

How to Make Poverty History



The central role of local organizations
in meeting the MDGs

Edited by Tom Bigg & David Satterthwaite

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The central role of local organizations in meeting the MDGs

Summary of the Millennium Development Goals and their targets

8 Millennium Development Goals	18 Millennium Development Targets
1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	1 and 2: Between 1990 and 2015, halve the proportion of people: * whose income is less than US\$ 1 per day * who suffer from hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education	3: By 2015 all boys and girls able to complete the full course of primary school.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women	4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015.
4. Reduce child mortality	5: 1990–2015: reduce by two-thirds the under-five mortality rate.
5. Improve maternal health	6: 1990–2015: reduce by three-quarters the maternal mortality ratio.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	7 and 8: By 2015, to have halted and begun to reverse: * the spread of AIDS * the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability	9–11: * Integrate principles of sustainable development into country policies, and reverse the loss of environmental resources. * 1990–2015: halve the proportion of people without safe water and basic sanitation. * Significant improvements in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.
8. Develop a global partnership for development	12–18: * Establish a fairer trading and financial system, including a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally. (Also targets that include aid flows equivalent to at least 0.7% of high-income nations' gross national income.) * Address special needs of least developed and land-locked countries and small island states. * Deal with debt problems. * Strategies for “decent and productive” work for youth. * Provide access to affordable essential drugs. * Make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technology.

For the complete text and also details of the indicators to be used to monitor progress, see http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp

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Foreword

Camilla Toulmin, Director, IIED

“One thing that we have learnt over the years is that neither doom-and-gloom scenarios nor destructive criticism will inspire people and Governments to act. What is needed is a positive vision, a clear road map for getting from here to there, and a clear responsibility assigned to each of the many actors in the system”.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan⁽¹⁾

In this book, IIED’s colleagues and partners lay out the case for why local institutions matter. If we, as a global community, are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and “make poverty history”, our global ambitions must become more firmly anchored in local realities. As we have seen at the 2005 G8 summit in Gleneagles, there are many millions of people in the rich world – old and young – who yearn for a fairer world, in which increased aid, trade justice and debt relief provide the planks for constructing a better world. At the level of ordinary people and civil society groups, the vision and values are alive and well. At global level, some cynicism is in order, given the ease with

UN Secretary General ‘From Doha to Johannesburg by way of Monterrey: How to achieve, and sustain, development in the 21st century’. London, 25 February 2002.



which most governments sign up to new initiatives and agreements. World leaders may sign up, knowing that in practice they won't be held responsible for failing to meet the terms of the agreement. In other cases, they hope to be able to fudge the figures, to show that they have indeed doubled aid, or done away with debt. The reality is often less magnanimous, with the same money being pledged away several times, and re-cycled from one context to another.

The MDG process faces many of the same risks as all big global initiatives. But thanks to the UN Secretary General, the Millennium Project was put in place to shift our leaders from bland platitudes towards finer calculation of what our global ambitions might imply, for particular places and goals. The process led by the Millennium Project of consultation and gathering of evidence through multiple task forces has helped greatly to focus minds on the big gaps remaining between what our leaders say they seek to achieve, and where progress stands to date. And as the process shows, the score-card is pretty mixed, with African countries particularly far behind in reaching the goals set. The response from donors and recipients has been to talk of doubling aid, channelled through new-style Poverty Reduction Strategy processes amended to include the MDGs as principal targets, with associated budgets for investment and recurrent costs needed to achieve these goals.

The aims are admirable and the vision clear, but such an approach will not make poverty history without a much stronger focus on local institutions and processes. Central governments are obviously important in setting the scene within which others can act. They can make life easier or more difficult, for traders to operate, for entrepreneurs to set up a business, or for farmers to secure a decent livelihood from their crops. But there are also many risks from channelling very large sums of money from western governments into the Ministry of Finance in the capital cities of many developing countries. These reservations are made up of well-rehearsed arguments about governance, power, and decision-making in recipient countries. Large sums from



donors for budgetary support (sometimes 70% or more of the recipient government's operating budget) shift the balance between government and citizen. Heavy reliance on donor support inevitably means that those in power look upwards to their paymasters, and discount the priorities and views of their people. No amount of "participatory process" can replace this missing link. Similarly, many people recognise the importance of decentralising power and resources to lower level structures, to ensure that policy and practice are tailored to fit local contexts. Yet such local structures are starved of funds by central governments, reluctant to give up any resources or powers that might cut back on the perks of patronage. Governance issues have been rightly flagged by the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP), raising the need for transparency and audit of how such donor funds are used.

Less well known is the timely match between this approach to aid-giving and the political, financial and administrative convenience of donor nations. Governments throughout the western world are under political pressure to cut back on personnel. It's much easier for administrative and financial reasons to write a few large cheques to recipient government Treasuries, than provide a large number of smaller funding packages, guidance and technical support to a mosaic of field-based projects. Yet it is at this local level that the substantial gains for achieving the MDGs and reducing poverty will be made.

The Millennium Project has generated knowledge of great value for policy-makers around the world, feeding into global debate and government plans. But the question of "how" the MDGs will be met remains unresolved – hence the title of this book. Unless we learn from the past and find ways to build on the success stories of the present, we risk repeating the many and multiple failures with which the development landscape is scattered.

What does this mean in practice? The most vital challenge is to find ways to support local level institutions and processes, whether municipal governments, farmer unions, women's



savings groups or citizen associations. Examples exist of decentralised funds and other mechanisms which can reach local people most effectively – some are governmental, others NGOs. The status of the organisation matters less than their accountability to poor people, and their proven capacity to deliver. Whatever their status, they need more support.

Bringing politics back into the debate is also essential. Meeting the MDGs requires actively supporting the civil and political rights of groups who often have little voice. World leaders are very vocal and ardent supporters of the “fight against poverty”, yet rarely do they seek out the views and voices of poor groups. The poor sometimes appear as photo-opportunities for a visiting politician keen to spruce up his image as a caring, committed person in his home constituency. But the voices of pastoralists, forest dwellers, scattered rural populations or those living in farming and fishing villages, small towns and large cities have been absent from the current MDG debate. Neither national nor local governments speak for them, and instead are deaf to the needs of poorer groups. The organizations formed by the poor – the landless, “slum” dwellers, smallholders, pastoralists – are critical to bring politics back into the process, since they provide their members with greater voice.

Achievement of the MDGs has another 10 years to run. As we yearn with our hearts for a fairer world, we must also put our minds to work on ways to get better progress over the next decade. “Making poverty history” must recognise the local dimension at its core, or risk being no more than the latest global development fad.

1

Introduction: why local organizations are central to meeting the MDGs

David Satterthwaite⁽¹⁾

I. OVERVIEW

Measures to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have to be intensely local or have strong local components – because, to succeed, they have to change outcomes in each particular locality, especially for those with the least income and assets. Most of the MDGs are about improved outcomes for individuals and households – food security, adequate incomes, access to schools and health care, secure homes with adequate provision for water and sanitation,

1. David Satterthwaite is a Senior Fellow at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in London. He was also a member of the Millennium Project Taskforce on Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers, and this chapter draws on discussions within this Taskforce. This chapter also benefited from comments and suggestions from Camilla Toulmin and Dilys Roe.



Most of the local organizations that benefit and represent poorer groups are invisible to development assistance

protection from and treatment for life-threatening diseases. This requires tens of thousands of more effective local organizations to provide the relevant services – and to increase local capacity to cope with social and environmental change. These organizations are unlikely to serve poor groups⁽²⁾ unless these groups have more influence on service providers, and more voice in local governments. So meeting the MDGs also requires actively supporting civil and political rights – for pastoralists, forest dwellers, scattered rural populations or those living in farming and fishing villages, small towns and large cities. Where local governments are ineffective or simply ignore the needs of poorer groups, organizations formed by the poor – the landless, “slum” dwellers, smallholders, pastoralists – often have particular importance, providing their members with services and more influence.

Perhaps the two greatest failings of development assistance to date have been that it has provided too little support to the local organizations that benefit poor groups (including these groups’ own organizations) and has not checked the local and extra-local organizations that ignore or impoverish poor groups. Indeed, most of the local organizations that do benefit and represent poorer groups are invisible to development assistance. In most places, these organizations have much greater importance for meeting local needs than activities funded by development assistance. Perhaps this failure to support pro-poor local organizations is also a key reason why decades of development and environmentalism have failed to halt the destruction or damage of the natural systems on which virtually all food, fresh water supplies and a stable climate depend. Development assistance has failed to support the local organizations that have the knowledge and capacity to halt and reverse this damage, and has failed to check those local and extra-local interests that cause such destruction. Local organizations also usually have the central

2. The inadequacy in this terminology should be acknowledged, although it is difficult to find an alternative word that will not be misunderstood. “Poor groups” refers to those with incomes and asset bases that are insufficient for them to meet their needs and to cope with stresses (e.g. rising prices) or shocks (e.g. a disaster, failure of the rains, an income-earner seriously ill or injured). Many such groups are not poor in other ways. Many are made poor by external influences over which they have no control.



role in ensuring that the two goals of sustainable development are compatible – meeting needs without depleting natural resources and compromising ecosystem functioning.

The Millennium Development Goals are meant to provide new energy and resources to meet the needs of poor people – but are they addressing the ineffectiveness of development assistance? Do discussions about how to meet the MDGs recognize the central role of local organizations? To date, there is little discussion of how national governments and international agencies can support local organizations that work in favour of the poor and sustainable resource management. Meeting most of the MDG targets requires three major changes in local organizations: providing or improving services; providing a more just rule of law; and ensuring more voice and capacity to act for those with unmet needs and limited assets. These three changes are usually linked, and reinforce each other. Is it possible to get a better match between generating the needed pro-poor changes in each locality, and the highly centralized management of development assistance?

II. THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND CENTRALIZED INSTITUTIONS

Meeting the MDGs means having to meet the needs of hundreds of millions of small-scale food producers (farmers, pastoralists, fishers) who work within localized food systems that provide the livelihoods, incomes, economies and cultures of much of the world's population (see Chapter 6). A high proportion of these have no formal title or rights to the land and water resources on which their livelihoods and most food production depend (see Chapters 2, 3 and 6). Meeting the MDGs also means meeting the needs of hundreds of millions of low-income urban dwellers who provide the cheap labour and services on which much economic growth depends – who live in houses and settlements that are of such poor quality that their health is constantly compromised and their lives at risk (see Chapter

Is it possible to get a better match between generating the needed pro-poor changes in each locality, and the highly centralized management of development assistance?



While successful development is intensely local, most development actions and investments are planned, implemented and evaluated centrally – by national governments and international agencies

5). Sustainable use of natural resources and management of ecosystems also require local institutions (informal or formal) that both serve local populations and are based on detailed knowledge of the particulars of each locality: most food production is embedded in complex, risk-prone and diverse environments (Chapters 3 and 6). Each locality needs local institutions to ensure that there is a capacity among local groups to adapt to change and successfully cope with stresses and shocks (including those related to climate change – see Chapter 7). Local groups also need capacity to manage ecosystem functions important for their locality and also for the wider region, nation or globally – for instance with regard to water flows, biodiversity and emissions of greenhouse gases (see Chapters 3 and 7).

Yet, while successful development is intensely local, most development actions and investments are planned, implemented and evaluated centrally – by national governments and international agencies. The very people on whose unmet needs the whole development business and virtually all the MDGs are justified have been given very little role in this. Most of the discussions about what should be done, and most of the project documents are not in their languages. Rarely do they have access to documents that set out the forms of external support that are meant to benefit them. Most decisions about what is funded and how the funds are used are made without consulting them – and with no accountability to them.⁽³⁾ And the knowledge and resources they can bring to meeting the MDGs is almost always ignored – even though this has been shown in countless case studies to make poverty reduction far more effective and to make external resources go much further. (And sometimes to show that external resources are not actually needed – see Chapter 5.) Only a very small proportion of official development assistance goes to what poor groups identify as their priorities. If they get any benefit from some externally funded initiative, it has usually

3. The move to greater donor “harmonization” within each nation, and support for national Poverty Reduction Strategies might be considered to be addressing these – but do village associations, grassroots women’s savings groups and federations of “slum” dwellers really have any influence here?



been determined by someone else within a decision-making process over which they had no influence and within which there is no accountability to them. And much of what is funded and supported by external agencies is inappropriate to the complex, risk-prone and diverse environments on which their livelihoods depend. The institutional structures of official aid agencies and development banks are largely incapable of supporting the diverse local processes that really deliver for the poor (except in just a few showcase projects).

Why does the development business ignore pro-poor local organizations? Is it because they do not exist? Clearly not, since this book gives many examples of local organizations that have contributed to meeting the MDGs. They include organizations formed by smallholder farmers, small-scale traders and forestry enterprises, pastoral herders, fishing communities, indigenous peoples and “slum” and shack dwellers. As Chapters 3 and 6 describe, in regard to food production, people have always worked together in resource management, labour-sharing, marketing and other tasks that would be too costly if done alone. Local groups and indigenous organizations have been essential in facilitating collective action and coordinated management of food systems and their environments at different scales. Local organizations continue to have a central role in this process of negotiation and coordinated action in a variety of settings. They include traditional and indigenous organizations, voluntary associations and emergent, popular or community-based structures, as well as more formal institutions such as NGOs and local government agencies. These organizations work across a range of scales – one reason being to increase their effectiveness in managing local food systems and increase their leverage in policy and political debates on farming, environment and people’s access to goods. Chapter 5 highlights the importance of collective action undertaken by low-income urban dwellers and the potential they have demonstrated to help local governments meet many of the MDGs.

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The problem is not that pro-poor, representative organizations do not exist but that they are so often invisible to external “experts” and international agencies

The problem is not that pro-poor, representative organizations do not exist but that they are so often invisible to external “experts” and international agencies. There are women’s groups, savings groups, migrant groups, village associations and indigenous organizations with critical roles in development, sustainable resource use and ecosystem management. In many places, as this book will describe, local organizations and federations of local organizations formed by small farmers, small forest enterprises, tenants, “shack” dwellers, homeless people and indigenous communities are also critical both to supporting and spreading innovative development and to giving poorer groups greater influence locally and beyond. In many instances, local informal institutions have key roles in ensuring the poorest groups, or those that suffer serious shocks (for instance serious injury or death of a working adult), can cope – thus ensuring food security on the ground (see Chapters 5 and 6).

In many locations, informal local institutions also have the central role in ensuring sustainable natural resource management that fits the particular local ecological context. Local organizations formed by smallholders and other food producers often have critical roles in natural resource management, pest control, research and innovation and marketing (Chapter 6). They are responsible for managing thousands of wetlands, forests, grazing lands, lakes and marine areas in ways that spread benefits and protect resources (Chapter 3). In many nations, local organizations and federations formed by the homeless and the “slum” and “shack” dwellers are demonstrating new approaches to poverty reduction and city development that are more effective than most programmes of governments and international agencies (Chapter 5). Many of these local organizations are representative of the very groups whose needs are the “targets” that the MDGs are meant to address. But these groups are marginalized by the ways in which most development and environmental management is planned and implemented. As Chapter 6 notes, local food systems and the local organizations that govern them are



largely ignored, neglected or actively undermined by the international development community.⁽⁴⁾

If a savings group formed by 300 low-income women in a sub-Saharan African nation wanted a loan for the equivalent of US\$ 20,000 – to purchase land on which to build their homes, to develop a group enterprise or to support their capacity to provide small loans to individuals within their group, for example – most official bilateral agencies and development banks could not support them.⁽⁵⁾ If they did, it would be by some mechanism that was outside their main funding structures, and this mechanism would be capable of providing support for only a few such initiatives in each country. The agency staff and institutional structure could not manage to support hundreds or thousands of such small loan requests. They would also have great difficulty managing the funding flows that came back to them from the loan repayments organized by these women, especially if the women developed the repayment schedules and procedures that best served them.

Perhaps it is unfair to criticize official aid agencies and development banks for not being able to support this kind of request. They were not set up to do so. They are meant to support local processes by channelling funding through national “recipient governments”. But the last half-century of development assistance shows very disappointing results in most nations. This is rarely acknowledged. Now, in the discussions about how to meet the MDGs, where is the consideration of how to make international funding more effective at supporting local processes that can ensure the MDGs get achieved? What about using local institutions that are accountable to and influenced by the poor? But which avoid the kind of uncoordinated action by different

In the discussions about how to meet the MDGs, where is the consideration of how to make international funding more effective at supporting local processes that can ensure the MDGs get achieved?

4. See in Chapter 6 some powerful examples of local organizations in the Andes and in India providing food security to the poorest groups in ways that were ignored or undermined by official institutions. See also the role of informal savings groups formed mostly by women who live on pavements or in slums and shacks (Chapter 5).

5. Note that the comments in this chapter about aid agencies and development banks refer to the official bilateral agencies of governments from high-income nations, and the official multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the various regional development banks. They are not directed at international NGOs, although many international NGOs have comparable problems listening to and working with low-income groups and their organizations.



Most poverty reduction, including meeting most of the MDGs, requires local processes that improve the performance of the more visible and formal local institutions and also support the more informal organizations formed by poorer groups

agencies within each locality that the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness seeks to avoid at national level?⁶

III. THE LOCAL PROCESSES ON WHICH DEVELOPMENT DEPENDS

Most poverty reduction, including meeting most of the MDGs, requires local processes that both improve the performance of the more visible and formal local institutions (many of them government organizations) and also support the more informal organizations formed by poorer groups. As all the chapters in this book highlight, this includes partnerships between these two.

There are three areas of change needed in the more visible and formal local institutions:

1. **Providing services**, such as good-quality schools, health care services and provision for water and sanitation that poorer groups can access and afford – although the most effective way of providing these is often through partnerships with the informal organizations of poorer groups.
2. **A just rule of law**, locally applied in ways that protect poorer groups' rights and livelihoods (including access to land, forests and water in rural areas, and land for housing and services in urban areas) and that recognizes customary rules and traditions. As Chapter 2 makes evident, this has to include local institutions that protect the right to land or land use (for instance secondary rights) of smallholders, tenant farmers and pastoralists. This has to check the powerful interests who want that land or resources; without this, economic growth can underpin mass eviction, as it often has in prosperous cities or mass dispossession of farmers who have long farmed the land they occupy but without formal land rights. As Chapter 8 discusses, environmental laws,

6. See the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: Ownership, Harmonisation, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability, agreed at the High Level Forum on Joint Progress Towards Enhanced Aid Effectiveness, Paris, 28 February – 2 March 2005. This was signed by governments from virtually all high-income nations and most large low- and middle-income nations; and also by most multilateral development assistance agencies.



including those developed in response to international environmental laws, often lack the measures needed to ensure that they benefit and respond to the priorities of low-income groups. Indeed, these laws may even be used to support the dispossession of such groups.⁽⁷⁾ The rule of law also has to protect and support those who face discrimination, for instance on the basis of gender, caste or ethnicity.

3. **More voice and power locally** for those suffering deprivation or at risk from stresses and shocks – and local governments and traditional authorities that are more accountable to them and able to work in partnership with them. In many instances, support is needed for small-scale producers and their associations to reduce the discrimination they face in government regulations and procedures, and in helping them tap new markets (see Chapters 4 and 6). In most instances, particular support is needed to ensure greater gender equality.

Table 1.1 contrasts the kinds of supportive local organizations that can contribute to meeting the MDG targets with the kinds of unsupportive local organizations that will prevent these targets being met. If the MDGs are to be met, international donors and national governments have to have systems that shift the actions of local organizations from the unsupportive to the supportive.

The importance of securing land or land-use rights for smallholders, pastoralists and low-income urban households is now more widely recognized by international agencies as central to reducing poverty and supporting more prosperous economies. But as Chapter 2 asks with regard to sub-Saharan Africa, is this recognition accompanied by an understanding of the current and potential role of local institutions (including informal institutions) in providing intermediate ways of securing rights to land? Is there also

In many instances, support is needed for small-scale producers and their associations to reduce the discrimination they face in government regulations and procedures, and in helping them tap new markets

7. As Chapter 8 notes, environmental laws are not self-executing and they cannot function in the absence of effective implementation, which in turn requires extensive administrative capacities, detailed regulatory mandates, strong government commitment, and active civil society participating in the law and decision-making processes.

