

**VOICES FROM THE SOUTH:  
The Role of Civil Society in Linking Biodiversity Conservation and  
Poverty Reduction**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Objectives

This report examines the role of civil society in improving the linkages between the biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction agendas. It has two components:

1. An overview of civil society influence on international biodiversity policy, focusing in particular on how the concerns of people-oriented organisations are represented in the negotiations of the CBD and CITES, and addressed in the policies and programmes of major conservation NGOs. It also looks at how international development NGOs seek to influence biodiversity conservation policy and address biodiversity objectives in their work. (Section 2).

2. A more detailed case study of Tanzania, examining the influence of civil society on biodiversity conservation policy (both government and NGO), including mechanisms for policy influence and information flows. The study also reviews how biodiversity objectives are addressed in poverty reduction policy and the channels of influence for conservation NGOs. (Sections 3 to 7).

## 1.2 Why focus on improving biodiversity-poverty links?

The Johannesburg Summit recognised the close interrelationship between biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction and the need to bring the respective policy communities – previously almost completely separate - closer together.

Many countries in the South have high levels of rural poverty and biodiversity – hence both biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction are often important national priorities. However, there are potential conflicts between these two priorities:

- biodiversity conservation activities can sometimes result in increased poverty (eg. through loss of access to resources);
- poverty reduction interventions can sometimes undermine biodiversity conservation through over- exploitation of scarce, but valuable, resources.

At the same time, the two objectives can be mutually supportive:

- global conservation thinking has for some time recognised the key role that local communities play in successful conservation activities;
- biodiversity conservation can make significant contributions to poverty reduction through increased food security, improved health through use of medicinal plants, and so on.

While the need to address poverty in order to achieve conservation objectives is fairly well recognised, the role of conservation in delivering on poverty reduction objectives is less well understood – and in many cases the distinction between these two perspectives is unclear to practitioners and policy makers. The problem of unsustainable bush meat consumption is a useful case with which to clarify these different perspectives: for the conservation community, bush meat consumption is a problem because a number of species, subject to heavy hunting pressure, are becoming increasingly threatened by this activity. The development community is equally concerned about unsustainable use of bush meat – but not because of a desire to conserve threatened species. Here, bush meat is recognised as a key contributor to enhanced food security – long term security is thus dependent on its sustainable use. Both conservation and development practitioners are therefore anxious to conserve remaining populations of

target species, but with different end-objectives in sight. This linkage between poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation has only recently gained prominence within development circles: it is perhaps hardly surprising, therefore, that it does not yet appear to have been made in the conservation world.

## **2. REPRESENTATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY CONCERNS IN INTERNATIONAL BIODIVERSITY POLICY**

### **2.1 The Biodiversity Convention (CBD)**

Most of the civil society organisations which attend the Conference of the Parties meetings and play an active role in informing and trying to influence them are international conservation NGOs whose primary objective is to conserve biodiversity (Conservation International, WWF, IUCN etc). Overall, people-oriented civil society organisations representing the interests of poor and marginalized groups living in biodiverse areas have a weaker presence at CBD fora. The most visible are usually the more radical NGOs campaigning against biopiracy. Some indigenous peoples' organisations concerned with protecting community rights in relation to biopiracy and protected areas also attend COP meetings, but indigenous representation is rather patchy as most organisations cannot afford to attend. In general, there seems to be relatively little presence from organisations advocating for people-centred conservation approaches (ie. placing equal emphasis on conservation and poverty reduction). Nor does there appear to be any real lobby making the case for conservation as a means to address poverty reduction objectives (eg. food security, health).

Inside the COP negotiations, official delegations are largely composed of environment policy specialists, with little participation from development or people-oriented departments. Nevertheless, issues relating to local community interests are raised in some cases, often by Northern country delegations. Meetings of the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), which provides technical advice to the COP, are also largely attended by international conservation NGOs, while most of the official delegates are scientific or technical specialists. However, some indigenous peoples' organisations have attended SBSTTA meetings dealing with ecosystem management.

Indigenous organisations have been quite well represented and have had greater opportunity to make interventions at meetings of the CBD Working Group on Article 8(j), which focuses on the protection of traditional knowledge but also touches on protected area issues. The Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing has also been quite well attended by indigenous organisations, often thanks to the assistance of international NGOs, and by NGOs campaigning against biopiracy and genetic resource privatisation.

At meetings of the CBD's Biosafety Protocol, both environment and development NGOs have had quite a strong presence, especially around the impacts of certain biotechnologies (eg. the terminator gene) on Southern farmers and the environment.

### **2.2 The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)**

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) makes decisions regarding the regulation of species in trade at regular COPs, on the basis of "one country – one vote". While this might seem an equitable negotiating arrangement, it is worth pointing out that not all countries have equal voices in these processes, since (as in

the CBD COPs), some Northern countries come with very large delegations, while poor countries are often only able to send one representative. In addition, the COPs are generally attended by conservation NGOs with the international organisations being the ones able to send large delegations with more effective lobbying power.

CITES COPs are poorly attended by civil society organisations addressing livelihood issues – mainly because of the lack of resources of the majority of community based or grass roots organisations. A notable exception was COP 10 held in Harare in 1997 at which the controversial elephant ivory trade ban was being discussed – Southern African nations having applied to have elephants downlisted from Appendix 1 (under which no trade is permitted). Here the Africa Resources Trust, a regional African organisation, facilitated the attendance of community based groups and traditional leaders both at the COP and at the preceding Global Biodiversity Forum. This did much to raise awareness of the “other side” of the elephant story – the huge costs they can bring to local people in the form of crop damage, personal injury and loss of life - and succeeded in broadening the debate on elephants beyond one of conservation of an endangered species<sup>1</sup>.

### 2.3 Policies of Major Conservation NGOs and Donors

A recent DFID study on Wildlife and Poverty found that there do not appear to have been any sector wide reviews of the extent to which poverty considerations are integrated in conservation initiatives. The study concluded that the degree to which poverty issues have been mainstreamed in the initiatives of conservation NGOs varies greatly, but is low on average<sup>2</sup>. The organisational websites of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and WWF-US make little reference to poverty reduction, while that of Conservation International (CI) states that the enterprise programme works closely with communities, and that of WWF-UK emphasises the need to tackle poverty. The growth of community based conservation in the 1980s and 1990s saw many NGOs move towards adopting development goals (eg. Flora and Fauna International (FFI), WWF-UK, Zoological Society of London and Birdlife International). The study also found that the leading conservation NGOs in the US and Europe spend tens of millions of dollars on conservation initiatives in developing countries each year. TNC, for example, had a budget of \$787 million in 2002; while the incomes of WWF-US, CI and WWF-UK in 2001 amounted to \$120 million, \$60 million and £28 million respectively.

