this is not enough to make a law, or even formulate clear guidelines for policies on land tenure. The current solution, which consists of inserting an article affirming support for family farming and referring to the rapid formulation of a law setting out the general principles on land tenure, could be a coherent next step if it constitutes a genuine agreement in principle with the guidelines proposed by the CNCR.

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## The school of citizenship

In recent years, several African countries have passed reforms that, on paper, should enable greater participation of their citizens in decision-making. Decentralisation is the most notable example. It involves the transfer of powers and responsibilities from the central State to local governments. Above and beyond the desire to bring the administration closer to its constituents, this transfer of power is intended to result in better and more effective local development by enabling local people to participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes. However, such participation can only be effective if all groups are involved in the decision-making process and have the capacity to call elected local officials to account for their actions.

Experience has shown that this is often not the case. Once elected, government officials at the central and local levels may be tempted to hide their actions from public scrutiny. In addition, certain vulnerable groups are excluded from the sphere of decision-making. These groups include women, young people and socio-professional categories such as pas-

toralists, as well as, more generally, poorer sections of society. Thus, women are very poorly represented in rural and municipal councils (less than 5% in Senegal), while herders in agropastoral areas are also under-represented in local government management bodies because of their lack of political power. The needs of these groups can only be properly taken into account if they have a voice in these matters; and their participation can only become meaningful if their capacities in negotiation and advocacy are strengthened.

An ongoing project of a Malian NGO, Eveil ("awakening"), is an encouraging step in that direction. Long involved in adult literacy programmes, Eveil is developing an innovative pedagogic approach called "literacy for empowerment" ("alphabétisation conscientisante"). This draws on the work of the Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire, whose methods were widely applied in Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s. The approach combines basic adult literacy with civic education, covering topics such as democratic governance, the national constitution, the functioning of government institutions and of local governments, and alternative dispute resolution.

Rather than "imposing" predefined information, literacy for empowerment aims at promoting dialogue and reflection among participants. The tools used to do so draw on a vast body of well-established approaches, particularly PRA. Very importantly, the training modules used by Eveil are in a local language, Fulfulde, which enables the full participation of those who do not speak the official language (French).

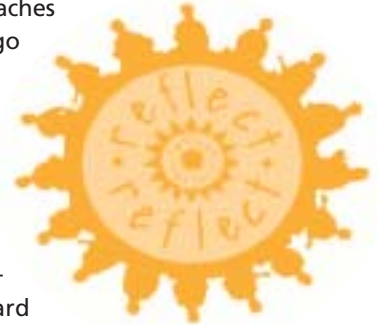
On the other side of the African continent, in Ngorongoro district (Tanzania), DANIDA is working along similar lines. A project completed last year developed the REFLECT approach, a participatory learning process launched by ActionAid which combines adult literacy and social change. This approach encourages participants to question and reflect upon their socio-economic, cultural and political environment, enabling them to analyse their social realities and to freely discuss sensitive issues. Besides improving their reading and writing skills, participants are expected to become better able to articulate their views and needs vis-a-vis outsiders. This is particularly valued in Ngorongoro, which witnessed massive evictions of Maasai herders from national parks: several participants at the training believed that evictions would have been less likely had their leaders been literate and more articulate, and that widespread literacy within the community makes it more difficult for elites to manipulate the situation and

betray their own people.

These innovative approaches are very promising. They go beyond the classical focus on literacy and numeracy to promote citizen's independent thinking on issues of direct relevance to their livelihoods, and they boost citizens' self-confidence to put forward

their views and needs. These are invaluable assets to make democratic governance work. The challenge ahead is to devise tools and criteria to monitor the real impact of these approaches, both in terms of improved capacities and confidence and with regard to the effects that these improvements may have on the quality of public participation in decision-making processes.

*To learn more about Eveil's programmes, contact Boubacar Ba at [eveil@afribone.net.ml](mailto:eveil@afribone.net.ml); for more information about the DANIDA programme, contact Samuel Ole Saiguran at [samuel.ereto@habari.co.tz](mailto:samuel.ereto@habari.co.tz). For more information on the REFLECT approach visit [www.reflect-action.org](http://www.reflect-action.org).*



## Shedding light on arms transfers

Pistols, machine guns, anti-personnel mines and other small arms and light weapons kill more people in Africa today than any other form of armament, and yet there is no global agreement among governments on how to stop the spread of these weapons. In **"We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century"**, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan admits that the task of effective proliferation control *"is made far harder than it needs to be because of irresponsible behaviour on the part of some States and lack of capacity by others, together with the shroud of secrecy that veils much of the arms trade."* Central to the problem is the fact that while there are international agreements to improve transparency in the arms trade, few of these explicitly require States to provide information on the transfer of small arms and light weapons.