Table 1.1: Examples of supportive and unsupportive formal local organizations

Local organizations that are supportive	Local organizations that are unsupportive
<i>Schools (pre-school, primary and secondary)</i>	
Schools that are accessible to all and with costs kept down (e.g. for fees, school uniforms, text books); special provisions to help low-income families keep their children at school and to ensure gender equality may be needed.	Education departments that make very inadequate or no provision for schools in many areas. Schools with high user charges (as formal charges, or through informal payments requested).
<i>Primary health care centres, hospitals and emergency services</i>	
Health services that are available and easily accessible to all, with strong outreach programmes for poorer areas, special programmes for vulnerable and at-risk groups and provision to keep down costs for users. Special outreach for all those with HIV/AIDS to provide counselling and guarantee the supply of needed drugs while avoiding stigmatising them.	Very inadequate or no provision for health care in many areas. Where provision is made, high user fees and locations and opening hours which make them difficult to use, especially for working people. Staff members who are antagonistic and judgemental to 'poorer groups' or to particular groups (such as adolescents or specific ethnic groups). Inappropriate or no services for those with HIV/AIDS.
<i>Providers of water, sanitation, drainage, household waste disposal and energy</i>	
Service providers with a focus on ensuring adequate provision for all – with differential service standards and support for community partnerships to ensure that poorer groups are reached, where the resources are insufficient for universal provision through conventional systems.	Service providers who have little or no interest in reaching poorer groups within political systems that do not ensure that they do so. Provision for water and sanitation and, where needed, waste collection, often available only to richer groups in particular cities (and often provided at below cost). Refusal to provide any services in illegal urban settlements and most rural settlements.
<i>Local government role in securing and protecting poorer groups' access to natural resources (land, forest products, water, fisheries)</i>	
Local government support for and engagement with organizations representing smallholders, pastoralists, indigenous people, fishing communities and other groups with limited asset bases and often unclear rights to resources to work with them in protecting and enhancing their access to resources and their capacity to manage these sustainably.	Local governments that primarily represent and serve the more powerful vested interests within their jurisdiction. Such local governments are often among the primary causes of poverty. Land registration systems that benefit the richer, more powerful groups. Governments undermining the successful natural resource management systems of local populations.
<i>Local government role in reducing the active and passive discrimination that small enterprises usually face in, for instance, getting government contracts and finance</i>	
Local government support for associations of small producers, traders and builders, and working with them to increase possibilities for their members.	Local governments that work only with the associations developed by powerful groups, which often exclude small-scale entrepreneurs and capture resources and markets.
<i>Local government role in monitoring social and environmental impacts of business activities</i>	
Local government with an active programme to monitor social and environmental impacts of business (for instance in relation to minimum wages, occupational health and safety, child labour, environmental pollution) and to work with local groups to develop the most appropriate local responses.	Local government not acting to prevent pollution and abuses of health and safety at work.

Local organizations that are supportive	Local organizations that are unsupportive
<i>Local government bodies for planning and land-use management that influence the availability of land for housing in urban areas</i>	
Local government actively working to ensure that land for housing is available at prices and in locations that serve low-income households wishing to build their own homes; also supporting provision of secure tenure for those living in informal settlements.	Local governments that do nothing – or actively seek to keep poorer groups out of official land for housing markets – for instance by maintaining inappropriate standards for minimum lot sizes and infrastructure, and by having slow, costly, inefficient official procedures required to develop land for housing.
<i>Public, private or NGO providers of safety nets</i>	
Official provision for safety nets to help those who cannot work or those with inadequate incomes, or official support for NGO or community provision of safety nets (including emergency credit) and community-based systems for guaranteeing food security.	No local organization providing safety nets or supporting community-managed safety nets.
<i>Public, private or NGO finance agencies</i>	
Microfinance programmes for individuals, and support for community finance for poorer households provided in ways that recognize the need to minimize debt burdens for poor households.	No local organization providing or supporting microfinance or community finance in ways that are appropriate to local needs and capacities to repay.
<i>The police, the legal system and local government bodies involved in ensuring the rule of law</i>	
The rule of law provided (including police services), and poorer groups' civil and political rights protected. Also seeking to be supportive of poorer groups' livelihoods and to lessen discrimination and work towards greater gender equality – often with the police developing partnerships with traditional authorities and community organizations.	Those who do not serve poorer groups (for instance with no police service provided), or who oppress them. In many urban areas, it is common for poorer groups living in illegal settlements to be evicted and for informal enterprises (such as hawkers and sellers in informal markets) to be harassed. In many rural areas, government bodies and regulations undermine effective community-based systems of natural resource management.
<i>Local government systems for voting and accountability to citizens</i>	
The right to and the possibility of voting for local government; political and bureaucratic systems in which poorer groups have access to senior politicians and civil servants to ensure that their rights are respected. This includes protection from forced eviction, and appropriate support in an emergency.	Local government that is not elected – or if it is, where little or no attempt is made to ensure that all adults are on the voter register and able to vote. In urban areas, those living in illegal or unregistered settlements are denied the vote (for instance, because they lack an official address). Politicians and the bureaucracy unresponsive to demands of poorer groups and of possibilities of working in partnership with them.
<i>Local government relationship with organizations formed by smallholders, landless groups, 'slum' dwellers</i>	
Local governments recognizing the validity of these organizations and seeking ways to work with them and support them. Also an active programme to change local government structures and regulations that impede development. In most places, support for community-developed disaster avoidance and preparedness.	Local governments opposing or ignoring these organizations, and local politicians refusing to respond to and work with them, unless they are allied politically to their party. No actions taken to support community-developed disaster avoidance and preparedness.
<i>How governments define and measure poverty and how local organizations act on this</i>	
Local processes in which poor groups are involved that define and measure poverty and use this to support local poverty reduction strategies seeking to reach all poor groups; poor groups' involvement in monitoring poverty and the success of interventions to reduce it.	Poverty defined and measured by a national government agency, usually based only on consumption levels and with poverty lines making little allowance for the cost of non-food necessities. Poverty measurements based on representative national samples so they have little or no relevant data for local organizations, including local governments.



It is difficult to see land-titling programmes being effective and working in favour of poorer groups without both strong local institutions within which they have real “voice”, and also a more just local rule of law

understanding of the difficulty for any centralized institution in providing land titling in ways that are tailored to each locality’s particular social, economic and political context? And is there sufficient provision to guarantee the land or land-use rights of the least powerful households and communities or of those with ancestral claims and cultural ties to specific land areas? In many places, local institutions are more capable of administering just, appropriate and easily implemented land rights than are conventional, formal land-titling programmes.

All land-titling processes have to have powerful checks against the dispossession of poorer groups in both rural and urban areas. In rural areas, they have to guard against the dispossession of groups who may have been farming the land or have had secondary-use rights for decades but who have no formal title. In urban areas, they have to resolve the fact that much of the housing built in the last few decades that poorer groups can afford has been built illegally, usually on land that is occupied or subdivided illegally. As Chapter 5 describes, depending on how it is done, land titling in urban areas can contribute greatly to either reducing poverty or increasing it. Low-income households may also be unable to afford the costs of getting a formal title to their land. In rural areas, land-titling programmes have to recognize secondary land rights – which are so important for many farmers and pastoralists – and have full regard for the importance of collective property. It is difficult to see land-titling programmes being effective and working in favour of poorer groups without both strong local institutions within which they have real “voice”, and also a more just local rule of law.

Identifying the current and potential roles of local organizations in addressing the MDGs should focus on their positive contributions and on reducing their failures – by their actions or their failure to act. Local governments can be key developmental institutions but they are also often the institutions that exacerbate poverty. Many informal institutions may also exclude the priorities of particular



groups. Many informal organizations and federations do not welcome women having equal roles. Many are not inclusive of poorer groups or “outsiders”, and most are not immune to manipulation by powerful insiders and outsiders. They may reproduce subtle forms of exclusion in the absence of a conscious commitment to freedom, equity and gender inclusion.

IV. CHANGES BEYOND THE LOCAL

Most of the discussions on how to meet the MDGs do not address what might be termed the local dimensions of good governance – or if they do, they fail to specify how this should be supported. The “Make Poverty History” coalition also pays little attention to this. Debt relief, a fairer international trade regime and increasing aid flows will not, of themselves, reduce poverty. Nor, in most instances, will economic growth. Indeed, economic growth can increase poverty for large sections of the population – as poorer groups get evicted from their homes and lands to make way for “development” projects and investment in infrastructure, thereby being excluded from resources on which their livelihoods depended.

The recommendations on how to meet the MDGs or to “make poverty history” are not wrong in themselves, but they fail to address the political and institutional means by which the changes they recommend will actually benefit the poor. This book does not assert that only local action can bring results. But it does stress the need for mechanisms to ensure that benefits are actually felt by those in each and every locality. This book is not proposing non-government channels for delivery of solutions – indeed, the authors regard better local governance through representative structures as vital to success.

This book draws on the work of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and its many partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean over the last 20–30 years – in forestry, agriculture, drylands management in the Sahel, biodiversity, energy and climate

Debt relief, a fairer international trade regime and increasing aid flows will not, of themselves, reduce poverty



From local engagement comes the identification of the “policies that work”, of the pro-poor local institutions that can be supported, and of the changes needed in higher levels of government and international agencies and in local and international markets that will in turn generate the changes needed in each locality to meet the MDGs and to “make poverty history”

change and urban development.⁽⁸⁾ This work has been rooted in local studies to identify what needs to change in “environment and development” to ensure poverty reduction and promote sustainable management of natural resources. This work is done in partnership with local researchers, practitioners and activists. It is often done with organizations formed by those suffering poverty or at risk of poverty – smallholders, pastoralists, household enterprises, landless groups, “slum” and shack dwellers and homeless groups in urban areas. IIED’s work on climate change also focuses on building local capacity to reduce risk: perhaps not surprisingly, it is usually the poorest groups who are most at risk from the direct and indirect impacts of climate change (Chapter 7). From this local engagement comes the identification of the “policies that work”, of the pro-poor local institutions that can be supported, and of the changes needed in higher levels of government and international agencies and in local and international markets that will in turn generate the changes needed in each locality to meet the MDGs and to “make poverty history”.

V. WHAT INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES SHOULD DO

For official development assistance agencies, perhaps the single most important action with regard to the MDGs and their contribution to “making poverty history” is rethinking how their ways of working and their institutional structure can support the local dimensions of development and natural resource management. This includes reviewing how they can support the shift by formal local organizations (especially local governments) from an unsupportive to a supportive role, as illustrated in Table 1.1. Central to this rethinking is a fundamental change in the relationship between international agencies and poor groups and their organizations. Donors need to ask how each of their country programmes can support the development of stronger local organizations that really deliver for poorer groups, are more accountable to them and are able to work in partnerships

8. For more details, see www.iied.org



with them. This includes support for associations or federations that these groups form; it also includes support for changes in local processes that reduce inherent anti-poor biases.

Therefore, international agencies need to shift away from seeing “the poor” as clients or targets to which “development” and “environmental management” must be delivered, and towards recognizing low-income groups as partners and active agents with knowledge, resources and rights to influence how donor assistance is used.

Development is not something that international agencies and their “experts” “do” for the poor. Yet most professionals working in development, from small NGOs to the largest development banks and bilateral programmes, have very strong opinions about what the “solutions” should be – even for locations or nations they have never visited. Energy experts see solutions in cleaner fuels, health specialists promote targeted interventions that they consider most cost-effective in terms of deaths and disabilities prevented, specialists in water and sanitation and transport promote their own projects and sectors, land specialists promote land titling, governance specialists focus on national administrative reform, education specialists claim that schooling plus enhancing human capital is the key intervention, economists seek “pro-poor growth” (although they are not sure what this actually means), and each rural development specialist has their own idea of what best supports agricultural development. There is little or no space for “beneficiaries” to influence these views and priorities. There is always some expert who has more influence than them on what is done. The Millennium Project, which seeks to show governments and international agencies how to meet the MDGs, has so many recommendations for what should be provided, expanded, distributed, reformed, launched, eliminated, established... but not much on listening, supporting, enabling, empowering and protecting.

International agencies need to shift away from seeing “the poor” as clients or targets to which “development” and “environmental management” must be delivered, and towards recognizing low-income groups as partners and active agents with knowledge, resources and rights to influence how donor assistance is used



Rather than specifying what should be done, international agencies need to develop the funding structures that support choices and priorities made by local organizations, formal and informal, in which poorer groups have influence. A critical test for this is to ask donors what proportion of their development assistance goes to groups such as the savings group mentioned above, formed by 300 low-income women who seek a loan for \$ 20,000. And what proportion of their funding could be accessed by groups such as these? This is not simply a question of increasing the funding for “small projects” through country programme offices but of considering what funding structures within each low- and middle-income nation can be permanently accessible and accountable to local groups. For instance, as Chapter 6 explains, achieving the MDGs for hunger alleviation and environmental sustainability for soils, forests and fisheries will largely depend on support for locally determined food systems, and policy frameworks that empower local organizations to manage food systems and their environments. As Chapter 5 highlights, for urban areas, this has to include funding to support thousands of local initiatives by “slum” and shack dwellers and to support these developing into long-term partnerships with local governments.

International agencies may claim that they have moved significantly away from determining priorities themselves towards supporting choices made by recipient country governments – for instance supporting poverty reduction strategies that are “locally owned.” But this “local ownership” is not local, it is at national level, with ownership being by national “partner” governments. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, to which most international agencies signed up, is about official development assistance agencies being coordinated in their support for “partner countries’ priorities, systems and procedures” and “strengthening partner countries’ national development strategies and associated operational frameworks”.⁽⁹⁾ In many respects, this actually reduces

9. Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness 2005, *op. cit.*, page 1.



international agencies' commitment to support pro-poor local processes on the ground.

The need for international agencies to provide more support for priorities identified by local organizations, formal and informal, in which poorer groups have influence, is hardly controversial. Many personnel in donor agencies recognize the need for this shift. But there is little evidence that this recognition is leading to the necessary changes within agencies. The structure of most agencies was defined and developed when "development" was conceived in terms that we now know to be very inadequate. These agencies are still subject to the pressures to spend (or make loans), while keeping down expenditures on their own staff costs. But if each official agency recognizes that part of its responsibility is supporting the development of stronger local organizations that really deliver for poorer groups, are accountable to them and are able to work in partnerships with them (including local NGOs and local governments), this needs a very different structure from one designed to fund large projects and provide sector support to national governments. This shift may imply more staff time per dollar spent, and it certainly implies a far more careful use of external funding – in which all efforts are made to minimize the amount of external funding actually needed, because the less external funding is required, the more the potential to scale up and sustain the initiative using local resources. Long-term support may often be required because development assistance is less about funding particular capital items and more about supporting pro-poor local processes and organizations. It often implies long-term partnerships rather than exit strategies. All this requires major changes in the criteria used for monitoring and evaluating "success" for international agency performance.⁽¹⁰⁾

if each official agency recognizes that part of its responsibility is supporting the development of stronger local organizations that really deliver for poorer groups, this needs a very different structure from one designed to fund large projects and provide sector support to national governments

10. Some years ago, I interviewed staff members of one of the most prominent bilateral agencies that had suffered a considerable cut in its budget when the government changed. While the staff members opposed the government's decision to cut the aid budget, they also admitted that this might allow them to spend the funding better – because it lessened the pressure to spend. Like all official agencies, this agency is under tremendous pressure, from the government that funds it, to keep down staff costs.



There are two priorities for future action. The first is for each official agency to review its current procedures to consider how more support can be given to pro-poor local organizations. The second is to consider the means by which a larger proportion of agency funding can be made available in each province, state or district within low- and middle-income nations

This also requires a change in perception of development assistance by the politicians in high-income nations who, in the end, are the ones who allocate or have to approve funding to development assistance.

Those politicians who are committed to development assistance (and to meeting the MDGs) see success in terms of how much development assistance is allocated or how much debt relief is provided. These politicians are also often the ones who see “efficient” development assistance agencies as those which spend the lowest proportion of their total funding on their own staff and administration. This is also a strongly held public perception of what constitutes an efficient international NGO. If a development assistance agency wants to support local processes, work in partnership with organizations and federations formed by poorer groups, use their support to leverage local resources and get real support from local governments – and keep to a minimum the amount of external funding (because this increases potential to enlarge the scale of what is done) – this may increase the proportion of total funding spent on staff costs. But rather than hide this fact – or invent ingeniously named categories to hide some of their staff costs when reporting expenditure – official development assistance agencies and international NGOs need to change this perception.

There are two priorities for future action. The first is for each official agency to review its current procedures to consider how more support can be given to pro-poor local organizations. For instance, how can Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and “donor harmonization” support this (or at least avoid marginalizing it). It may be that many of the measures to “enhance aid effectiveness” actually go against supporting pro-poor local organizations. The second priority is to consider the means by which a larger proportion of agency funding can be made available in each province, state or district within low- and middle-income nations to support this. There are many precedents here – such as bilateral agencies funding institutions within recipient



governments that support local processes (see Chapter 5), and international NGOs that have long had this as an important part of their work, especially those working through country offices.

In some low- and middle-income nations, there are already government agencies that support local processes, including organizations formed by poorer groups, through which international funding could be channelled.⁽¹¹⁾ In many nations, there are representative organizations and federations of “slum” and “shack” dwellers that are engaged in many initiatives, working with local governments, with their own urban poor funds through which external assistance can be channelled – and which also provide external donors with the accountability they need (see Chapter 5). Other chapters point to the importance of other organizations and federations – organizations of landless people, indigenous people’s movements, peasant movements, and federations of small farmers, traders and forest enterprises. The means by which pro-poor local processes can be supported will obviously vary greatly, depending on each international agency’s structure and experience, and circumstances and possibilities in each nation. But the principle is the same – that more official development assistance should be made available to provide long-term support for local processes and institutions that directly benefit poor groups. This includes these groups’ own organizations. And this must build on local systems of knowledge and management, enhancing their capacity to cope well with social and ecological changes. It must also build on locally available resources and techniques. This funding has to be accessible to these organizations, while how it is spent also has to be more accountable to them. Donor policies should be subject to local scrutiny, and criticism where needed – as in the citizen juries and other mechanisms described in Chapter 6. This certainly poses many political and institutional challenges for most official development assistance agencies.

The means by which pro-poor local processes can be supported will obviously vary greatly, but the principle is the same – that more official development assistance should be made available to provide long-term support for local processes and institutions that directly benefit poor groups

11. See the example of the Community Organizations Development Institute in Thailand, as mentioned in Chapter 5 and described in more detail in Boonyabantha, Somsook (2005), “Baan Mankong; going to scale with ‘slum’ and squatter upgrading in Thailand”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 17, No 1, pages 21–46.



Monitoring should provide the information needed to track progress towards meeting the MDGs and their targets. But the information it provides should also be useful to those who contribute to meeting these goals and targets

Even if it proved possible to spend only 10 per cent of official development assistance through such channels, the returns would be considerable. Many of the experiences discussed in the following chapters show how supporting poor groups' active engagement also increases their capacity and willingness to invest individually and collectively, and work in partnership with local governments – which multiplies the impact of external assistance. But this is enabled only when poor groups have confidence that long-established practices of neglect or oppression by formal institutions are changing. This shift to supporting local processes also requires a rethinking about monitoring, to involve those whose needs the MDGs are trying to meet.

VI. MONITORING THE MDGS: LOCAL INFORMATION FOR GLOBAL GOALS

The emphasis given within the MDGs to better monitoring, to see if the MDGs are being met, is right but it misses the critical local dimension. The emphasis is on national and global monitoring by national governments and international agencies, not on local monitoring. This matches the emphasis by donor agencies on supporting “national strategies” and “national partner governments”. There is a danger that too much attention will be given to building the data sets that monitor progress on meeting MDG targets nationally, and allow international comparisons, and too little attention to generating the information base needed to monitor progress in each locality in ways that also inform action on the ground and put pressure on local governments and other service providers in each locality to improve their performance.