This study reviewed the websites and annual reports of five conservation NGOs<sup>3</sup>, supplemented with telephone enquiries with staff members, and came to similar conclusions. Many of the leading conservation NGOs (eg. TNC and CI) focus mainly on the management, expansion and creation of protected areas, including through land purchases and conservation concessions. Protected areas tend to result in the exclusion of poor people who are dependent on natural resources, have few livelihood alternatives and receive little or no compensation.

Although CI recognises the importance of community involvement and benefit-sharing, questions remain over its commitment to fully engaging communities in practice. For example, the Critical Ecosystem Partnerships Fund invests in community, NGO and private sector initiatives to conserve biodiversity ‘hotspots’, and ‘promotes poverty alleviation’. However, at a recent meeting in Tanzania to define priorities for the fund, requests made by Tanzanian NGOs

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<sup>1</sup> For more details of CITES decision making processes, see Roe, D et al (2002) Making a Killing or Making a Living? Wildlife Trade, Trade Controls and Local Livelihoods. IIED, London

<sup>2</sup> DFID Livestock and Wildlife Advisory Group. (2003). Wildlife and Poverty Study.

<sup>3</sup> TNC, CI, WWF-UK, FFI and Birdlife International

to give priority to community involvement and benefit-sharing were met with some resistance. An in-depth study of WWF's policies and programmes concluded that although some organisations, such as WWF and IUCN, have begun using the language of participation and people-centred approaches, it is important to exercise caution in claiming that 'participation' has been mainstreamed<sup>4</sup>. WWF has initiated many new projects which provide people with more room for manoeuvre in environmental decision-making, but has not undergone significant organisational change and the uptake of participatory approaches across the organisation is uneven. Furthermore, while some NGOs explicitly undertake not to evict communities, most are opposed to providing compensation for restricted access to natural resources<sup>5</sup>, although some provide other benefits instead (eg. enterprise development).

However, it is important to note that organisational policy does not necessarily reflect the perspectives of individual staff members within these organisations. In many conservation organisations, there are some individuals who genuinely believe in the need for people-centred approaches to conservation. In addition, some conservation NGOs, such as Bird Life International and Flora and Fauna International (FFI), do appear to place significant emphasis on addressing local community needs. Bird Life International is a global partnership of NGOs (few of those in the South are specifically bird-focused), which identifies important bird sites and strengthens local institutions to manage natural resource use and improve livelihoods. The aim is to build local ownership and responsibility so that people become custodians of their resources, beyond the project time-frame. Helping people to secure permanent land rights is considered important. Similarly, FFI works closely with local counterparts to build local capacity, ownership and long-term commitment, and ensure that interventions are community-driven. Land purchase strategies seek to protect communities from eviction (eg. by oil palm companies), and FFI provides support for legal titling of land, as well as advocating for policy change towards community based management of natural resources.

The Wildlife and Poverty study also found that much conservation money is still invested with only limited consideration of poverty and livelihoods concerns, despite a growing consensus that poverty and weak governance are significant underlying threats to conservation. The key international donors for conservation include the World Bank, UNDP, UNEP and the Global Environment Facility (operated by the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP), IUCN and US and European NGOs. The World Bank has built up a portfolio of conservation projects worth about \$2 billion over the past decade, which includes a number of Integrated Conservation and Development Projects supported in the 1980s and 1990s. A review of 23 ICDPs in the early 90s found that many had benefited communities, but largely as passive recipients<sup>6</sup>.

The Global Environment Facility (the financial mechanism for the CBD), has funded over 400 biodiversity projects in 140 countries, worth a total of \$5.4 billion<sup>7</sup>. The GEF largely supports government biodiversity initiatives such as protected areas, with a relatively small proportion allocated to NGO conservation projects through the Small Grants Programme. Established conservation NGOs are often well placed to apply for these grants, while local NGOs pursuing more people-oriented conservation approaches often lack the necessary capacity<sup>8</sup>. To date

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<sup>4</sup> Sally Jeanrenaud (2002). People-oriented approaches in global conservation: Is the leopard changing its Spots? IIED Institutionalising Participation Series.

<sup>5</sup> WWF-UK is not opposed to compensation and in some cases encourages government compensation.

<sup>6</sup> Wells M and Brandon K (1992). People and Parks: Linking protected area management with local communities.

<sup>7</sup> DFID Livestock and Wildlife Advisory Group. (2003). Wildlife and Poverty Study.

<sup>8</sup> Rachel Wynberg and Krystyna Swiderska (2001). South Africa's Experience in Developing a Policy on Biodiversity and Access to Genetic Resources. Participation in Access and Benefit-Sharing Policy, Case study 1.

there do not appear to be any reviews of the impact of GEF projects on poverty, although a major review of the 'human impacts' of the GEF portfolio has just been initiated. There are also a number of US-based foundations (eg. the MacArthur Foundation) which allocate substantial funding for biodiversity conservation, often for conventional conservation approaches rather than people-centred approaches.

Apart from BirdLife and FFI, which appear to have become fairly responsive to community concerns by working closely with local NGO partners, it is unclear what institutional mechanisms the major conservation NGOs and donors have for hearing the concerns of the poor in biodiverse areas, and responding to them in their organisational policy, programmes, budget priorities etc.

In preparation for the World Parks Congress in September 2003, the IUCN Commission on Environment, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) has launched an initiative on Equity, Protected Areas and Communities, which is providing a platform for people-oriented civil society groups to have an input into this major forum on protected areas. Although the initiative cannot be said to fully reflect IUCN's more conventional organisational policy, it promises to be an important mechanism for promoting pro-poor conservation.

## **2.4 Efforts of international development NGOs to influence and address biodiversity policy**

An initial review of seven international development NGOs<sup>9</sup>, based on their websites and discussions with representatives, indicates that most of these organisations have some involvement with biodiversity conservation issues, although the importance given to biodiversity varies between and within organisations (some representatives contacted did not see their relevance).

Despite broad recognition that protected areas often impose costs on the poor, whether through human-wildlife conflicts or loss of access to resources, it appears that the development community as a whole has not started to proactively address this issue. Nevertheless, in-country offices of international development NGOs, and local environment NGOs, have campaigned around specific cases of community exclusion or eviction from protected areas. ActionAid, the Mozambique Endangered Wildlife Trust and IUCN Mozambique, sought to rectify the violation of community fishing and land rights by the Vilanculos Wildlife Sanctuary in Southern Mozambique<sup>10</sup>. ActionAid also campaigned against the eviction of the Benet tribal people from Mount Elgon by the Ugandan government to establish a national park in 1992. Resettlement was inadequate leaving 700 households homeless and landless. This led to an inter-ministerial committee to provide for resettlement, and a Bill to redefine the boundary of the national park. In addition, ITDG Kenya is actively working to challenge conservation NGOs to improve their work on local and alternative livelihood strategies.