Fortunately the situation is changing for the better. Recent declarations by African governments calling for transparency in the

flow of small arms and light weapons and the establishment of a central register and database of existing stockpiles, arm dealers and shipping agents,<sup>1</sup> have been backed up by the Programme of Action adopted at the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects in July 2001. More recently, ten African states have agreed to participate in the implementation of the **Small Arms Transparency and Control Regime (SATCRA) Programme.**<sup>2</sup>

SATCRA, implemented by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) with

funding from the governments of Finland and Sweden, started in October 2003. It helps participating countries implement measures to prevent the trafficking of illegal weapons, and to collect, document and share information on the flows of small arms within their countries. But this is easier said than done, particularly since countries are being asked to share information on a sensitive topic with direct



Small arms are common place



implications for State security. Establishing a sense of trust and common purpose are thus essential prerequisites for the success of this project.

At a regional workshop held in Bamako (Mali) in July 2004 substantial progress has been made on this score with participating countries coming to a common agreement on what constitutes “transparency” and what sort of information they need to share to achieve it. This includes information on the number and type of weapons they import and export, the number and type of arms they manufacture, the number of weapons they have stockpiled in their military arsenals and whether they are in good working condition. Agreement was also reached on how this information should be safely transmitted and stored in a data bank and arms registry, to be administered by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.

Exchanging information on the flow of arms to reduce illegal trafficking is only part of the solution. Governments need help to put into place such measures as a tighter system for the issuing of arms permits, enforcing the marking of locally manufactured arms so they can be traced and keeping tabs of those who make and distribute weapons. But at the end of the day governments have to have the political will to reduce

the flow and manufacture of arms within their countries, and have the confidence that in so doing they are not threatening their own security and defence capabilities. The fewer arms there are circulating around the country, the less risk there is of conflict and loss of life.

*You can get more information about the project by writing to:*

*United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, B.P. 2705, Lome, Togo.*

*Tel: +228 253 5000. Email: [mail@unrec.org](mailto:mail@unrec.org)*

*or by visiting*

*their website: [www.unrec.org](http://www.unrec.org).*

*Additional information on the topic of small arms can also be found at:*

*[www.smallarmsnet.org](http://www.smallarmsnet.org).*



1. The Bamako Declaration (2000) on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light; the Nairobi Declaration (2000) agreed during the Ministerial Conference of the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa; the Economic Community of Central African States meeting in N'Djamena (Chad) from 25 to 27 October 1999.

2. The participating countries are: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Gabon, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa and Togo.

# RESOURCES

## Negotiating property in Africa

Kristine Juul and Christian Lund (eds), Heinemann, Portsmouth, 2002. Website: [www.heinemann.org](http://www.heinemann.org)

How do African farmers assert and secure their claims to land? Reality moves faster than policy, and while policy-makers discuss different tenure reform options and government officials lag behind in the implementation of existing policies, peasants use all sorts of manoeuvres to change, challenge or consolidate land claims.

This is the key issue explored by this book, which draws on a workshop that brought together leading researchers from a range of disciplines and backgrounds. Contributions are based on fieldwork in a variety of African countries and settings – from pastoral areas in Niger to peri-urban areas in Ghana down to communal lands in post-apartheid South Africa.

The book places land tenure at the heart of social relations in Africa, showing how multiple, overlapping and competing land claims are intertwined with processes of rent-seeking, politicisation and class formation. Definitely an important reading for researchers striving to understand land relations in Africa.



## Law and Poverty – The Legal System and Poverty Reduction

Lucy Williams, Asbjorn Kjonstad and Peter Robson (eds), Zed Books, London and New York, 2003. Website: [www.zedbooks.co.uk](http://www.zedbooks.co.uk)

Law plays an important role in the creation, perpetuation or reduction of poverty, both globally and within countries. On the one hand, legal rules reflect the interests of wealthier and more powerful groups, and as such may exacerbate income and power imbalances. For instance, the international protection of pharmaceutical companies' intellectual property rights has long been held to prevent access to drugs for poor people in developing countries. On the other hand, law can provide tools for poverty reduction, by establishing legal rights for marginalised groups both at the international level (e.g. international human rights treaties) and at the national level (constitution, legislation). Although these rights are often frustrated by implementation problems, they create assets and entitlements that poorer people can use in their livelihood strategies. At the international level, fairer rules on world trade would support the development efforts of many

developing countries, probably more effectively than existing development aid (see Towards a fairer deal on agricultural trade? on page 14).