Monitoring should provide the information needed to track progress towards meeting the MDGs and their targets. But the information it provides should also be useful to those who contribute to meeting these goals and targets. If more, better targeted, better managed donor assistance is the key to meeting the MDGs, then the monitoring system can be designed to serve this. Standard national sample surveys can



do this, and also provide data for international comparisons. So when the monitoring identifies a deficit in MDG achievement in any nation, then donor assistance can be increased and better “donor harmonization” sought. But if meeting the MDGs also requires pro-poor local processes and organizations in each locality, this needs a very different kind of information base – because the information base has to help inform local organizations and drive local change. Statistics on infant, child and maternal mortality, on the quality and coverage of schools, health care, water and sanitation, and on the incidence of diseases are needed for each place in a form that can be discussed and acted on in each locality. This means building capacity to monitor progress towards achieving the MDGs in each locality.

National sample surveys do not generate data that are useful locally. For instance, to improve provision of water and sanitation, details are needed of the quality and extent of provision for each household. The kinds of national sample surveys currently used in most low- and middle-income nations to monitor development progress contribute nothing to this because their sample size is too small to provide statistics of local relevance. They are designed to provide national governments and international agencies with data on the proportion of people with provision in the whole nation. The sample size may be large enough to allow some very limited disaggregation – for instance by province, or divided into rural and urban areas. These national surveys may serve global and national monitoring by providing the percentages of people lacking piped water in a nation or province – but they do not identify inadequacies in provision within each province, and they do not identify which households have inadequate provision. If the water and sanitation MDGs (and most other MDGs) are to be met, details are needed of all households lacking adequate provision in each village or urban settlement, located on maps which show existing infrastructure and services. This information base can then serve local organizations in addressing these deficiencies. Generating such a detailed information base might be

National sample surveys do not generate data that are useful locally. For instance, to improve provision of water and sanitation, details are needed of the quality and extent of provision for each household



An important part of monitoring is supporting discussion and learning within each locality that involves both those whose unmet needs the MDGs are meant to be addressing, and the local organizations that contribute to meeting these needs

considered too expensive – but again, it is only very expensive if conceived as something implemented by professionals within national agencies, as with a census, for example. There are many ways to generate detailed, accurate, local data for monitoring that are not expensive and that also contribute to pro-poor processes. Chapter 5 gives examples of maps and household enumerations generated by urban poor federations in many nations, and also by the Orangi Pilot Project Research and Training Institute in Pakistan that provide the information needed for local action and lay down a baseline from which progress can be monitored.

Monitoring should also support learning, and inform current or potential implementers about where progress is lacking. Thus, one of the key issues for monitoring is whether it is supporting learning among the groups contributing to meeting the MDGs. Again, if local processes and organizations are central to meeting most of the MDGs, monitoring has to provide the information that allows reviews of progress in each locality, involving those whose needs the MDGs are meant to meet. An important part of monitoring is supporting discussion and learning within each locality that involves both those whose unmet needs the MDGs are meant to be addressing, and the local organizations that contribute to meeting these needs (see Chapters 3, 5 and 6).

Another key part of monitoring is getting an accurate baseline from which progress can be measured. There are two problems here: first, how to identify indicators for which data are easily collected that actually measure progress towards the MDGs; and second, the difficulty in reconciling the need for locally and nationally specific indicators with the desire for international comparisons. Both problems are evident in how the MDGs conceive of poverty and plan to monitor it.

The first indicator recommended for the measurement and monitoring of extreme poverty and hunger within the MDGs is the proportion of the population with an income



of less than one dollar per day. But this is known to be a very inadequate measure, because the extent to which a dollar per person per day allows individuals or households to meet their needs varies so much from place to place within each nation.⁽¹²⁾ It is also unrealistically low for many nations, even when adjusted using purchasing power parity rates. Hundreds of millions of people with incomes above a dollar a day still face very serious deprivations because food and non-food needs cost far more than a dollar a day.⁽¹³⁾

The second recommended poverty indicator is the poverty-gap ratio – the incidence of poverty multiplied by the depth of poverty. But for this to be useful requires an accurate poverty line from which to measure the incidence of poverty. It is easy to produce nonsense statistics about the incidence of poverty if inappropriate poverty lines are set.⁽¹⁴⁾ If the poverty-gap ratio is using the dollar-a-day poverty line, then it will greatly under-estimate the depth of poverty for many nations – for the reasons given above. But even if it is based on poverty lines set within each nation, it will often under-estimate the depth of poverty.

Most of the poverty lines used by nations in Africa and Asia are defined using methods that follow World Bank guidelines. Setting poverty lines is seen as a technical issue and not something that poorer groups have a right to influence. The setting of these poverty lines is largely based on data on food consumption and costs, often with no data collected on the costs of non-food needs – and little attention is given to incorporating the costs poor households face in meeting non-food needs. In many cases, the assumption is made that if a household has sufficient

Hundreds of millions of people with incomes above a dollar a day still face very serious deprivations because food and non-food needs cost far more than a dollar a day

12. This was discussed in more detail in the first IIED book on the Millennium Development Goals, Satterthwaite, David (editor) (2003), *The Millennium Development Goals and Local Processes: Hitting the Target or Missing the Point?*, IIED, London (which can be downloaded at no charge from www.meetingthemdgs.org); see also Satterthwaite, David (2004), *The Under-estimation of Urban Poverty in Low and Middle-Income Nations*, IIED Working Paper 14 on Poverty Reduction in Urban Areas, IIED, London, 69 pages (which can be downloaded at no charge from www.iied.org/urban).

13. Ironically, the “poverty line” is said to be “An income level that is considered minimally sufficient to sustain a family in terms of food, housing, clothing, medical needs, and so on” on the United Nations website which gives details of all the Millennium Development Goals indicators (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_dict_xrxx.asp?def_code=440) but very few of the poverty lines used in African and Asian nations make adequate allowance for the cost of “minimally sufficient” housing, health care or other non-food needs; indeed, these poverty lines are usually set with no data gathered regarding the cost of housing and other non-food needs.

14. For many examples, see Satterthwaite 2003, op. cit., and Satterthwaite 2004, op. cit.



If the MDGs are to monitor the eradication of extreme poverty, they need to give more attention to better definitions and more accurate baselines

food, it must have its non-food needs met too. In addition, the poverty lines set rarely make sufficient allowance for the variations within nations in the income individuals and households need to avoid deprivation. Again, there is too much focus on generating national data to serve national discussions and international comparisons, rather than generating relevant data to serve local discussions and actions. In addition, such definitions of poverty make no attempt to incorporate many other aspects of poverty such as inadequate asset bases, absence of the rule of law for the poor, and the absence of “voice” for the poor within political and bureaucratic structures. They also include no consideration of inadequacies in basic services.

Thus, if the MDGs are to monitor the eradication of extreme poverty, they need to give more attention to better definitions and more accurate baselines. They need to identify indicators for which data are easily collected that actually allow progress towards the MDGs to be measured, and that reconcile the need for indicators to be useful locally as well as nationally. There are comparable problems with the indicators suggested by the MDGs for assessing environmental sustainability. For instance, the only two indicators relating to the management of renewable natural resources (including soils, forests, fresh water and fisheries) are the proportion of land area covered by forest and the land area protected to maintain biological diversity. As Chapter 3 describes, official statistics on land area protected to maintain biological diversity do not include thousands of community conserved areas that often have a better record of sustainable management and protection than do protected areas managed by government. In addition, government-protected areas are often managed in ways that exacerbate poverty, undermining people’s access and tenure rights. Again, a focus on government-protected areas focuses too much on national policies, neglecting the local processes, organizations and institutions that contribute much to maintaining biological diversity and sustainable natural resource use in ways that also support local livelihoods. The new enthusiasm among many international

agencies for supporting land titling (see Chapter 2) also has the potential to focus too much on national land-titling programmes that are monitored by the proportion of land for which official titles have been provided – rather than supporting local institutions for managing secure rights in which poorer groups and secondary-rights holders have influence.

VII. CONCLUSION

Whether or not most of the MDGs get met depends on more effective and pro-poor local organizations being engaged in all aspects – from determining what should be done, to doing it, and to monitoring progress. So it also depends on donor agencies changing to support this. If this is neglected, it is unlikely that most of the MDGs will be met. If the poor lack voice and influence, rights and protection by the rule of law, then much-increased donor flows and even debt relief and fairer global markets are unlikely to bring them much benefit. The people on whose poverty the programmes of all donor agencies are justified surely have a right to a greater influence on what is done and by whom. As the examples given in this book show, this greater influence can transform the quality, scale and cost-effectiveness of development assistance. It can also contribute much to building more effective governance systems, but doing so from the bottom up – which is where it is most needed.



If the poor lack voice and influence, rights and protection by the rule of law, then much-increased donor flows and even debt relief and fairer global markets are unlikely to bring them much benefit

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Securing land and property rights in sub-Saharan Africa: the role of local institutions⁽¹⁾

Camilla Toulmin⁽²⁾

I. INTRODUCTION

Most land in sub-Saharan Africa has no registration of who owns it or has rights to use it. Various new initiatives are underway to address this, in the belief that land registration and titling can promote investment, reduce poverty and encourage better natural-resource management. For instance, the Commission for Africa has recognized this need, while the newly established High Level Commission on the Legal Empowerment of the Poor,

1. This chapter is a revised version of *Securing Land and Property Rights in Africa: Improving the Investment Climate Global Competitiveness Report, 2005-06*. World Economic Forum, Switzerland. The author wishes to express appreciation to many colleagues for their collaboration on land tenure issues over the last decade, especially Hubert Ouédraogo, Thiendou Niang, Arlindo Chilundo, Ben Cousins, Mitiku Haile, Moussa Djire, Philippe Lavigne Delville, Jean-Pierre Chauveau, Julian Quan, David Brown, and colleagues Su Fei Tan, Lorenzo Cotula, Ced Hesse, Nazneen Kanji from the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

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Will land titling safeguard the livelihoods of smallholders and pastoralists who make up the majority of all households in Africa and who are responsible for most agricultural production?

building on the work of Hernando de Soto, plans to provide a framework for titling the property of millions of urban dwellers, farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs across the continent.

But attempts at setting up conventional land registration systems have generally not worked well. They are usually expensive, complex and slow to implement. If the costs have to be borne by the person or group seeking formal title, this tends to exclude poorer groups from getting title to the land they farm or the land on which their home is built. In addition, powerful vested interests at all levels will seek to ensure that any land titling and registration benefits them and dispossesses other claimants. It would be naïve to think otherwise. Thus, one of the key questions for poverty reduction in Africa is whether support for land titling and registration will benefit poorer groups. Will it safeguard the livelihoods of smallholders and pastoralists who make up the majority of all households in Africa and who are responsible for most agricultural production? In urban areas, will it help the hundreds of millions of people who live in shantytowns to get title to the land they occupy – or will it act to expel them or, as it has done in many cities, lock them into highly exploitative tenant relationships with powerful landlords? Will land registration systems be able to support the secondary land-use rights of many farmers and pastoralists? And will they support the local systems and institutions that currently manage common property resources?

Central governments have neither the capacity nor the local knowledge to implement a just, large-scale national land registration system. Support to local institutions to undertake intermediate forms of land registration has been shown to be far more effective in many places – although these need careful checks on abuses by powerful local (and external) interests, measures to limit disputes (too many of which can overwhelm any institution) and measures to ensure that the needs of those with the least power – typically women, migrants, tenants and pastoralists – are given due weight. These locally grounded systems can also



provide the foundation for more formal registration systems, as needs and government capacities develop. Even if there are the funds and the institutional capacity to provide formal land title registration to everyone in ways that are fair and that recognize local diversity and complexity, and could manage disputes, this may often not be needed. For the vast majority of people, cheaper, simpler, locally grounded systems of rights registration can better meet their needs for secure tenure.

II. LAND UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE AND COMPETITION

At one time land seemed an almost inexhaustible asset in Africa, but population growth and market development have created mounting competition for land resources, especially close to towns and cities, and in the productive, high-value agricultural areas. Customary land management is also under pressure in many places. With such a high proportion of land being unregistered, the risks of dispossession for the poor majority from a major land-grab are high. Historical experience suggests that in the evolution of oral to formal, written rights, certain interests tend to lose out, typically the poor holders of secondary rights.⁽³⁾

Apart from its historical and spiritual significance, land is at the heart of social, political and economic life in most African economies, which continue to rely heavily on agriculture and natural resources for a significant share of GDP, national food needs, employment and export revenue.⁽⁴⁾ This is not likely to change in the foreseeable future.

The family farm has been central to the agricultural economies of most African nations, and has proved to be highly productive, and responsive to new markets and opportunities when conditions are right. Now, the challenge is how best to secure family land rights, so as to enable the

For the vast majority of people, cheaper, simpler, locally grounded systems of rights registration can better meet their needs for secure tenure

3. Clanchy, MT (1979), *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066–1307*, Blackwell, Oxford.

4. Commission for Africa (2005), *Our Common Interest: Report of the Commission for Africa*, Commission for Africa, London.



Pastoral herders must move their animals during the year, following seasonal changes in water and grazing cycles. Herders, who have historically relied on longstanding secondary rights of use to stubble, water and pasture resources, are finding their passage blocked, with crops planted in what were cattle tracks and the enclosure of common grazing land

smallholder agricultural sector to address global competition more effectively.

Migrant farmers, such as those in the cocoa belt of Côte d'Ivoire from neighbouring Burkina Faso and Mali, face particular challenges: sharecropping contracts have been central to the enormous growth in Ivorian cocoa and coffee over the last 40 years, yet, as land becomes scarcer, such agreements are increasingly called into question by landowners.

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Although sub-Saharan Africa remains predominantly rural, its urban population has grown far more rapidly than its rural population and continues to do so. Africa's urban population increased nine-fold between 1950 and 2000, while its rural population increased by 265 per cent.⁽⁵⁾ Africa now has more than 300 million urban dwellers and two-fifths of its population in urban areas. Much of the growth in urban population has taken place in informal settlements where land is occupied illegally or land ownership is unclear. In many urban contexts, land titling is not only complex but also involves competing claims, which include politically powerful groups claiming ownership within informal settlements where large sections of the low-income population live. Rapid urban growth also produces a high demand for well-located sites, including those that are already densely occupied by illegal settlements. The rights of their inhabitants are frequently swept aside when more powerful interests want this land. Rapid urban growth is also having a major impact on peri-urban land values, with rising insecurity for those living on and working such land.

5. United Nations (2004), *World Urbanization Prospects: the 2003 Revision*, United Nations Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ST/ESA/SER.A/237, New York, 323 pages.



Farmers near urban areas, where land values are rising very rapidly, face displacement from the conversion of agricultural to building land – whether from legally approved or illegal developments. Land speculation also disrupts farming and displaces farmers and agricultural labourers.

Many governments claim ownership of land, with customary-use rights recognized only when land is not sought by other more powerful interests. Governments can also expropriate land for public purposes and public works, such as road building, or the establishment of an industrial estate – usually with minimal compensation given for standing crops or for the value of buildings. In practice, compensation to the landowners or users is not only inadequate and late but also makes little or no provision for the value of the land itself. For example, recent estimates of unpaid compensation for land taken by the government in Ghana total many billions of cedis.⁽⁶⁾ Large land-holdings in government hands constitute a valuable asset for gift to political allies and foreign investors.

Poorer and less politically powerful groups are often dispossessed of the land on which they farm or, in urban areas, on which they have developed their homes. The recent mass evictions from informal markets and settlements in and around Zimbabwe's capital Harare and other urban centres have led to more than 200,000 people losing their homes and livelihoods. Although this eviction programme is larger and more extreme than in most other African nations, such programmes remain common in many African cities – usually legitimated by inaccurate stereotyping of the people who are evicted as 'migrants' who 'would be better off' if they returned to rural areas. But in reality, large numbers of those evicted are not recent migrants and none will be better off in rural areas. The consequences of these evictions are severe: property is destroyed, assets and access to essential services are lost and social networks are broken.⁽⁷⁾

Many governments claim ownership of land, with customary-use rights recognized only when land is not sought by other more powerful interests

6. US\$1 is equal to 9050 cedi (August 24 2005).

7. du Plessis, J (2005) "The growing problem of forced evictions and the crucial importance of community-based, locally appropriate alternatives", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 17, No 1, pages 123–134.



Rights to land in Africa stem from many different sources, such as first settlement, conquest, allocation by government, long occupation or market transaction. In some cases these rights are transferable to heirs or can be sold; in others, consent must be sought from the underlying rights-holder

III. LAND RIGHTS IN AFRICA: MULTIPLE ORIGINS AND OVERLAPPING SYSTEMS

Rights to land in Africa stem from many different sources, such as first settlement, conquest, allocation by government, long occupation or market transaction. In some cases these rights are transferable to heirs or can be sold; in others, consent must be sought from the underlying rights-holder.

First settlement. Rights to rural land in many areas stem from the first settlers, who cleared the land and converted it from bush to field. Commonly, these rights pass down through the male or female line, so that current occupants can say: “this land belongs to me and my family because my great-great-great grandfather settled here and started farming”.

Conquest. In the pre-colonial period, the great West African empires of the Hausa, Mossi and Ashanti established control over extensive areas of land. Emperor Menelik’s conquest and settlement of southern Ethiopia in the nineteenth century also brought large tracts of land under feudal authority, to be allocated to loyal generals. Similarly, the colonial conquest enabled the British to acquire land in eastern and southern Africa for settlement by white farmers. However, land claims based on conquest are subject to contest when political circumstances change.

Allocation by local or national government.

Governments grant rights to land, such as plots for housing, distributed as part of an urban development scheme, for irrigation projects, or as grants of land to investors. Such administrative allocations are at risk from corrupt practices.

Long occupation and use. Investment of effort in the land may generate the basis for a claim. Such rights associated with “land to the tiller” policies⁽⁸⁾ may contradict other rights, particularly those based on first settlement.

Tensions can arise between those who claim first settlement

8. Referred to as *la mise en valeur* in francophone systems.



rights and those claiming rights through long occupation as tenants, as in areas where there are substantial numbers of incoming migrant farmers, such as cash-crop areas of Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire. For example the Ashanti of Ghana say "long occupation can never ripen into ownership", and the Bambara of Mali say that "a log may stay a long time in the water, but it never turns into a crocodile".⁽⁹⁾

Market transaction. Some observers claim that land is not bought and sold in customary African systems. However, in most parts of the continent, some forms of land transaction have a long history, even though they may not involve cash payments.⁽¹⁰⁾ In many urban areas, land allocation systems by customary land rights holders have become monetized.⁽¹¹⁾ A broad range of varied contracts allowing access to land is found in southern Benin, from the sale of full ownership rights, mortgage of land, rental and sharecropping agreements, to temporary rights giving access for a season's cropping.⁽¹²⁾ Similarly, in Sahelian Mali, Fulani cattle owners negotiate access to water and grazing in exchange for leaving their animals on the farmers' fields at night, thereby manuring the soil.⁽¹³⁾ But contracts are increasingly contested, because of rapid changes in land values, differing attitudes of new generations following the death of those originally making the contract, and political shifts which have altered the balance of power between different groups.

Rights to land often involve a series of overlapping claims, dependent on customary use, season and negotiation. For instance, cultivation rights to a millet field in Mali may be held by one household, with women from the wider family having rights to glean after harvest, and neighbours then

In Sahelian Mali, Fulani cattle owners negotiate access to water and grazing in exchange for leaving their animals on the farmers' fields at night, thereby manuring the soil

9. *Jiri kuru be men ji la – a te ke bama ye.*

10. Lavigne Delville, P (2004), "When farmers use 'pieces of paper' to record their land transactions in francophone rural Africa: insights into the dynamics of institutional innovation" in Benjaminsen, T and C Lund (editors), *Securing Land Rights in Africa*, Frank Cass, London, pages 89–108.

11. UNCHS (Habitat) (1996), *An Urbanizing World: Global Report on Human Settlements, 1996*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York; Yapi-Diahou, Alphonse (1995), "The informal housing sector of the metropolis of Abidjan, Ivory Coast", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 7, No 2, pages 11–29.

12. For further detail, see Edja, H (2000), *Land Rights under Pressure: Access to Resources in Southern Benin*, IIED/ Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques, London and Paris.