In some cases, international development NGOs are providing support for communities affected by protected areas, or engaged in conservation-related activities. Christian Aid is providing support to Adivasi tribals in India whose livelihoods have been affected by the creation of National Parks; while Oxfam is assisting communities affected by protected areas as part of wider efforts to improve access to land and natural resources. For example, the Pastoral Programme in Ngorongoro (Tanzania) provides paralegal training on land tenure for

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<sup>9</sup> CONCERN Worldwide, Action Aid, CARE International, Save the Children, Oxfam, Christian Aid and ITDG

<sup>10</sup> See Fiona MacLeod (2001). 'Wildlife playground displaces poor'. Press release, Johannesburg.

several villages, including some which are affected by Tourist Hunting Blocks and some which fall within the Conservation Authority Area, to strengthen their ability to make demands of the authorities. Similarly, Oxfam is working in Karamoja, Uganda, where all land is owned by the Wildlife Authority (either a Hunting or Protected Area), to improve the livelihoods of pastoralists, including through improved access, control and management of natural resources. Oxfam is also collaborating with WWF to encourage farmers to use non-threatened varieties for wood crafts; while CARE Tanzania has a project on forest conservation and community development.

However, these conservation related activities appear to be rather ad-hoc and peripheral, rather than part of an organisational policy or programme, and often more concerned with natural resources in general than protected areas specifically. One representative from Oxfam commented that, while there are sometimes conflicts between communities and conservation interests, the over-exploitation of natural resources (eg. forests) for commercial purposes is a more significant problem.

The UK Development and Environment Group (DEG) coordinates NGO advocacy activities, including on biodiversity and the CBD, but tends not to focus on issues at the interface between development and conservation such as community-conservation conflicts. The UK Food Group focuses on food security and sustainable agriculture, including issues of genetic resource privatisation, but does not address broader conservation concerns. However, the Biodiversity Group of the UK Tropical Forest Forum has done some work on the linkages between biodiversity and livelihoods.

Overall, there does not appear to be an organised lobby within the international development community to encourage protected area initiatives to reduce their impacts on the poor. Focusing on dispersed rural populations may not be the best way to address poverty reduction objectives, at least in terms of the number of people that benefit – but the large sums invested in conservation initiatives which impact negatively on the poor would appear to merit greater attention from the international community.

Nevertheless, a number of international development NGOs (eg. SCF, Christian Aid and ITDG) are addressing biodiversity objectives through their work on food security and sustainable agriculture (for SCF, agricultural biodiversity and wild foods are important issues). Within ActionAid, the focus on agro-ecological and Integrated Pest Management approaches is generally increasing across the organization, and rights issues are increasingly focused on access to land, forest resources and water and their sustainable use by local communities. However, it appears that these organisations are not yet fully exploiting the potential of biodiversity for achieving poverty reduction in different sectors, or addressing biodiversity as an organizational objective to ensure that their programmes do not undermine it.

Although the development community is focusing considerable attention on Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, it appears that the linkages between poverty reduction and environment objectives, including biodiversity and wildlife, are still weak in many PRSPs<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> DFID Livestock and Wildlife Advisory Group. (2003). Wildlife and Poverty Study.

### **3. CIVIL SOCIETY INFLUENCE ON BIODIVERSITY-POVERTY LINKAGES IN TANZANIA: INFORMATION FLOWS, COMMUNICATIONS AND POLICY INFLUENCE**

#### **3.1 Objectives of the case study**

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world and also one of the most biodiverse. Poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation are therefore both important national priorities. This short exercise had two key objectives:

- To examine the influence of civil society on policy for biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction;
- To examine the links between biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction policy.

In addressing the first objective, the study specifically concentrated on information flows, communication channels and other mechanisms between civil society groups and between civil society and government. Key civil society groups examined include:

- conservation-focused NGOs (conservation as primary objective);
- sustainable development NGOs (equal focus on environment and development);
- development NGOs (focus on poverty reduction, civil rights etc);
- grass roots organisations (community based organisations, local NGOs, associations etc);
- local communities

For the second objective the links between NGOs and government were examined: both the extent to, and means by, which conservation NGOs address poverty objectives and try to influence poverty reduction policy and development NGOs address conservation objectives and try to influence conservation policy. In addition the coherence between government biodiversity policy and poverty reduction policy was examined: how does biodiversity policy address poverty reduction and how does poverty reduction policy incorporate biodiversity concerns.

#### **3.2 Biodiversity and Poverty Policy in Tanzania**

This study focused on a number of key policies affecting biodiversity conservation in Tanzania: the land, forestry, wildlife and environment policies, which have all been recently revised and emphasise the need for local benefits from conservation activities.

The National Land Policy (1995) sets the direction for land reform that has been followed up by new legislation. This includes significant changes to the way land can be acquired, held and transferred. The land reform distinguishes between land under the authority of central government and land now under the authority of village governments. Village councils are now the land managers charged with the supervision of adjudication and registration of Village Land within their respective village spheres, including forestland. Consistent with the National Land Policy (1995), provisions of the Land Act (1999) and Village Land Act (1999) and related regulations recognize customary rights in land and allow for registration of these rights. This directly affects the status of millions of hectares of unreserved or "general" forestlands. Customary rights as provided for in the new laws specifically include the right of households, groups, or communities to hold commons (such as forests) as registered common property.

The 1998 Forest Policy encourages participatory forest management, providing for joint forest management inside forest reserves and for community-based forest management outside the reserves. The policy seeks to integrate environmental and biodiversity values of forests into forest management and utilisation, and to promote conservation of areas with unique environmental values in collaboration with local populations.

The Forest Act was passed by Parliament in April 2002 and provides the legal framework for carrying out the intentions in the National Forest Policy. The Act aims to encourage and facilitate the active involvement of the citizens in the sustainable planning, management, use and conservation of forest resources through the development of rights and responsibilities to use and manage forest resources at the lowest possible level. It supports environmental management by enabling local communities to declare – and ultimately gazette – Village, Group or Private Forest Reserves, and provides for three categories of Community-based Forest Management (CBFM):

- Village Land Forest Reserves (VLFR) managed by the entire community,
- Community Forest Reserves (CFR) managed by a particular designated group in the community, and
- Private Forests (PF) managed by individual designated households.

The Act also provides for registration and other procedures through which villages, groups or individuals may secure local jurisdiction over forests or take on management functions in government reserves through the establishment of Joint Forest Management (JFM) Agreements with Government. However, the regulations to implement the Act have not been passed yet.

The Wildlife Policy of 1998 establishes wildlife management areas (WMAs) for communities to benefit from wildlife outside of protected areas, and this approach is being piloted in a number of areas over the next three years. The Wildlife Conservation Regulations of 2002 incorporate WMAs, although the Regulations are still being revised to give full effect to the new policy. National Parks remain as strict no-use areas while Game Reserves allow use – trophy hunting etc – but no community participation.