This is what this book is about. It includes a wealth of contributions from both developed and developing countries on a wide range of topics – from social security to the internationally sanctioned right to development, from migrant workers to gender mainstreaming, from child labour and children's rights to the use of litigation as a tool for poverty reduction. Although the book is mainly written by lawyers, it avoids getting entangled in legal technicalities, and it explores the linkages between legal rules and social change. The result is a very readable volume that helps shed some light on this fascinating yet little explored research topic.



## The Karamoja Conflict. Origins, Impact and Solutions

Michael Ochieng Odhiambo, Oxfam, 2003

Government neglect, self-interested and unaccountable local elites, the proliferation of illegal arms, poverty, the ineptness of modern institutions to enforce law and order, the collapse of traditional authority and institutions, and the absence of effective government are some of the potent ingredients fuelling conflict and insecurity in Karamoja in north-eastern Uganda. Though to many outsiders, particularly government officials and the farming communities neighbouring the region, it is the Karimojong, with their backward and warlike culture overly obsessed with cattle as the symbols of wealth and prestige, who are to blame. But, as Odhiambo so adroitly argues in his book, pointing the finger of blame or ignoring the history and deep-seated causes of the conflict are factors in themselves that contribute to keeping the conflict alive in Karamoja today.



Karimojong Local Defence Unit

© Panos Pictures, Crispin Hughes

# RESOURCES

Researched for Oxfam UK/I, the book starts off with an excellent analysis of the conceptual issues underpinning the notions of conflict and insecurity in Karamoja, and the critical importance of addressing these issues from a multi-stakeholder perspective at local, national and global levels. In this regard, Odhiambo reminds us of the dangers of assuming that there is any degree of consensus among the actors on even the need to address or resolve the conflict, let alone the reasons for its existence. He admits that while most people in Karamoja would like to see the situation improve, it is equally the case that there are certain individuals and groups both within and outside Karamoja whose interests are well-served by conflict in the region. And these groups are not a minority made up of a few bandits and outlaws, but powerful alliances based on complex clan loyalties, often enfolded within party political considerations and driven by huge economic interests.

The core sections of the book give an incisive and highly perceptive analysis of the causes of conflict and insecurity in Karamoja from an historical and multi-disciplinary perspective. Odhiambo essentially argues that the root causes of the problem are to be found in the social, political, economic and cultural isolation of the region by the British administration in colonial times, which a succession of independent governments have failed significantly to redress. To the contrary, many of their policies served further to marginalise and

impoverish the Karimojong, while a long period of national insecurity following the collapse of the Idi Amin regime and the succession of civil wars in neighbouring Sudan and Ethiopia gave them the opportunity to arm themselves with modern weapons. Successive governments have systematically perceived and treated the Karimojong as backward, second class citizens whose agro-pastoral way of life based on rain-fed agriculture and the seasonal movement of livestock in search of pasture and water had no place in the modern nation they were building.

Ignoring the suitability of pastoralism to the environmental conditions of Karamoja and the significant contribution it makes to local and national economies, led successive governments to enforce unsuitable policies which have done more harm than good to the livelihoods of local people. In the wake of such discrimination the Karimojong have fended for themselves which, with rising levels of poverty, has fuelled the practice of cattle raiding thus reinforcing not only their image of



violent people but also levels of insecurity both within and outside Karamoja. And so a vicious circle is created further reinforced by a range of other factors including the virtual absence of an effective local government system providing basic services, the inability of the law courts and police to maintain law and order in the region, and the failure of customary institutions to manage public life.

The book concludes with a set of recommendations highlighting the need to address the complex situation in Karamoja in an informed and incremental manner, where local people are provided with the means to play a central role in defining for themselves the solutions to their problems, and that such solutions are given the attention they deserve. Rising above the local to address national and global issues particularly in arms trafficking and taking a multi-level and multi-stakeholder

approach are also key aspects central to finding lasting peace in Karamoja.

Odhiambo has succeeded in writing a book on a highly complex subject that is easily accessible. Its brevity and generous use of testimonies from ordinary people living and working in Karamoja to illustrate the issues he raises, gives the book a welcome human dimension to the plight of the Karimojong. For someone wanting to understand the situation in Karamoja, this book is an excellent starting point!

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Copies of the book can be ordered from Oxfam.



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