13. Toulmin, C (1992), *Cattle, Women, and Wells: Managing Household Survival in the Sahel*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.



In the West African region as a whole, only 2 to 3 per cent of land is held by written title, this being largely confined to a few major cities and development areas, such as irrigation schemes

allowed to let their animals graze on the remaining stubble. Rights to dig a well on the field are held by the broader lineage of which the household is part, whereas rights to fruit from the tamarind trees that shade the plot are held by those who have pruned them on a regular basis. Where such a field has been let out to a tenant, however, rights are usually restricted to the cultivation and harvesting of crops. A tenant will not be allowed to dig for water, plant trees or make other significant investments in the land.⁽¹⁴⁾

Moreover, tenants are often not able to pass the plot they have rented to their heirs.

Insecure rights to land stem from many sources, and affect different people and regions in diverse ways. The rapid pace of change is bringing new risks to formerly stable systems of property rights, since changing values bring a transformation in the authority claimed by different structures, whether family heads, customary chiefs or local government. In many areas, this uncertainty stems in part from the high proportion of land for which no written paper exists, to document the rights held, or the terms on which these rights can be exercised.

In the West African region as a whole, only 2 to 3 per cent of land is held by written title, this being largely confined to a few major cities and development areas, such as irrigation schemes. In Burundi, it is estimated that less than 1 per cent of land is registered. In East and Southern Africa, much higher levels of registration exist, given the longstanding occupation of land by large commercial farmers. However, even the existence of paper title is not a sufficient condition for tenure security, as experience in Zimbabwe in recent years has demonstrated.

Women rarely have full rights to land but must negotiate as secondary claimants through a male relative – father, brother, husband or son. On the death of a spouse, women usually cannot inherit the matrimonial home, a matter of

14. Such overlapping rights are not uncommon in many high-income nations. For instance, different access rights may be evident for the same area of moorland for those who are walking, fishing, picking mushrooms or shooting birds and deer. Even those with full land-ownership rights may not claim water and mineral rights below the soil.



growing concern given high death rates from AIDS in much of the continent. Women's rights are often affirmed unequivocally in constitutions, but customary law in which they do not have equal rights usually prevails on the ground.

IV. LAND MANAGEMENT

Governments across the continent are revising their land tenure legislation, reforming institutions for the administration of rights and experimenting with ways to register individual and collective rights to land and natural resources. Such new policy measures are of particular significance in countries seeking to re-establish peaceful relations between competing groups following civil war, such as Rwanda and Mozambique. With the recent issuing of the World Bank's policy research report on land⁽¹⁵⁾ and the publication in 2004 of the Guidelines of the European Union Task Force on Land Tenure,⁽¹⁶⁾ the donor community has also moved land issues higher on its agenda.

The choice of structures to manage the issue of land rights and resolve land conflicts will have consequences for different groups of people, with some winning and others losing. As the report of the Commission for Africa rightly notes,⁽¹⁷⁾ Africa's private sector is largely composed of family farms, and small and medium-sized enterprises. Consequently, if investment and growth are to be promoted, design of land administration must consider carefully the needs of such smallholder farmers, traders and entrepreneurs.

There are various ways to register rights to land, from short-term certificates of occupancy to more formal registers and titling procedures. Rights can be secured at different levels, such as by the individual or family, or collectively by a village or clan. But the state has a fundamental role in managing or

Africa's private sector is largely composed of family farms, and small and medium-sized enterprises. Consequently, if investment and growth are to be promoted, design of land administration must consider carefully the needs of such smallholder farmers, traders and entrepreneurs

15. Deininger, K (2003), *Land Policies for Growth and Poverty Reduction*, World Bank and Oxford University Press, Oxford.

16. EU Task Force on Land Tenure (2004), *EU Land Policy Guidelines: Guidelines for Support to Land Policy Design and Land Policy Reform Processes in Developing Countries*, European Union, Brussels.

17. Commission for Africa 2005, *op. cit.*



Given the range of diverse contexts and settings, there are strong arguments for developing locally appropriate initiatives and actions, rather than a single standard blueprint “solution”

facilitating the process of checking and validating claims, either handling it centrally, or devolving it to local institutions. Given the range of diverse contexts and settings, there are strong arguments for developing locally appropriate initiatives and actions, rather than a single standard blueprint “solution”.

Where tenure practices are evolving rapidly, writing things down is increasingly seen as an essential tool in managing relationships, even by rural people themselves. Faced with the risks of legal insecurity, small farmers try to amass documents, without always being clear what they are for, and often hoping that they will have the right one when it is required.⁽¹⁸⁾

In South Africa, the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA) has been working with communities in Kwa Zulu Natal to develop legal, affordable and accessible records of household land rights, both to strengthen the communal system and to give households more security over their holdings.⁽¹⁹⁾ The absence of written evidence makes it very difficult for individuals to assert their rights to land, and has resulted in numerous requests for registration.

a. Multiple structures

Rights to land depend on different systems of authority for their validation. These include community councils, patrilineal hierarchy, local government, traditional leadership, irrigation authority, city council and land agency. Different forms of power are exercised by each, and may rely on a combination of physical force, legal judgment, spiritual values and moral authority. However, this multiplicity of structures brings contradictions and insecurity regarding whose rights count, whose will be supported in the event of contest, and which decision-making structures are paramount. It has led to what has been termed “institution shopping”, whereby people seeking a judgement will try different options, to see which institution

18. Lavigne Delville 2004, *op. cit.*

19. Hornby, Donna (2004), *Securing Tenure at Ekuthuleni*, online at www.wits.ac.za/informalsettlements/Donna%20Hornby.pdf, accessed July 2005.



is more likely to rule in their favour.⁽²⁰⁾ In a situation of rising competition for land, and with the establishment of new systems of local government, there is room for considerable uncertainty, negotiation and opportunistic behaviour.

b. How are rights secured?

Securing property rights requires a combination of two forms of validation, at both local and state levels. At the local level, rights are secure if neighbours and others in the vicinity recognize a particular claim as being legitimate, according to their knowledge and set of values. However, these rights have no formal legal validity unless they also pass a second form of validation, i.e. recognition by the state. In practice, the lack of state recognition may not matter if land is not under particular pressure, and if local systems work reasonably well. But where land values are rising and there are significant outside interests, then clarity is needed on the status of local land rights.

In the case of Burkina Faso, for example, the government claims ownership of all land, putting the vast majority of the rural population in a situation of de facto illegality.⁽²¹⁾ But, in practice, the government recognizes that it must rely on traditional leaders for day-to-day management of land rights. At the same time, local government officials are increasingly brought into disputes surrounding land, and asked to provide judgement. Typically, these disputes pit incoming farmers against traditional land-rights holders. In some cases, the decision of the préfet supports traditional leaders; in others, they find in favour of incomers.

Thus, in the long-settled cotton lands of western Burkina Faso, land sales are now supported by three different documents, depending on circumstances:

- “Sales” backed by a local receipt (*petit papier*), drawn up between the vendor and purchaser, but which has no

In a situation of rising competition for land, and with the establishment of new systems of local government, there is room for considerable uncertainty, negotiation and opportunistic behaviour

20. Lund, C (2003), “Questioning some assumptions about land tenure” in Benjaminsen, T A and C Lund (editors), *Politics, Property and Production in the West African Sahel*, Nordic African Institute, Uppsala, pages 144–162; Benda-Beckmann, K van (1991), “Forum shopping and shopping forums: dispute settlement in a Minangkabau village, West Sumatra”, *Journal of Legal Pluralism* Vol 19, pages 117–159.

21. Mathieu, P et al (2003), *Making Land Transactions More Secure in the West of Burkina Faso*, Drylands Issue Paper 117, IIED, London.



In all nations, procedures are needed to allow land to be acquired and allocated for public purpose. The degree and form of intervention must be balanced against the costs imposed on those owning, using or seeking land

formal rubber-stamp from the local government officer; these documents typically mention the names of the parties, area and location of the plot, the rights granted, the sum involved in the transaction, identity of witnesses, signatures of parties and witnesses and date.

- “Sales” supported by a deed (*papier*), registered by government, and having the certification of the local *préfet*.
- Grants of land supported by a *Procès Verbale de Palabre*, involving the written minutes of a discussion between the transacting parties in the presence of a government official; this more formal deed of sale is sought by members of the urban elite, who want assured ownership rights to the land they are acquiring.⁽²²⁾

c. The role of government

Governments have a legitimate role in regulating and administering land rights, due to their significance to the economy, people’s livelihoods and employment, and the stability of the nation. In all nations, procedures are needed to allow land to be acquired and allocated for public purpose. The degree and form of intervention must be balanced against the costs imposed on those owning, using or seeking land. Additionally, the design of such interventions and procedures needs to minimize the risks of corruption.

Governments have been reluctant to transfer full property rights to their citizens. In Tanzania, the president holds all rights to land “in the name of the citizens”, to be held in trust for them. Long-term use rights are held by rural and urban dwellers, which can be registered and titled, and subsequently traded. In Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso, the government claims ownership of most land as state domain, and attributes use rights to customary occupants, as long as the land is not needed for some other purpose. Similarly, the government of Ethiopia claims ultimate ownership of all

22. *Ibid.*



land, with long-term use rights held by citizens. These use rights can be traded, so that, for instance, a widow with land but very limited household labour can lease her land to a neighbour to farm for a specified number of years.

By contrast, 80 per cent of land in Ghana is in private hands, principally through the trusteeship of customary chiefs, who are charged with managing these lands for the benefit of their peoples, with the remainder owned by the state.⁽²³⁾ Yet there remains a long-standing struggle between government and customary chiefs over how land is actually used, given the patronage associated with managing this asset, and the revenues gained from tenants. Since colonial times, power has shifted back and forth between government and chiefs. After Independence in 1957, Nkrumah's government used its power to acquire certain lands, by vesting them in the hands of government, as a means of bringing recalcitrant chiefs into line, and providing land for the development of cities and ports. The current government, by contrast, recognizes the strength of the customary chiefs and is more inclined to accommodate their interests in land, since their support at election time is critical.

In South Africa, the protection of private property rights is enshrined in the constitution. Yet land ownership remains a hot political issue, due to the very unequal pattern of land rights inherited from the former white apartheid regime. More than 85 per cent of farmland is still in the hands of white commercial farmers.⁽²⁴⁾ A process is now underway to transfer ownership gradually, by various means, to meet the target of placing 30 per cent of farmland in the hands of black farmers by 2014.⁽²⁵⁾ Progress has not been as fast as might be hoped, and a nervous eye is often cast over the border towards Zimbabwe. Some parts of the commercial farming sector, such as the sugar industry, have launched

There remains a long-standing struggle in Ghana between government and customary chiefs over how land is actually used, given the patronage associated with managing this asset, and the revenues gained from tenants

23. Kasanga, K and N A Kotey (2001), *Land Management in Ghana: Building on Tradition and Modernity*, IIED, London.
24. Ng'ong'ola, C (2004), "Constitutional protection of property and contemporary land problems in southern Africa" in Saruchera, M (editor), *Securing Land and Resource Rights in Africa: Pan-African Perspectives*, PLASS, South Africa, pages 60–74.

25. Ministry for Agriculture and Land Affairs (nd), *Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development*, South Africa, online at <http://land.pwv.gov.za/redistribution/lrad.htm>, accessed July 2005.



It is widely asserted that a good investment climate benefits rich and poor alike – but will it be of particular value to small-scale producers and entrepreneurs, who make up the bulk of local economic activity?

plans to transfer 30 per cent of land under sugar from white farmers to smaller-scale black-held holdings by 2014.⁽²⁶⁾

V. CREATING A FAVOURABLE CLIMATE FOR INVESTMENT

Ensuring a favourable climate for investors is vital to generate higher and more sustainable levels of economic growth.⁽²⁷⁾ It is widely asserted that a good investment climate benefits rich and poor alike – but will it be of particular value to small-scale producers and entrepreneurs, who make up the bulk of local economic activity?⁽²⁸⁾ Small-scale entrepreneurs will typically have poorer access to the institutions and processes that can secure their land (and other) rights. Support for local investors should ultimately encourage outside investment as well, since foreign direct investment will be more attracted by good evidence of existing strong domestic activity.

African governments have usually been far more interested in attracting foreign direct investment, through measures such as advantageous tax regimes, than in promoting local enterprise, or preventing capital outflow. Such investment is seen as bringing in new technology, training opportunities, access to markets and competitive advantage. Yet, more than 90 per cent of incomes in Africa stem from a range of small-scale domestic entrepreneurs.

A recent survey showed that 57 per cent of firms in Ethiopia, and 25 per cent in Kenya and Tanzania, reported access to land as their main obstacle.⁽²⁹⁾ Both large and small investors need assured rights to the land and property in which they invest; full ownership is not always necessary, however, as tenancy, sharecropping and leases are often what investors need. While the law in many African countries does not allow for foreign ownership of land, foreign investors are often given leases of up to 99

26. Inkezo Land Company (nd), *An Introduction*, online at <http://www.inkezo.co.za>, accessed July 2005.

27. World Bank (2005), *World Development Report: a Better Investment Climate for Everyone*. World Bank, Washington DC.

28. Commission for Africa 2005, op. cit.

29. World Bank (2005), *Doing Business 2005: Removing Obstacles to Growth*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Table 2.1: Time and cost to register property

Number of days	Region	Percentage of property value
34	OECD high income	4.8
51	East Asia and Pacific	4.2
54	Middle East and North Africa	6.8
56	South Asia	6.1
62	Latin America and the Caribbean	5.6
133	Eastern Europe and Central Asia	3.2
116	Sub-Saharan Africa	14.4

Table 2.2: Time and costs for property transfers: selected African countries

Number of days	Country	Percentage of property value
335	Angola	11.0
107	Burkina Faso	16.2
340	Côte d'Ivoire	10.2
382	Ghana	4.1
274	Nigeria	27.2
114	Senegal	34.0
69	Botswana	5.0
39	Kenya	4.0
20	South Africa	11.3
48	Uganda	5.5

SOURCE: World Bank (2005), *Doing Business 2005: Removing Obstacles to Growth*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

years. Table 2.1 highlights the difficulties and costs (in relation to property value) in registering property in sub-Saharan Africa, in comparison with other parts of the world. Although the difficulties in getting property transfers are extreme in some African countries, others have shorter, less costly and more efficient procedures (Table 2.2).

However, building a favourable climate for investment involves many factors other than access to land, including access to markets, price expectations and size of market. For



In Ghana, registering a land purchase involves multiple visits to five different government offices to obtain the appropriate pieces of paper, confirming that a survey has been undertaken, valuation of the property carried out, tax paid on the property transfer, and a check made on the absence of rival claims to the land concerned

some investors, inability to access capital on reasonable terms may be the tightest constraint on investment, whereas for others uncertainty relating to contracts is more critical. Institutional factors are often as important as economic aspects. Various surveys have exposed the damaging impact on potential investors of the inefficiency of government bureaucracies, difficulties in accessing credit, corruption and policy instability.⁽³⁰⁾

VI. SECURING RIGHTS IN PRACTICE

There are various methods that people use to secure their land and property rights, depending on the funds which individuals can mobilize, and on their recourse to state institutions to back their claims.

a. The problem of bureaucracy

As noted above, many countries in sub-Saharan Africa have long and difficult bureaucratic procedures, which slow property transactions and encourage corruption.⁽³¹⁾ In Ghana, registering a land purchase involves multiple visits to five different government offices to obtain the appropriate pieces of paper, confirming that a survey has been undertaken, valuation of the property carried out, tax paid on the property transfer, and a check made on the absence of rival claims to the land concerned. For many people, the process takes so long, and costs so much, that it is effectively inaccessible. Even those with excellent contacts in government and the judiciary report that the process can take more than 18 months. Many give up before completing the process, given the number of agencies to visit and a land registry with only partial records. In a few areas, local chiefs have established their own land registries, in an attempt to create order within their own locality. Such a locally based approach now provides the basis for Ghana's current Land Administration Project, which also aims to unify the different land sector agencies into a single

30. World Economic Forum (2004), *The Africa Competitiveness Report 2004*, World Economic Forum, Geneva.

31. de Soto, H (2000), *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*, Bantam Press, London; World Bank (2005), *Doing Business 2005*, op. cit.



administration and establish a one-stop shop at the district government level.

Recognizing that long delays discourage investors, the Mozambique government has established a new, shorter procedure for agreement between a local community and an outside investor seeking a land concession. The time period for this has now been cut to 90 days, with new rules aiming to ease access to land for foreign investors. But there is also concern that such a short period does not allow for adequate consultation with local people in advance of a land grant, and justified fears that government officials will reach agreement with local elites with no account taken of the local population's interests.

Many assume that individual titling of full ownership rights represents the best option. However, lesser forms of rights, such as rights of occupancy and use, are possible and may provide adequate security.⁽³²⁾ Rights can be registered by individuals, jointly by spouses, by the family as a whole, or by a community in the case of common property resources such as woodland, grazing and wetlands. In the latter case, management responsibility can be given fully or shared with government. Management and rule making are carried out by a body within which different interests are represented.

b. What does experience tell us?

Evidence from other parts of the world appears to show that land titling can have major impacts on investment and productivity. For example, Feder presents data from Thailand, Indonesia, and Brazil, which show a 30–80 per cent increase in land values following titling. Investment levels show an increase of 40–115 per cent in Brazil, Thailand, and Honduras, with access to credit multiplying by 200–350 per cent in Brazil and Thailand.⁽³³⁾ De Soto's work in Lima, Peru also shows the value of titling the land and housing assets of poor people, as a means of securing

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32. Quan, J and C Toulmin (2004), "Formalizing and securing land rights in Africa: overview", paper presented at the Land in Africa Conference, 8–9 November, London.

33. Feder, G (2002), "The intricacies of land markets", paper presented to the Conference of the International Federation of Surveyors, April 19–26, Washington.



New research suggests no unequivocal link between titling, investment and access to credit, either in Lima or in Thailand. These new findings cast doubt on the central role of titling in generating economic growth and a fair distribution of wealth

their rights and supporting subsequent economic growth and development. However, new research suggests no unequivocal link between titling, investment and access to credit, either in Lima⁽³⁴⁾ or in Thailand.⁽³⁵⁾ These new findings cast doubt on the central role of titling in generating economic growth and a fair distribution of wealth.

Arguments in favour of registering title to land have been put forward for many years. They normally include the following perceived benefits:

1. Land registration stimulates more efficient land use, by increasing tenure security and providing incentives to invest in the longer-term management and productivity of the land.
2. Land registration reduces transaction costs and enables the creation of a land market, allowing land transfers from less to more dynamic farmers and its consolidation into larger holdings. In urban areas, it enables a formal market for land and housing that helps to increase supply and reduce prices.
3. Land registration provides farmers with a title that can be offered as collateral to banks, improving farmers' access to credit, and allowing them to invest in land improvements. In urban areas, land registration also allows owners to use land as collateral for loans and safeguards their investment in housing.
4. Land registration provides governments with information on land-holders and size of plots, i.e. the foundation for a property tax system.

However, the evidence from research in sub-Saharan Africa shows that many of the benefits assumed to stem from land titling are not automatic, and, in some circumstances, titling

34. Buckley, R and J Kalarickal (2004), "Shelter strategies for the urban poor: idiosyncratic and successful, but hardly mysterious", World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3427, World Bank, Washington DC; Calderon, J (2004), "The formalisation of property in Peru 2001–2002: the case of Lima", *Habitat International* Vol 28, pages 289–300.

35. Leonard, R and Ayutthaya, K (2003), "Taking land from the poor, giving to the rich", *Watershed – People's Forum on Ecology* Vol 8, No 2, pages 14–25.



may have the opposite impacts from those expected. Land titles seem to make most sense: in situations where customary systems have ceased to have legitimacy; where major tensions exist between different groups and which cannot be handled by local institutions for dispute management; in re-settlement areas; and where competition for land is fierce, such as high-value urban or peri-urban areas.⁽³⁶⁾

While land registration is often proposed as a means of resolving disputes, the introduction of central registration systems may actually exacerbate them. Elite groups may seek to assert claims over land which was not theirs under customary law, leaving local people to find that the land they thought was theirs has been registered to someone else. The high costs for registration, in money, time, and transport, make smallholders particularly vulnerable to this.