The Environment Policy (1997) specifically addresses poverty reduction noting that investment in development is vital for environmental protection and therefore addresses both objectives. In addition, a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) has been developed by the Environment Division in the Vice President's Office and acts as the coordinating framework for sectoral policy (those mentioned above as well as agriculture and fisheries).

The Government of Tanzania (GoT) has adopted a multi-sectoral approach to addressing poverty issues in the Development Vision 2025 for Tanzania. The principal vision of GoT is to alleviate the widespread poverty in Tanzanian society by improving socio-economic opportunities, good governance, transparency, and improved and redefined public sector performance. An appropriate balance between public and private institutions is emphasised. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP, 2000) is a concretisation of Vision 2025, and states that poverty is largely a rural phenomenon concentrated in the 'subsistence farming' sector, often in remoter areas. The main focus of the PRSP is on health, agriculture and education. The paper recognises the dependence of the poor on environmental resources both for income generation and consumption, but is weak in its treatment of environment and biodiversity objectives. Although the need to address these objectives is identified, strategies to

do so have not yet been articulated. However, the Vice President's Office has now put a process in place to revise the PRSP, and is establishing a strategy to link environment to the PRSP process.

National economic policies on Structural Adjustment aim, among other things, to contribute to poverty alleviation. The linkages between these policies and biodiversity conservation objectives are, however, unclear.

### 3.3 Civil society organisations in Tanzania

A number of international conservation and development organisations are operational in Tanzania as well as numerous national level organisations. International NGOs include WWF, TRAFFIC, African Wildlife Foundation, CARE, Concern, ActionAid, Oxfam, Aga Khan Foundation and so on. At the national level, conservation organisations include the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG) and the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania (WCST). There are many national NGOs addressing broad environmental issues, which - depending on the specific project - may also include biodiversity conservation. These include AGENDA, ENVIROCARE, TATEDO (Traditional Energy Development and Environment Organisation). It is more difficult to identify national NGOs focusing on development or poverty reduction in relation to conservation activities: those that are most prominent tend to be those with a human rights mandate, including the Legal and Human Rights Centre, Lawyers Environmental Action Team (LEAT), and Hakiardhi, the Land Rights and Resources Institute - an organisation that has campaigned on pastoralist land rights, among other activities. Women's groups include the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme; Media groups include the Journalists Environment Association of Tanzania (JET).

A number of grassroots organisations operate through regionally based networks, some of which actively advocate on land rights and community concerns associated with conservation. For example, the Arusha-based Pastoralist Indigenous Non-Governmental Organisational Forum (PINGOs Forum) is a loose coalition of like-minded, pastoralist and hunter-gatherer community-based groups or organisations (CBOs) situated mainly in the northern drylands of Tanzania. There are at present over twenty organisations actively participating in the PINGOs Forum, representing Maasai, Barabaig, Hadzabe, and Dorobo communities. It is alleged that these communities have been marginalised from the mainstream of Tanzanian society and suffer from human and land rights violations. Other grassroots and community based organisations undoubtedly exist but were not identified in this study due to the focus on Dar es Salaam.

## 4. METHODOLOGY FOR THE CASE STUDY

The study was carried out in collaboration with a local partner organisation - the Institute of Resource Assessment at the University of Dar es Salaam. Key stakeholder groups with a potential influence on policy were identified. These included: national and international conservation and development NGOs, donor agencies, government departments.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives from many of the organisations described above<sup>12</sup>. Organisations interviewed were limited to those based in Dar es Salaam because of the short timeframe of the study and consequent limitations on travel.

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<sup>12</sup> See page 2 for list of interviewees and workshop participants

Key findings from the interviews were summarised and a workshop was held with a broader range of stakeholders in order to:

- present the results of the interviews;
- verify the findings;
- collate additional experience from organisations not interviewed;
- map linkages and information flows between organisations and from local to national level;
- map relative influences that different organisations have on national policy;
- identify priorities for improving information flows and enhancing the influence of civil society.

A draft report of the study findings was circulated to all interviewees and workshop participants as well as additional individuals and organisations in Tanzania with a role in biodiversity and/or poverty reduction policy. Feedback from the review process was incorporated into the draft to produce this report.

## 5. FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS

### 5.1 Influence of NGOs on government policy

#### *Conservation NGOS*

None of the conservation NGOs interviewed have been involved in the PRSP process. However, a useful networking mechanism – the donor-NGO Informal Discussion Group on Environment – was amongst the first to raise the issue of the lack of attention to environmental issues in the PRSP. Through UNDP this group is now involved in discussions on how to mainstream biodiversity in the PRSP.

However, conservation NGOs do appear to have influence over government policy on conservation – particularly international organisations that are well connected and well resourced. Reference was made in numerous interviews to the influence of WWF in particular but also to international organisations outside of Tanzania – for example the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA). While national conservation organisations may have less influence over policy-*making* they appear to enjoy a close relationship with government and are viewed as partners – in terms of policy implementation.

#### *Development NGOs*

Development NGOs have had more direct influence over the PRSP than conservation organisations – particularly those involved in health, education and so on - through involvement in the consultation process – although again, this has not been extensive. More broadly, development NGOs have networked in an *NGO Policy Forum* since late 2001. The purpose of this forum is to facilitate “strengthened NGO engagement in key policy processes in Tanzania”.<sup>13</sup>To this end the Forum produced a collection of NGO “Statements” on key social and economic development issues based on the views of around 80 NGOs “who have in turn consulted with hundreds of other groups and citizens from across the country”. What is not known, however, is the impact this Forum has had on government policy.

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<sup>13</sup> NGO Policy Forum (2002) NGO Statements, Consultative Group Meeting. Dar es Salaam, December 2-5 2002

Those that have tried most to exert influence over *conservation* policy have tended to be those concerned with human rights – and particularly in connection with the rights of pastoralists evicted from national parks. Some success has been achieved – for example a number of organisations drew attention to a proposed prawn farming project in the Rufiji Delta which would have had a major impact on biodiversity through destruction of the mangrove ecosystem, as well as on local livelihoods. A combination of advocacy by NGOs and pressure groups as well as media pressure from JET prompted the government to set up a mechanism to mitigate the negative impacts of the project. The developer later abandoned the project due to a combination of factors, which probably included lack of capital and animosity in the local area. However success has appeared to be more limited where powerful vested interests are concerned and a number of interviewees pointed to the power and influence of the private sector – particularly tourism companies, hunting companies and mining companies. A land rights claim brought by pastoralists groups, following the creation of the Mkomazi Game Reserve, dragged on for over ten years and the High Court finally ruled in favour of the government, despite considerable evidence to support the claim.

Advocacy organisations also note that if they are too critical of the government then they risk being sidelined in further processes – indeed some individuals are currently being prosecuted by the government for sedition. Furthermore, with the recent NGO Act, advocacy organisations which become too active risk being de-registered. This therefore raises the dilemma as to whether to tone down criticisms in order to remain with the government circle of influence or to raise “uncomfortable” issues and potentially be sidelined and therefore not “heard” at all in future debates.

