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# **NGOs in the Forest**

**Participation of NGOs in National  
Forestry Action Programmes:  
New Experience in Papua New Guinea**

*James Mayers and Basil Peutalo*

*1995*

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INTERNATIONAL  
INSTITUTE FOR  
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by

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1995

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## Executive Summary

The global Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP) became, by the late 1980s, the most ambitious environmental aid programme ever conceived. The TFAP was also one of the first international initiatives to endorse the participation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and officially recognize their strategic contribution toward achieving conservation and sustainable development of forest resources.

But when environmental and peoples' organisations analysed a number of early National Forest Action Programmes (NFAPs) they warned that the TFAP would actually accelerate tropical forest loss. Developing country NGOs were particularly outraged that the plan blamed an amorphous mass called "the poor" for the destruction of tropical forests, while promoting investments in export-oriented forest exploitation. The response was a re-oriented programme emphasising country-driven processes which fully involve forest peoples and local communities.

This paper looks at the potential and actual roles of NGOs within NFAPs. The background and experience of Papua New Guinea's National Forestry and Conservation Action Programme (NFCAP) is described and some conclusions drawn about the participation of NGOs. This experience is combined with a review of national forest and environmental strategies elsewhere, and some lessons are derived for developing constructive partnerships with NGOs for sustainable forestry.

The NFCAP in Papua New Guinea emerged during the early stages of re-orientation of the TFAP and in response to a national crisis of confidence in the forestry sector. Major NFCAP objectives were broad national ownership of the process and a high degree of NGO and customary landowner involvement. NFCAP also broke new ground in having a programme, within the core technical support project, specifically aimed at supporting NGO capacity and developing NGO access to policy processes. The NGO community shared equal status with government departments responsible for forestry and the environment in the institutional framework of the NFCAP.

The principal successes of NGO participation in the Papua New Guinea NFCAP are:

- Involvement of NGOs in key formal decision-making bodies and structures for participation.
- Organised and effective support from NGOs for progressive government initiatives in forest policy and institutional reform.
- Institutional support to develop NGO networks, chiefly through support for the founding and development of the NGO alliance - NANGO.
- Increase in NGO capacities in forestry and related fields, through funding, training and information support.

Continuing constraints to fruitful NGO participation include:

- The perception amongst NGOs that NFCAP does not belong to them. The framework of the NFCAP was conceived and shaped before any formal mechanisms for national NGO consultation were in place.
- Opportunities for substantial NGO participation developed far more rapidly than the NGO capacity to consider the policy implications of the NFCAP.
- Slow development of initiatives oriented towards the identified primary beneficiaries of NFCAP - the customary landowners. Funding procedures for NGO participation were also opaque and unduly lengthy.
- Lack of widely-agreed goals for the type of NGO capacity which was needed, and hence the process for deciding which NGOs should be supported.

Papua New Guinea has created almost unprecedented opportunity for NGOs and customary landowner groups to participate in decisions about the management of national forests. NFCAP has also put NGOs on the political map in PNG and a delicate relationship continues to evolve between NGOs and government. It will take commitment over a considerable period yet to ensure that this process lives up to its billing and engenders lasting enrichment of PNG's development process. As far as NFCAP is concerned, the level of this commitment is uncertain.

Experience from PNG and elsewhere suggest some general lessons for developing constructive partnerships with NGOs for sustainable forestry:

#### *Strategic directions and political realism*

- It is more important that a NFAP be strategic than attempt to be fully comprehensive. Likewise, the participation of NGOs should not be expected in all areas. It may be legitimate for governments to start with a concentration on government roles alone, before going on to a wider, participatory process.
- Criteria need to be developed for determining the types of NGOs, and other bodies, which should participate. NGOs may have to prove their credibility before they are taken into account.
- Forestry rarely gets high up a central government agenda. Participants in a NFAP should know how far up the decision-making ladder their deliberations are likely to reach.

#### *Communication and information*

- An information and communication strategy is needed for a two-way process of education and consultation to develop between the NFAP and the public.
- Government agencies and NGOs need information about each other's objectives and working practices, and training to adapt to these in joint fora.

### *Appropriate policy, agreements and institutions*

- The rights and responsibilities of the NGO-Government relationship in the NFAP should be defined through consensus, and formalised in writing and/or actions. A procedure for reconciling possible points of disagreement in the pursuit of common goals should also be developed.
- NGOs need a forum to meet and coordinate approaches to the government and private sector.
- A core planning agency of government is preferable as the lead NFAP agency - to provide strategic coherence and to nurture the participation of NGOs and others.

### *Participatory approaches and capacity*

- Local expertise in participatory methods, communications, education and media activities should be identified and consulted early in a NFAP process and goals set for long-term strategy towards adaptation and institutionalisation of participatory approaches in the development of "new professionals".
- Based on an independent review of capacity amongst NGOs, a capacity needs assessment should be made and indicators of development, participation, representativeness, accountability and capacity developed with NGOs.

### *Catalysts for the process and learning environments*

- NGOs with recognised capabilities may help with early participation in NFAP processes and in starting to develop the links between top-down and bottom-up processes.
- Coordinators of NFAPs need to be able to deal with more devolved directions and complexity of process and "NGO specialists" should be included in programmes of core technical support for NFAPs.
- Frameworks for judging the achievement of progress should be developed and early phases of the NFAP should be assessed with all participants and an early round of adaptation should take place before spreading the programme.

### *A phased approach with adequate resources, skills and time*

- Phasing the process can slow the rate of raised expectations and development of conflicts and allow them to be better met and dealt with.
- Early priority should be given to supporting small NGO projects to develop confidence amongst NGO partners and to demonstrate particular approaches.
- Higher investment will be required in the early phases of a NFAP which involves NGOs and others; experience shows that in time this becomes more cost-effective.

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDAB	Australian International Development Assistance Bureau
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation
ESCOW	East Sepik Council of Women
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FSP	Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICAD	Integrated Conservation and Development
ICRAF	Individual and Community Rights Advocacy Forum
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organisation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
MOMASE	Morobe, Madang and Sepik provinces
NANGO	National Alliance of Non Governmental Organisations
NCD	National Capital District
NFA	National Forest Authority
NFAP	National Forestry Action Programme (formerly Plan)
NFCAP	National Forestry and Conservation Action Programme
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
ODA	Overseas Development Administration of the United Kingdom
PLANGO	Pacific Islands Association of NGOs
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
TFAP	Tropical Forests Action Programme (formerly Tropical Forestry Action Plan)
TSP	Technical Support Project
TST	Technical Support Team
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VDT	Village Development Trust
WB	World Bank
WEI	Wau Ecology Institute
WHO	World Health Organisation
WRI	World Resources Institute
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

### A note on exchange rates:

Over the period 1991 to 1994 the exchange rate was relatively constant until the last half of 1994 when there was a significant devaluation of the Papua New Guinea Kina. The exchange rate used in this paper is an average of the annual rates over the main period under discussion 1991-1994, ie:

US\$ 1.00 = PNG Kina 0.988 (Source: *Financial Times*, London)

## 1. The Tropical Forests Action Programme and NGOs

### *TFAP origins and early enthusiasm*

The Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP), launched in 1985, was the result of serious international attention stemming from the early 1980s. It stimulated an unprecedented level of international action to address the crisis facing tropical forests. The global level TFAP was developed by FAO, UNDP, the World Bank and the World Resources Institute (FAO/WRI/WB/UNDP, 1987). FAO assumed the coordinating role. The TFAP's initial goals were: to curb tropical deforestation; to promote the sustainable use and conservation of forest resources to meet local and national needs; and to increase the flow of international aid to the forestry sector.

The TFAP represented a basis for development of National Forest Action Plans (NFAPs). They are prepared and implemented by national governments, normally with one or more external donors and/or international NGOs. Most NFAPs are managed by a National Coordinating Unit, usually located within a line ministry for the natural resources, agriculture or forestry sector, or increasingly, the ministry of planning. NFAPs are built around a sector review process, which ideally produces a long term strategy, a policy framework, and a short term action plan with priority project profiles. By 1990, of the 125 countries with tropical forests, 75 were involved in some way in the TFAP process.

### *TFAP problems and critics*

By the late 1980s however, the TFAP had become quite controversial. Environmental and peoples' organisations had analysed a number of early NFAPs and warned that the TFAP would actually accelerate tropical forest loss (eg Caufield, 1987; Shiva, 1987; *The Ecologist*, 1987). Their concerns were that huge amounts of money were being poured into logging sectors which at the time were far from sustainable; that alternatives to logging were ignored; that the TFAP was simply encouraging commoditisation of the forests while ignoring its other multiple environmental and social benefits; that the underlying causes of deforestation were not being addressed, particularly the international economic causes; that the needs of the poor and forest dwellers were side-stepped; and that the NFAPs were driven by the needs of the donor organisations to distribute aid, not the needs of the countries concerned who, though aware of this, could hardly ignore the apparent financial benefits.

### *TFAP "revamping" and the emphasis on NFAPs*

Donors and recipient governments shared some of these concerns. This stimulated various evaluations (eg Winterbottom, 1990; Sargent 1990) and a formal Independent Review of the TFAP in 1990 (Ullsten *et al*, 1990). The result, in the words of FAO's TFAP coordinator was that, "*a renewal of the objectives, principles and operational procedures was carried out in 1991, resulting in changing the concept of the programme from a donor-directed international Action Plan to a country-driven process supporting the developing countries (and not only the tropical ones) in the preparation and implementation of NFAPs within the framework of a participatory, multidisciplinary approach*" (FAO, 1994a).

This country-driven process was to fully involve forest peoples and local communities. This meant much more emphasis on "country capacity projects", projects designed to facilitate capacity building in the management, policy, planning, and technical fields, and within the NGO sector.

### *NFAPs and NGOs*

The TFAP was one of the first international initiatives to endorse the participation of NGOs and officially recognize their strategic contribution toward achieving conservation and sustainable development of forest resources. Yet few, if any, of the issues raised by the TFAP have evoked more emotion and rhetoric from both the accusers and accused alike than that concerning NGO involvement (Cabarle, 1992; Inglis, 1992).

Early documents on the TFAP by FAO were generally weak on the mechanisms for country-level implementation. NGO participation was supported, but the impression often given was that NGO involvement was an afterthought in the process. By 1989, this situation had changed a little and the FAO "Guidelines for Implementation of the TFAP at Country Level" referred to *"the critical role of NGOs in assuring grassroots participation"* and contained specific principles of how NGOs should be involved in the process. It was proposed that the fields in which NGOs can play a role should be determined in the early stages of the development of a national TFAP, through an active dialogue with the NGO community. (FAO, 1989).

However, the guidelines effectively limited NGO participation by focusing on the use of forestry sector reviews, conducted largely by donor agency forestry experts and their national government counterparts. Little attention was given to creating appropriate mechanisms for NGO involvement and to examining and addressing the many constraints that might limit their participation. From 1988 to 1990, the World Resources Institute (WRI) assembled and monitored a database covering NGO involvement in TFAP exercises in 25 countries. In TFAP preparation, meetings were convened for NGO input in only seven countries. NGOs were invited to participate in TFAP round tables and workshops to comment on TFAP reports in approximately half of these countries. Yet counting the presence of NGO representatives at TFAP meetings hardly provides real insight into their involvement in the TFAP process. Overall, a WRI author concluded, *"the record of NGO and local community participation in the TFAP is dismal when compared with its original expectations and the needs of the millions of rural poor"* (Cabarle, 1992). This was the context in which PNG's NFAP developed (see below).

NFAP Operational Principles were produced in 1991 and were revised in 1994. The Operational Principles are meant to be *"practical tools"* to help those involved in the preparation and implementation of NFAPs. *"They are not recipes to be followed blindly, but merely attempt to clarify the nature of the steps of the NFAP process and some of the procedures involved"*. (FAO, 1994b)

NGOs have a prominent role in the revised Operational Principles. They are proposed as one of three national partners, the other two being: government institutions; and the highly heterogeneous grouping of people's associations, private interests and user groups. NGOs are also to be the subjects of capacity review and capacity building, particularly for

decentralised programmes of planning and investment in forestry development. The Principles state: "in many countries, the development of a partnership between local people and their associations, local and national development and conservation NGOs, as well as the private sector, will require specific dynamic action. The government's role in facilitating the participation of these groups in the process may require policy changes and the provision of several supporting activities such as incentives, training, dissemination of information in local languages and technical advice." (FAO, 1994b)

Another area noted by the Operational Principles where capacity building is likely to be needed within NFAPs is in support for development of NGO coalitions which enable the NGO community to: (i) learn from each other's experience; (ii) coordinate their activities; and, (iii) make their participation in the national NFAP Steering Committee more effective.

### *What's so special about NGOs?*

Being defined only by something which they are not - *non-governmental* - some would say that NGOs have good grounds for complaint. The all-inclusiveness of the term NGO when used by some can make it almost meaningless. It does not fully differentiate between function, ownership and scale of operation. Some include non-profit organisations in the private sector, academic and research organisations and even local government in their definition of NGOs. This is reflected in the term used in the agreements made at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992: the 'major groups' or the 'independent sectors'. NGOs are also known as the 'third sector' in contrast to the government and business sectors.

Some authors writing about NGOs distinguish between *membership support organisations*, staffed and elected by the people they are meant to serve and represent, and *grassroots support organisations*, which are professionally based and in some sense independent from grassroots control (Farrington and Bebbington, 1993). This paper generally assumes a combination of these two groupings when using the label "NGO". Yet even within this narrower definition, NGOs are diverse and cover a spectrum from long-established, major international and national institutions to fragile, local operations with no staff or guaranteed funding. They may work on single issues or broad-based concerns.

The UNCED agreements emphasise that pluralistic civil society, comprising civic groups working alongside government and the private sector, is critical to sustainable development. NGOs, where truly representative, can be effective in organising the many niches of civil society; where government recognises this role financially, technically and legally, the prospects for sustainable development are good (Carew-Reid *et al*, 1994).

In the forestry sector, NGOs offer distinctive perspectives. Generally, they do not start with the concern for timber that dominates so many government and private sector institutions. They may focus on: the environment and forest conservation; poverty and rural dwellers; or social justice for indigenous and other marginalised forest dwellers. NGOs are often able to take more controversial stands, act more quickly and innovate more easily than their larger more established counterparts (Korten, 1992). The potential benefits of NGO involvement in NFAPs are summarised in Box 1.