Registration also penalizes holders of secondary land rights – especially women and herders – as these rights often do not appear in the register, and are more easily dismissed. Registration alone may not be enough to improve access to credit. For farmers, the high transaction and other costs in rural areas hinder credit supply, and an unpredictable and fluctuating environment makes farmers risk-averse and reluctant to apply for loans. For urban dwellers, banks and other credit institutions will usually want proof of income or capacity to pay before providing a loan. Finally, where registering land transactions is expensive, transfers tend not to be recorded, with the result that the register becomes rapidly outdated, limiting its potentially positive effects.⁽³⁷⁾

Tenure security is largely dependent on the rights holder's own perception of risk. Where farmers consider their rights under customary law sufficiently secure, registration may

Registration alone may not be enough to improve access to credit. For farmers, the high transaction and other costs in rural areas hinder credit supply, and an unpredictable and fluctuating environment makes farmers risk-averse and reluctant to apply for loans

36. IIED (1999), *Land Tenure and Resource Access in West Africa: Issues and Opportunities for the Next Twenty Five Years*, IIED, London

37. Atwood, D A (1990), "Land registration in Africa: the impact on agricultural production", *World Development* Vol 18, No 5, pages 659–971; Mighot-Adholla, S, and J Bruce (1994), "Introduction: are indigenous African tenure systems insecure?" in Bruce, J and S E Migot-Adholla (editors), *Searching for Land Tenure Security in Africa*, Kendall-Hunt, Iowa, pages 1–13; Lund, C (1998), *Law, Power and Politics in Niger – Land Struggles and the Rural Code*, LIT Verlag, Hamburg; Firmin-Sellers, K and P Sellers (1999), "Expected failures and unexpected successes of land titling in Africa", *World Development* Vol 27, No 7, pages 1115–1128; Platteau, J P (2000), "Does Africa need land reform?" in Toulmin, C and J Quan (editors), *Evolving Land Rights, Policy and Tenure in Africa*, DFID/IIED/NRI, London, pages 51–73.



In Cameroon, where land can be registered under the 1974 Land Ordinance, very few non-urban plots have been registered. Many farmers have initiated the procedure and abandoned it after the boundary demarcation phase

not result in higher investments, and research shows that there are simpler means of assuring farmers of security. For instance, in Cameroon, where land can be registered under the 1974 Land Ordinance, very few non-urban plots have been registered. Many farmers have initiated the procedure and abandoned it after the boundary demarcation phase. While demarcation, *per se*, has no force of law, village communities saw it as increasing tenure security, since other villagers were unlikely to contest land rights that had received that level of official recognition.⁽³⁸⁾

As a result of the recent research exposing the shortcomings of land titling, institutions such as the World Bank, previously a vocal advocate, are now more cautious and recognize that land titling may not be appropriate in many circumstances.⁽³⁹⁾

In Ghana, the Land Title Registration Law of 1986 provides for the registration of all interests in land, under customary law and common law. It also provides that land held by stools, skins⁽⁴⁰⁾ and families should be registered in the name of the corporate group. However, titling has been initiated in only the urban centres of Accra, Tema, and parts of Kumasi, and, by 2000, the Registry had been able to process fewer than half the applications made to it. Its impact over nearly two decades has been negligible. Failure has been attributed to design and implementation defects, such as inadequate funding and human resources, the uncoordinated process, registration of individual interests when there remains dispute at higher levels, and registration without the knowledge of other claimants, since insufficient care is taken to publicize these processes. Consequently, 30,000 disputed titles were in the courts in 2000.⁽⁴¹⁾

There have been several programmes aimed at registering land rights, such as the Rural Land Plans (Plan Foncier Rural – PFR) in Benin and Côte d’Ivoire, and titling by the Land Commissions in Niger. These demonstrate the high level of

38. Firmin-Sellers and Sellers 1999, *op. cit.*

39. Deininger 2003, *op. cit.*

40. Stools and skins refer to the customary land trustees in the south and north of Ghana.

41. Kasanga and Kotey 2001, *op. cit.*



demand from rural dwellers in areas covered by such a project to get their land rights registered. But the issuing of title is currently very slow. Other problems include increased insecurity stirred up by the registration of rights, the difficulties of registering complex and overlapping rights, and time pressures that push staff to achieve targets at the expense of accuracy.

The costs of establishing and maintaining an up-to-date register are also considerable. Estimates from Niger suggest an annual cost for running a Land Commission of around 40 million CFA francs per district (equivalent to US\$ 74,000), with the rough cost per plot of land at approximately 1,000 CFA francs (US\$ 1.85). Some plot-holders consider this is money well spent if it confers firm rights, and avoids further conflict with neighbours and kin.⁽⁴²⁾ In Côte d'Ivoire, costs averaged 4,700 CFA francs per hectare, the figure being lower in savannah areas and higher in the forest region, due to the larger holding sizes and easier survey work in the former.⁽⁴³⁾

The cost of the registration process can be covered by charging the land-rights holder but this risks preventing poorer farmers from registering their land. Alternatively, Western donors can provide the funding, but this may lead a country to accept a programme that suits the donor but is not necessarily appropriate for the country's needs. Funding from loans by development banks must ultimately be repaid. Niger, for example, has been more than 90 per cent reliant on funds from outside donors to establish the 11 pilot Land Commissions, and will need further major support to enable it to gain nationwide coverage. Registers also require maintenance and updating, or they quickly lose their value as a record. Thus, it is necessary to fund not only the capital costs of establishing such registration systems but also the costs of maintenance.

Niger has been more than 90 per cent reliant on funds from outside donors to establish the 11 pilot Land Commissions, and will need further major support to enable it to gain nationwide coverage

42. Yacouba, M (1999), "Niger's experience in decentralized management of natural resources", paper presented at Conference on Land Rights and Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons and Ways Forward in Land Tenure Policy, 16–19 February, Sunningdale, United Kingdom.

43. Okoin, J R M (1999), "Cote d'Ivoire's rural land use plan: an innovative approach towards an appropriate rural land tenure code", paper presented at the Conference on Land Rights and Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons and Ways Forward in Land Tenure Policy, 16–19 February, Sunningdale, United Kingdom.



Certification of land-use rights in Tigray gives farmers greater confidence in the security of their claim, encourages investment in soil conservation, tree planting and improvements to soil fertility

c. Locally driven intermediate tenure

A recent initiative in Niger, building on the Land Commission structure (Commissions Foncières) shows a possible way forward and demonstrates the promise of decentralized, community-based systems for conferring rights over land. In the Mirriah region, 74 Village Land Commissions (Commissions Foncières de Base, COFOB) have been established with NGO support, with authority to handle the great demand for registration of land rights that cannot be satisfied at the higher level – due to insufficient capacity to survey, map and establish titles. In each village, a committee was established with five members (including one woman) which was responsible for receiving requests for registration, publicizing them and, where no contest is forthcoming, inscribing this claim in the village land register. The process is simple, inexpensive and accessible to all. Registration at community level ensures the legitimacy of the claim, before it can be officially registered. Village committee members are trained to ensure that they can manage the various tasks involved, and update the register, which includes other transactions such as rentals, mortgages and gifts.⁽⁴⁴⁾

In Ethiopia, several registration processes are underway. In Tigray, this is being done at the lowest level of government, the tabia, comprising one or several villages.⁽⁴⁵⁾ For each household, several plots of cultivated land held by the household are recorded in the local language on a pre-printed page in a record book located at the tabia office. Each page lists each parcel of land, the approximate size of the plot, the type of land and the names of the neighbouring land-holders. Certificates are then prepared and delivered to the land-holder. This certification of land-use rights gives farmers greater confidence in the security of their claim, encourages investment in soil conservation, tree planting and improvements to soil fertility.

44. Lund, C (2000), "Rapport d'évaluation des activités des commissions foncières de base (COFOB) du projet d'application de la législation foncière et de la gestion durable des ressources naturelles. Mirriah: Niger", University of Roskilde, Denmark.

45. Haile, M and Kassa, G (2004), "Formalising and securing land rights: diverse approaches from Africa. The case from Northern Ethiopia", paper presented at the Land in Africa Conference, 8-9 November, London.



In the Amhara region of Ethiopia, the government is piloting two registration processes. In the traditional approach, farmers are trained to do the land measurement and complete registration documents. The land is measured and the boundaries of plots are identified. The information is then entered into an official form with a stamp, and a photo of the farmer and his wife are attached. By using this simple, inexpensive system, it is expected that 50 per cent of land in 106 woredas (districts) will be registered by 2006. The second approach uses a modern, donor-funded cadastral survey⁽⁴⁶⁾ as the basis for registration and certification. Although too expensive to scale up to the regional level, this approach may be a useful model for the design of registration systems in urban and peri-urban areas, where land has greater monetary value.

An example of a local land-titling process in urban areas is provided by Nairobi in Kenya. More than half of Nairobi's population live in informal settlements on land where ownership is unclear or contested. In many informal settlements, there are large potential conflicts between those who claim ownership of the land and those who actually live there – who pay rent to the landowner or the 'structure owner'. However, local savings groups, formed mostly by women and their federation have been undertaking household enumerations in informal settlements, and seeking to broker agreements between landowners, structure owners and tenants in regard to land titling. In one settlement on the outskirts of Nairobi, Huruma, agreement has been reached among all the inhabitants of a site layout in which everyone gets title and where there is provision for improved infrastructure and services.⁽⁴⁷⁾

d. Conserving the commons

While titling programmes have focused on farmland, common property resources, such as grazing, woodlands,

Local savings groups in Nairobi, formed mostly by women and their federation have been undertaking household enumerations in informal settlements, and seeking to broker agreements between landowners, structure owners and tenants in regard to land titling

46. Showing and recording property boundaries.

47. Weru, Jane (2004), "Community federations and city upgrading: the work of Pamoja Trust and Muungano in Kenya", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 16, No 1, pages 47–62.



Ways should be found to reduce risks of conflict between herders, neighbouring crop farmers and other land users. This may involve rights of passage for animals along agreed pathways, access to water and compensation for crop damage

ponds and fisheries, are vital for many groups, including mobile, pastoral herders, who produce much of Africa's meat and milk. There are growing pressures on these resources, and a trend toward privatization and enclosure. In many cases the breakdown or absence of access rules has led to a free-for-all, bringing degradation and unsustainable levels of use. Legal regimes often fail to protect collective rights. Instead an *ad hoc* series of by-laws provides some protection, but requires broader formalization.

Mobility is key for these people, who must move freely across both national and sub-regional borders. There are calls for the pastoral herders to "modernize" and "settle down", but abandoning their way of life would jeopardize a sustainable pattern that has survived a harsh environment for millennia. Instead, ways should be found to reduce risks of conflict between herders, neighbouring crop farmers and other land users. This may involve rights of passage for animals along agreed pathways, access to water and compensation for crop damage, as outlined in new legislation such as the Charte Pastorale of Mali and Guinea.⁽⁴⁸⁾

Promising examples of common property management include local agreements (conventions locales) for resource management in the West African Sahel, hillside enclosures in Ethiopia and community land registration in Mozambique.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Management of the commons works well when local people are assured secure legal rights over the common resources on which they depend, and can gain the technical support to manage these resources in an equitable and sustainable manner.

e. Options for securing rights to land and property

Given the steep costs of adjudication, and of maintaining a

48. Touré, O (2004), *The Impact of Pastoral Legislation on Equitable and Sustainable Natural Resource Management in Guinea*, Drylands Issue Paper 126, IIED, London.

49. Banzhaf, M, B Drabo and H Grell (2000), *From Conflict to Consensus: Towards Joint Management of Natural Resources by Pastoralists and Agro-pastoralists in the Zone of Kishi Beiga, Burkina Faso*, Securing the Commons 3, IIED, London; Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) (2000), "Codes locaux pour une gestion durable des ressources naturelles: recueil des expériences de la Coopération technique allemande en Afrique francophone", GTZ, Eschborn; Toulmin, C, L Cotula and C Hesse (2004), "Pastoral common sense: lessons from recent development in policy, law and practice for the management of grazing lands", *Forests, Trees and Livelihoods Vol 14*, pages 243–262; Vogt, G and K Vogt (2000), Hannu Biyu Ke Tchuda Juna (2004) *Strength in Unity: Shared Management of Common Property Resources. A Case Study from Takieta, Niger*, Securing the Commons 2, IIED, London.



land register, other options to secure rights must be considered in places where land is less valuable, and where titling and registration may be much less important than working to strengthen local institutions with responsibility for managing land rights and related disputes. The recent shift towards decentralized government has helped to bring land-rights management closer to the field. Methods of securing local rights seem to work best when based on tenure systems already known to the community concerned. The costs and techniques of land administration must also correspond to the value of land. New technologies, such as Global Positioning Systems (GPS), computerization of records, and Geographic Information Systems can help at some levels. For example, the large forest lands held by Ghana's customary chiefs could be mapped much more quickly and accurately using GPS, once agreement on the boundaries has been reached. But technology is no substitute for a locally legitimate process to adjudicate disputed claims. The knowledge of local neighbours is essential for clarifying rights and agreeing on boundaries before they are entered into a formal registry.

De Soto's approach to land titling, now being taken up by several African governments and donor agencies, is generating concern because it is being parachuted in from outside, rather than building on the substantial body of existing experience. Others object to de Soto's treatment of "the poor" as an undifferentiated group, rather than recognizing the diverse rights and claims of poor people, young and old, male and female, local, migrant and immigrant. There are thus legitimate concerns that the approach being recommended does not recognize the complex and overlapping nature of property rights, the high risk for secondary-rights holders of individual property title, and the vital importance of common property resources to many rural dwellers. This chapter has also suggested that full titling is not needed to support security and investment in many farms.

Technology is no substitute for a locally legitimate process to adjudicate disputed claims. The knowledge of local neighbours is essential for clarifying rights and agreeing on boundaries before they are entered into a formal registry



Rooted as they are in the social, political and cultural landscape from which they grow, institutions take many different forms and cannot be simply transplanted from one setting to another

VII. DESIGN OF SYSTEMS TO SECURE LAND AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

Institutions are recognized as holding the key to economic development, by establishing the rules, norms and governance systems within which resource flows take place.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Rooted as they are in the social, political and cultural landscape from which they grow, institutions take many different forms and cannot be simply transplanted from one setting to another.

Establishing an effective register of land and property rights will take many decades in much of Africa, given current low levels of documentation. Setting up a single unified system may make sense as a long-term goal, but meanwhile it may be better to establish locally tailored procedures that can be upgraded over time. Priority areas need to be identified where systematic registration can be undertaken. In areas of lower concern, reliance on less formal procedures is the best option, such as encouraging the use of simple contracts that can be validated by a village- or district-level official.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

The issue of land titling in sub-Saharan Africa raises major challenges. Such titling needs both to enable the region's farmers to invest, expand production and compete in world markets, and also to enable its rapidly growing urban population to get secure tenure for their homes. It has to secure land-use rights for the poorest groups and work within the rapid economic and institutional change underway in most rural and urban contexts.

Given that formal land-titling programmes have proved to be slow, expensive and often biased in favour of richer groups, simpler methods to secure land and property rights are urgently needed. These must also be tailored to each particular local context. Some recommended elements

50. North, D (1990), *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; Ostrom, E (1990), *Governing the Commons: the Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; Easterly, W (2004), "Can foreign aid make countries more competitive?" in *The Global Competitiveness Report 2004–2005*, World Economic Forum, Geneva.

Table 2.3: Key choices in the design of institutions for land administration

Attribute	Options and implications
Location	Central: closely coordinated with government, policy, and legislature, accessible to foreign investors and residents in central city. Local: accessible to rural populations, monitored for accountability and efficiency.
Language	Local language ensures access to records and avoids mis-translation of rights but prevents establishment of a common national system.
Access to information	Restricted access is easier to manage but increases the risk of poor governance; open access allows verification of land claims by neighbours and media, and public scrutiny reduces corrupt allocations.
Cost	Registration and maintenance through fees charged to applicants, purchasers, and sellers; steep fees prevent access by poor groups, and risk patchy maintenance of the register.
Record-keeping system	Manual records are accessible at only a single location, unless copied systematically; computerized records allow multiple access but are not accessible for most rural users and poor urban dwellers.
Adjudication process	Time required for checking rights claimed with neighbours' and family members' testimony, and publicity process accessible to local people; reliance on government gazette for publicizing claims disadvantages non-literate and poor people.
Systematic or on-demand registration	Systematic registration – simultaneous adjudication of all claims – is more efficient and less open to fraud than on-demand titling.
Collective/individual	Recognition of land rights held by collective groups is required, as well as those of individuals and households.

include: strengthening local institutions for rights administration and just dispute resolution; identifying secondary rights and securing access for tenants, women, migrants and herders; using a phased approach that focuses first on priority areas such as where rapid commercialization threatens poorer groups' access to land and where commons need conserving or protecting; introducing simple written contracts with agreed basic terms; and establishing property registers to serve as a base for property taxes that can provide the revenue for services.

Innovative systems are needed in urban areas to enable a negotiated solution in squatter settlements and other informal or illegal land developments that avoid forced



High-flown political statements in support of women's rights must be backed by women's representation on land committees, local government staff that know and use new legislation regarding women's rights, legal clinics and community leaders who take women's rights seriously

evictions. Revised planning and land-use procedures can increase the supply and reduce the cost of land for housing, reducing the need for poorer households to squat, and increasing the proportion of urban households with basic services.

In much of the region, women are particularly vulnerable to dispossession, because they lack power and rights of inheritance. The rising incidence of HIV/AIDS often exposes them to an even greater risk of being dispossessed, when their male partner dies, since the rights of the dead man's kin usually prevail over those of the widow. In addition to equitable policies and laws, practical measures to promote gender inclusion at all levels are needed. High-flown political statements in support of women's rights must be backed by women's representation on land committees, local government staff that know and use new legislation regarding women's rights, legal clinics and community leaders who take women's rights seriously.⁽⁵¹⁾

The High Level Commission on the Legal Empowerment of the Poor seeks to secure land rights and access to justice for the poor in Africa. What is needed is a careful, tailored approach, capitalizing on the wealth of experience of African professionals across the continent, recognizing the diversity and overlapping nature of land rights, and having full regard for the importance of collective property. Such an approach would secure rights for poor and rich alike, and promote a better climate for long-term investment and prosperity.

51. International Food Policy Research Institute – IFPRI (2005), *Women: Still the Key to Food and Nutrition Security*, IFPRI, Washington DC.

3

Conservation with social justice? The role of community conserved areas in achieving the Millennium Development Goals

Neema Pathak, Ashish Kothari and Dilys Roe⁽¹⁾

I. INTRODUCTION

If the entire planet's population depends on natural resources and systems, why is there such inadequate provision for their maintenance? Why does this get such peripheral attention in the MDGs? Why do the policies of most governments and international agencies give so little support to community systems that have long protected such resources? Everyone depends on natural resources and systems for food, water and many other needs, and for keeping the planet inhabitable.

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In many areas traditional systems of resource management have broken down in response to processes of globalization, inappropriate policies and malpractices in government and non-government organizations, and a host of threats from wider economic and political forces. The net result of this has been degradation of resources and collapse of ecosystem services

More than half of the world's population depends directly on natural resources for part or all of their livelihoods – and this includes a high proportion of the poorest groups. Such dependence on natural resources should, in theory, bring with it a strong stake or interest in sustaining the resources themselves. Indeed, most traditional societies have belief systems and practices that demonstrate such an interest. However, in many areas traditional systems of resource management have broken down in response to processes of globalization, inappropriate policies and malpractices in government and non-government organizations, and a host of threats from wider economic and political forces. The net result of this has been degradation of resources and collapse of ecosystem services.⁽²⁾

Because of their dependence on natural resources, and consequent vulnerability to environmental problems, poor people are most affected by the degradation of natural resources and ecosystems. Furthermore, the standard approach to the conservation and protection of these resources – the establishment of “protected areas” – has in many cases exacerbated the poverty⁽³⁾ of local people by undermining traditional access and tenure rights. Ironically, this in turn has often stimulated over-exploitation, as local people have prioritized short-term gains, in the face of uncertainty, over longer-term sustainability.