## **5.2 Addressing poverty reduction through conservation projects**

It is hard now to find a conservation NGO that does not take community development issues into account. Conservation NGOs are not using biodiversity to address poverty issues, but are increasingly addressing community development needs in order to improve conservation efforts, through alternative income generation, sustainable use initiatives and community outreach (health and education projects). For example, showing the contribution of conservation projects to local livelihoods and poverty reduction is a key requirement for WWF.

Conservation NGOs working in the forest sector appear to have more potential to impact on community development as the forest policy is less restrictive of community access to/use of resources in reserves. The Wildlife Policy, by contrast, while advocating the development of Wildlife Management Areas outside of formal protected areas still emphasises strict protection in National Parks and very limited community use in Game Reserves. WCST notes, however, that the wildlife has more potential to deliver significant financial benefits to local people because of the high value of wildlife compared to forest resources (logging for high-value timber species by local people is not permitted). TANAPA's (Tanzania National Parks) Community Conservation Services Department provides some benefits for communities, though this mechanism is not fully utilised.

A number of NGOs have combined conservation activities with local development. For example CARE has a programme on Integrated Conservation and Development with the dual objectives of biodiversity conservation and livelihood improvement. ENVIROCARE links environment, poverty reduction and human rights – recognising that poverty reduction and human rights have to be addressed in order to foster environmental improvements.

Overall, the pattern that emerges is one of mainly conservation-focused NGOs working on projects to deliver conservation objectives but using local community development as a means to achieve this. There is no strong development focused NGO working across the country (rather than in isolated project sites such as CARE) on conservation issues. Furthermore, there is no evidence of NGOs using biodiversity conservation as a tool to deliver on poverty reduction objectives.

### 5.3 Linking community/grassroots organisations to government policy

#### *Role of NGOs*

Many NGOs have field staff working closely with local communities and are therefore well placed to identify local issues of concern and try to address these directly in their project activities or raise them at a higher level. NGOs also act as a valuable intermediary between local communities and local or national government. For example, the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group has established a community forestry network which links communities involved in forest management to each other as well as providing a forum for linking them to local and national government. The Lawyers Environmental Action Team has also developed a loose network of local NGOs and grassroots organisations – the Environmental Coalition of Civil Organisations – to lobby on environmental issues.

As well as raising issues of concern at the community level to the government level, NGOs also have a key role to play in translating government policy at the local level. ENVIROCARE, for example translate official policy into local languages and try to make it simple and easy to understand. LEAT notes however that this flow of information from government to civil society is not as simple as explaining policy at the local level – much government information other than policy remains classified and where information is not officially classified barriers to accessing it are common – for example red tape requirements for research permits and so on. Also, a number of interviewees cited the 2002 NGO Act as one attempt by the government to assert powers of registering and de-registering NGOs according to its wishes.

#### *Role of the Media*

A number of interviewees highlighted the critical role the media plays in airing local concerns at the national level. The media was key in awareness raising and applying political pressure in the case of the Rufiji Delta prawn project for example. LEAT also notes that they identify issues to address through the media as well as by being approached directly by local communities. JET – the Journalists Environment Association of Tanzania - is therefore crucial here. JET has volunteer members based across the country in different media and in different publishing houses. When environmental issues arise they are therefore well placed to coordinate a strong media campaign and ensure the issues receive national attention. As with the NGOs however, the influence the media actually has at the government level appears to depend very much on the vested interests involved.

#### *Role of Government*

Tanzania has not long been multi-party state and the legacy of a long single party, socialist history is still evident in the hierarchical structure of society and the power of government. The formal mechanism for raising community concerns at the national level is through village government, to the district government to the national government. This mechanism depends very much on the willingness of the different levels of government to voice community concerns and a number of interviewees highlighted the barrier that is often represented at the village and district level. Although there are democratic structures at the local level such as the Village

Assembly and the District Council, most of the power still rests with *appointed* officials, who are not necessarily representative of their constituents, rather than those elected. Furthermore, village governments are often managed in a top-down manner, by individuals who are 'not aware' of the formal requirements for managing village governments. For example, the Village Assembly is the highest organ at this level empowered to take policy decisions, but it appears that such meetings rarely take place, partly because the villagers themselves are often unaware of their right to hold such meetings.

A number of interviewees highlighted the potentially important role of elected MPs. In certain cases – where MPs have their constituents' interests at heart - they have been influential in ensuring proper consultation processes. In other cases however, MPs may come from a different tribal background to many of their constituents and may have no interest in voicing their concerns.

The National Environment Management Council (NEMC) provides another forum by which local concerns can be raised at government level, through consultative workshops, seminars and meetings, as well as participatory projects such as the GEF Cross-Border Biodiversity Project, Tanzania Coastal Management Partnership, Lake Victoria Environment Management Project etc. However, due to budgetary constraints, NEMC, which is charged with providing technical advice, promoting awareness and coordinating environmental activities/projects, is unable to fully execute its plans and responsibilities.

Central government has conducted a number of consultation exercises in connection with the development of new conservation policy and legislation and this process includes local communities. While on paper this may seem like an adequate forum for ensuring all views are taken into account, a number of interviewees noted that while local people are indeed consulted by government, the *nature of consultation* makes their effective participation very limited. For example, typical consultation processes involve local and regional workshops to which local communities are invited. However, because of the formalised and hierarchical structure of government discussed above local people have limited opportunities – and limited willingness - to voice concerns in these forums. Moreover, the Tanzanian culture makes it difficult to criticise those who are in a higher position of authority than yourself and so even if opportunities are presented for local communities to have their say they often decline to criticise. An additional issue of concern raised by interviewees with respect to the government consultation process is the identification of stakeholders to be consulted. Since it is the government that identifies which stakeholders to involve, it can easily sideline those that are too critical while at the same time claiming broad representation.

#### *Role of donor agencies*

Donor agencies play a key role in raising local concerns at the national level because of the influence they wield over government. GTZ, for example, funds a community based conservation advisor to work with government and has actively lobbied for the development of appropriate legislation to put the WMA provisions into place. In addition, many conservation organisations are donor-funded so while they may appear to be very close to government they are also influenced by donor concerns.

Perhaps more important than their influence on conservation policy, donors are critical in their role as support agents for civil society strengthening. A large number of interviewees noted the weakness of civil society in Tanzania, the lack of effective representation and the unwillingness of the government to engage. A number of donor agencies are providing support for capacity

strengthening of civil society. For example, USAID has governance and democracy programmes which are aimed at strengthening civil society and also work with MPs to improve their representativeness. DFID and Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) have established a Civil Society Foundation to channel support to civil society organisations and strengthen their capacity to engage in policy debate.