## Box 1

### Benefits of NGO Involvement in NFAPs

NGOs have varied and diverse capabilities for pursuing sustainable development of forests. Some of the areas of NGO capability of importance to NFAP planning and implementation processes include:

- identifying clients' needs and taking rapid decisions on how to respond to needs;
- community mobilisation, encouraging appropriate community organisation and capacity building;
- awareness raising and communications;
- delivery of services and extension of government and aid agency programmes;
- information and applied research of relevance to local needs and conditions;
- questioning assumptions (eg about state control over forested lands, the appropriateness of timber harvesting in primary forests, or the appropriate royalty rates to charge concessionaires)
- innovation based on freedom to experiment;
- mediation and reconciliation of conflict;
- watchdog, warning and monitoring;
- facilitation of integrated, cross-sectoral and participatory approaches; and,
- policy analysis and advocacy.

Most NGOs do not have capacity in all these areas, nor wish to have it. NGO partnerships and coalitions may be able to exercise these functions collectively. Such coalitions can complement weak government and provide a vehicle by which planning and implementation processes can encompass citizens' participation and represent popular concerns. In this context NGOs can:

- help bring greater diversity of approaches and community-level insights to complex problems;
- draw attention to the rights and needs of groups on the margins of society; and,
- help make government responsive and accountable to groups that lack influence in decision-making (Morrison, 1989; Cort, 1991).

The type and degree of participation negotiated with and by NGOs has varied in each NFAP case. In many cases however, the NFAP process has been led by donor agencies and governments, and in such circumstances the onus has been on NGOs to "prove" their institutional responsibility and credibility before participation is allowed. In an ideal world, such organisational credibility would be a transparent goal of all organisations, governmental and non-governmental, but in many cases NGOs do not regard government as part of their constituency, and are thus reluctant to "prove themselves" to government. The experience of Papua New Guinea in trying to develop a more equitable partnership between government and NGOs is described in section 3 of the text.

It is being increasingly well-established, by both comparisons between projects and comparisons within projects, that the benefits of the type of interactive participation to which NGOs can contribute may be substantial. For example, in its 1994 review of implementation of its own forest sector policy, the World Bank noted that "deepening of participation in the governance of the forest sector is needed. In general, when the design of institutional arrangements has actively involved various stakeholders and when agreements were reached between governments and affected groups of stakeholders regarding benefits and management responsibilities, the likelihood of a successful outcome was greatly improved." (World Bank, 1994).

Until recently, however, governments have tended to dominate most policy and strategy processes. At best, participation has been seen as an end in itself, with NGOs being dragged into participating in operations of no prior interest to them, in the very name of participation. However, like the TFAP, many strategies that were prepared with little non-governmental input have, more recently, realised the role of interactive participation, and they recommend non-governmental involvement in implementation and future iterations (Bass *et al*, 1995).

### *After UNCED: the current context and relevance of TFAP and NFAPs*

Since the TFAP 'revamping' of 1991/92, an adequate reform of the TFAP's governance, management, and contents has yet to be defined or introduced to the satisfaction some of its various partners. At the international level, most NGOs have largely kept their distance from the TFAP. Although there is a continued high demand for assistance through TFAP, political and financial support for the TFAP is still waning. In the early 1990s the World Bank distanced itself from the TFAP in preparation of its new forestry projects, leading some commentators to conclude that the TFAP at that time was, for all practical purposes, dead (Rich, 1994).

The outputs of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) put much emphasis on sustainable forestry and the need for forest activities to take place within an intersectoral and participatory framework. The main chapter dealing with forests in the UNCED action plan, Agenda 21, requests the signatories "to prepare and implement, as appropriate, national forestry action programmes and/or plans for the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests" which "should be integrated with other land uses" (Chapter 11; UNCED, 1992).

Some argued that the TFAP should have been replaced with a more effective mechanism by UNCED. In retrospect, much of the criticism may have been inevitable given the evolution of NFAPs from a fairly narrow, sectoral planning exercise towards a process aiming to address some of the root causes of deforestation. The criticism also reflected the varying perceptions of national sovereignty over the use of natural resources versus the growing international demands for democracy and global environmental management (Oksanen *et al*, 1993).

However, TFAP is also valuable for its experience, accumulated over the years, regarding the operational and political aspects of mobilising an international response to the global deforestation crisis. In spite of its problems, many NFAPs are ploughing ahead with effective practical work irrespective of the stormy climate of global forest politics. By the end of 1994, 92 countries had decided to undertake national planning of forestry sector activities and 60 of them had completed the formulation (but were not necessarily in phases of implementation - see above) of their NFAP<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the NFAPs have been prepared in the framework of TFAP. Some in Asia have been prepared with the support of the Asian Development Bank as Forestry Master Plans, others have been prepared through Forest Sector reviews organised by the World Bank. Eight of these 60 NFAPs have been prepared in non tropical countries (FAO, 1994)

In its 1994 "TFAP Stock-Taking", FAO state that in 14 out of the 31 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America considered to be implementing NFAPs, the NFAP "has made a positive impact on the development, organisation and recognition of NGOs." (FAO, 1994a). FAO recognises that this assessment is their own, and not necessarily that of the NGOs! (J.Clement, personal communication).

## **2. Papua New Guinea: Forests, People, NGOs, Trouble**

### ***Biodiversity, rugged terrain, multiple nations***

The geography of Papua New Guinea creates a tremendous diversity of habitats, including some of the most species-rich rainforests and coral reefs in the world. Terrestrial environments are influenced by great variation in rainfall, altitude, soil, and history of disturbance. Papua New Guinea is thought to harbour five per cent of the world's biodiversity in less than one per cent of the land area - perhaps totalling 400,000 species of fungi, plants, and animals (CRC, 1995).

Nearly half of PNG's 3.5 million people live in the Highlands which is separated from the coastal fringes by a natural barrier of steep mountains and dense forests. The remoteness of many communities is part of the explanation of PNG's great cultural diversity. It is estimated that PNG has more than 700 distinct languages, 25% of the world's total.

### ***Customary land ownership - no national forest estate***

Imposed European-based tenurial systems did not survive PNG's independence in 1975, and customary tenure, under which forest land cannot be sold, was brought back. Approximately 97 per cent of the land in PNG is under customary ownership. The remaining 3 per cent of land (14,000 sq. km) has been alienated from the customary system - some freehold, some leased to private interests and the rest held by the government. Only government may acquire lands from customary landowners. It may do so by compulsory purchase for specified public purposes, but this authority is rarely exercised. Instead, any acquisition generally requires protracted negotiations at the local level.

By law, while minerals and the rights to use natural water resources are vested in the state, forests are regarded as private property. The government may issue permits for timber exploitation, but it must first negotiate acquisition of the rights from local communities. There is thus no "national forest estate" to be zoned, planned and allocated as in most other countries. Customary forms of tenure have severely limited the effective power of the state to determine the manner in which forests will be used. The issues of landowner "awareness", motivations and incentives are therefore critical to the success of any plan to modify this use. (See Box 2).

## Box 2

### The Landowner Challenge for Forest Conservation in PNG

Systems of customary land tenure are complex, varying greatly from region to region, and are highly flexible. It is to these systems, that conservation focused activities must adapt, if there is to be any chance of safeguarding PNG's biodiversity endowment in the long term. Most land in Papua New Guinea is owned by customary landowners. This poses a different set of challenges to achieving conservation when compared to those faced in most other developing countries (where conservation areas can be established on alienated land).

Since nearly all land remains under customary tenure, there is hardly a single indigenous citizen who is not, and does not frequently claim to be, a 'landowner'. Many landowners are also politicians, and nearly all politicians are also landowners, but landowners are not a social class whose interests can be compared with those of other sections of the population.

Insofar as a class of rural landowners can be distinguished whose land is the primary source of their subsistence, it is still difficult to maintain that they necessarily share a common interest in the 'conservation' of that land beyond the simple preservation of their tenure. Material 'development' through generating income is often the main priority, and conservation achievements are unlikely to result unless landowners benefit tangibly, and are able to obtain income and social services from conservation management.

As Colin Filer has put it: "Education itself is most unlikely to compensate for the mixture of landowner material motives. What this means, very simply, is that NFCAP will not get very far with forest conservation unless it counters one material incentive with another. The international community has recognised this fact by conceding the need to supplement 'landowner awareness' with 'benefit packages'. The problem now is to work out the correct rate of exchange between these two commodities." (Filer, 1991).

A problem with many current donor programmes is that only a fraction of the amount earmarked for conservation actually reaches the landowners. Often there is little understanding of local needs and the complexity of social and ecological systems. Such projects, by neglecting the big picture, tend to address symptoms rather than causes. Moreover, there has been a very poor integration of conservation objectives into development projects. The corollary is that there have been few conservation achievements in Papua New Guinea through active interventions.

There is however much potential for agreements within and between land groups, with their legal basis of control over land and resources formalised under the instrument of Incorporated Land Groups (a process and legal mechanism by which representative Land Groups can be registered), to set aside areas for conservation, linked to development initiatives. If a number of land groups collaborate, the collective area may represent a substantial conservation area. The Department of Environment and Conservation is pressing ahead with two Integrated Conservation and Development (ICAD) projects with assistance from the Global Environment Facility and Chevron Kutubu. The quest is now on for alternative development options which do not destroy the forests and yet provide sustained benefits comparable to or better than timber production.



### *Cultural variation and social stratification*

Social indicators show a low quality of life for many people in the rural areas and the unemployed of the towns. The UNDP's Human Development Index of 173 countries places PNG at 129 (UNDP Human Development Report, 1993). There is considerable spatial variation in levels of well-being within Papua New Guinea.

Given the considerable heterogeneity of cultures and ecological conditions, it is difficult to make generalisations about the ways in which people perceive their natural environment, and systems of resource ownership and allocation. It can certainly be concluded, however, that financial dividends from current, exploitative development (such as logging) are not generally being invested in broadening the rural economy's base. Furthermore, growing economic stratification in PNG is, in part, fuelling landowner demands for exploitative development to meet new lifestyle demands (Filer, 1995).

### *Few local benefits from logging, with loggers in control*

Customary landowners currently receive a pittance of the real value of their timber from logging. The inability of the government and of landowners to capture a sufficient proportion of the rent from current logging, conducted almost entirely by foreign companies, is leading to pressures to maximise income by maximising the scale of production, an obviously inefficient form of resource use. There is evidence in some areas of PNG of the large-scale abandonment of subsistence gardens with the onset of industrial logging (with adverse implications for the maintenance of traditional knowledge of subsistence methods).

Selective logging of the natural rainforest in PNG, as currently practised, causes serious degradation of the forest, felling and damaging between thirty per cent (in the best circumstances) and seventy-nine per cent (in the worst circumstances) of the existing forest environment (Cameron and Vigus, 1993). Alternative forestry practices, such as those based on portable sawmilling, provide one means of increasing the standing value of forests, but in practice have received little formal government support.

In 1989, a judicial inquiry into the PNG forest sector, chaired by Judge Thomas Barnett, identified extensive malpractice in the largely foreign-owned industry (Government of Papua New Guinea, 1989). The inquiry confirmed the worst and signalled the importance of the forest resource and the gravity of the management problem it faced. The Barnett Inquiry sparked the PNG Government's call for an action programme to put things right.

### *NGOs, forestry and conservation*

The PNG constitutional goals related to "integral human development", "Papua New Guinean ways" and the safeguarding of the natural environment provide strong support for the pursuit and practice of sustainable development. Yet since independence, much of the top-down system of government inherited from the Australian colonial administration has persisted. In many parts of PNG, government organisations capable of delivering development services simply do not exist. Government is not able to do the work alone and probably never will be. In PNG, there is a perhaps unique level of need for

government to form working partnerships with NGOs and communities.

In most parts of PNG, communities still lack effective development-promoting organisations of their own, capable of coordinating resources for local development. In the last 3-5 years however, there has been a steady increase in the number of small grassroots support organisations operating in many areas of the country, with the aim of promoting some aspect of community organisation and local development (see Box 3). Some of these groups have formed around single issues and have a specialised focus (eg. literacy, landowner rights) while others take a more general and integrated approach. Many of the groups are linked to churches or larger provincial or national NGO umbrella groups (eg. the East Sepik Council of Women or the PNG Trust). There is a major demand from these organisations for support in the development of their capacity to help communities promote their own development.

At the provincial and national level, most NGOs consider their primary work to be the building of capacity of district and local organisations and key individuals through training, technical assistance and through building networks of mutual support. These organisations, together with their local counterparts, are often in the best positions to actually facilitate development processes and to provide the sustained support and follow-up needed. Capacity building of these organisations is argued by many to be the single most critical need for the realisation of local development in PNG.

### Box 3

#### The Development of NGOs in PNG

For many years, the churches in Papua New Guinea have played pivotal roles in the provision and maintenance of basic community services. Most of these services - education, health, youth, women, literacy, spiritual development - have been voluntarily provided with little or no assistance from the government. Their services have often targeted disadvantaged and vulnerable communities who have often enjoyed little or no access to government services.

In the post-independence period, government assistance to and liaison with NGOs has been *ad hoc* at best, reflecting firstly the absence of a clear national NGO policy, and secondly, the peculiar autonomous character and organization of NGOs. They are diverse in character and include community based action groups, social service agencies, humanitarian groups and religious organisations. More recently, a range of newer NGOs with an environment and development focus has emerged. Branches of international NGOs also participate with a growing number of local NGOs which have emerged in response to various needs (Peutalo and Moi'he, 1991).

Until the last few years, more formal and organised linkages between the government and NGOs were not considered feasible since the NGOs by and large did not form major alliances or an organised movement. In 1990, however, a more coherent relationship became possible with the formation of the National Alliance of Non-Government Organizations of PNG (NANGO-PNG), which aims to foster collaboration between NGOs.

In the 1990s the government has taken a number of initiatives designed to strengthen and coordinate NGO-government efforts for national development. The NFCAP broke new ground as the first of these major initiatives.

### 3. Papua New Guinea's New Approach to NGOs and the NFAP Process

*"They gave us a lolly to shut our mouths"*  
(NGO participant at a workshop discussing NFCAP)

#### *Origins of NFCAP - the Knights of the Round Table*

Judge Barnett unleashed the wrath of his twenty one volumes on the Papua New Guinea forestry sector in 1989 (Government of Papua New Guinea, 1989). This was the trigger for forest sector reformation. While many had suspicions, it was no longer easy to deny the existence of extensive malpractice in the largely foreign-owned industry. Few benefits were reaching the customary landowners, while the damage to the resource and loss of future benefits was severe. The revelations of mismanagement and corruption were not only remarkable for their detail, but were also widely publicised through the relative freedom of the PNG press. Government called for the TFAP to review the forestry sector and propose an action programme to put things right.