Protected area coverage is a key indicator for MDG7, which is to “ensure environmental sustainability”. Unfortunately, this rather simplistic measure of conservation activity, with its focus on quantity alone, ignores the role played by both management and governance regimes (how areas are managed, by whom and for what), and also the land and resource rights of people living in and around them in

2. The recent Millennium Ecosystem Assessment provides scientific evidence and wide consensus on this – see Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Board (2005), *Living Beyond Our Means: Natural Assets and Human Well-Being*, Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

3. We define ‘poverty’ here as deprivation of critical resources; this could include natural resources, financial resources, or capacities needed for people to survive and enhance their well-being. People may be well off without much money if they have secure access to natural and human resources. It should be noted that, throughout this chapter, we are not using poverty to mean the lack of only financial resources.



improving the quality of environment.⁽⁴⁾ Furthermore, protected areas are expensive to maintain, particularly when the local support for them is low. International conservation flows of revenue from sources such as the Global Environment Fund (GEF), the World Bank and international NGOs meet only a small percentage of the costs of maintaining protected areas in poor countries.⁽⁵⁾ Ongoing discussions within the Convention on Biological Diversity Ad Hoc Working Group on Protected Areas indicate the continued reluctance of high-income countries to provide additional financial resources for protected areas in low- and middle-income countries.

A strong focus on officially gazetted and largely exclusionary protected areas also ignores the role local communities have played and continue to play in conservation of natural resources, and hence their contribution towards environmental sustainability. This excludes many areas that have been designated for protection by indigenous peoples or local communities, as well as those under private land ownership. Collectively, such areas contain an immense range of ecosystems and species, equivalent to – or even exceeding – those contained in official protected areas. Today many thousands of community conserved areas (CCAs) exist across the world, including sacred forests, wetlands, large landscapes, village lakes, catchment forests, river and coastal stretches and marine areas. Conservation and sustainable use in many of these areas is often far longer-established than in government-managed protected areas, yet they are often neglected or not recognized in official conservation systems.

This chapter seeks to:

- provide a description of the phenomenon of CCAs, with illustrations of how they work;

Conservation and sustainable use in community conserved areas is often far longer-established than in government-managed protected areas, yet they are often neglected or not recognized in official conservation systems

4. See Roe, D (2003), "The MDGs and natural resources management: reconciling sustainable livelihoods or fuelling a divide?" in Satterthwaite, David (editor), *The MDGs and Local Processes: Hitting the Target or Missing the Point?* IIED, London, for a full discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the MDG7 indicators and the limitations of a protected-area approach.

5. Roe, D, J Hutton, J Elliott, K Chitepo and M Saruchera (2003), "In pursuit of pro-poor conservation: changing narratives or more?" in *Community Empowerment for Conservation*, special edition of *Policy Matters*, Issue 12, pages 52–53.



Community conserved areas can be loosely described as natural and modified ecosystems containing significant biodiversity values, ecological services and cultural values

- highlight their importance in meeting conservation and poverty reduction objectives, and therefore their links with the MDGs;
- identify continuing challenges and problems;
- discuss the steps that need to be taken to support CCAs and strengthen their role in meeting the MDGs.

Throughout the chapter, examples are given of CCAs from across the world – although there is a heavy focus on CCAs from India, where most of the authors’ experience lies.

II. WHAT ARE COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREAS (CCAS)?

Community conserved areas can be loosely described as natural and modified ecosystems containing significant biodiversity values, ecological services and cultural values. These include ecosystems under minimum as well as substantial human influence. They are voluntarily conserved by concerned indigenous, mobile and local communities through customary laws or other effective means. Typically, these communities would have substantial dependence on the natural resources contained in the ecosystems, for survival, livelihoods and cultural sustenance. At the same time, many CCAs include “no go” areas, ranging from very small to large stretches of landscape and waterscape within their areas of control.⁽⁶⁾

Conservation efforts by communities include continuation of traditional conservation and sustainable-use practices, revived and/or modified traditional practices, or completely new initiatives taken up by the communities when faced with external or internal threats to their resources or their access to the resources. Such efforts can be initiated and/or achieved with or without outside support but essential features are that:

6. Pathak, N, S Chowdhury and R Bandekar (in press), *Directory of Community Conserved Areas in India*, Kalpavriksh, Pune, India.

Box 3.1: Village empowerment and management of natural resources: a case of Mendha village

Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra state in India, with areas in the surrounding districts and states, is a region famous for its biodiverse, dry deciduous forests as well as for its tribal communities. In the 1970s the forest-dependent tribal communities in this area faced displacement, and destruction of their forests, because of a government-sponsored hydroelectric project. This led to a strong tribal opposition to the project, which was eventually shelved by the government. United by this opposition, the tribal people in the area started a campaign towards tribal self-rule, declaring their own villages as small republics within the constitution of India. Mendha-Lekha was one of these villages, with a population of 400 tribals called Gonds, where the process towards self-rule gained momentum.

During the 1960s, 1,800 hectares of forest which were traditionally part of the village boundary had been taken over by the government and used for revenue generation through logging by contractors, charcoal making, and bamboo extraction for the paper industry. At the same time, restrictions were imposed on local people's resource use to meet basic needs. An important aspect of the later self-rule movement was reclaiming the local forest and promoting its sustainable use for current and future generations.

In the early 1980s, the village established a *gram sabha* (village assembly), including at least one man and one woman from each family in the village. Decisions in the *gram sabha* are taken unanimously and implemented through oral yet strong social rules. Social ties and sanctions are so strong that the decisions taken by the *gram sabha* prevail over any other official or unofficial orders. All outsiders who intend to carry out any activities in the village or the adjoining forests have to present their plan in the assembly for permission.

The village has various other institutional structures, such as the *van suraksha samittee* (forest protection committee) that deals with forest-related decisions. Villagers have stopped all logging and other commercial exploitation of forests by outside agencies, finding them damaging to the forests. Non-timber forest produce and bamboo are currently extracted (after a decade-long moratorium) jointly by the forest department and the villagers. Villagers follow strict rules and regulations for the exploitation of these resources. Encroachment of forests by the villagers, forest fires and unregulated extraction of non-timber produce, which were significant annual processes, have largely been stopped. Such is the reputation of the forest protection committee that the government forest workers have agreed that forest protection in the village is no longer their job.

SOURCE: Kothari, A, N Pathak and Vania, F (2000), *Where Communities Care: Community Based Wildlife and Ecosystem Management in South Asia*, Kalpavriksh and International Institute of Environment and Development.

- the relevant indigenous peoples, mobile and local communities are “concerned” about the ecosystems and species, and relate to them culturally and/or because of survival and livelihood dependence;
- the outcomes of local management decisions and efforts include the conservation of habitats, species, ecological services and associated cultural values, although the objectives of management may be different (e.g. livelihood, water security, safeguarding of cultural and spiritual places);



Community initiatives are site-specific in their approach, and varied in their origin. Methods of use, regulation and management of natural resources differ from site to site

- the indigenous, mobile and local communities are the major players in decision-making and implementation, and their institutions have the capacity to enforce regulations – in many situations there may be other stakeholders in collaboration or partnership, but primary decision-making is with the community.

Community initiatives are site-specific in their approach, and varied in their origin. Methods of use, regulation and management of natural resources differ from site to site. Evolution of these methods depends on the local context, such as the nature of the community, history and tradition of conservation, kind of resource and other political and economic factors. In India for instance, CCAs can be broadly classified into three categories based on their origin:

1. Self-initiated by communities, when facing a resource scarcity, ecological hardships like landslides and drought, or external threats like dams and mining, or initiated by communities generations ago for various reasons but mainly to ensure long-term availability of resources. Such practices in many cases continue to be followed.
2. Initiated with the help of NGOs, to overcome crises of resource availability, to fight social injustice, or to work for biodiversity conservation.
3. Initiated by state-sponsored programmes or individual government officials, where sensitive officials play a crucial role in starting community conservation initiatives.

III. HOW CAN CCAS HELP ACHIEVE THE MDGS?

An analysis of the impacts of CCAs suggests that many of them are helping to achieve the MDGs in different ways. Table 3.1 illustrates their ecological and socioeconomic impacts in South Asia.

a. Eradicating extreme poverty (MDG1)

Given the strong and continuing dependence of most rural and some urban populations on natural resources for their

Table 3.1: Ecological impacts of CCAs in South Asia

Type of initiative	Ecological impact	Examples*
Traditional protection of sacred sites	Protection, often total, of forests, grasslands, tanks	Several thousand in India and Bangladesh, usually small in extent
Traditional protection of sacred species	Protection of key species	Bluebull (<i>nilgai</i>), Rhesus macaque, and <i>Ficus</i> species, all over India; Blackbuck and other species in Bishnoi community area, Rajasthan, India; <i>Ficus</i> species, <i>Madhuca indica</i> , <i>Prosopis cineraria</i> , other trees in many countries
Traditional sustainable use practices for habitats	Conservation of habitats such as village tanks, pastures and forests, and wildlife species resident in them	Kokkare Bellur, India; <i>bugiyals</i> (pastures) in Indian Himalaya; several marine sites with traditionally regulated fisheries, in India and elsewhere
Traditional sustainable use practices for species	Conservation of wildlife species along with or independent of their habitats	Trees like <i>Madhuca indica</i> , harvested with great restraint in many parts of tribal India; hunting restraints for several species
Recent initiatives to revive degraded habitats and use them sustainably	Regeneration of forests, grasslands and other ecosystems, and of species dependent on them	Several million hectares of forest lands in India (joint forest management, or community-initiated) and several hundred thousand hectares in Nepal and Bhutan (community forests)
Recent initiatives to conserve and/or sustainably use relatively intact ecosystems	Conservation of important ecosystems and their resident species, reduction in threats to them	Mendha (Lekha), India; Annapurna Conservation Area, Nepal; Muthurajawela Marsh and Lagoon, Sri Lanka; Eco-development at Periyar Tiger Reserve, India; community wildlife and forest reserves in Nagaland, India
Recent initiatives on sustainable (consumptive and non-consumptive) use of species	Revival of threatened populations of wildlife, e.g. ibex; and reduction in over-exploitation, e.g. of plant and aquatic species	Hushey, Pakistan; Rekawa, Sri Lanka; Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Sanctuary, India
Resistance to destructive commercial forces	Reduction or elimination of factors threatening ecosystems and species	Protection of Indian coastline and marine areas by traditional fisherfolk, from destructive fishing and aquaculture; several movements against big 'development' projects in several countries; movement against mining in Sariska Tiger Reserve, India

* The list of examples is not exhaustive but only a random selection.

SOURCE: Adapted from Kothari, A, N Pathak and F Vania (2000), *Where Communities Care: Community Based Wildlife and Ecosystem Management in South Asia*, Kalpavriksh, Delhi/Pune, and IIED, London.

livelihoods, conservation is central to poverty eradication and sustainable development. Broadly, the following kinds of livelihood security are provided by CCAs:

- continued, strengthened, or new access to ecological services that are critical for survival, such as water,



Community efforts are about not only conservation but also regulated access to the conserved resources. By taking a de facto control over resources where such control is legally not allowed, and demonstrating effective management, community conservation efforts meet the survival needs of some of the poorest people

productive soil and microclimatic stabilization;

- continued, strengthened, or new access to economic opportunities, including natural-resource enterprises, domestic resource needs and employment.

Watershed protection is one of the most common motivations for CCAs. Several dozen villages in the arid state of Rajasthan, in western India, have regenerated and conserved forests in catchment areas of small-scale water-harvesting structures, aware that such measures will provide greater water security than any large engineering interventions. As a result, a previously dried-up river, the Arvari, has come back to life. The increased reliability and amount of water in the Arvari has resulted in a significant increase in local agricultural production. Hundreds of initiatives across India are based on similar motivations – ecological and economic – from the traditional ‘safety forests’ of Mizoram, to the new ‘village forest reserves’ in Nagaland.

Many CCAs are based on sustainable use of resources. Community efforts are about not only conservation but also regulated access to the conserved resources. By taking a *de facto* control over resources where such control is legally not allowed, and demonstrating effective management, community conservation efforts meet the survival needs of some of the poorest people. In the Coron Islands of the Philippines, villagers claiming their customary rights have been able to prevent unregulated fishing and encroachment by outsiders. The subsequent regeneration of previously depleted resources has also provided economic benefits for the local people.⁽⁷⁾

Conservation efforts are also providing ecologically sound economic options to local communities. A number of CCAs in different countries have focused on livelihood security based on strengthening traditional resource uses or introducing new ones. Enterprises based on forest or

7. Ferrari, M F and D de Vera (2003), “A ‘participatory’ or a ‘rights-based’ approach? Which is best for protected areas and indigenous peoples in the Philippines?”, *Policy Matters Vol 12*, pages 166–170.



aquatic produce, community-based ecotourism, employment in conservation and land/resource management are examples of such initiatives. In Mendha Lekha village (see Box 3.1), villagers have managed to create employment opportunities throughout the year. At Makuleke in South Africa, community-based tourism is providing revenues and continued incentives to conserve a part of the former Kruger National Park recently restituted to local communities from whom it had been taken away during the apartheid regime.⁽⁸⁾ In Peru, communities are establishing biocultural heritage sites such as the Potato Park, where indigenous populations are reviving the traditional diversity of potato in its place of origin, and combining this with landscape conservation, enhanced livelihoods, and protection of traditional knowledge.⁽⁹⁾ (See Chapter 6 for more details of this park.)

Perhaps even more importantly, CCAs can often provide an opportunity for empowering hitherto marginalized sections of society. They encourage communities and individuals to participate more confidently in social and political processes, and to confront or resist sources of exploitation. At the Arvari river initiative in western India, for example, the river-basin villages have formed an Arvari *sansad* (parliament), which meets regularly to take decisions on natural resource management, sharing of benefits, inter-village disputes and agricultural strategies – decisions which were previously made at government level.⁽¹⁰⁾ At Saigata village in central India, a forest conservation initiative has been led by a youth of Dalit caste, the most oppressed section of caste-based society in India. His leadership in this has brought him and his caste much greater respect within the community than has any government scheme for social development. In Brazil, indigenous Kayapo communities gained political power by confronting the government about the importance of protecting the boundaries of

CCAs encourage communities and individuals to participate more confidently in social and political processes, and to confront or resist sources of exploitation

8. Steenkamp, C (2000), *The Makuleke Land Claim, Evaluating Eden Discussion Paper 18*, IIED, London.

9. Pathak, N, S Bhatt, T Balasinorwala (2004), *Community Conserved Areas: a Bold Frontier for Conservation*, Briefing Note 5, TILCEPA, CEESP-WCPA (IUCN), CMWG, CENESTA, Iran.

10. Kulhari, O P et al. (2003), *Arvari Catchment Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. Substate site for the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, India*, Tarun Bharat Sangh, Alwar, Rajasthan.



In many instances women, out of sheer desperation at the degradation of survival resources, have been forced to take natural resource management into their own hands. Such struggles eventually lead towards improved status for women in the society in general

Xingu National Park.⁽¹¹⁾ Communities often see such political empowerment in itself as a strong motivation for CCAs.⁽¹²⁾

b. Promoting gender equity (MDG3)

In many parts of the world, women are at the forefront of conservation initiatives. The famous Chipko movement of the Indian Himalaya was led by village women concerned about the destruction of their livelihood security by deforestation. A number of forest protection committees or natural resource management committees across India (such as many community forestry initiatives in Orissa state) are all-women, or have significant female leadership. Numerous studies highlight that women suffer most when resources are degraded.⁽¹³⁾ Women have to walk much longer distances, and face many hostile situations (for example, when confronted with government officials in charge of forests), to meet everyday biomass requirements. Since they are often the primary resource collectors, longer hours spent in collection affects health, child and family care. The situation is much worse for single-woman households. Absolute shortages of biomass, nutritious wild foods, medicinal plants, and other survival resources, therefore adds to the marginalization and impoverishment of women, and with them of children, livestock, the elderly and other dependants.

Community conservation efforts, where they have taken into account these requirements, have helped improve the status of women. In many instances women, out of sheer desperation at the degradation of survival resources, have been forced to take natural resource management into their own hands. Such struggles eventually lead towards improved status for women in the society in general. In the case of the Chipko movement, for instance, the need to protect forests from outside contractors as well as from their

11. Brockington, D and J Igoe (2005), *Anthropology, Conservation, Protected Areas and Identity Politics*. Unpublished manuscript.

12. Kothari, A, N Pathak and F Vania (2000), *Where Communities Care: Community Based Wildlife and Ecosystem Management in South Asia*, Kalpavriksh, Delhi/Pune, and IIED, London.

13. See, for example, IIED (2002), *Drawers of Water II*, IIED, London.



own menfolk, contributed significantly to increased influence for women in village matters.

Externally aided or motivated programmes often insist on greater involvement of women in decision-making. Such external interventions also help to improve the status of women. The legislation that facilitates the Namibian community conservancy movement, for example, emphasizes the representation of women on conservancy committees, while an NGO initiative has helped to formalize their roles as “community resource monitors”, so greatly enhancing their participation in decision-making on natural resource management.

c. Ensuring environmental sustainability (MDG7)

As with the protected areas that are the focus of MDG7, CCAs help to conserve critical ecosystems and threatened species, maintain essential ecosystem functions including water security, and provide important gene pools for evolutionary and human uses. They do this following social sanctions, locally adopted and functional rules and regulations. Often these sanctions are also deeply associated with the beliefs, practices, and livelihood strategies of the communities that manage them.

CCAs can provide corridors and linkages for animal and gene movement, including often between two or more officially protected areas. In the Himalayan state of Uttaranchal in India, two critical protected areas (the Nanda Devi National Park and Biosphere Reserve, and the Askot Sanctuary) are linked by hundreds of square kilometres of community forest land managed under the traditional *van panchayat* (village council) system.⁽¹⁴⁾ Together they form a contiguous forest swathe of almost 300,000 hectares (3,000 square kilometres), which would make it one of India’s biggest protected areas if the village forests were recognized as equivalent to official protected areas.

CCAs help to conserve critical ecosystems and threatened species, maintain essential ecosystem functions including water security, and provide important gene pools for evolutionary and human uses

14. Foundation for Ecological Security (2003), *A Biodiversity Log and Strategy Input Document for the Gori River Basin, Western Himalayan Ecoregion, Uttaranchal, a substate process under the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan India, FES, Munsiari, Uttaranchal.*

Box 3.2: Community-based management initiatives in Madagascar

There has been dramatic environmental change in Madagascar since the arrival of humans around 2,000 years ago, including significant loss of forests, changes in hydrology, sedimentation of lakes and rivers and loss of Madagascar's unusual endemic species. Many factors probably contributed to these changes, including desertification of some parts of the island just before human arrival, and also land conversion for agriculture.

Despite the apparent spiral of degradation, there are many examples of local initiatives and traditions where those relying on valued natural resources have developed institutions and rules to control use and maintain resources. For example, at the Manambolomaty lakes, a closed season is respected to allow fish stocks to recover during the spawning season, which is dictated each year by a traditional leader known as the *tompon-drano* or 'lord of the water'. In the southeast of the country it is forbidden to cut down the *hovao* tree, *Dilobeia thouarsii* in the rainforest because the nuts provide a valued source of cooking oil. In the southwest, the Bara people protect Zombitse and Vohibasia forests as a pasture area for their cattle, and also to hide cattle from and for cattle thieves.

There are also many natural areas of cultural and spiritual importance for the Malagasy people that are protected through traditional management. Angavo is one of the many sacred forests in the south of Madagascar where spiny forest covering around 3,000 hectares is protected from deforestation, fire and any wood extraction. Many forests throughout Madagascar are protected by local customs because they contain tombs or ritual sites, although the areas protected are usually small, for example up to 100 hectares. In the west of Madagascar, there are sacred lakes where nets and boats are prohibited. A council of elders, often in collaboration with a traditional leader such as the head of a local royal family, or *mpanjaka*, reinforces the rules and decides on any sanctions after these have been agreed at a meeting of the community. Although there are many cases of continued respect for such traditional values and management, there are many more cases in which societal changes and outside pressures have undermined traditional practices, which are now remembered as something of the past.