#### 5.4 Coherence between government biodiversity and poverty policy

The Vice President's Office in central government includes the Division of Environment, the Poverty Eradication Division, the NGO Division and the NEMC. The DOE was responsible for preparing the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSP) and elaborating upon sectoral policy developed under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism and others, while the PED is responsible for the PRSP. Although both Divisions fall under the same overall department, the PRSP is currently weak on environmental issues including biodiversity conservation. The government has therefore developed a programme, which includes a UNDP-based environment advisor working with the Vice President's Office, to mainstream environment into the PRSP. UNDP notes that this programme has been proactively sought by the PRSP team rather than by conservation/environment organisations. The donor/NGO Informal Discussion Group has sometimes included government representatives and so helped to raise awareness about environmental issues, but it is not clear how effective this has been. The Environment Division notes that there will soon be a formal forum within government to address environmental issues in the context of the PRSP.

As noted above, sectoral biodiversity policies have identified poverty reduction as an issue but as a means to delivering better conservation rather than being the objective towards which conservation activities should be aimed. The Environment Policy specifically addresses poverty reduction but does not elaborate on mechanisms for achieving it. Poverty reduction certainly features loud and clear in the rhetoric of biodiversity policy. How this translates into reality is however another issue.

#### 5.5 Summary of interview findings

##### *Influence of civil society on conservation policy*

- *Conservation-focused organisation*

Conservation NGOs appear to be very close to government and work in partnership with government to implement conservation policy. All have some involvement in community-based conservation and so are able to provide feedback to the government from the community level and equally are in a position to inform local communities about government policy. The influence of some organisations is enhanced by their access to international funds.

- *Sustainable development organisations*

Because of dual objective of conservation and development, sustainable development NGOs are often in a better position to raise local concerns about conservation policy. However, because these organisations appear to be less closely involved with government than the conservation-focused NGOs they are therefore potentially less powerful in terms of policy influence.

- *Development organisations*

Few development organisations are engaged with conservation policy-making. Those that are engaged have a powerful role to play in raising awareness when there are negative impacts of conservation on local people. However, if they are perceived as being too

critical of government policy or too radical they risk being sidelined, therefore limiting their potential influence.

- *Grass roots organisations*

Because of their location away from Dar es Salaam, local and regional groups have less influence on national conservation policy unless effectively networked at the national level. However, these groups are included in regional and local government consultation processes – eg on the new wildlife policy or on management plans for game reserves– but not necessarily in subsequent national-level workshops. They also have less power in terms of access to funding. Channels exist through national level NGOs and also through local government processes (but then influence is dependent on the motivation of local government).

- *Local communities*

Many local communities are remote, without communications and without effective representation – other than through the local government hierarchy. In terms of government policy implementation, in some cases local communities are consulted on issues that directly affect them – eg game reserve management plans. Potential channels of influence are with local conservation officers (wardens etc) who may or may not be responsive to their concerns. NGOs are therefore key for raising local concerns at the national level through their own consultation processes.

#### *Influence of civil society on development/poverty reduction policy*

- *Conservation-focused organisation*

None of the conservation NGOs interviewed have been directly involved in the PRSP process. But through donor-NGO Informal Discussion Group on Environment they are involved in discussions on how to mainstream biodiversity in the PRSP. The Government plans to involve them more through the poverty-environment mainstreaming process. Pressure to include environment in the PRSP process has been proactively sought by the current PRSP team and donors rather than by environmental/conservation organisations trying to influence the PRSP.

- *Sustainable development organisations*

More direct involvement in PRSP process but still quite limited and only at a late stage of the process. Otherwise, engagement is as for conservation organisations (Informal Discussion Group and the poverty-environment mainstreaming process).

- *Development organisations*

Much more proactive in addressing priorities of PRSP and trying to influence it – particularly those dealing with health, education etc – but not making the environment case.

- *Grassroots organisations*

No direct involvement in PRSP process.

- *Local communities*

It is not clear whether there was any consultation with local communities in the PRSP process, other than indirectly through development NGOs which broadly represent their concerns.

#### *Linkages between conservation and development policy*

- *Activities by conservation NGOs to address poverty reduction at the project level*

It is hard now to find a conservation NGO that does not take community development issues into account. Conservation NGOs are not using biodiversity to address poverty issues, but are increasingly addressing community development needs in order to improve conservation efforts, through alternative income generation, sustainable use initiatives,

community outreach (health and education projects). This seems to be easier in the forest sector than in the wildlife sector.

- *Activities by development NGOs to address conservation*

Few development organisations are engaged in conservation debates or focusing on the role of biodiversity in poverty reduction. Those that are tend to be civil rights organisations that are concerned with land rights issues.

## 6. WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

The summary results of the interviews were presented to participants, and a number of comments were made to clarify and expand on particular points:

### *Links between conservation policy and poverty reduction objectives:*

- Conservation policy was initially shaped by colonial powers. The protected area approach where people are excluded has been promoted by the government since independence and continues today in National Parks and Games Reserves. Donors (eg. GTZ) are questioning whether this is still the right approach. Tanzania has one of the highest proportions of protected lands in the world: 26% of the country is already under strict protection, yet game reserves are still being created. This approach reflects the government's stance, rather than the influence of any donor or organisation. However, the recent policy changes recognise the need to shift the focus from creating protected areas to village based conservation areas.
- TANAPA claimed that some National Parks are formed at the request of the communities themselves because of the destruction they witness and the benefits that they see others are getting from NPs. For example, outreach programmes raise awareness amongst communities, and revenues collected from tourism is "shared" with communities for projects such as wells, clinics etc, to provide co-funding to projects initiated by communities (although this still limited). Other benefits include jobs from tourism (eg. at hunting lodges). Other workshop participants queried whether this request from local communities for more National Parks is based on a full understanding of the implications of the Parks – for example reduced access to resources and so on.
- Since over 80% of the Tanzanian population is dependent on agriculture, there is a need to ensure that agriculture is sustainable and conserves biodiversity, and to address the conflict between agriculture and protected areas, particularly at local government level. It is important to look at harmony and coherence between the different policies – agriculture, wildlife, land, forestry, livestock etc.

### *NGO influence on conservation policy*

- International conservation organisations such as WWF and AWF have played a central role in shaping conservation policy – far more so than national NGOs – because they have more money. Some national organisations do not necessarily try to influence policy – they are more concerned with helping people on the ground. The fact that they are not closely involved in policy processes does not mean they are not "aligned" with government policy.
- Civil society organisations based in Arusha are more actively engaged in issues of land use conflict associated with protected areas, as they work in northern Tanzania, where such conflicts are more pronounced. However, workshop participants only included organisations based in Dar Es Salaam which tend to focus on Southern Tanzania.