In May 1989 an inter-agency mission under the leadership of the World Bank began the review of the PNG forestry sector.<sup>2</sup> As noted above, this coincided with the early stages of reorientation of international TFAP objectives. The World Bank in particular seems to have regarded the PNG review as a test case of its own sincerity in addressing, in particular, the conservation concerns of TFAP critics.

The mission's report was completed in October 1989, and the final report, including a list of 'Suggested Project Proposals', in February 1990. The report was in the form of an action plan which was presented to a 'Round Table' meeting of public and private sector agencies, local and international NGOs and donor representatives, in April 1990.

Criticisms of the review process and its outcome came from a number of sources, notably those published by the Chairman of the PNG Law Reform Commission, and by a collection of NGOs under the leadership of the New Guinea Island Campaign Group and the Rainforest Information Centre, both based in New South Wales, Australia (Brunton, 1990; RIC, 1990). Unimpressed by the "World Bank's new green clothes", they viewed the package of proposed reforms as a castle built on the sand of several false assumptions, especially:

- that PNG politicians and businessmen will voluntarily renounce the ill-gotten gains exposed by the Barnett Inquiry, or be obliged to do so by the formulation of new laws, policies, regulations or procedures;
- that PNG bureaucrats can acquire the capacity to regulate commercial timber

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<sup>2</sup> The other agencies involved in the review process were: UNDP, FAO, ADB, IUCN, IIED, AIDAB, the New Zealand Ministry of External Relations and Trade, and the German Federal Republic's technical cooperation agency (GTZ).

harvesting by foreign companies in a manner which is consistent with any meaningful conservation values;

- that PNG landowners can be forced or persuaded to submit to central government decisions concerning the use of their own land (Filer, 1991).

Whilst the ground has changed considerably in five years, few would claim today that these implicit assumptions have, in fact, proven fully sound.

Some university-based local NGOs were also critical of World Bank lending to PNG for accelerating the registration of alienated lands and to loosen up customary landholdings. To get around the cultural impossibility of customary landowners relinquishing their communally-owned lands, the Bank has stimulated "lease-lease-back" arrangements by which landowners lease customary lands to the government which then leases them back to land developers. The developers, often "big men" of the customary group, can then use this "leased-back" land as credit for land development schemes (Colchester and Lohmann, 1993). Critics argue that the resulting growing income disparities and migration to the cities are destroying PNG society.

Despite these criticisms in 1990 however, only one NGO (Melanesian Solidarity) actually resolved to boycott and picket the proceedings of the TFAP Round Table. Donors were quick to pledge support for the twenty projects identified as priority needs, and reflecting the shift in global TFAP priorities, forest conservation projects accounted for more than half of the funding proposed at the Round Table, compared to a quoted figure of 9 per cent for the TFAP as a whole at that time (Pearce, 1990; quoted in Filer, 1991).

In early 1991 the original NFAP was broadened into the National Forestry and Conservation Action Programme (NFCAP) to "better reflect the complementarity between the use of forests for conservation purposes and industrial wood production and the need to improve benefits flowing to the customary landowners" (Dolman, 1994).

#### *A "Partnership with NGOs" - Steering the NFCAP*

The NFCAP reflected another area of global TFAP momentum, with major objectives being broad national ownership of the process and a high degree of NGO and landowner involvement.

Project documents relating to NFCAP raised high expectations for NGO and landowner participation, which extended far beyond a narrow role for them as "project executants". In respect of the institutional framework of the NFCAP, the NGO community, later to be represented by the National Alliance of NGOs (NANGO), shared equal status with the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and the National Forest Authority (NFA).

Customary landowners were identified by NFCAP as the major beneficiaries in the long-run, with other major beneficiaries being the "NGOs through their strengthened environmental management capacity and ability to promote the concepts and implementation of sustainable resource use and conservation". Also, "The task of detailed

preparation and implementation of the (NFCAP) will be the *joint responsibility* of the government and the NGO Community".

Furthermore, NGOs and landowner interests were represented as "equals" on:

- The NFCAP Steering Committee and several sub-committees;
- The Board of the National Forest Authority created by a new Forestry Act (1991) stemming from NFCAP;
- The Provincial Forest Management Committees also required by the new Forest Act.

The NFCAP became a highly ambitious programme. It was overseen by a full time National Coordinator through the above-mentioned Steering Committee comprised of representatives from several government departments, NGOs and the Universities. A Technical Support Project (TSP) provided on-line support through three specialists who are aligned to the Forest Authority, Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and the non-government sector respectively. The TSP was funded by the UNDP and British Overseas Development Administration (ODA).

Discussions on preparing the TSP began in July 1990. Representatives of NANGO, together with a representative from the UK-based International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED), joined the Government of PNG in these discussions. This set the scope for NGO participation and involvement in the NFCAP. An immediate outcome of this was the inclusion of the NGO Component of the TSP, which became funded by the ODA and managed by IIED. The NGO Component was coordinated by a full time Papua New Guinean consultant NGO Specialist as a member of the Technical Support Team (TST). IIED staff members provided support to the NGO Specialist through a programme of visits to PNG and, in certain instances, recruitment of external consultants and locally-based specialists.

PNG thus became the first NFAP to have a core NGO support project closely linked to the national NFAP coordinator and steering committee. The objectives of the NGO Component of the TSP were broadly:

- facilitating NGO participation in NFCAP processes
- facilitating NFCAP projects with NGO involvement
- strengthening NGO capacities for initiatives in sustainable forest development
- developing mechanisms for participation of landowners
- supporting and promoting NGO-government relations.

### *The NFCAP Donors*

As lead donor agency, the World Bank had an executive function for the TSP and is prominent in coordinating activities of other donors. Additionally the Bank administer trust funds on behalf of others, including a Japanese Grant Facility used to finance several large NFCAP projects, and an Australian-sourced Trust Fund which has provided the technical assistance needed to restructure the forestry administration and build capacity of national NGOs (see below).

The Bank has been very influential in the development of the NFCAP. While the PNG government is behind the wheel, it is the donors who have provided locomotion. To date the Bank has not committed any loan funds through NFCAP, but is managing the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which is financing an Integrated Conservation And Development (ICAD) project. The Australian government has been the major contributor of grant aid. Other donors have included the Governments of New Zealand, Sweden and Germany, and the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), UNESCO and the ADB.

### *A review of the NGO experience with NFCAP*

The following section attempts to describe some of the main features of four years of NFCAP with regard to NGO involvement and the government-NGO "partnership". Appendix 1 outlines a chronology of some of the main events of relevance to NFCAP, NGOs and forest sector reform in PNG. Appendix 2 gives a perspective on progress and constraints in the forest sector under NFCAP.

In examining NGO involvement in the NFCAP, it is easier to identify the setting up of *means* (eg. newsletters or working group meetings) rather than the achievement of *ends*. A review is thus faced with the challenge of identifying indirect and *process* successes and failures (Thomson, 1992). In the following section, progress is reviewed under the five general objectives of the NGO Component of the TSP.

### *Facilitating NGO participation in NFCAP processes*

NGOs have retained formal representation on the Board of the National Forest Authority despite two attempts, backed by the elements of the logging industry, to change the 1991 Forestry Act to remove them. In addition to reflecting a successful fight by the NGOs, this represents considerable governmental recognition that the NGO view is vital. Progress with convening and resourcing the *Provincial Forest Management Committees* was very slow and by early 1995, few had met. The potential for constructive NGO-government relations in forming and pursuing provincial forest strategy in these fora remains high however.

Less formal NGO participation in the NFCAP process was developed in the *NFCAP NGO Working Group*. This represented about 10 NGOs and NANGO and was first convened by the NGO Specialist in 1992. The group met periodically to review NGO input into major NFCAP projects, to plan training exercises for NGOs, and in one case to collectively develop a project proposal to forward to the Steering Committee.

The *NGO Specialist* of the TSP was a Papua New Guinean with considerable expertise in NGO organisations, NGO-government relations, NGO-landowner relations, the local perspectives of NGOs, and liaison with NGO groups. Planning for the NGO Component noted a number of difficulties with the "traditional" technical assistance project with an external consultant and a local counterpart. Counterparts are often given rather routine things to do, tasks which do not utilise the competence they have. Rather than building capacity this leads to "drowning" in day-to-day problems. Furthermore, the position of the counterpart is not always attractive to competent people, as it tends to involve being

dependent on, and monitored by, external agencies.

Rather than having a single counterpart, the NGO Specialist had *a number of inter-active collaborations* with: NANGO, a range of NGOs, the Department of Environment and Conservation, the National Forest Authority, and other agencies. This appears to have been successful. Whilst not spectacular in any one agency, the collective willingness and capacity for government and NGO bodies to work together on efforts contributing to productive change towards sustainable development in forests, and to promote a learning environment in the process, has improved considerably.

The NGO Component produced the "*NGO NFCAP Newsletter*" which came to represent a newsletter on NFCAP generally. The Newsletter was a key element in nurturing information flows between government and NGOs on NFCAP. The substantial *NFCAP awareness raising activity* (through the newsletter, meetings, briefings), led to a gradual raising of understanding and working knowledge of NFCAP amongst NGOs. However, it was rare to find strategic thinking amongst NGOs on how they should relate to the NFCAP. Most NGOs are very locally focused, and with a few exceptions<sup>3</sup>, do not devote much time to national policy analysis or wider national political perspectives, since this imposes a real cost on their ability to do local work.

#### *Facilitating NFCAP projects with NGO involvement*

Expectations were raised high at the beginning of the process that the *NFCAP would be a quick and effective mechanism for supporting NGO projects*. This was not the case for at least the first two years of NFCAP and some disenchantment amongst NGOs set in.

From 1993, the TSP put a higher priority on developing projects for incorporation in the NFCAP than on technical assistance to NGOs. The NGO Component developed simple criteria for NGO proposals for small grant funding (less than Kina 50,000, or US\$ 50,600) from an AIDAB Trust Fund for NFCAP; provided assistance where requested in proposal structuring; and facilitated the approval of funds for 16 NGO projects (Box 4). All of these projects are initiatives aimed at *development of alternatives to large-scale logging*.

There are plans for the impact of these NGO projects to be assessed before the end of 1995. Preliminary indications are that the majority of projects have achieved some impressive results and have been quite effective at stimulating the spread of initiatives.

Interest is also developing in the *financing possibilities through other channels* such as innovative credit schemes, and systems for providing collateral and security for lending from commercial sources. The NGO Component encouraged NGOs to investigate *innovative joint proposals* which, for example, graft the management and project execution capability of one NGO, with the grassroots capability of another.

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<sup>3</sup> eg. Melanesian Solidarity, Individual and Community Rights Advocacy Forum [see Appendix 3] and others, when under the "umbrella" of NANGO

Box 4

NGO Projects Supported by NFCAP

One major donor-funded NFCAP project - the Ecoforestry Programme - is managed and implemented by an NGO, the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSP-PNG). This project offers customary landowner groups an alternative to logging based on good management of forest linked to portable sawmills and "eco-timber" markets. Some other major NFCAP projects, such as the Integrated Conservation and Development project, have subcontracted work to NGOs.

In addition, the following projects were funded under a Trust Fund financed by AIDAB and managed by the World Bank. The NGO Component of the TSP facilitated the development of the proposals. Following approval by the NFCAP Steering Committee, the proposals were forwarded via the TSP and NFCAP Coordinator for final approval by AIDAB and the World Bank. The system proved to be more cumbersome than originally expected. Allocations from the Trust Fund were made in three tranches. The status of each project as of early 1995 is noted:

First tranche, August 1993, total amount about K83,000 (US\$84,000):

- \* Eco-forestry demonstration and training centre - Village Development Trust, Bukawa, Morobe. Under way.
- \* Kupers Range community conservation project - Wau Ecology Institute, Wau, Morobe. Under way.
- \* Landowners awareness campaign - East New Britain Soses Eksen Komiti, Rabaul, East New Britain. Completed.
- \* Project preparation workshop - NANGO-PNG, NCD. Not held (funds not allocated).
- \* NGOs forest management training course - UNITECH and NGOs, Lae. Completed.

Second tranche, November 1993, total amount about K200,000 (US\$202,400):

- \* Training and reference manual for portable sawmilling and local forest management: translation into tok pisin - Village Development Trust. Under way.
- \* Environmental awareness and monitoring of logging by landowners - Lokal Envairomen Foundeisen, New Ireland. Under way
- \* Gau Agroforestry Project - Gau Land Group Inc., Morobe Province. Under way
- \* Environmental Awareness and Sustainable Forest Product Based Enterprise Training Programme - East New Britain Soses Eksen Komiti. Under way
- \* Butterfly ranching in Madang - Wau Ecology Institute. Under way
- \* Legal awareness workshops and litigation fund - Individual and Community Rights Advocacy Forum, NCD. Under way

Third tranche, September 1994, total amount about K300,000 (US\$303,600):

- \* Pilot community afforestation in fire-prone grasslands - Daga Baha'i Spiritual Assembly. Milne Bay. Starting.
- \* Afforestation for Community Housing - Habitat for Humanity-PNG. Markham Valley, Morobe. Starting.
- \* Caterets Mangroves and Shoreline Reforestation - Tuluon Association. New Ireland. Starting.
- \* Pilot community afforestation project for timber deficit areas - Enga Baptist Union. Enga. Starting.
- \* Trobriand Pilot Reforestation Programme - Kiriwina Community Council. Losuia District. Milne Bay. Starting



An indication of the heightened perception of the value of NGOs is in the number of *government-led NFCAP projects which have incorporated an NGO liaison position*, eg. the GEF Integrated Conservation and Development Project (see Box 6).

### *Strengthening NGO capacities*

Most organisations in PNG's NGO sector are young and evolving. Like all organisations in this condition, they may have weak capacities, but collectively there is great richness in the diversity, with NGOs displaying varying strengths, weaknesses, expertise, organisational and managerial abilities. The NGO Component embarked on a NGO inventory with a questionnaire approach. Questionnaire returns were good but it was found that NGOs were overplaying what was known of their capabilities to deliver services etc. and underplaying their resources in the hope of generating funding support.