Recent government policies have explicitly aimed to reinforce community management of natural resources through the GELOSE (*Gestion Localisée Sécurisée*, or Secure Local Management) law passed in 1996 that enables communities to sign a contract with the state to manage specific natural resources on their lands. The contract, or *cahier de charge*, defines management objectives, rules and quotas. As of January 2005, almost 500 contracts had been signed, covering around 500,000 hectares. These contracts reinforce and legalize traditional forms of management, and show great promise for facilitating sustainable resource management, especially in a country where government agencies are generally regarded as under-funded, demotivated and corrupt.

SOURCE: Joanna Durbin, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, USA and Jersey (Channel Islands).

CCAs can thus be a powerful tool for enhancing a country's network of formal protected areas – although they are not often given this level of recognition. One exception to this is Madagascar (Box 3.2). At the IUCN World Parks Congress in 2003, the President of Madagascar, Marc Ravalomanana, committed his country to tripling its land area under protection, from 1.7 million to 6 million hectares (some 10 per cent of the land area) in the next five years. But rather than do this through conventional models alone, the country's wildlife agency has drawn up plans to use a range



of governance types for protected areas, including a large number of CCAs, and to 'democratize' the governance of protected areas in general.⁽¹⁵⁾

The conventional protected area approach to natural resource management has undoubtedly generated significant social, economic and environmental benefits. However, protected areas have also extracted a huge cost. In some cases, protected areas have failed to sustain the wildlife populations they were designed to protect, while, at the same time, having a negative impact on the food security, livelihoods and cultures of local people.⁽¹⁶⁾ In general, the distribution of costs and benefits in relation to conventional protected areas has been highly inequitable, with local people bearing the brunt of the costs and reaping few of the benefits. CCAs help to provide a much closer link between the costs that communities pay towards achieving conservation and the benefits that they receive from such conservation – in the form of cultural and livelihood security, and enterprise opportunities.

CCAs also help to strengthen the links between agricultural biodiversity and wildlife, providing larger land/waterscape-level integration. The example of the Potato Park mentioned above is a prime one, where different elements of the landscape are being integrated into a seamless conservation unit, encompassing both agricultural and wild biodiversity, and of course human cultures related to these.

CCAs are often built on sophisticated ecological knowledge systems, elements of which have far wider positive use. This local knowledge in many cases has been used to control smuggling of forest resources and poaching of wild animals. For example, in Ranapur forest range in Orissa state in India, timber smuggling was a major source of livelihood until a few years ago. Now these same communities are protecting the forests within the territory of their villages, and past experience with timber extraction and sale helps them to

The distribution of costs and benefits in relation to conventional protected areas has been highly inequitable, with local people bearing the brunt of the costs and reaping few of the benefits

15. Guy Suzon Ramagason, Director General, ANGAP (National Parks), Madagascar, personal communication, 2005.

16. Ghimire, K and M Pimbert (1997), *Social Change and Conservation*, Earthscan, London.



keep the smugglers under control. Often, the combination of traditional and modern knowledge has helped to achieve more effective conservation. In the Alto Fragua-Indiwasi National Park of Colombia (see Box 3.3), established at the request of the Ingano indigenous people, zoning and management planning have combined the ecological knowledge base of the local people with scientific inventories by the Von Humboldt Institute and GIS-based mapping by the National University.⁽¹⁷⁾

Box 3.3: Alto Fragua-Indiwasi National Park (Colombia)

The Alto Fragua-Indiwasi National Park was created in February 2002, after negotiations between the Colombian government, the Association of Indigenous Ingano Councils and the Amazon Conservation Team, an environmental NGO. The park is located on the piedmont of the Colombian Amazon on the headwaters of the Fragua River, part of a region with the highest biodiversity in the country. The site covers different Andean ecosystems including the highly endangered humid sub-Andean forests, and includes endemic species such as the spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*), and sacred sites of unique cultural value.

This area, called 'House of the Sun' in the Ingano language, is a sacred place for indigenous communities. This is one of the reasons why traditional authorities have insisted that the area's management should be entrusted to them. Although several protected areas of Colombia share management responsibilities with indigenous and local communities, the creation of Indiwasi National Park represents an historic precedent for the indigenous people of Colombia. For the first time, an indigenous community is the principal actor in the design and management of a protected area fully recognized by the state.

SOURCE: Oviedo, G (2005), "The Alto Fragua-Indiwasi National Park of Colombia: challenges and lessons" in Lockwood, Michael, Graeme Worboys, Terry De Lacy and Ashish Kothari (compilers and editors), *Managing the World's Protected Areas*, IUCN – World Conservation Union, Gland (in press).

Indigenous, mobile and local communities in many areas have been able to resist existing or impending commercial and industrial threats. The Coron Island example from the Philippines, mentioned above, is typical of such initiatives. In Nigeria, the Ekuri community has warded off threatened timber logging, by forming the Ekuri Initiative and declaring the ancestral forests a community conserved area.⁽¹⁸⁾ Several CCAs in South America and India have managed to stave off mining, logging or other threats.

17. Oviedo, G (2005), "The Alto Fragua-Indiwasi National Park of Colombia: challenges and lessons" in Lockwood, Michael, Graeme Worboys, Terry De Lacy and Ashish Kothari (editors and compilers), *Managing the World's Protected Areas*, IUCN – World Conservation Union, Gland (in press).

18. Ogar, Chief Edwin (2005), "Ekuri community requests for community conserved area" in Lockwood, et al., *op.cit.*



d. Sustaining cultural diversity and security

Culture is an important driver of CCAs, as many of them are sacred sites, conserved for religious and spiritual purposes. In Ghana, sacred forest groves are patches of forest where the royal members of a particular village are buried. They are protected out of respect for the dead and belief the ancestral spirits live there. In other areas, forest is protected because it provides habitat for certain wildlife species considered to be sacred or taboo. The Boabem-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary in the Brong-Ahafo region of Ghana is protected because it is home to Colobus and Mona monkeys, considered sacred by the residents of Boaben and Fiema villages.⁽¹⁹⁾

Indirectly, but as effectively, CCAs often become a tool for the protection of cultural diversity. In keeping out destructive external forces of ‘development’, or in providing a forum for self-assertion, they help to protect languages, traditions, knowledge and practices that may otherwise be threatened. They may even help to revive pride in local cultures which are otherwise beginning to be considered ‘primitive’ and ‘outmoded’ not only by outsiders but also by community members themselves. This is the case with several indigenous people’s initiatives to conserve cultural and natural landscapes in South and North America, and Australia. In Mendha-Lekha village of central India (see Box 3.1), revival of *adivasi* (tribal) self-identity and associated practices such as the *ghotul* (hostel for unmarried youth, earlier discouraged by British colonialists as being ‘immoral’) have been linked to the CCA effort, and have helped to spread similar cultural revival in neighbouring villages.⁽²⁰⁾

Cultural issues may not appear to be contributing directly to the MDGs, which focus on the more tangible aspects of well-being – income, health and education, for example. Nevertheless, cultural values and practices are critical parts of community and individual well-being.

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19. IIED (1994), *Whose Eden?*, IIED, London.

20. Pathak, N and V Gour-Broome (2001), *Tribal Self-Rule and Natural Resource Management: Community Based Conservation at Mendha-Lekha, Maharashtra, India*. Kalpavriksh, Delhi/Pune, and IIED, London.



Externally driven changes in value systems, including neoliberal economics and science-based education models, are sweeping aside the knowledge systems that formed the basis for social sanctions

IV. THE CHALLENGE

The discussion above highlights the role that CCAs can play in achieving the MDGs. It is not claimed here that all CCAs have achieved all the above-mentioned goals, or that their functioning is always transparent and equitable. However, the examples illustrate that there are many CCAs that have achieved one or more of these goals and that local systems have great potential that is currently unrecognized. Nevertheless, CCAs do face a number of critical challenges to their continued existence and growth, as well as having some limitations in what they can achieve.

Because of a general lack of recognition at the national and international level of the values of CCAs, alternative development models continue to be imposed on local communities, undermining conservation efforts. A similar challenge is posed by the dominant intellectual and belief systems which communities managing CCAs may not have the political power to challenge. Wider market forces and “modern” lifestyles have deeply penetrated local economies, increasing their dependence on the “outside”, as well as changing the perspectives and aspirations of the youth. Externally driven changes in value systems, including neoliberal economics and science-based education models, are sweeping aside the knowledge systems that formed the basis for social sanctions. Young people in some communities grow up knowing more about the world outside than about what is happening within the community. They subsequently become more and more isolated from local values, and drift away, threatening the human and institutional base of the local CCA.

Lack of government recognition means that planning processes for conservation and development often do not take account of – and serve to undermine – CCAs. Such planning needs to be done with local consultation, transparent public hearings, and clearly taking into account what the communities would or would not desire for their area. Even more alarmingly, many CCAs have suffered through the undermining of traditional institutions by



centralized political systems. National and local governments have taken over most of the functions and powers that communities traditionally enjoyed. Even well-intentioned government policies, aiming to support conservation, involve taking over functions and powers, or establishing uniform and parallel institutional bodies based on representative politics. This is done instead of facilitating and improving upon existing systems, which often do have much scope for improvement. In many parts of Asia for example, there is a strong tradition of local management of small irrigation reservoirs that also support large populations of birds and other animals. These reservoirs – together with sacred forests or landscapes – have been declared as state-run protected areas, breaking down the intricate community management systems and generating resentment among the surrounding populations.⁽²¹⁾ A better approach would have been to understand the weaknesses and strengths of the community institutions, and then help to develop them.

CCAs often contain valuable renewable and non-renewable resources, such as timber, fauna and minerals. As a result, they are subject to extreme pressure from developers – from both the private sector and government – eager to exploit those resources. They also suffer illegal incursions by outsiders, and are not easily protected because of their lack of recognition and support. Communities themselves are often highly stratified, and decisions may be taken by the dominant sections of the society (such as men, big landowners, “upper caste” communities), without consideration of the impacts on the less privileged sections. Party or power politics also takes its toll on traditional systems of justice and conflict resolution. Party politics can make cohesive community action very difficult. Aside from internal divisions, many communities also lack the capacity for managing CCAs – in terms of the required administrative, accounting and marketing skills – and are heavily dependent on external support.

Even well-intentioned government policies, aiming to support conservation, involve taking over functions and powers, or establishing uniform and parallel institutional bodies based on representative politics

21. Pandey, D N (2000), “Sacred water and sanctified vegetation: tanks and trees in India”, paper presented at the conference of the International Association for the Study of Common Property (IASCP), in the Panel “Constituting the Riparian Commons”, Bloomington, Indiana, USA, 31 May – 4 June.



It is clear that there is no “one size fits all” solution: site-specific situations and circumstances need site-specific rules, regulations and institutions

These and other challenges have to be faced jointly by communities and others, including formal conservation agencies and NGOs. However, it is important to note that the above-mentioned factors are constraints that need to be kept in mind while extending support to CCAs, and not intractable situations that would make conservation impossible. Indeed these constraints are beginning to be dealt with in countries where CCAs are recognized in one form or another (as shown in some of the examples presented in the boxes in this chapter). Documentation and awareness about such initiatives, previously neglected, are gradually increasing in many countries, and could eventually lead towards greater support for CCAs.

V. ENHANCING THE ROLE OF CCAS IN ACHIEVING THE MDGS

Ensuring that the protected area indicator for MDG7 contributes to poverty reduction rather than exacerbating poverty implies a need for different approaches to resource conservation that provide benefits for poor people and meet social justice objectives.⁽²²⁾ CCAs provide crucial lessons in participatory governance of protected areas – lessons that are already being used in many countries to resolve previously intractable conflicts between official conservation agencies and local rights holders and stakeholders. It is clear that there is no “one size fits all” solution: site-specific situations and circumstances need site-specific rules, regulations and institutions. This points towards a system of conservation in which decisions about who manages the resources, and how and why, depend on the local situation rather than uniform national legal requirements.

Many communities do not have protection or conservation of biodiversity as the main motive for establishing CCAs – although it is a key outcome. Indeed, most CCAs would relate to a range of community motivations and needs, including continued access to survival and livelihood resources, cultural importance, political empowerment and

22. Roe 2003, op. cit.



others. Conservation is a part of livelihood insurance but it is deeply rooted with other social dynamics as well. On one hand, community conservation initiatives may actually lead to social reforms (equity and empowerment), while, on the other, efforts to achieve social reform could lead to conservation of natural resources. It is essential to understand that conservation cannot be seen in isolation from the other social, economic and political processes of the community. Regardless of the motivation for establishing a CCA, a number of key factors stand out as being major determinants of its success or failure.

Tenurial security. For a community to start conserving its natural resources, it needs to have a sense of belonging or custodianship towards the resources. This develops through economic, cultural or religious interaction and association with these resources. The most successful community conservation initiatives are where the communities have legal ownership of the area (such as in Nagaland state in India, see Box 3.4), tenurial security through rights over resources, or *de facto* control over the resources (such as in Mendha-Lekha, see Box 3.1).

Equity and transparency in decision-making. The equal representation of all sections of society in information-sharing, and a transparent and impartial process of decision-making, are essential features of successful and sustained community initiatives. Unequal access to funds or power, and social inequities of other kinds, often threaten or undermine conservation initiatives. Successful community initiatives therefore have an open system of decision-making and accounting. Decisions are taken with the involvement of as many of the members of the community as possible, and accounts are regularly disclosed to the village council. It is only through such open processes that some CCA initiatives have been able to provide answers to some very critical and troubling issues (e.g. encroachments, forest fires, illegal use of resources, poaching, smuggling of valuable timber, and others). However, there are still many community institutions that could do with external

Box 3.4: Community conservation in Nagaland state, India

Nagaland state of India, bordering Burma, is occupied by about 15 different tribal communities – each culturally and geographically distinct. Unlike other parts of India, nearly 90 per cent of the land is under community ownership and 85 per cent is still under forest cover. Originally hunter-gatherers, the tribal peoples have developed an intricate land-use system, with land distributed between shifting cultivation (on communally owned land), settled agriculture (on privately owned land) and forest reserves (on land that can be owned by family, clan or community), to provide food, fruit, fuel and timber. Wild meat is an integral part of tribal culture here, and most families own guns and go hunting nearly every day. Easy availability of guns (because of a few decades of insurgency in the state) and non-implementation of wildlife protection laws led to rampant hunting. Increasing population and heavy dependence on timber and forest produce for livelihood has affected forest quality.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, water resources began to dry up, and there were declines in the availability of wild vegetables and animals. In 1988, the Khonoma Village Council in Kohia district declared 20 square kilometres of forest and grassland as the Khonoma Nature Conservation and Tragopan Sanctuary. Rules were formulated to ban hunting (not only here but over the whole of Khonoma's territory of 135 square kilometres), to stop all resource uses in the sanctuary area, and to allow only a few benign uses in the surrounding buffer area. A trust was set up for management. A proposal is currently under discussion to extend the sanctuary area to include some of the adjoining forest. The villagers are also in discussions with neighbouring villages, to conserve 200 square kilometres of unique habitat, with several endemic and threatened species.

The village council of Sendenui also resolved to set aside an area of about 10 square kilometres, after discussions initiated by the village youth concerning declining populations of wild animals. The village has issued its own wildlife protection act, with rules and regulations for the management of the sanctuary. In 1983, the Luzaphuhu village students' union resolved to conserve 5 square kilometres of forest land above the village as a watershed. In 1990, they declared another 2.5 square kilometres as a wildlife reserve, in which hunting is strictly prohibited. Similarly, Kikruma village is regenerating and protecting 70 hectares (0.7 square kilometres). Several villages centred on Runguzu are protecting perhaps several thousand hectares of forest, and six villages led by Chizami are reviving traditional protection of a few hundred hectares. Village youth associations have put up notices along many roads in the state, warning that the area is under strict protection. Different villages have different ways of dealing with violations, a simple fine being the most common. Some are more sophisticated, with a higher fine for more endangered species.

SOURCE: Pathak, N (2005), *Nagaland Field Visit Report*, Kalpavriksh, Pune.

intervention or internal mobilization to rise above social inequities and local politics. Constant interaction with outsiders and regular discussions within the village make people more conscious and aware, which in turn helps them in taking informed decisions.

Local leadership. In most successful community initiatives, local leaders play a crucial role. These leaders are often apolitical and inclined to focus on the wider social good. They may not be traditional or political leaders but touch the soul of the community. Their achievements can come at



enormous personal and family cost, as they may have to spend large amounts of time leading an initiative, at the cost of personal and family responsibilities. Even in areas where conservation is more process-driven than individual-driven, motivation largely comes from individual leaders. Many communities find it difficult to find a second line of leadership, which would have similar dynamism and charisma. In supporting community action it is important to identify such leaders and facilitate their work (without cooption, or negatively affecting the local power dynamics), and create conditions within the community to help build up a second line of leadership. It is important that the leadership and motivation comes from within the community rather than from external sources, as is seen in many project-oriented initiatives. In such cases the initiative ends with the project.

Importance of partnerships. In many CCAs, villagers have indicated and often demanded that management of resources be a joint activity of the communities and the government officials or NGOs. Here, communities realize the difficulty of managing natural resources on their own, given the internal and external social dynamics, political and commercial pressures. What communities expect is that the partner in joint management should play an active but equal role – a facilitator rather than a dominating ruler or enforcer. External agencies are also expected to play a critical role at discussion forums, when they help to bring in wider perspectives that are not so easily understood by villagers with limited access to outside information.

In the last few years there has been considerable debate and discussion on mechanisms for recognizing and supporting CCAs. Nationally, grassroots organizations and indigenous and local people are fighting for greater recognition of their conservation efforts, and international networks of such individuals and institutions are demanding the same from international treaties and commitments. Of particular importance has been the work of IUCN's Theme on Indigenous and Local Communities, Protected Areas, and

What communities expect is that the partner in joint management should play an active but equal role – a facilitator rather than a dominating ruler or enforcer



Equity (TILCEPA), and Collaborative Management Working Group (CMWG), which have been promoting the recognition and spread of co-management and CCA approaches. As a result, issues of good governance, the application of governance types to protected areas, the recognition of CCAs, and other related aspects were extensively discussed at the 2003 World Parks Congress, and at the 2004 Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The recommendations of the World Parks Congress ⁽²³⁾ included the following for national governments:

- make an effort to promote a process for recognizing, enlisting, evaluating and delisting CCAs – although the participants of these processes should be multisectoral, including members of local communities;
- recognize and promote CCAs as a legitimate form of biodiversity conservation, and, where communities so choose, include them within national systems of protected areas, through appropriate changes in legal and policy regimes;
- ensure that official policies, guidelines and principles recognize diverse local (formal or informal) arrangements developed by communities on their own or in collaboration with other actors, for the management of CCAs;
- facilitate the continuation of existing CCAs, and their spread to other sites, through a range of measures including, financial, technical, human, information, research, public endorsement, capacity-building and other resources or incentives that are considered appropriate by the communities concerned, as well as the restitution of traditional and customary rights;
- acknowledge that it may be appropriate for some existing protected areas to be managed as CCAs, including the transfer of management of such areas to relevant communities;

23. <http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/wpc2003>.



- provide protection to CCAs against external threats – the nature of such support should be agreed in full consultation with the concerned communities;
- respect the sanctity and importance of CCAs in all operations that could affect such sites or the relevant communities, and give particular attention to applying the principles of prior informed consent, participatory environmental impact assessments, and other measures in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- support self-monitoring and evaluation of CCAs by the relevant communities, and participatory monitoring and evaluation by outside agencies or actors; and
- provide impartial information when and where needed and/or asked for by the relevant communities.

The Convention on Biological Diversity Programme of Work on Protected Areas (which, importantly, is legally binding on governments that are party to the Convention) incorporates CCAs in several sections.⁽²⁴⁾ Most critical is Element 2 on “Equity, governance, participation, and benefit-sharing”, which lays down targets and activities for establishing the rights, participation and benefits of indigenous and local communities in the full range of activities relating to protected areas. Countries are now legally bound to these targets. Of special relevance here are the sections that require countries to recognize and support CCAs, provide them legal backing within their national systems of protected areas, and link them to goals of poverty reduction. Donor agencies, which are appealed to by conservation organizations for help in expanding and securing the global protected area network, would do well to note these requirements and target their interventions at CCAs. In some cases this can be achieved through support to enlightened national governments (such as that of Madagascar), and in others though

Of special relevance are the sections of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas that require countries to recognize and support CCAs, provide them legal backing within their national systems of protected areas, and link them to goals of poverty reduction

24. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2004). Programme of Work on Protected Areas (CBD Programmes of Work), Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal.



concerned civil society and other organizations (including the members of TILCEPA, as mentioned above).