### *Local Community influence on conservation policy*

- Community participation and influence is affected by politics as well as remoteness. If community concerns seem to contest local government's interests, then they are not necessarily relayed to national government. Regional/district level governments can therefore act as a barrier to community influence. Barriers to the implementation of forest policy (JFM and CBFM) also seem to be at local government level (eg. reluctance to share benefits with communities). In many cases this is because local government has previously raised a major proportion of its budget through income from natural resource use. The new policies which advocate increased local community participation threaten this.
- Civil rights groups noted that local people are seldom involved in policy making or policy implementation. While the government policy talks about community participation, this does not happen on the ground. For example, local communities are not consulted in decisions concerning the location and boundaries of new protected areas.
- TANAPA argued that, unlike in the past, local communities are now involved in conservation planning and management. However, GTZ observed that this is so in rhetoric but not necessarily in reality. For example, when Sadani was converted from a Game Reserve to National Park, communities were invited to the consultation but did not participate because of the political culture. Local people are often afraid to voice their concerns and contradict people in higher positions. In the long term, problems will only get worse if the concerns of villagers are not addressed.

### **6.1 Who sits by the policy fire? Mapping power influences**

Workshop participants prepared maps to show the relative influence of their organisations on biodiversity and poverty reduction policy, and how much influence they feel they should have.

#### *Relative influence on biodiversity conservation policy (NBSAP, wildlife, forest etc):*

Donors and parastatals (eg. TANAPA) have significant influence on conservation policy, followed by international conservation NGOs (eg. WWF, AWF, and CARE in Zanzibar). National conservation/environment and sustainable development NGOs (TFCCG, WCST, AGENDA, JET, ENVIROCARE) have less influence, while development/civil rights groups (eg. LEAT) and academic institutions (eg. the University of Dar es Salaam, UDSM) have even less influence over conservation policy. These national organisations felt they should have far greater policy influence than they currently have, above or equal to that of international NGOs. There is some frustration amongst civil rights groups (eg. LEAT) that their efforts to influence policy are often futile. Finally, participants identified local communities as having very little influence, and felt that they should in fact have a central role in shaping conservation policy (greater than that of NGOs and donors).

#### *Relative influence on poverty reduction policy*

A similar picture emerges for influence over poverty reduction policy, with donors having significant influence, followed by international development NGOs (eg. Care Tanzania). Conservation departments (Wildlife and Forestry Divisions) are not centrally involved in the formulation of poverty reduction policy (although as government departments they are mandated to implement policy), nor are national sustainable development and conservation

NGOs. These conservation departments and national NGOs all feel that they should have greater influence over poverty reduction policy, as does the UDSM which currently has little influence. Once again, there is frustration amongst civil rights groups (LEAT) which feel that they have little influence over policy. Local communities have very little influence over poverty reduction policy, when they should in fact be centrally involved.

## **6.2 Mapping communication channels from civil society to government and between the conservation and development communities**

### *Civil society to Government:*

Conservation NGOs are well linked to policy makers in the conservation sector through networking, newsletters, consultations and field projects. Similarly, development NGOs are well linked to policy makers concerned with poverty reduction through networking, projects, awareness raising etc.

A number of NGOs, both development and conservation, have quite strong links with local communities and provide a two-way information channel between communities and national policy, through projects, awareness raising and networks (eg. TFCG's Community Forest Conservation Network). Overall, NGOs have less good links with local authorities, although in some cases these are quite strong (eg. TFCG and CARE Tanzania). The links between local communities and national government are also made, to some extent, through government departments (eg. Forestry and Wildlife Divisions) and local authorities. UDSM provides an information link between local communities and local and national government.

Donors have strong links with national and local government - through formal contractual relationships - and participate in policy and law formulation, although their involvement varies depending on the donor and policy (eg. GTZ has strong influence over conservation policy, and weak influence over PRSP formulation). Donors also have strong links with NGOs (eg. through project funding and the IDGE), and thus provide a mechanism for linking civil society and the government and facilitating information flows both ways.

### *Links between the conservation and development communities*

There are some information links between conservation and development NGOs, through the Informal Discussion Group on Environment (although this has been mainly attended by conservation NGOs), certain conservation projects (eg. CARE and TFCG) and some networks. The links between conservation NGOs and poverty reduction policy are fairly weak, while those between development/civil rights NGOs and conservation policy appear to be even weaker. Similarly, there is currently no formal mechanism to link conservation and poverty reduction policy processes, although the government's poverty and environment initiative is seeking to establish an environment group linked to the PRSP.

The media plays a key role in facilitating information flows between various actors: local communities and national policy makers, conservation and development NGOs, and donors and NGOs (eg. through JET's newsletter and national newspapers).

## **7. WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS: Enhancing local community influence**

Following the mapping exercises, which highlighted the particular need to enhance the influence of local communities over government policy, the concluding discussion of the workshop focused on the ways in which this might be achieved.

### **Strengthening the role of local government:**

There is a need to strengthen District and Village level governments in order to enhance their ability to act as effective channels for community influence over conservation policy. Issues of who wields the power and who controls the resource have to be addressed before issues of participation can be addressed. However bearing in mind the issue raised above as to the potential barrier that local government represents, mechanisms need to be found to better link local government with its constituent local communities – for example through use of elected rather than appointed institutions.

Environmental Committees provide a mechanism through which community concerns relating to conservation can be addressed and transmitted to the national government. However, local governments have limited power over conservation policy, although in some cases, they may exert an influence, particularly in the context of forest policy. It is unclear from the workshop whether district councils have the legal power to veto National Parks, but it appears that such power is often limited (eg. in the case where Karatu District Council objected to a National Park).

Village level governments often have very little power. The legal basis for local government is strong but influence and power comes with money. Villages often do not have their own budget or ability to raise funds. District councils face similar problems, although they have more resources and are becoming increasingly strong.

The creation of village lands under the 1999 Village Lands Act provides real authority to Village Assemblies to control natural resource use, and hence has the potential to give local communities a real influence over decisions. However, their role is decreasing because of lack of power, and the government is now thinking of changing the Act to narrow the definition of village lands.

### **Implementing the new Wildlife and Forest Policies:**

WMAs and JFM might form a mechanism by which communities can raise funds and therefore wield influence – as well as generating a financial incentive for conservation. Pilot WMAs are underway in about 110 villages, and incentives for conservation seem to be increasing. Requirements for registering WMAs are however very cumbersome, and this may limit their potential role (eg. communities will need to get legal support to establish WMAs).

In forestry, the focus now needs to be on implementation - cost and benefit sharing and the actual mechanisms for how the new policy is going to work. Incentives currently do not exist for local government to manage resources sustainably since they rely on natural resource harvests for revenue raising. The Forest Regulations are not yet finalised and the potential to influence these will be very important.

### **Improving Governance:**

Good governance is essential, particularly at the local level, if community concerns are to be addressed and relayed to higher levels. Village structures are often affected by 'interference'

from vested interests, making regulations and the legal framework ineffective. Local people are sometimes manipulated/co-opted for political ends, while the Chief Executive Officer of district councils is appointed by national government, and hence subject to political influence from above. Furthermore, District Councils often lack understanding of their roles.