Description of capacity amongst NGOs does not easily fit the easy categories of, for example, staff numbers, management systems, research programmes and training levels. Broader concepts of capacity may be needed which allow for obvious NGO strengths in terms of local knowledge, flexibility, etc. Nevertheless, expertise/strengths of NGOs can be grouped in quite "traditional" terms, for example in Momase Region, NGO capacity includes:

- *training* community organisations, "training trainers", small businesses and even government organisations and officials in business, management and marketing skills (eg. Business Education and Support Training, Kum-Gie Consult)
- *natural resource management and ecology* (eg. Wau Ecology Institute, Village Development Trust; Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific), and through links with academic institutions (eg. University of Technology, University of PNG), access to considerable technical expertise;
- access to considerable *legal expertise* (eg Melanesian Solidarity, Individual and Community Rights Advocacy Forum and the Foundation for Law Order and Justice);
- *provincial networks* of trained workers and capacity for extension services and follow-up (eg the provincial women's councils and the church organisations);
- *links with landowner organisations*, or are landowner organisations themselves (eg. Asples-Madang, Grassroots Opportunities for Work, East Sepik Council of Women and many others);
- *awareness raising* programmes at the local level, involving long periods out in the field with local communities (the so-called barefoot environmentalists, para-legals, development teams, etc - eg. Melanesian Environment Foundation, PNG Trust, Women's organisations, church organisations);
- programmes for *women's empowerment* (eg. the Women's Councils);

- a wide range of experience in *local credit schemes* (eg. Kum-Gie Consult);
- basic provision of *literacy, education, and spiritual and cultural development* (PNG Trust and many of the above organisations).

All of these are central to the prospects for forest conservation and sustainable development. Added together this represents tremendous capacity within the PNG NGO community. Under NFCAP, many government and donor initiatives concentrated on finding individual NGOs with the elusive "track record" as project executants. Few were found, and those that were became swamped. From 1993, the NGO Component encouraged building capacities of individual targeted NGOs to effectively carry out projects, and more innovative partnerships and joint projects between NGOs with complementary skills and capacities.

The NGO Component organised and directly implemented several initiatives aimed at boosting capacity in specific areas, including:

- An introductory *Participatory Rural Appraisal* training workshop and subsequent support for a number of NGOs in developing and adapting the approach in their own work.
- A course on *sustainable forest management*, designed with the University of Technology, specifically for NGOs, covering the concepts of managing natural and man-made forests for the optimum benefits of different interest groups. Most of the NGOs represented have subsequently expanded their operational activities in forest management. Follow-up courses of various kinds are in preparation at the University.
- Awareness-raising exchanges such as a visit for a landowner groups from Gulf Province, to see the social and environmental impacts of large-scale logging and oil palm development as well as potentially sustainable alternatives in East and West New Britain. The landowner groups involved have subsequently developed their own plans for locally-controlled small-scale timber extraction.

Much organisational, administrative and secretarial assistance was also provided by the NGO Specialist to *promoting and strengthening NANGO* (see Box 5)

## Box 5

### National Alliance of NGOs - NANGO

With the appearance of a few national NGOs in the 1980s there were a number of initiatives spearheaded by the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSP) which aimed at developing a regional NGO body. A workshop in Honiara in the Solomon Islands in 1986 catalysed a process leading to the formation of the Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO). A steering committee set up to form a PNG National Liaison Unit however, did not make much progress.

Due largely to the stimulus provided by the inter-agency mission to review the forestry sector in preparation of the NFAP, a grouping of environmentally oriented NGOs began preparations which led to the formal founding of the National Alliance of NGOs (NANGO), in February 1991, with a range of interest areas in addition to the environment.

NANGO's objectives describe its perceived role as providing: facilitation between government and national and international NGOs; an information gathering and disseminating network; a forum for NGOs; and a service for NGOs to prepare projects and to secure support.

In 1992 the government's Forestry Authority provided some funding to enable an Executive Secretary to be appointed. Small amounts of funding have since been secured by NANGO from various external sources to keep a small secretariat running.

Examples of NANGO's work to date, in support of NGOs building the capacity of customary landowners to pursue sustainable development, include:

- active membership of the NFCAP Steering Committee, the Board of the National Forest Authority and, increasingly, the Provincial Forest Management Committees;
- gathering NGO opinion and campaigning against regressive developments and in favour of progressive reforms in the forestry sector;
- involvement in workshops in each region on "*Law for Landowners*" and "*Strategies for Community Conservation*" in collaboration with particular NGOs.

Since its early days, however, NANGO has been plagued with arguments between member NGOs. Much energy has been expended on a variety of wrangles, to the detriment of mutual cooperation and collaboration with a number of government departments and external agencies which saw NANGO as a means of collaborating more coherently with NGOs in PNG. Yet some NGOs, government and donors have been guilty of raising unrealistic expectations of NANGO. As a young organisation, and as an "alliance of diversity", NANGO has had to deal with varying demands and agendas from the wide range of its NGO members, and has articulated with government and external agencies in different ways on different issues. Most NGOs although supportive of NANGO, still have as their main priority their local work and provincial networks. Several years will be required before the collective efforts of NGOs define NANGO's most effective niche in serving them.

### *Developing mechanisms for participation of landowners*

Landowners are identified as the main project beneficiaries of NFCAP. The design of NFCAP should therefore have been predicated on its landowner components. Whilst a number of NGO activities did successfully address landowner participation, until 1994 there was little to show generally from NFCAP in this area.

One reason for slow progress on these matters is the difficulty in identifying the appropriate target groups amongst "landowners" or "resource-owners" for supporting improved organisation and for better assessment, consultation and negotiation with government and the private sector (see Box 2). This is due to the range of definitions of tenure and use rights, and the appropriate forms of representation. More recently, two major NFCAP projects began to show progress in this area, particularly with regard to the procedures and possibilities for formal *incorporation of representative land groups*.

Landowner awareness and capacity for participation of landowners in far-sighted decision-making about forests is a crucial, but insufficient, focus for NFCAP efforts. Without viable income-earning alternatives to logging, the longer term outlook for conservation is still bleak. A concerted *emphasis on alternative income opportunities*, building on the lead provided by some NGOs and private interests, is clearly needed.

#### *Supporting and promoting NGO-government relations*

In terms of formal channels of communication, NFCAP appears to have stimulated a major shift towards developing NGO-government relations. The number of *programmes and initiatives which involve NGOs and government agencies together* mushroomed since the start of NFCAP. Some of these initiatives are listed in Box 6.

In forestry, for example, there are growing numbers of collaborative relationships between government and NGOs. A major NFCAP project, managed by the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific-PNG is developing the whole field of '*Ecoforestry*' in relation to forest management linked to portable sawmills. Other NGOs such as the Village Development Trust and the Pacific Heritage Foundation are also attracting government interest in their work on developing small-scale community-based forest management approaches. One area, increasingly being developed, is for NGOs and landowners to assist the NFA in monitoring logging operations. Appendix 3 presents profiles of a number of indigenous NGOs which have "critically engaged" NFCAP (see Box 7) and are working for sustainable development of forests.

It has long been recognised by some however, that *lack of government policy on NGO-government relations* is a major constraint in developing the role of NGOs in government policy dialogue and on the mechanisms by which NGOs can obtain funding support. Work on such policy has progressed slowly during the NFCAP period, but a Draft Policy Document, produced following a rather brief consultative process with NGOs, was developed by government. The document presents ways of grouping NGOs and the issues which the policy attempts to take into account, which include: stewardship of resources; sustainable development; partnership; autonomy of NGOs; compatibility of NGO and government agendas; diversity of NGO expression, contribution, motivation and organisation; autonomy and accountability. The main policy implementation mechanism proposed is a 'Bureau of NGO-Government Development Coordination' which would provide representation from both NGOs and government, but which would stand outside the government bureaucracy. However, the two issues of key concern to NGOs - policy dialogue and funding mechanisms - are raised by the document but receive little detailed attention.

## Box 6

### Spread of the NFCAP NGO Participation Model

The following are non-NFCAP government or major donor projects or initiatives with NGO participation (or some involvement claimed as participation) which have developed since 1990. Most of these have sought the advice or formal involvement of the NGO Component of the TSP.

- Forest Research Institute: Forest Act training
- Ad-hoc NGO-government relations and policy development committee
- Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme
- Department of Provincial Affairs - Village Services Scheme
- Department of Agriculture and Livestock - Rural Involvement Programme
- Department of Energy Development - Micro Hydro Scheme
- National Sustainable Development Strategy
- AIDAB reviews of various sectors
- Ad-hoc group to consider a Forest Product Certification Council for PNG
- UNDP Family Planning Programme
- Asian Development Bank Community Fisheries programme
- UNDP Partners in Development programme
- WHO AIDS programme
- Kandrian Gloucester Integrated Rural Development Project
- South Simbu Integrated Rural Development project
- Post UNCED Committees
- Oversight Committee for New Guinea Islands Environment Programme
- Department of Religion, Home Affairs and Youth - NGO Unit
- Tourism Authority - Eco-tourism development group
- Department of Education - Literacy Council
- UNESCO Projects Committee

#### 4. Conclusions From the Experience in Papua New Guinea

The following section outlines some conclusions made by the authors. Two other sources of evaluation are outlined in Box 7 and Box 8, respectively describing a NGO evaluation of NFCAP in 1993 and the formal NFCAP Review of 1994.

##### *Constraints to fruitful NGO participation*

The *resistance to cooperation with NGOs* which still exists within parts of government, particularly locally, should not be underestimated. The type of cooperation sought also varies widely. There is still a tendency for some government agencies and donors to see NGOs as a cheap and efficient means to deliver services. The other advantages of NGOs such as independence, commitment and new thinking are lost if this is the only view.

*The framework of the NFCAP was conceived and shaped before any formal mechanisms for national NGO consultation were in place.* The National Alliance of NGOs - NANGO - was not set up in time to influence the overall NFCAP objectives. The NFCAP was thus

running ahead of NGO consultative structures and it was necessary for the core support team to invest time and effort in assisting to build a functioning NANGO. The over-rapid formulation of the NFCAP set the stage for a continuing asynchrony between NGOs and the NFCAP itself.

*Opportunities and mechanisms for substantial NGO participation developed far more rapidly than the NGO capacity to consider, and respond to, the policy implications of the NFCAP. NANGO has not yet made up this gap. Indeed, some consider the sporadic internal divisions and poor capacity of NANGO to be in part the result of a "premature birth" and accelerated early life at the hand of NFCAP. Although NFCAP has been relatively cautious not to over-press the NGO case (since it leaves itself vulnerable if NGOs fail to deliver), some have been guilty of unrealistic expectations of NANGO.*

Given the recent history of forestry in PNG, some NGOs may be forgiven for caution with respect to partnerships with government. The lack of priority many NGOs continue to give to NFCAP stems from the *perception that NFCAP does not belong to NGOs*. This has been a major constraint on the take-up of opportunities for participation in government-led projects. NGOs were frequently consulted but the feedback they received was often slow in coming. *Consultation without feedback* is not participation and some disenchantment set in.

However, the "NGO gap", with regard to the development of the major NFCAP projects, has closed considerably since the early days of the programme. There are fewer new projects coming into NFCAP and NGOs are gradually becoming more a part of the existing government-led projects. Major newer NFCAP project proposals have invariably involved NGOs at some level during their preparation, although this still more often entails *scrutiny by NGOs once the draft preparation is done, rather than participation in the preparation process*.

A further major imbalance has been the *very slow development of the vital landowner-oriented components of NFCAP*. This remains the area where NGOs have great potential as brokers of information and services and catalysts for organisation. Much more attention in this area would likely help the NGO role to "take off".

*Development of government policy on NGOs has been lethargic*. It has progressed a little but has been undertaken by somewhat peripheral agencies in government. This has resulted both in poor NGO involvement, and in poor central government support for implementation.

*Funding procedures for NGO participation were initially opaque and unduly lengthy*. NGOs consequently became disappointed with the difficulty of accessing NFCAP funding for projects which were often highly appropriate and viable. Access to funding mechanisms for NGOs has improved a little during NFCAP, but a clear government strategy towards funding NGOs is still urgently needed. So also is a more strategic approach to bringing the mass of complicated procedures for accessing external funding within the grasp of NGOs.

## Box 7

### NGOs Analyse NFCAP, Develop Criteria and Evaluate NFCAP Projects

In February 1993, NANGO organised a workshop, with the support of Greenpeace, to discuss the NFCAP. Representatives from 16 NGOs attended, some of whom had been involved in formal NFCAP fora, some of whom knew little about NFCAP. At that time, no NGOs had benefitted from small grants under the NFCAP Trust Fund provided by AIDAB. The first tranche from this fund was released in August 1993. The group discussed the relevance of NFCAP for NGOs, the obstacles to NGO participation, and the ways these obstacles could be overcome.

Obstacles to NGO participation noted by the group included:

- lack of clear terms of reference for NGO participation in the NFCAP Steering Committee and the new forestry structures set up under NFCAP
- absence of clear channels of communication about who should get involved and why
- unequal balance of power in most fora, with NGO positions not being taken seriously
- poor capability of NGOs to analyse national issues and make space for their responses
- poor recognition amongst NGOs of their potential power if they act collectively

Solutions included:

- NGO equality on decision-making bodies
- pursue a range of communication and information methods and strategies
- prepare an inventory of available resource persons and capabilities of NGOs
- develop quick flexible funding mechanisms for innovative NGO projects - for building confidence and trust as well as capacity
- training in a range of skills including negotiation, advocacy and proposal development.

The group decided that NGOs need to "critically engage" the NFCAP because: it affects landowners and NGOs; NGOs have skills and perspectives to offer; and, it provides an opportunity for NGOs to define and strengthen their role in PNG society at a national level

In order to appraise the NFCAP projects the group developed criteria, which they later felt could be applied to any programmes initiated by government or international agencies. A number of criteria were developed under the following headings:

- transparency
- participation
- accountability to groups affected
- benefits to landowners
- appropriateness and consideration of social impacts
- ecological sustainability
- effect on local capacity for sustainability
- consistency with five directives of the national constitution
- evaluation and follow-up
- timeframe related to "pace" of landowners

The group analysed each of the existing NFCAP projects against these criteria and later ranked the projects according to priority for implementation and priority for receiving further NGO analysis, involvement or action.

(Source: adapted from Peutalo, 1993; and Cortesi, 1993)

## Box 8

### The NFCAP Review 1994

The NFCAP was subject to evaluation by a Review Mission in November 1994. Breaking tradition of common practice amongst NFAPs, the Review team was composed entirely of locally based consultants, without donor agency representation. The Review team received quite substantial and varied input from NGOs. The Review's main conclusions, can be summarised as follows:

- NFCAP has been partially successful in achieving its objectives, particularly in institutional strengthening at the national level, but less successful in enhancing landowner involvement and field-level forestry and conservation operations. NFCAP should continue but requires strong and explicit political commitment to sustainability and conservation in the forest sector from the highest level of government.
- The main focus of NFCAP should be re-orientated by:
  - rationalisation of an accelerated landowner awareness/mobilisation programme;
  - strengthening local level capacity in forest management;
  - evaluation of the viability of initiatives based on non-timber forest products, and biodiversity products and services;
  - promoting greater awareness of NFCAP aims, programmes, and results.
- The NFCAP Steering Committee was poorly attended by all but the national forestry agency, had poor internal mechanisms for participation, and had not met sufficiently often. Nevertheless, it has provided a forum for discussion and co-ordination of projects. In future, the Steering Committee should have designated senior agency representation (eg: First Assistant Secretary level), with the mandate to make binding decisions. Forest industry should also be represented.
- The Technical Support Project, has been successful in "driving NFCAP". With the proposed future reorientation of NFCAP, a technical support team should consist of: an NGO/NANGO advisor; a landowner awareness advisor; and an environmental resource economist.
- The existing National Forest Policy relates to the productive wood sector. There is a need to develop a new policy, by a broad consultative process with landowners, taking into account the wider service and productive aspects of the forest resource. This should be linked to the emerging National Sustainable Development Strategy and represent a strategic planning function within the machinery of central government, linked to local level planning at community and provincial levels.
- Local level capacity for forest resource planning, management and monitoring is lacking. Processes which address this should include:
  - cross-sectoral support for developing Incorporated Land Groups
  - training workshops at landowner level for forest planning and management and monitoring of forest projects, including logging
  - support to enable NGOs to undertake the above and to develop practical materials for promoting sustainable management
- NFCAP has provided opportunities for significant participation by NGOs. Further capacity building of NGOs is required and immediate tasks should include:
  - project preparation workshops and follow-up training for NGOs
  - a register of organisations and individuals who can act as medium-term 'change agents' at the community level
  - an NGO directory of capacities and needs
  - specific projects in landowner/NGO awareness and skills development focusing on resource management and alternatives for landowners.
- The existing Trust Fund (with Australian funding) should be expanded and further developed as a mechanism for funding on-going and new landowner and NGO initiatives.



A fundamental problem with capacity building of NGOs under NFCAP was the *lack of widely-agreed goals for the type of NGO capacity which was needed*, and hence the process by which it could be decided *which* NGOs should receive support. In part this was a function of inadequate and inaccurate information on the capacities and needs of NGOs.

#### *Achievements of NGO participation*

NFCAP has shown that, given the right conditions, government and NGOs can collaborate for mutual benefit. NFCAP has also put NGOs on the political map in PNG and a delicate relationship continues to evolve between NGOs and government. The principal areas of success to date are:

- *recognition of the importance of collaboration with NGOs* - with an NGO Specialist on the NFCAP core support team;
- *facilitation of genuine dialogue* on forest and conservation issues between government and NGOs, through establishment of various fora and communication channels, and through support for the draft government policy on NGOs;
- *involvement of NGOs in formal mechanisms for participation*: in the new Forest Authority at Board and Provincial level; in the NFCAP Steering Committee and NGO-NFCAP Working Group; and a number of other important NFCAP project decision-making bodies;
- *organised and effective NGO support for progressive government initiatives for forest policy and institutional reform*;
- *institutional support to develop NGO networks*, chiefly through the support for founding and developing NANGO;
- *greater awareness of the NFCAP* by NGOs;
- *increase in NGO capacities in forestry and related fields*, through funding, training and information support;
- *increase in the involvement of NGOs in government-led forest and conservation projects* through the NFCAP;
- *increase in the number of NGOs undertaking independent projects* in forestry and conservation, or with the potential to do so;
- *wider adoption of the concept and benefits of NGO participation* in other government programmes and processes; and
- *for some NGOs at least, increased amenability to work with relevant sections of government.*

### *Postscript: Fragile Progress in PNG*

The NFCAP has offered a good learning environment for NGO/government cooperation, as have its projects. This learning needs to be encouraged, through flexible approaches to NFCAP projects, good attention to monitoring and seminars, and documentation of experience. It is hoped that the developing National Sustainable Development Strategy process in PNG will build on the NFCAP experience of NGO participation.

The political atmosphere surrounding forestry and conservation in PNG remains volatile. The real progress made in institutional and policy reform towards constructive participation and sustainable forestry is all the more significant in this context. But it is also quite fragile in consequence.

There have been several changes of government during the period of NFCAP, and even more changes in the key political and bureaucratic positions. The last four years have been punctuated by a number of public debates (to which NGOs actively contributed), about aspects of exploitative forest development, legislative amendments, policy and institutional changes. Incidences of malpractice and malfeasance at various levels seem to occur with little-diminished regularity, despite the Barnett Inquiry findings and national resolve to act on them in the early 1990s. A key feature, too, has been the steady monopolisation of at least 70% of the country's log harvest by one Malaysian logging corporation, Rimbunan Hijau, now the dominant force in the exploitation of PNG's forest resource.

In 1995, despite windfall revenue from log export prices and the new revenue streams from gold and oil, government expenditures have brought the country to the verge of bankruptcy. The government is looking to timber exports to ease the crisis. In 1995 the government hopes that log exports will reach 3.2 million m<sup>3</sup> and yield K155 million (about US\$129 million) in export taxes<sup>4</sup>. This will entail a total harvest of nearly 4 million m<sup>3</sup>. The 'sustainable harvest' is still much debated but the National Forest Authority has used the figure of 3 million m<sup>3</sup>. Even if no new timber permits are issued in the next five years, existing permits allow for a harvest of 7.5 million m<sup>3</sup> in 1995 and almost 6 million m<sup>3</sup> in the year 2000.

If consumers in Japan and Korea (respectively the destination of 65% and 26% of logs from PNG in 1994) continue to be prepared to pay prices of more than K150 (US\$136) per m<sup>3</sup>, and if local landowners are still prepared to permit the 'development' of their forests in return for benefits worth less than K15 (US\$14) per m<sup>3</sup>, then it is of course understandable why the government is keen to apply the short term economic logic of selling as many logs as possible to tackle its debts.

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<sup>4</sup> PNG logs fetched an average price of US\$167 per m<sup>3</sup> in 1993; a total of 2.8 million m<sup>3</sup> left the country, and the Internal Revenue Commission collected about K72 million (US\$73 million) in log export taxes. In 1994 the average price fell slightly to US\$158 (having peaked at US\$180 per m<sup>3</sup> in August 1994) and a total of 3.02 million m<sup>3</sup> were exported, log export taxes accounted for K141 million (US\$136 million), more than 12% of the total government tax revenue.

Alternatively, the government may soon be considering a major structural adjustment package from the IMF and World Bank. It seems likely that the conditions of such a package would include: government commitment to forest sustainability (an agreed definition will be needed); securing the institutional reforms made under NFCAP; and the introduction of a revenue system which ensures adequate funding for forest and conservation institutions and an improved share for landowners. At this stage it is not known what other conditions in such a structural adjustment package might render its effects of net benefit, or detriment, to the forests and landowners.

In terms of forest sustainability or degradation however, the important challenge is not ultimately to be found in the institutions of central government. Decisions by the multitude of different groups of landowners are the key determinant of what happens in the forest. Forest exploitation will continue in a haphazard and unpredictable way because these decisions will be taken for a wide variety of reasons which defy the application of a single plan or policy by central government. The variety of cultural formations in PNG further amplifies the variation in what landowners think and do about questions of conservation and development.

The recent history of the PNG mining industry suggests that "local gatekeepers sometimes contribute to the conservation of their resources by raising the entry fees to the point which deters all potential customers, either because their expectations of 'development' begin to exceed what can feasibly be realised from some particular economic activity, or else because they are pricing themselves out of the market in order to achieve non-market objectives" (Filer, in CRC, 1995)

Developing the capacity for participation of landowners in far-sighted decision-making about forests is crucial. Yet without viable income-earning alternatives to large-scale logging, the longer term outlook for sustainable development is still bleak. A concerted emphasis on assessment of the technical, social, environmental and economic viability of alternative income opportunities is needed, which builds on the lead provided by some NGOs, academic and private interests. This needs to be followed by provision of information about viable alternatives and support for overcoming the lack of adequately trained manpower in their development and management.

Positive Government attitude towards NGOs has indeed waxed and waned. But at least NGOs are on the 'political map'. Through NFCAP, PNG has created almost unprecedented opportunity for NGOs and landowner groups to participate in decisions about the management of national forests. NGOs, both national and local, are increasingly recognised as actual and potential brokers of services, and catalysts for organisation and development amongst landowners. It will take commitment and continued support, over a considerable period yet, to ensure that this process begun under NFCAP lives up to its billing and engenders real prospects of sustainable forestry and lasting enrichment of PNG's development process.

## 5. Lessons for Constructive Partnerships with NGOs for Sustainable Forestry

Papua New Guinea's experience with NFCAP provides a number of lessons about the conditions necessary for a constructive partnership with local NGOs. We have looked at these lessons in relation to a number of reviews of experience of national approaches to environment and development; in particular those of Borrini (1993) and Carew-Reid *et al* (1994). The following section outlines the major lessons from PNG which appear to be of wide relevance.

### *Strategic directions and political realism*

*A NFAP should not try to cover everything - being strategic is more important than being comprehensive.* The challenge is to make approaches to sustainable forest management practical and coherent within, and compatible with, an intersectoral approach to sustainable development, as required by UNCED. A NFAP is much more likely to be implemented if early agreements amongst partners concentrate on a few priority issues.

Likewise, and contrary to much current rhetoric, *the participation of NGOs should not be expected in all areas of a NFAP.* For example, NGO participation may not be critical in topical studies of a highly specialised nature to fill information gaps. Similarly, the efficiency of some elements of forest sector reform, such as increasing the capacity to control timber exports, will be better served by relatively centralised processes than by high levels of participation. A prominent role for NGOs is vital, however, for defining key issues, verifying information, generating viable solutions that will lead to action, setting priorities and determining responsibilities. Box 9 lists some of the strategic options for developing a full representative and supportive role for NGOs in NFAPs.

Early NFAP planning discussions may develop *criteria for determining the types of NGOs, and other bodies, which should participate* in order to ensure that all interests are represented in the NFAP process. Obvious candidates are those that can: provide accurate information required for the decision-making process; represent the needs of local peoples affected by the forest land-use issues and trends; disseminate information; have legal or customary authority over forest resources. Writing on this issue, Bruce Cabarle, contends that *"the reality of the situation is that participation [in NFAPs] is not a birthright; NGOs will have to prove themselves legitimate and credible before they will be taken into account."* (Cabarle, 1992).

Similarly, a strategic approach will *keep things within the bounds of the possible over time.* For example, progress towards sustainable development of forests will often entail quite radical changes in institutional roles - and for this reason it may be quite legitimate for governments to start with a strategy which concentrates on government roles alone and especially their integration, before going on to a wider, participatory process. This may well be the case for highly developed government systems, which recognise the risks of moving from centralised, sectoral norms towards more experimental, integrated, participatory modes of operating. (Bass *et al*, 1995).

Box 9

**Strategic Options for Developing a  
Full Representative and Supportive Role for NGOs in NFAPs**

Options are listed in order of a possible sequence in the development of a NFAP:

- Independent capacity needs assessment/ national inventory of NGOs, with information on strengths, weaknesses, problems, resources and felt needs of each organisation
- Full disclosure of NFAP-related information, and development and implementation of a NGO NFAP information and communication strategy, based where possible with an NGO coalition
- NGOs as people's representatives on the NFAP Steering Committee and other formal *institutional mechanisms set up under the NFAP*
- National workshop to develop a strategy for participation in the NFAP - with NGOs represented
- Development of criteria for determining who should participate in order to ensure that all interests are represented in the NFAP process
- Rights and responsibilities of the NGO-Government relationship defined through consensus, and formalised in writing and/or actions. Development of a procedure for reconciling possible points of disagreement in the pursuit of common goals
- Indicators of development, participation and capacity developed with NGOs
- Preliminary issues paper identifying key information needs to ensure participation, prepared with strong NGO input
- Training in participatory techniques and approaches for national NGOs
- Programme to strengthen NGOs, including support for a national coalition, training opportunities and core support for the organisations directly involved in assisting participatory local studies, micro-planning and participatory evaluation
- Participatory local studies (stemming from the needs identified in the issues paper) facilitated by NGOs
- NGOs as people's representatives in round table of donors discussing NFAP financial requirements
- Participatory environmental projects, developed and implemented by local communities, facilitated by NGOs
- Micro-planning, of NFAP projects with involvement of local communities, facilitated by NGOs
- Participatory evaluation of NFAP projects and regular review of the NFAP process, with NGO involvement.

(Source: adapted from Borrini, 1993; and Cabarle, 1992)

*Sustainable development of forests is unlikely to interest or involve all sectors of society.* Forestry rarely gets high up a central government agenda; there is always something more pressing. Because forestry problems are usually in part the result of influences and policies outside the forestry sector, and often have impacts outside the sector, any meaningful NFAP must also look beyond the forestry sector. Participants should be clear, however, that strategic choices are political choices and that there are often structural constraints and inequalities in the path of progress towards better forest management and sustainability. *Participants should know how far up the decision-making systems their NFAP recommendations and deliberations will reach.* Whilst widening participation in a NFAP may make forestry and conservation more visible, it may also raise unrealistic expectations about how far-reaching changes will be and how quickly they will come.

### ***Communication and information***

Those outside the initial source of impetus for a NFAP - usually NGOs and often the general public - are unlikely to understand it, or simply to be interested in a NFAP. *An information and communication strategy is needed*, which identifies the means both for information about NFAP to reach potential participants, and for a two-way process of education and consultation to develop. The comparative advantages of different organisations in providing information and communication tasks need to be assessed - often NGOs are well placed to work with the media, the arts and the education system.

Newsletters, information materials and face-to-face provision of information through workshops, meetings and theatre are all likely to be crucial. Other outputs likely to be of specific use include: a "NFAP Users Guide" for NGOs and others, incorporating key information about the NFAP and explaining the opportunities for NGO participation; and a "Directory of NGO Capacities and Needs" which would build on any existing NGO databases and institutionalised within an NGO coalition and regularly updated.

*Government agencies and NGOs need information about each other's objectives and working practices*, and training to adapt to these in joint fora. Some NGOs are much more in tune with local styles of communication and are not familiar with the more technical language of government agencies and donors. Conversely government and donor agency staff may be incapable of understanding the information dynamics and means of "grassroots" NGOs.