**Strengthening decentralisation:**

The current decentralisation process is not fully realised in practice – there is a need to transfer more power from ministers to local authorities, and to complement this with capacity building and information at District level. However, there will always be a need for national government to retain some powers, and manage some resources at the national level, eg. for areas which extend beyond one district such as the Eastern Arc mountains.

**Empowering civil society:**

The ability of civil society to influence government policy is often limited as the government does not tolerate organisations that are too radical or critical, and has the power to de-register NGOs. If civil society organisations are to provide an effective mechanism for voicing local community concerns and stimulating action to address them, they will need to become much more powerful, and democracy in general will need to be strengthened so that responding to civil society concerns is no longer a matter of choice.

NGO networks can help to strengthen the voice of civil society on policy issues, providing a platform for coordinated and unified action. Existing policy networks could be broadened to address conservation as well as development policy, and links between regional organisations (eg. in Arusha) and national networks strengthened. Furthermore, there are networks which already provide a channel to link communities to the national government, such as TFCG's community forest network, which could be used to influence policy. Links to international organisations and networks have helped some advocacy organisations to withstand pressure to curtail their activities or close down.

**Improving information flows:**

In particular, there is a need to improve information flows from the government, ie. to translate policy into simple local language, ensure transparency, and reduce the amount of classified information. There is also a need for better analysis to inform decision-making at national level.

**Strengthening the role of MPs:**

Members of Parliament are potentially a very strong channel for voicing community concerns and influencing government policy – they have had good influence in some cases. Steps could be taken to strengthen their capacity to represent community concerns on issues relating to conservation and poverty reduction policy.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS AND PRIORITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Whether at international level or in Tanzania, some common observations can be made on the role of civil society in promoting biodiversity-poverty linkages:

- International conservation NGOs are considerably more influential in shaping biodiversity conservation policy than both national or local conservation organisations and people-oriented organisations representing the interests of the poor living in biodiverse areas.

- The key factor determining the level of policy influence is availability of resources – most notably financial resources, and established connections with donors and policy makers, but also advocacy skills.
- Many conservation NGOs (particularly those in-country) are increasingly addressing community development objectives – although as a means to achieve conservation rather than as an end in itself. Some development NGOs are beginning to recognise the contribution of biodiversity to local development and poverty reduction and hence the need for biodiversity conservation. Few NGOs are addressing conservation and poverty reduction as equal objectives in their work and in general the role of conservation as an engine for poverty reduction has not been recognised.
- Outside specific cases of community-conservation conflicts, it appears that few NGOs are proactively seeking to improve biodiversity-poverty linkages in the wider NGO and policy community. In general, the links between the development and conservation communities appear to be fairly weak, both amongst civil society, and between civil society and respective policy processes.

### 8.1 Civil society influence on international biodiversity policy

The conclusions arising from the review of international policy can be summarised as follows:

1. In general, people-oriented civil society organisations are not well represented at international biodiversity policy fora (eg. CBD and CITES meetings), while the wealthier international conservation NGOs have a stronger presence and act as a more powerful lobby.
2. The extent to which international conservation NGOs have mainstreamed poverty reduction objectives varies, but is low on average. Some of the large US conservation NGOs pay little attention to poverty issues; others have started to recognise the need for participation and people-centred approaches on paper; while some NGOs do appear to be genuinely pursuing such approaches. The major conservation donors also place limited emphasis on poverty issues.
3. Hundreds of millions of dollars are invested annually in conservation initiatives which appear to pay little attention to development objectives. Their impacts on the poor are therefore likely to be significant, although there seems to be little information on these impacts.
4. The development community is not really pushing for conservation impacts to be addressed, except in certain cases of community eviction etc. The role of biodiversity in achieving poverty reduction is not yet fully recognised by many international development NGOs. However, some NGOs are addressing biodiversity objectives as part of food security programmes, or in certain natural resource or conservation-related projects, but not as organisational policy.

There is clearly a need to ensure that conservation NGOs and donors respond to the concerns of people-oriented civil society organisations representing the interests of the poor, and to strengthen the involvement of such organisations in biodiversity policy fora. Similarly, development NGOs could do more to respond to biodiversity objectives in their poverty reduction programmes. *Further research* could usefully be conducted to:

1. Examine the policies, programmes, management systems and organisational culture of conservation NGOs and donors to identify influences working for and against the uptake of

- people-centred and participatory approaches, and ways to improve organisational linkages with, and inputs from, civil society organisations representing the poor in defining the agenda.
2. Assess the extent and nature of impacts of conservation initiatives of NGOs, donors and governments on the poor and on biodiversity.
  3. Examine the impacts of alternative people-centred conservation approaches on both biodiversity and the poor, and the conditions under which they work best.
  4. Understand the role of biodiversity in achieving poverty reduction objectives (eg. food security and health), and areas where conservation and poverty objectives clearly overlap, so that biodiversity objectives can be better integrated in the work of the development community, and the two communities can be brought closer together around common objectives.

## 8.2 Civil society influence on biodiversity policy in Tanzania

In Tanzania, international conservation NGOs have the greatest influence over biodiversity conservation policy – more so than national conservation or development NGOs - because they are better resourced. Most, if not all, are addressing community development needs as a means to achieve conservation, their primary objective. Government conservation policy has become more pro-poor in recent years, particularly in the forest sector. For wildlife, this is the case outside protected areas, but the government maintains strong control over wildlife – 26% of Tanzania is under protected areas. It seems that the government is the main driving force for maintaining protectionist conservation approaches, rather than conservation NGOs. Wildlife is a lucrative industry in Tanzania, which may explain the government's overall reluctance to significantly engage communities in wildlife management and benefit-sharing.

The centralist government tradition and limited tolerance of NGO advocacy or criticism makes it difficult for people-oriented organisations to try to influence biodiversity policy and policy in general. The influence of donors places them in a strong position to promote changes in policy, although some people feel that things are unlikely to change significantly until the next generation of beaurocrats takes office in 10-15 years.

This study has produced a number of generic recommendations for strengthening civil society influence in Tanzania, but *further research* is needed to identify specific activities and entry points that could most feasibly be pursued. Possible activities include:

1. Extending the focus of the NGO Policy Forum to advocacy on community-conservation conflicts, and strengthening the involvement of regional grassroots organisations working with affected communities, eg. pastoralist groups in Arusha.
2. Increasing the efforts of international donors and NGOs to strengthen Tanzanian civil society from national to village level (eg. financial support, capacity building), and to persuade the government of the need to become more responsive to civil society (eg. by amending the NGO Act, and improving mechanisms for inclusive and transparent decision-making).
3. Raising awareness amongst MPs about community-conservation conflicts, and strengthening their links with civil rights groups and representatives of affected communities.
4. Increasing the participation of civil rights and development NGOs in the Donor-NGO Informal Discussion Group on Environment.