### ***Appropriate policies, agreements and institutions***

*Clear and consistent government policies towards NGOs are needed.* These should include the basis for funding mechanisms for NGOs and the means by which NGOs can be involved in policy processes generally. NFAPs can contribute to the development of government policy towards NGOs.

The coordinating structures of NFAP should operationalise NGO partnership as recommended in the NFAP Operational Principles (FAO, 1994). *Clear terms of reference are needed for NGO and other representatives in NFAP institutions*, such as the Steering Committee, and for NGO representatives in the forest and conservation institutions

subject to reform or development under the NFAP.

*The rights and responsibilities of the NGO-Government relationship are best defined at the outset through consensus, and formalised in writing and/or actions. The information used to make decisions should be "open" and subject to joint analysis. Participants will not necessarily agree on all matters, but just those considered by all concerned to fulfill common needs. A procedure for reconciling possible points of disagreement in the pursuit of common goals should also be developed.*

*NGOs need a forum to meet, discuss issues and coordinate approaches to the government and private sector. NGO alliances should be supported by external agencies through a NFAP, but their formation and development should not be pushed ahead of the capacity of individual NGOs to use them and respond to them.*

Where the central goal of a NFAP is reform of forest sector policy and institutions, and where the impetus for reform lies within those forest institutions, it is appropriate that the government's forest authority be the lead agency for a NFAP. In terms of the strategic nature of a NFAP and the participation of NGOs and other sectors, however, *a core planning agency of government is preferable as the lead NFAP agency.* Other parts of government which may already have participatory structures should be involved in NFAPs - decentralised administration systems and education systems for example.

NFAPs have been quite successful at involving a good "width" of sectors of government and, increasingly, of NGOs and the private sector at the national level. Less success can be discerned in developing "depth" of participation through the provinces/states and different types of lower-level divisions. This is vital if the linkages between top-down and bottom-up decision-making are going to be made. *Both "wide" and "deep" structures for participation are needed to ensure that NFAPs are steered by the appropriate degree of multi-disciplinarity, and are grounded in reality.*

### *Participatory methods*

*Local special expertise in participatory methods, communications, education and media activities should be identified and consulted early in a NFAP process.* The development of participatory approaches, skills and resources to engage with communities is needed for both NGOs and government. Often, some NGOs are well ahead of government in this, and the challenge is to spread these skills amongst NGOs and develop a strategy by which government is gradually brought into the learning process.

Methodologies for survey, analysis and monitoring include forms of participatory inquiry, such as participatory resource and capacity surveys. For decision-making tasks, methods include: consensus-building, negotiations and traditional methods eg. of conflict resolution. For implementation tasks, voluntary agreements and joint forest management processes may be developed.

Changing the orientation of foresters and conservationists, towards facilitation of community-based action, is a goal of an increasing number of NFAPs. It is also a very long-term undertaking and requires the slow and long-term development of an institutional

culture which backs up experimentation and learning (see below). *NFAPs offer the opportunity to develop a clear and longer-term strategy towards adaptation and institutionalisation of participatory approaches in the development of these "new professionals"*. Some NGOs have a comparative advantage in providing the lead in this area, whilst others should be a major focus themselves for capacity building.

### ***Catalysts for the process***

*NGOs with recognised capabilities may help with early participation in NFAP processes and in starting to develop the links between top-down and bottom-up processes.*

*Coordinators of "high participation" NFAPs need to be able to deal with more devolved directions and complexity of process. They need participation and administration skills - and are "facilitators" more than coordinators. This is complementary to a general reorientation within NFAP institutions and amongst professionals, from management roles to facilitating roles. This requires changes in behaviour and attitudes which can only be gradual.*

*"NGO specialists" should be included in programmes of core technical support for NFAPs. However, NGOs often have very specific technical needs, and it may not be appropriate for one NGO specialist, or similar, to be expected to develop a variety of types of capacity support for NGOs. Thus a particular individual may be the focal point but he/she should have access to skills and experience in other personnel. NGO specialists will tend to pick up on things which fall between the roles of government and NGOs and a careful balancing act is required between being advisory, and being the conceivers, initiators and executors. Nevertheless such NGO specialists can prove to be catalysts for the processes described in this paper.*

### ***Developing and monitoring capacity***

Based on an independent review of capacity amongst NGOs, *a capacity needs assessment should be made*. Objectives can then be developed for the type of NGO capacity which is needed, and for the process to decide which NGOs should receive support. *Indicators of development, participation and capacity should be developed* with NGOs in the early stages of a NFAP such that progress can be assessed (see Box 10).

Areas of capacity-building likely to be needed by NGOs include: project and proposal preparation; management, administration and business systems; principles and practices of sustainable forest management; participatory approaches for working with communities for appraisal of needs and possibilities, dialogue, ranking solutions, forming partnerships, resolving conflicts and reaching consensus.

When involving NGOs, their *level of representativeness and accountability should also be open to assessment*. Complete representation of a sector is rarely possible and participants in a NFAP process or strategy should be aware of what interests are not being reflected. Fairness in representation is another issue. Many government officials are paid to participate and usually have access to relevant information. Community groups and NGOs



often do not have these resources. To put them on an equal footing with wealthier and more powerful participants, they need financial support to attend meetings and prepare informed positions. (Carew-Reid *et al*, 1994).

#### Box 10

##### Indicators of NGO Development, Participation and Capacity

Criteria or qualitative indicators of NGO development, participation and capacity-building enable assessments of change. Two stages would be necessary to productively evaluate how NGO capacities have changed as a result of the NFAP: firstly, a baseline study on existing capacities; and secondly, cooperative work with NGOs in developing self-evaluation methods. Self-evaluation by NGOs is important, since NGOs are benefiting and learning from the programme.

A number of different indicators of NGO capacity-building might be developed. For example:

- regularity of meetings and attendance at meetings
- frequency of shared decision-making
- evidence that NGOs carry out the decisions which they collectively make
- regularity of interaction with government
- enthusiasm and active support for NGO coalitions and umbrella organisations
- awareness of issues related to the NFAP
- commitment to participation in the NFAP and priority given to it (time and resources)
- improved levels of technical, financial and managerial competence
- ⊖ evidence of self-criticism and self-evaluation
- projects funded
- partnerships and cooperation between NGOs (and other groups) in achieving shared goals, for example, project execution
- improved flows of information and feedback
- numbers of professionally trained, qualified or experienced staff
- numbers and spread of members

Under many NFAPs there have been limited means and opportunity for government organisations, NGOs and NGO umbrella organisations to engage in critical self-evaluation either in relation to their own work, or in relation to their links with others. A lesson for NFAPs and national strategies in future is the importance of collaborative development of change indicators and the mechanisms for evaluation and adaptation.

(Source: adapted from Thomson, 1992)

#### *Learning environments*

NFAPs are generally responding to forest problems which have defied solution by existing institutional arrangements. Participants in the NFAP are involved in a new approach, and need to do so with an expectation that there will be elements of experimentation, success and failure, and adaptation. In particular, the *early phases of the NFAP, including NGO participation, should be assessed with all participants, and an early round of feedback and adaptation should take place before spreading the programme.*

Progress in a NFAP with participation of NGOs and other groups cannot easily be technically assessed, because it will involve multiple perspectives and processes. This requires the development of *agreed frameworks for judging the achievement of progress* (such as the example of NGO capacity indicators in box 10).

### *A phased approach*

The process of developing a NFAP will be slower with participation than without. Indeed it must be slower if a sustainable process is to be initiated. It can be expected that a NFAP will progress in a manner, and over a time scale, which is set by the main structures and processes of participation adopted. *Phasing the process can slow the rate of raised expectations and development of conflicts and allow them to be better met and dealt with.* Numbers of participants and stakeholder groups will have to be kept to manageable proportions in the early stages, which allow them to provide appropriate detail and receive adequate attention.

In terms of NGO capacity, an *early priority should be given to supporting small NGO projects* to develop confidence amongst NGO partners and to demonstrate particular approaches. NGO training needs should also be addressed in the early stages.

### *Adequate resources, skills and time*

Participation of NGOs needs to be adequately budgeted for. Opportunity costs of the participation of NGOs and others need to be fully recognised, and the costs shared. *Higher investment will be required in the early phases of a NFAP with involvement of NGOs and others; experience shows that this becomes more cost-effective with time.*

NFAPs which become more process-oriented programmes, with the participation of NGOs and other groups, need to develop strategies with donors to ensure the process is amenable to donor cycles, but not driven by donors alone. Focusing the donors on particular "flagship" projects will be necessary. Equally, the lessons learned from past NFAPs, other environmental strategies and more comprehensive sustainable development strategies, should be increasingly accommodated by donors (see Box 11).

Time is required to establish trust and a framework for cooperation between government, NGOs and other groups. The incremental costs of this might appear to be high. But only with the commitment of these groups, and ultimately all communities in the forest domain, will there be a sense of ownership on the part of the people towards the NFAP. And only then will such commitment translate into participation, reduce external dependency, and make development interventions sustainable over time.

## Box 11

### Ten Lessons for Donors<sup>5</sup>

These are the ten main lessons for donors which have been learned through more than ten years of their involvement in National Conservation Strategies, NFAPs and comprehensive strategies for sustainable development.

1. **Coordinate donor activities:** Recipient governments must be supported in taking a leading role in coordinating external contributions to the strategy process.
2. **Invest in the long-term:** Low-level continuous external backing over a long period is almost always much better than short, high-level, one-off inputs (unless contributing to a strategy trust fund).
3. **Support existing strategies:** Programme funding is needed for the capacity-building process; not just the products of strategic planning. Programme-oriented approaches are often more valuable than projects that are not an integral part of a strategy.
4. **Support existing strategies:** If funding is conditional, the conditions should respect alternative approaches to strategies that exist locally. Buy in to existing processes, even if they do not quite fit with local norms and capacities.
5. **Do not impose external models:** The corollary to supporting 'homemade' or tailor-made strategies is the need to guard against designing for schedules, budgets and skills which do not fit with local norms and capacities.
6. **Form and encourage partnerships:** Close working links with other donors and partnerships, and support for a variety of participants in a strategy, both governmental and non-governmental, add momentum and stability to the process. A good first step is to help governments identify stakeholders and their potential contributions.
7. **Seek coherence in aid programmes:** Each donor needs to ensure that all components of its support interrelate and build upon each other within the strategy process.
8. **Devise new forms of assessment:** Donors need to develop new indicators for sustainability and evaluation to reflect and give greater importance to the qualitative and process elements of strategies.
9. **Refocus existing investment:** Donors need to review all elements of their aid programmes and help governments refocus existing investments towards sustainable development principles and objectives defined through the strategy process. This refocusing will be more important than initiating new 'environment' projects.
10. **Be flexible and creative in financial arrangements:** Support innovative financing mechanisms; for example, National Environment Funds and Sustainable Development Trusts, which lead to consistency and self-reliance in maintaining the strategy process.

(Source: Carew-Reid *et al.*, 1994)

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<sup>5</sup> For simplicity, both development assistance agencies and lending institutions/banks are here called donors.

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## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1**            **Chronology of Main Events for the National Forestry and Conservation Action Programme, NGOs and the Forestry Sector in Papua New Guinea 1988-1995**
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## APPENDIX 1

### Chronology of Main Events for the National Forestry and Conservation Action Programme, NGOs and the Forestry Sector in Papua New Guinea 1988-1995

1988	
Late	PNG government decision to be involved in the TFAP
1989	
May	Inter-agency mission led by the World Bank
Late	Barnett Report findings widely reported in press
1990	
January	NGO meeting at the Wau Ecology Institute. National Alliance of NGOs (NANGO) set up by a group of environmental NGOs
April	TFAP Roundtable, Port Moresby
April-June	Task Force on Environmental Planning in Priority Forest Areas
August	Formulation of the Technical Support Project (TSP) document
August	NFAP Steering Committee convenes
September	NANGO General Meeting
November	World Bank meetings in Port Moresby on NFCAP implementation
1991	
January	NANGO formally established through Constitution. Board appointed
January	NGO Component of the TSP formally established with the appointment of Basil Peutalo as the NGO Specialist
March-April	NGO "Tuesday Group" - first convened, an informal grouping of Port Moresby based NGOs discussing NFCAP
April	World Bank "one-year-on follow-up"
May	NGO Funding Mechanisms under NFCAP. NGO Component Discussion Paper
July	The World Bank managed AIDAB (Australian Government) Trust Fund initiated
June-July	The Landowner Awareness Project (LOAP) Planning Mission
July-August	First NANGO work programme
August	PNG UNCED Working Committee
August-September	The Kandrian-Gloucester Project NGO 'capability statements'
September	Reorganisation of the NFCAP Steering Committee. Proposal to systematise the Committee
September	NFCAP Steering Committee agreement to grant K20,000 to NANGO
September	Global Environment Facility (GEF) Workshop Organised by TSP
November	Conservation Needs Assessment meeting (CNA); Port Moresby
November	Conservation Needs Officer and CNA Oversight Committee
December	Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) Strategic Plan produced
1992	
February	Special NANGO meeting, discussed NFCAP
February	Steering Committee Project. Small NFCAP project to reorganise SC

February	National Forestry Development Guidelines - first draft
February	Transitional Management Council for the new National Forest Authority formed - forcing transfer of control from old Department of Forests
March	Rapid Resource Appraisal Project begins. Not much NGO involvement - even in the use of PNG Resource Information System
March	Full NANGO meeting. Dominated by internal constitutional matters
March	"Quadripartite" Review of the TSP
April	NANGO AGM, Lae
April	CNA Workshop, Madang. Some NGOs protest at poor consideration of Landowners
May	GEF Formulation Mission
June-July	New Forestry Act comes into force and establishment of Forest Authority
July	NGO Workshop on Forestry Act and Provincial Forest Management Committees (PFMC), Lae
August	TSP Evaluation. Recommends second two-year phase
September	Jack Genia, Forest Minister since 1985, dies. Tim Neville appointed
December	Board of the National Forest Authority meets for the first time

### 1993

January	Managing Director of NFA appointed - Jean Kekedo
January	TSP Phase II starts
February	Forest Management and Planning Project gets underway
March	NANGO AGM, Madang. NGOs briefed on AIDAB Trust Fund
March	NGO database initiated in Prime Minister's Department
April	Forestry Act amended
May	Consultative Group of donors meeting for NFCAP
May	Private Member's Bill to amend Forest Act in favour of logging industry. Beginning of campaign by logging interests against Minister Neville
August	First tranche of NGO projects funded by AIDAB Trust Fund
June	DEC Strategic Plan implementation begins
June	Integrated Conservation and Development project begins, GEF funding
July	NANGO campaign against Private Member's Bill and in support of Minister Neville
August	AIDAB begin study of how PNG and Australian NGOs can play a larger part in the AIDAB-PNG programme
September	Senior staff of National Forest Service recruited, including Conrad Smith as General Manager
September	Waigani Seminar - major national sustainable development discussion
September	National Sustainable Development Strategy Working Committee set up. Provincial meetings. Five NGOs on the Committee to draft Policy Submission for Cabinet
September	NGO NFCAP Working Group prepares proposal to NFCAP for support to NGO strategy for sustainable development in MOMASE region
September	Ecoforestry Project - the one major NGO project under NFCAP to date. Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSP-PNG) complete '100% survey of portable sawmills'
October	Draft government policy on NGOs, following cursory NGO consultation
November	Sustainable Forest Management Workshop for NGOs
November to end 1994	"Strategies for Community Conservation" and "Law for Landowners" workshops held by NANGO with WWF and ICRAF respectively in each of the four regions



November	Forest Industry Development Studies produce final report
November	Second tranche NGO projects under AIDAB Trust Fund
December	Cabinet approves the Forestry Development Guidelines but embargoes the new revenue system subject to evaluation by a three person ministerial sub-committee, which does not meet throughout 1994
December	Special NANGO Board Meeting. Chairman resigns, Secretary removed.
Late	SGS contracted to monitor log exports, contracts and industry generally for 17 months
Late	Purari Oil Palm Project approved - thought by NGOs to be a cover only for un-regulated clear-fell logging on a large scale. Some NGOs begin campaigning against it, supported by TSP

#### 1994

January	Landowner Awareness Project finally gets slowly underway.
February	Biodiversity Country Study
February	Private Member's Bill rejected by parliament, NGO role acknowledged
March	Cabinet endorses NSDS policy submission.
March	DEC Strengthening Project begins - 25 consultants proposed in all
March	Timber Supply Areas announced without consultation. Port Moresby NGOs campaign against it
March	SGS leave PNG before contract gets underway because they are not paid
April	NGO Component holds Participatory Rural Appraisal Workshop for NGOs
April	Regional environmental programme in the Islands Region. Proposed for EC funding, agreed in late 1994
April	NFCAP Forestry Human Resources Development Project. AIDAB-funded consultancy produced Draft for the long-awaited project. The NGO NFCAP Working Group welcome the project but point to document's major deficiencies for NGOs and Landowners
August	New government. Forest Minister Neville replaced by Andrew Posai, who threatens to overturn major NFCAP reforms and takes antagonistic approach to NGOs
August	Purari Oil Palm Project shelved. NGOs claim victory
September	Fire in NFA building, destroys many logging agreements and aerial photography, sabotage suspected
September	Third tranche NGO projects under AIDAB Trust Fund
September	General Manager of NFA, Conrad Smith sacked. Replaced on interim basis by TSP Team Leader
September	UNDP Mission to develop NSDS, produce report in December
October	NGO Liaison Officer in ICAD project appointed
October	Campaign by NANGO and others to support NFA Managing Director, Jean Kekedo, under attack from Minister Posai
November	Timber Supply Areas concept rescinded, NGOs claim victory
November-Dec	NFCAP Review

#### 1995

January-March	Campaign by group of NANGO member NGOs against Minister Posai's proposals to given his position discretionary powers and against government's proposed use of forestry to solve revenue problems
March	TSP completed. Government plans for a further phase of NFCAP unclear

## APPENDIX 2

### Forest sector reform in Papua New Guinea 1990-94 A Perspective on Progress & Constraints

This appendix is an excerpt, with permission, from a paper by:  
Keith Dolman, Team Leader of the Technical Support Project  
National Forestry and Conservation Action Programme,  
dated 27 June, 1994.

#### *Policy reform*

##### *The Need*

Papua New Guinea faces a fearsome task of trying to reconcile divergent needs of development vs. conservation, landowners' interests vs. national goals, and government intervention vs. the use of market forces in the forest sector<sup>1</sup>. There is much to gain from better inter-agency cooperation, perhaps nowhere more importantly than between governments, forest development and conservation agencies. Project planning and monitoring could be more efficient if the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and the Forest Authority were to develop a more productive relationship, as there are many opportunities for cost sharing.

##### *National Forest Policy*

The 1990 Forest Policy provided a platform for legitimising sustainable management as the guiding principle for development and a Forest Authority as a suitable institutional mechanism for achieving this. While a good first step, the Forest Policy is now obsolete. It has been criticised for not adequately addressing forest rights and for favouring economic forestry. It does little to resolve the relationship between the clan groups who collectively own virtually all land and the government forest administration which has been the primary benefactor of forest development. Much of the good intent is lost in prescriptions which might better have graced procedure manuals or forest regulations, which have the flexibility to accommodate new ideas.

##### *National Forestry Development Guidelines*

The need for National Forestry Development Guidelines was identified in the Forest Policy as part of a National Forest Plan. Guidelines were drafted from early 1992 and briefly stated they do the following:<sup>2</sup>

- lay down principles for management of natural forest committed to timber production on a sustainable basis;
- provide for the financing and management of timber plantations through the private sector with the Authority playing an advisory and regulatory role;
- provide a basis for the establishment of a competitive timber processing and wood product manufacturing industry in PNG;

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<sup>1</sup> How To Help Landowners Manage Their Forest Resources? A Challenge for PNG; World Bank Country Issues paper; source paper undated

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from a Keynote Speech by Tim Neville, Minister of Forests, to Faces of PNG Seminar, Lae; March 1994

- describe the objectives and mechanisms of a new revenue system;
- provide for the transfer of forest training institutions to the education sector and stricter adherence by industry to localisation requirements;
- establish mechanisms to ensure government sponsored forest research is focused on priority needs and output is effectively disseminated;
- detail procedures governing the commencement of new forestry projects which ensure effective participation by landowners and selection of developers through open tender; and
- state a process for the comprehensive review of existing projects to audit compliance with project conditions and bring them in line with the new forestry act.

The National Executive Council approved the Guidelines on 1 December 1993 but embargoed the new revenue system subject to evaluation by a three person ministerial sub-committee. Without action on implementing the new revenue system, both government and landowners will continue to lose the value of their resource.

### *Forest Revenue System*

The system proposed would provide reasonable incentives to industry, encourage local processing and lay down clear ground rules for altering the level of charges. The main beneficiaries of the new system will be the landowners. With current record high timber prices, royalties and premiums paid to landowners under present arrangements fall short of a fair return. This new system will go a long way toward satisfying their wants and complaints.

There has been much resistance to the proposed revenue system and particularly from a few individuals who undoubtedly are doing very well presently and who claim to represent the landowners. In the face of this, government has increased the tax on log exports to capture more of the economic rent, which is a positive development. However, landowners will not share in this bonanza and therefore are the losers in the war of publicity which has benefitted only the newspapers.

### *Industrial Development*

There is little to show for earlier policy statements calling for more downstream processing. In 1993 the total harvest of logs was in the order of 3.5 million cubic metres and with around 17 percent of this processed locally. Industry has been advised that log exports will be reduced from 1995 by 10 percent per year and operators have been asked to carry out a feasibility study for processing their timber within PNG. Those that fail to meet this requirement will be refused further export permits, from 1 August 1994. The Minister has announced that the following measures will be taken to encourage the development of a domestic processing industry in PNG:<sup>3</sup>

- incentives to process locally will be built into the new revenue system through generous recovery factor allowances;
- the right of processing facilities to purchase compulsorily, at market price, logs otherwise trading between specialist mills, including the granting of coastal trading licences to enable operators to furnish their own facilities with domestic supplies;
- the provision of a secure raw timber supply through forest management agreements with resource owners and timber supply agreements with government, aimed at achieving harvest on a sustained yield basis;

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from a Keynote Speech delivered by Tim Neville, Minister of Forests to Faces of PNG Seminar, Lae; March 1994

- log exports associated with industrial plants which have a capital cost of a minimum of K75 (US\$76) per m<sup>3</sup> of installed capacity will be granted an export duty reduction once one third of the capital investment of the new plants has been commissioned;
- duty exemption of import of equipment and building materials required for the erection of any new log manufacturing plant;
- pioneer tax status for a 5 year period from commencement of construction of an approved processing plant;
- exemption from export tax on any processed product derived from the processing facility for a minimum period of 5 years.

Taken together, these measures should greatly increase the attractiveness to investors of processing logs within Papua New Guinea.

### *Independent Export Surveillance*

The combination of record high log prices and relatively ineffective monitoring from a forest service which is in a state of major change, has provided an opportunity for companies to under-record log value and volume. These were the major concerns exposed through the Commission of Inquiry. As it will take time before the Authority can adequately inspect and monitor log exports, a contract for independent log monitoring and border surveillance has been obtained, and this will provide for:

- inspection of all logs during preparation and loading;
- establishment of a resource management system that will deliver a comprehensive data base of the industry with world-wide market information;
- commercial exposure and training for future inspection and monitoring staff of the Authority;
- design of improved export procedures;
- a transparent audit trail to facilitate accurate monitoring and reporting.

This service will cost in the order of K2.5 (US\$2.5) per cubic metre. For this price, PNG will be guaranteed to receive the full and appropriate share of forest revenues due. All exports will be correctly identified and the full duties paid by the logging contractors. The increase to export revenue will more than cover the cost of the programme. Additionally it is hoped that this programme will remove the spectre of distrust between government and industry by exposing the true extent of malfeasance and transfer pricing, and in so doing will clear the way for positive collaboration in the future.

### *Legislation*

The Forestry Act 1991 was notified in the National Gazette on 25 June 1992 and amended in April 1993. A private member's bill to further amend the Forestry Act became highly controversial before being rejected in February 1994. Government is now preparing a second Amendment Bill which will respond positively to genuine criticisms and comprehensively review the Forestry Act to make it more workable. It will do the following<sup>4</sup>:

- provide for a stronger landowner and private sector representation on the Board of the Authority;

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<sup>4</sup> Keynote Speech delivered by Tim Neville, Minister of Forests; to Faces of PNG Seminar; Madang; March 1994

- require that the level of charges imposed through the revenue system be set in regulations and not by the Minister;
- provide for revenue from harvesting operations to be paid, upon instruction from the Authority, by operators directly to landowners and landowner companies;
- reduce red tape and promote longer term commitment by logging contractors by permitting the issue of licences for longer terms;
- streamline and clarify the process for allocation of timber permits and licences;
- provide for those who install local processing facilities to be given quotas to buy logs that will otherwise be exported in log form;
- prohibit acquisition of timber rights through takeovers of companies by foreign investors without prior approval from the Authority and endorsement by the Minister.

### *Conservation*

Papua New Guinea's flora and fauna are impressive and rivalled by few other regions. More than seven hundred species of birds inhabit its varied environments including the world's smallest and some of the largest parrots, the largest pigeons, all of the world's largest butterfly, almost two hundred species of mammals, including two of the world's three monotremes and all of the world's tree kangaroos. The forest flora is one of the richest on earth, with an estimated 9000 species of higher plants and perhaps as many as 1500 species of forest trees alone.<sup>5</sup> In many ways these forests are recognised more for conservation reasons than for economic extractive purposes. Global warming is a hot issue as is loss of biodiversity and both are assuming a bankable value. NFCAP is cashing in on this opportunity and has helped identify important areas to be protected, whether for preserving biodiversity, protecting watersheds, safeguarding areas of natural beauty or religious significance.

The unresolved issue is how these areas can be protected in ways that are acceptable to the landowners. The need is to raise awareness of the non timber value of their forest and to the desirability of protecting this resource. It is however not just a matter of awareness. In a predominantly subsistence rural economy, the focus is on immediate needs for food, shelter and warmth and for many, future aspirations are foreign and out of reach. Most landowners see logging as their window for development and they will not easily be convinced otherwise. One way might be through compensation, as an alternative source of income and employment will be expected.

DEC is pressing ahead with two Integrated Conservation and Development (ICAD) projects with assistance from the Global Environment Facility and Chevron Kotubu oil project. The quest is for alternative development options which do not destroy the forests and yet provide sustained benefits comparable to or better than timber production.

### *Where to now with Policy?*

The opportunity to test these new policies has not occurred due to the moratorium on new forest development imposed at the NFCAP inception meeting in 1990 and extended for one year by the present government. While the moratorium has since expired, the lack of agreement on a revenue system continues to inhibit negotiation of new contracts. Nevertheless the Authority have commenced field trials and the prognosis looks good.

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<sup>5</sup> Adapted from a Report on PNG's Conservation Needs Assessment project; J.F. Swartzendruber, February 1993

The Guidelines will go a long way toward meeting the primary goals of forest sector reformation, but not all the way. They have little relevance to the majority of PNG's forests which are not considered commercial, and by benign neglect, landowners are left to sort out land use conflicts themselves. The Guidelines are the business of the Authority and a subset of the national Forest Policy which should concern all forest stakeholders and spell out government objectives and functions, taking full account of landowners rights and expectations, and for both conservation and development of forests.

As the 1990 Forest Policy does not do this, we might now consider the need to review this within the context of the NFCAP programme of assistance. While easily said, this will not be a simple task and in the end may not be successful without full participation across the sector and a sustained institutional and political will to see it through. The issues to be considered concern all forest owners, and in PNG that includes just about everyone.

### *Institution building*

#### *The Need*

Policy reform will lack meaning without complementary institution building. If PNG is to succeed in managing its forest on a sustainable basis, three separate sets of institutions will have to be effectively involved: government, non government organisations and local communities. At the time of the judicial Inquiry, none of these groups were geared to play an effective role and all continue to need strengthening, although as indicated earlier, the precise role of each will have to be worked out.

#### *Forest Authority*

The Inquiry documented an industry which was out of control and a forestry administration unable to do much about it. The call was for radical surgery and government passed a new Forestry Act in 1991 which created a Forest Authority. The Authority comprises a Board, advisory committees and a unified National Forest Service, and succeeds the Department of Forests (DOF), 19 Provincial Forest Departments and the Forest Industry Council. The first Board met in December 1992 and ten months later the National Forest Service took form with recruitment of senior staff. Selection was based on best practice principles with open advertisement and all positions filled on merit, with no automatic appointments to existing departmental staff. Middle and lower level positions were offered to public servants in the previous administration.

The Authority birthed in a climate of controversy and tension and with much of the resistance relating to selection of outside staff to key positions. Not all have appreciated that the success of the Authority will depend on the quality and commitment of its staff and while historically, PNG has produced well trained forestry personnel, the professional service has experienced a decade of turmoil. Undue high level interference in day to day operations, the difficulties arising from the creation of separate national and provincial agencies, under-funding, declining standards of in-service and sector training had led to poor morale and performance.<sup>6</sup> It has not been desirable to engage all of the staff of the previous administration even though the numbers are about the same. Most of those retrenched were on a voluntary basis with full benefits and in only a handful of cases was severance for reasons of performance or attitude.

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<sup>6</sup> Report on Organisation Charts & Nominated Officers for the PNG National Forest Service; Dolman; October 1994

Progress with restructuring was initially resisted by the concerned organisation and this forced a transfer of control in February 1992 to a Transitional Management Council comprising representatives from DOF, other government agencies and the private sector. The Council injected the needed commitment and within practical limits, evolved a structure from a 'clean slate' and with limited reference to existing departmental arrangements. There was nevertheless continuing sparring with the previous administration even though it would make little sense for them to lead given the scale of the change proposed and for the reasons given.

The Authority has progressed well although the extent to which it may now deliver is constrained by budget which is simply insufficient when one considers the need to procure staff houses, offices, vehicles and equipment which were reclaimed by provincial administrations at the time of hand-over. Most of the recruitment issues have settled-out and we see staff now coming together into a corporate culture which must increasingly be customer driven and meeting the needs of the client, who for the most part are landowners and not the bureaucracy.

#### *Department of Environment & Conservation*

The effectiveness of the environmental administration has also been questioned and for similar reasons. DEC does not have sufficient financial or human resources, to manage its current tasks, let alone meet the challenges ahead. A five year AIDAB sponsored strengthening project will commence soon and will focus on human resource development across the spectrum of planning, management and administration needs, and will rethink the organisation structure. The capacity of DEC to set standards for environmental aspects of logging operations has received a boost with representation on the Board of the Authority and will shortly be enhanced further by placement of an environmental officer in each Regional Office of the National Forest Service.

A Conservation Resource Centre (CRC) has been established with assistance from the UNDP. The CRC is responsible for implementing ICAD's as well as for a PNG Biodiversity Country Study which is sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and for strengthening conservation areas and assisting other DEC projects.

#### *Non Government Organisations*

It is generally agreed that effective forest management requires management by landowners, and that NGOs can play a crucial role, particularly at the grass roots level. There is little agreement on how this might be accomplished. NFCAP has not progressed well here and at least partly because many national NGOs are unable or unwilling to take on new roles. There are serious capacity and communication issues to be overcome and it is largely with this in mind that the National Alliance of Non Governmental Organisations (NANGO) was created. NANGO has an important networking and advocacy role and is represented on the Board of the Authority. It has received financial assistance from government since inception in 1992 and continues to be heard in the public debate on forest reformation, so far supporting government's proposals, with some reservations.

Now that NANGO is functional, NFCAP has shifted attention to building capacity of NGOs concerned with forests and has funded twelve small-scale projects managed by them. This is a beginning, however much of the latent energy of the non governmental sector remains under-utilised. Too many decisions in forests are made defensively and with concern for territory and control. NGOs may not make major in-roads until such time as bureaucrats loosen their grip and they themselves demonstrate a capacity to deliver the goods and services of choice. Perhaps the awareness building and empowerment process now underway will give resource owners more say

in who they wish to work with.

### *Strengthening Landowners*

Sustainable management will not succeed in PNG unless landowners support this and that will require their full participation in the planning and management of the forests. Conservation aspirations will not be realised unless landowners agree and are given alternative income opportunities. These are bottom-line realities which continue to shape NFCAP and the forest reformation programme. There is much work yet to be done and the search is on for ways and means to ensure that clan groups are better equipped to assess, consult and negotiate with government and the private sector. Obtaining a target group for awareness building and training has not been easy as there are many bogus voices in the woods. One option gaining favour is incorporation of land groups which have worked well for the Chevron Kotabu oil programme in Western and Gulf Provinces.

### *Conclusion*

Since Justice Barnett sparked the call for reformation, the scale of the industry has more than doubled and the forest sector is reaching new heights of controversy and tension. The need for control is even greater now and understandably there is frustration at the delay in actualising national policy and institutional reform at the field level. To a large extent progress is contingent on agreement of a new revenue system and this should be seen as a priority by government. While less immediate, there is need to revise the national forest policy to better relate to development and conservation and government and landowner perspectives, and to define a process for dealing with conflicting forest uses.

Papua New Guinea is nevertheless poised to turn the tide on malpractice and to regain control of the forestry sector. This has been possible because the commitment to reform has been sustained through three government administrations. Most decisions have been hard-earned and frequently powerful counter lobbying has obliged government to reassess its commitment to change. Donors too have been unswerving in their support for reformation and they have made the National Forestry and Conservation Action Programme possible.

Much will now depend on implementation of the Guidelines as these show the way to sustainable development and a better deal for the resource owners. The Forest Authority is operational and by the end of this year will field a rejuvenated monitoring programme in the much-ravaged New Guinea Islands region, and with support from an independent border surveillance service nationwide. By 1995 Papua New Guinea will receive its full share of revenues due and will have the upper hand in determining the shape of a future industry which favours downstream processing. Non government organisations and the Department of Environment and Conservation are gaining strength and for the first time in ages we see policy being agreed through dialogue and consensus.

While there is much yet to do, we might feel optimistic.



## APPENDIX 3

### Profiles of some Papua New Guinea NGOs "Critically Engaging" the National Forest and Conservation Action Programme

#### *East Sepik Council of Women*

The East Sepik Council of Women (ESCOW) is a provincial NGO linking over 200 women's organisations across the East Sepik Province. The Council is an umbrella organisation for many different kinds of grassroots programme work, much of which is carried out by men as well as women.

ESCOW has been in operation since the late 1970s and has developed an extensive and dedicated volunteer network of non-formal educators emphasising self-reliance, environmental concern and cultural growth. Programmes run by District Councils under ESCOW include training for: agriculture and nutrition, family planning education, literacy, health care and youth leadership. In 1994, the NGO Component of the Technical Support Project of NFCAP worked with ESCOW on an introductory training workshop on Participatory Rural Appraisal and its adaptation for NGO initiatives in local forest management.

ESCOW has played an important role in channelling information and assisting communities to organise against destructive and exploitative logging practices. In September 1994 a subsidiary of a major Malaysian logging company was expelled from a large concession area in the Province.

#### *Village Development Trust*

The Village Development Trust's (VDT) overall goal is to help rural Papua New Guineans to manage their resources in a way that meets the needs of their communities and the needs of future generations. VDT does this by building awareness at the village level and by putting this awareness to work in small scale forestry projects.

Since 1989, VDT has been providing training in alternatives to large scale logging, normally in a three-week course that focuses on portable symbolling. Under the VDT programme, over 100 sawmills have been set up all over the country with a full training programme. The aim of the programme is to empower customary resource owners to control the use of their forests to meet their needs in a sustainable way. NFCAP supported VDT in construction of a training and ecoforestry demonstration centre in a 'real' location and a comprehensive training and reference manual to accompany the training programme has been produced in both English and Tok Pisin.

VDT attempts to link village communities directly to international markets for "eco-timber" and acts as a monitoring agent for the eco-timber initiatives in PNG. The Trust is also working with other NGOs to develop income-generating businesses based on non-timber forest products such as orchids, butterfly farming and handicrafts, focusing on women's participation. VDT has strong links with the Awareness Community Theatre (ACT) to promote forest and environmental issues.

From the early days of NFCAP, VDT has been one of the most active participants in all related NGO fora including the NGO NFCAP Working Group, and has provided the alternate NGO Representative on the Board of the National Forest Authority.

### *Wau Ecology Institute*

The Wau Ecology Institute (WEI) was registered in 1971 as a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to ecological research, education and conservation. Collaborative programmes have been implemented with a diverse range of bodies including the PNG University of Technology and the US Smithsonian Institution. WEI played a key role in the formation and early existence of NANGO, in part with a clear view to forming a collective response and means of engaging the NFCAP process.

Current WEI programmes include: environmental monitoring (including impacts of large scale mining projects); ecological and ethnobotanical research; research and extension into honey production, site-stable agriculture and butterfly farming/ranching; women's income generation; and landowner awareness. In addition WEI has a commercial programme - the institute currently generates about 60% of its operating budget from coffee - the remainder is made up from guest accommodation and from project grants.

With NFCAP support, WEI initiated one of several programmes to develop butterfly farming and ranching in PNG. The focus of attention is the group of large birdwing butterflies from the *Ornithoptera* and *Troides* genera. The process involves: identifying with landowner groups the appropriate locations where these species occur but are below ecological carrying capacity; planting the appropriate food species desired by the caterpillars and favoured by wild females for egg-laying; collecting and caging the larvae at chrysalid stage; killing and packaging the newly hatched adults. The butterflies can be sold to the Insect Farming and Trading Agency in Bulolo, or to WEI itself.

NFCAP also supported WEI in working with a landowner group in developing benefits from product enterprises and research linked to an area set aside for conservation in the Kupers Mountain Range.

### *East New Britain Sosel Eksen Komiti*

East New Britain Sosel Eksen Komiti (ENBSEK) is an NGO established in 1986 as a support committee to the provincial probation service. The committee acts to initiate, organize, motivate and mobilize social action programmes and services to address development issues and problems facing ordinary people in East New Britain Province.

The province is currently confronting an onslaught of logging companies as the price of tropical timbers sky-rocket. Many people have not had sufficient education or exposure to be able to anticipate the scope and severity of the impact of large-scale logging or other development projects which involve intensive and extensive resource exploitation.

Since 1991 ENBSEK has implemented an environmental awareness programme through foot patrols. The approach is to stress the value of natural resources and the danger of uncontrolled exploitation. ENBSEK advocates for and supports landowners in their attempts to resist the threat of over-exploitation by unscrupulous logging companies and helps landowners identify sustainable income generating activities based on the sensible and selective use of forest resources. NFCAP provided some support for this programme in 1993.

As in many provinces of PNG, women are often excluded from the discussions, debate and decision-making on environmental matters, despite being those often most affected by environmental degradation. ENBSEK's Women and Environment programme represents an

important focus on the participation and education of women.

Also with NFCAP support, ENBSEK has arranged for trainers from the Village Development Trust (see above) to conduct training for communities who have access to portable sawmills. Other training efforts have been geared to development of non-timber forest product based businesses such as galip nut processing.

#### ***Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific, PNG, Inc.***

The Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific, PNG, Inc. (FSP/PNG) has been working in PNG since 1968. In 1992 FSP/PNG became an independent member of FSP International which has four metropolitan members - Australia, Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. FSP/PNG has a core staff of 13 and funding, from a range of external and PNG Government sources, in the range of US\$600,000 per annum.

FSP/PNG's programme in ecoforestry - based on the controlled use of village-based portable sawmills - has strong linkages with NFCAP and involves collaboration with a range of bodies including VDT, the Forest Research Institute, the National Forest Authority, the Department of Environment and Conservation, WEI and others. A nationwide survey of portable sawmills was completed in 1994 and the project is now moving into a new phase of "assessment and design of an ecotimber industry in PNG". Other forest related projects include: a flora conservation project, with a particular focus on orchids; a non-timber forest products inventory project with the University of PNG; input into various "integrated conservation and development" projects; and a range of awareness initiatives.

Other programme areas for FSP/PNG include: literacy, extension support and development, and education through traditional theatre.

#### ***Pacific Heritage Foundation***

Pacific Heritage Foundation (PHF) is a newly established NGO (1992) committed to:

- increasing awareness amongst all people of the wealth and diversity of the natural heritage in the Pacific area and providing moral, technical and legal support to prevent the destruction of this heritage;
- improving the welfare of peoples by providing practical working examples of environmentally sound methods of earning income from the natural resources without unnecessary destruction;
- supporting government policies and practices aimed at the preservation of this heritage.

PHF is actively involved in a managed, community-based portable sawmill project that they run jointly with the resource owners of three villages in the Bainings area of the Gazelle Peninsula, East New Britain Province. They have proved that this form of forestry project is economically viable, and socially and environmentally acceptable to the traditional land/resource owners. Once the concept of sustainable harvesting is agreed upon, PHF have found that a reinforcement of traditional forest values occurs.

Following recent publicity and continuing awareness and education efforts by PHF, landowners from other areas in East New Britain and other provinces of New Ireland, West New Britain and East Sepik have increasingly sought information from PHF, particularly in regard to starting their own projects to counter pressure from foreign loggers.

PHF is also establishing some further demonstrations of the possibilities of community-based forest management. Permanent Sample Plots (PSPs) have been established in their first project area, and initial visual evidence indicates that this re-growth is vigorous and species-varied. However, PHF believes that the commercial value per hectare can be improved without substantially altering the forest mix or interfering with the flora and fauna relationships by selective planting of high value tree species and rattans. Several communities with which PHF works are developing practices of forest enrichment, particularly for the recovery of abandoned garden areas.

Members of PHF have been key NGO participants in many NFCAP fora. A proposal from PHF for NFCAP funding in 1994 was rejected because it was believed by the Steering Committee that PHF was on the brink of receiving major external support from other sources.

#### *Individual and Community Rights Advocacy Forum*

ICRAF was set up recently by a small group of lawyers specifically to make legal and advocacy services available to communities in the areas of human rights, land rights and the environment. ICRAF has already become an important linking organisation cutting across existing unresponsive structures and giving resource owners access to legal and advocacy services and beginning to provide paralegal community-level training.

With NFCAP support, ICRAF has established a Port Moresby headquarters and set up a litigation fighting fund to enable groups to ensure they have full briefing of cases which seek redress in the courts against those who have violated agreements with landowners to the detriment of the environment. A rolling programme of workshops for local NGOs and landowner leaders is also underway, aimed at raising awareness of legal rights and organisation strategies which protect the land and environment.

ICRAF have provided (together with VDT) the alternate NGO Representative on the Board of the National Forest Authority and have been a vital counterweight to the pressures stemming from the logging industry for preventing or over-turning some of the major progressive steps made under NFCAP for control of the industry.

## **IIED's Forestry and Land Use Programme**

The Programme addresses needs for productivity, sustainability and equity in forestry and land use. Its research and capacity-strengthening work focuses at the national level in developing countries. It involves:

- **policy processes:** supporting participation of multiple interests in policy analysis, formulation and monitoring
- **sustainability assessment** of forest management and use
- **capacity development** of governments, NGOs and communities for sustainable forest management
- **the development and monitoring of incentives** for sustainable forest management



# **IIED**

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