VI. CONCLUSION

The first volume in this series of IIED booklets on the MDGs highlights the weakness in the indicators associated with MDG7 – in terms of both their coverage of the drivers of environmental sustainability, and their one-dimensionality – and also the lack of linkages between the eight goals, specifically the impact that environmental issues have on achievement of the other goals.⁽²⁵⁾ Furthermore, the targets-driven approach of the goals pays no attention to the process by which those targets are achieved. The governance of natural resources – particularly the rights, roles and responsibilities of different actors – is critical to delivering on poverty reduction and social justice objectives.

CCAs appear to be a valuable mechanism both for expanding the scope of the MDG7 indicators and for making linkages between environmental sustainability and human well-being. CCAs cover a wide range of ecosystem types – far more than the forest emphasis of MDG7. Through their focus on sustainable livelihoods, human rights and democracy, CCAs can also make clear contributions to the many dimensions of poverty articulated by the MDGs. However, ensuring this contribution does require concerted action at local, national and international levels, to increase the recognition of CCAs. Very considerable steps have been taken in international policy processes in the last two years. Action is now needed at the national level to ensure that these valuable local institutions can fulfil their potential and deliver on conservation with social justice.

25. Roe 2003, *op. cit.*

4

Advancement through association: Appropriate support for associations of small and medium forest enterprises

Duncan Macqueen, Sonja Vermeulen, Cornelius Kazoora,
Frank Merry, Sharon Ousman, Sushil Saigal, Shao Wen
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I. INTRODUCTION

Small-scale enterprises are vital to the lives of a high proportion of poor people around the world. Associations among such enterprises can strengthen their position – by reducing costs, amplifying benefits and putting small-scale businesses in a position where they can effectively engage with big business and governments. In this chapter, the focus is primarily on the forest sector, and small- and medium-scale forest enterprises (SMFEs). SMFEs are often defined as enterprises with fewer than 100

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Both well-being and its converse – poverty – have several dimensions. Well-being is defined here in terms of six dimensions: material subsistence, security, relational equity, creativity and fulfilment at work, intellectual discernment, and cultural identity

employees⁽²⁾, yet this definition is so broad, and the overlap with larger enterprises so extensive, that it blurs many useful insights. Therefore, the interest in this chapter lies primarily with enterprises of fewer than ten employees. Many of these may involve only a single person or one family. Despite the focus on forest enterprises, most of what follows is applicable to small and medium enterprise and associations in other sectors. Indeed, some of the examples include agricultural or artisanal enterprise in partially forested landscapes.

The aim in this chapter is to assess how SMFEs and their associations can contribute to broad human well-being, and to suggest what kinds of external support could enhance their capacity to maximize these benefits. Both well-being and its converse – poverty – have several dimensions. Well-being is defined here in terms of six dimensions: material subsistence, security, relational equity, creativity and fulfilment at work, intellectual discernment, and cultural identity. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set out internationally agreed targets that implicitly link to some of the dimensions of broad well-being. For example, the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger in MDG1 places a strong emphasis on material subsistence. Efforts to provide primary school education (MDG2) and to improve child, maternal and adult health (MDGs 4–6) are also critical preconditions for enhancing material subsistence and for intellectual discernment. The goal of gender equality and women’s empowerment (MDG3) also requires relational equity. Similarly, the goal of environmental sustainability (MDG7) requires a broader approach that takes security, and intellectual discernment, into account. The goal to develop a global partnership for development (MDG8) requires explicit attention to creativity and fulfilment at work – through a focus on youth and making available the benefits of new technologies.

A significant omission in the MDGs is the failure to be explicit about the protection of cultural identity and human



rights (e.g. the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities⁽³⁾). There is little mention of security other than broad environmental security. There is also an undeniable weakness in how the MDG framework separates out economic, social and environmental targets⁽⁴⁾ rather than taking a more integrated approach to sustainability. Yet, for all their weaknesses, the MDGs do provide a clear set of targets. What is less clear is detail on how these targets are to be achieved. For example, there is nothing explicit about building and supporting local institutions for service delivery.

At the smaller scale, SMFEs often provide examples of self-initiated and self-maintained routes to a better standard of living. For example, families and small entrepreneurs collect and sell timber for fuelwood, charcoal or carpentry products, or non-timber forest products such as forest fruit and bushmeat, medicinal plants, craft-work species, honey, gums, oils and resins. Some may also sell services, such as those related to tourism and to conservation. The conditions under which such enterprises operate may not always be ideal. They may not offer much in the way of individual remuneration, and may present serious risks in terms of occupational health and safety. When unregulated, they may also lead to local social conflicts and environmental degradation. Yet, in many cases, they are the only options available to poor people. And before SMFEs are characterized only as options of last resort, it is worth noting that locally governed SMFEs provide many examples of excellent social and environmental impact.⁽⁵⁾

This chapter explores a set of questions around how external agencies might understand and support SMFEs to deliver the best outcomes to locally owned development. How might local institutions like SMFEs and their

For all their weaknesses, the MDGs do provide a clear set of targets. What is less clear is detail on how these targets are to be achieved

3. Corpuz, V T (2005), *Making the MDGs Relevant for Indigenous People*, statement presented to the ECOSOC, 16–17 March, from the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (available at: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/news/MDGs/Corpuz_ECOSOC_MDGs.doc).

4. Roe, D (2004), *The Millennium Development Goals and Conservation. Managing Nature's Wealth for Society's Health*, IIED, London, UK.

5. Durst, P B, C Brown, H D Tacio and M Ishikawa (2005), *In Search of Excellence – Exemplary Forest Management in Asia and the Pacific*, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFT), Bangkok, Thailand.



What kinds of external support could help poor people to develop their own capacities to capture the economic, social and environmental benefits of small-scale enterprise?

associations contribute to (or undermine) the achievement of the MDGs? Might they have anything additional to offer to well-being, such as strengthening of human rights and supporting cultural identity? What conditions enable or prevent the effective functioning of SMFEs? What kinds of external support could help poor people to develop their own capacities to capture the economic, social and environmental benefits of small-scale enterprise? We consider these questions in turn in the following sections.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM FOREST ENTERPRISES (SMFEs) AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS

SMFEs account for a significant proportion of all forest businesses and jobs. Most statistics on these enterprises fail to differentiate between those with under 10 employees and those with 10–100 employees. Fisseha⁽⁶⁾ estimated that in Bangladesh, Egypt, Honduras, Jamaica, Sierra Leone and Zambia, SMFEs of up to 100 employees made up 37–80 per cent of forest enterprises and 42–63 per cent of forestry employees. In Brazil, May et al⁽⁷⁾ note that SMFE forest-harvesting operations, wood-processing enterprises and furniture manufacturers make up 98–99 per cent of enterprises and 49–70 per cent of employees. In Guyana, Thomas et al⁽⁸⁾ record that SMFEs make up 93 per cent of enterprises and 75 per cent of employment.

In many countries, a substantial proportion of SMFEs may be “informal” and their work and numbers not captured in official business statistics.⁽⁹⁾ For example, Saigal and Bose⁽¹⁰⁾ describe widespread under-reporting of employees in the

6. Fisseha, Y (1987), “Basic features of rural small-scale forest-based processing enterprises in developing countries” in FAO (editor), *Small-scale Forest-based Processing Enterprises*, Forestry Paper 79, FAO, Rome, Italy.

7. May, P H, V G Da Vinha and D J Macqueen (2003), *Small and Medium Forest Enterprise in Brazil*, Small and Medium Forest Enterprises Series, No. 3. Grupo Economia do Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Sustentável (GEMA) and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), London, UK.

8. Thomas, R, D J Macqueen, Y Hawker and T DeMendonca (2003), *Small and Medium Forest Enterprise in Guyana*, Small and Medium Forest Enterprises Series, No. 5, Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), London, UK.

9. Chuta, E (1987), “Growth and dynamism among rural small-scale enterprises: information gaps” in FAO (editor), *Small-scale Forest-based Processing Enterprises*, Forestry Paper 79, FAO, Rome, Italy.

10. Saigal, S and S Bose (2003), *Small-scale Forestry Enterprise in India*, Small and Medium Forest Enterprises Series, No. 6, Winrock International India (WII) and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), London, UK.



SMFE sector in India, to avoid compliance with India's detailed labour laws. From a government perspective, SMFEs are often difficult to deal with and collect revenues from. SMFEs may remain in the informal economy because the burden of administrative formality is too high, because the skills and technologies available to them do not allow compliance, or because they may have to cut social and environmental corners to remain competitive with larger-scale enterprise. Such practice reduces security and opportunity, stifling creativity and social and environmental responsibility – the classic “race to the bottom”.

Yet SMFEs can often represent dynamic individuals and communities improving their livelihoods and their environment. For example, in Guyana the North Rupununi District Development Board of the Makushi Indians has helped to develop a very successful eco-lodge at Surama village, from where tourists can see giant otters. In Malawi, a local community in Salima district developed a profitable tree nursery to sell seedlings to adjacent community reforestation projects. In the Philippines, local farmers plant up the sloping hills or *muyongs* between rice paddy with species that can be collected and sold for fuelwood, construction, carving, basket making, food, medicinal plants and natural insecticide.⁽¹¹⁾

In many cases, the small initial investment needed to set up SMFEs make them accessible to poor people. Entry into the market place can diversify the economic portfolio of poor rural households, increasing livelihood security. The equity of opportunity in small-scale enterprise can strengthen networks and alliances, and emerging business skills allow specialization. Such creativity can generate a patchwork of production activities that offers greater diversity than either uniform small-scale subsistence options or large-scale monoculture alternatives. Local specialization can also enhance a positive cultural identity – if geared towards local market preferences. But policy and market environments

In the Philippines, local farmers plant up the sloping hills or *muyongs* between rice paddy with species that can be collected and sold for fuelwood, construction, carving, basket making, food, medicinal plants and natural insecticide

11. Rondolo, M T (1999), “The changing Ifugao woodlots: implications for indigenous plant knowledge and diversity”, PhD thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia, 214 pages.



Farmers in Yunnan province, China, have no idea that their forest activities count as “small enterprises”, and such activities are often only part-time or seasonal. But their impact on the forest, and their need for collective action to regulate activity and improve their options, is huge

often squander these positive attributes when they work against, rather than encourage, small-scale entrepreneurial activity.

To counter marginalization by market and policy decision makers, SMFEs often band together. Associations based on mutual interest often form spontaneously, but they also normally require some form of external support along the way. Of note is that many SMFEs do not perceive themselves as enterprises. For example, in China there are millions of small-scale farmers who depend on China’s large collective forests (in Yunnan province, more than 70 per cent of the forest is in collective hands). The farmers have no idea that their forest activities count as “small enterprises”, and such activities are often only part-time or seasonal. But their impact on the forest, and their need for collective action to regulate activity and improve their options, is huge. Reaching these more ephemeral SMFEs and sensitizing them to the benefits of association may require considerable outside support.

III. THE CONTRIBUTION OF SMFES TO THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS)

SMFEs have the potential to contribute positively to several of the MDGs – but also to undermine them. Table 4.1 identifies some examples of both positive and negative impacts, using the six dimensions of human well-being (material subsistence, security, relational equity, creativity and fulfilment at work, intellectual discernment and cultural identity).

What is striking from a review of such case studies is the critical role of the policy environment in determining positive or negative outcomes. In an enabling environment, SMFEs offer unique opportunities to the poor. Such opportunities can be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. For example, the Ugandan Nyangole B Community Forest Management Association (in the Tororo Municipal Council) used its collective bargaining power to access 16 hectares of forest land from the National



Forest Authority. The association comprises 132 members (50 women and 82 men) who plant eucalyptus trees for fuel and building materials, trained by the National Forest Authority. The supportive policy environment has allowed the association to flourish. In disabling policy environments, especially where political forces such as taxation or regulation favour large-scale commerce, SMFEs frequently cut social and environmental corners or fade into informality to avoid administration costs.⁽¹²⁾

It is clear that the ability of SMFEs to contribute to achieving the MDGs and other development aims is strongly affected by scale effects. There are both pros and cons of being small-scale (Table 4.2). Without external intervention, the disadvantages of small scale can outweigh any commercial advantages, threatening the survival of SMFEs. The problem is that much external intervention does not provide appropriate policy and assistance but actually tips the balance even further on the side of large-scale enterprise. In the following section, some examples are given of how the “rules of the game” work against, or are made to work against, SMFEs.

IV. RULES OF THE GAME: TIPPING THE BALANCE AGAINST SMFEs?

Table 4.2 charts some of the passive scale effects that bring about positive and negative effects for enterprises of different sizes. These constitute the basic “rules of the game”, which sometimes inflict passive discrimination on SMFEs. But in many instances policy- and decision-makers actively alter these rules, creating active discrimination against SMFEs and in favour of large-scale enterprise. SMFEs that are aware of these policy problems will want to do what they can to influence both government and industry to weight the rules of the game more fairly. However, experience shows that passive or active discrimination is often combined with a deliberate exclusion of small-scale

The problem is that much external intervention does not provide appropriate policy and assistance but actually tips the balance even further on the side of large-scale enterprise

12. Schneider, F (2002). *Size and Measurement of the Informal Economy in 110 Countries around the World*, paper presented at the Workshop of Australian National Tax Centre, 17 July, University of Linz, Linz-Auhof, Austria.

Table 4.1: Example contributions of small and medium forest enterprises (SMFEs) to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Dimension of well-being / MDGs	Example of a positive SMFE contribution to well-being	Example of a negative SMFE contribution to well-being
Material subsistence – MDGs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6	The Chinese forest sector employs 1.06 million people. SMFEs within the sub-sector of furniture and wood-based building materials account for 90% of the value in that sub-sector. There is often a contrast between larger state firms and non-state SMFEs. SMFEs are particularly important in China's poor mountainous counties. For example, in Liaoning Province 1,450 non-state firms employ 13,000 people, and in Hengreng county the industry accounts for 35% of "agricultural" production. ^a	The Sumo and Miskito indigenous cultures of Nicaragua engage in boom-and-bust enterprises associated with national and international trends in pine lumber, banana and rubber. ^b Temporary economic growth followed by collapse reduces people's capacity to survive and degrades the resources on which that survival depends.
Security – MDG7	There are an estimated 500,000 SMFEs in Uganda comprising small-scale tree farmers and fuelwood users, NTFP* collectors and processors, nursery operators, brick, lime and smoked fish producers, and pastoralists. Most are family-based, seasonal and need only limited investment – vital to the livelihood security of the rural and urban poor. ^c	In South Africa, the SMFE sector is overshadowed by large firms that outsource work to small contractors or buy timber from small outgrowers. High levels of competition are deliberately maintained – leading to many financial stresses, high levels of insecurity and business failure. ^d
Relational equity – MDG3	Zimbabwean women have traditionally run the majority of micro- and small enterprises (67%), tending to concentrate in certain sub-sectors such as mat and basket making, beer brewing and food processing. Small-scale enterprises with flexible working hours are suited to people who need to look after children. ^e	The production of matches by small business was encouraged by Indian government size-restricted excise incentives. But this has not stopped more powerful vested interests from taking over. Currently just 18 families, known as the "Match Kings of India", control 67% of production. ^f
Creativity and fulfilment at work – MDG8	In Nepal, the Shree Binayak Pimidanda Community Forest is not only an exemplary sustainable forest operation but also involves hundreds of local households in the manufacture of hand-made paper – one of the best-managed community enterprises in the country. Valuable administrative, technical, management and business skills have been acquired too. ^g	In China, the lack of clarity over property and resource-use rights, forestry taxes and fees that discriminate against private enterprise have created a sub-sector dominated by large state firms offering few creative opportunities. Only recently have new joint venture and partnership arrangements emerged to encourage small village and household enterprise. ^h
Intellectual discernment – MDG7	Indigenous peoples in the southern states of Mexico, angered by watching their forests degraded by outsiders, fought a successful campaign against imposed concessions and won rights to operate their own micro-enterprises adhering to their own environmental values. ⁱ	In Brazil, timber-extraction SMFEs at the forest frontier have to compete with land-use alternatives such as agricultural and forest plantation – and with the flood of cheap timber coming from illegal agricultural settlement. In remote Amazonian locations, social and environmental values have been sacrificed in the search for profit. ^j
Cultural identity	The Makushi people in Guyana have developed local tourism enterprises that promote local language, dance and weaving. When self-assessing the most important assets within their communities, the Makushi identified culture as a key resource – based in no small part on their sustainable interaction with surrounding forest resources. ^k	Among the North American First Nations, not all believe that the technological advances associated with new SMFEs are positive. For example, the gradual tying in with the seasons of the commercial fur trade has disrupted traditional cultural life in the forest-based communities of Quebec in Canada. ^l

* NTFP: non-timber forest product

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- b. Limi-Nawah (2005), *About us*, online at: <http://www.limi-nawah.com/about.htm> (accessed June 2005).
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- k. Mangal, S and J Forte (2003), “Case study – a culture sensitive participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation tool for marginalised indigenous resource managers”, unpublished draft, North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB), Rupununi, Guyana; see also Mangal, S and J Forte (2005), *Community Tradeoffs Assessment: for Culture-Sensitive Planning And Evaluation*, IIED Power Tools series, North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB) and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), London, UK (available at: http://www.policy-powertools.org/Tools/Understanding/docs/community_tradeoffs_tool_english.pdf; accessed June 2005).
- l. Samson, C, J Wilson and J Mazower (1999), *Canada's Tibet – the Killing of the Innu*, Survival International, London (available at: <http://astatine.webfusion.co.uk/~survival/files/books/InnuReport.pdf>; accessed June 2005).

Table 4.2: Commercial scale-related effects on SMFEs

Effect	Advantages	Disadvantages
Political influence	Impacts are significant at local scale and can be used to foster strong local alliances	Small unit impact increases the chance of being ignored by national policy makers
Economic bargaining power	Small volumes permit greater flexibility, reducing losses in changing circumstance	Small volumes result in unfavourable input and output prices
Labour specialization	Can become highly adapted to the needs of one particular group of clients	Limited staff numbers reduce chances of specialization in technical and business administration
Transaction costs	May deliberately bear transaction costs to reach clients that bigger firms might miss	Interactions between multiple small units can cost more than integrated larger enterprises
Access to information	Greater awareness of fluctuations in local demand	The dispersed nature of enterprise units raises costs of distant market information
Research and development	Engagement with immediate clients can allow specialization and local adaptation	Small units lack the surpluses required to engage in research and development



Experience shows that passive or active discrimination is often combined with a deliberate exclusion of small-scale enterprises from the processes by which the rules of the game are established

enterprises from the processes by which the rules of the game are established.

a. Passive scale effects against SMFEs

Many of the effects described in Table 4.2 tend to disadvantage SMFEs. For example, in the South African forest contracting services, profitability is low and competition is high. Many SMFEs cannot afford bank charges on their low profit margins. With few staff, SMFEs find it difficult to do all the paperwork relating to the Unemployment Insurance Fund, district municipality levies, training levies, licensing procedures or banking requirements. Having to pay VAT before receiving fees from contracts adds to their problems. Moreover, SMFEs are rarely granted contracts for more than a year's duration – while financing of vehicles and equipment is typically over a period of three to five years. Growers find it difficult to convince finance houses to grant them loans on trees where the land title is not secure.⁽¹³⁾ All of these subtle “rules of the game” conspire against SMFEs.

A similar picture emerges from Uganda. Microfinance institutions typically provide only short-term loans and small amounts of capital. Big financial institutions like banks deal only with large firms. In addition, SMFEs often have difficulty getting access to market information, such as on emerging markets for carbon offsets or commercial production of medicines using the bark of *Prunus africanum*. Land purchase or lease for processing facilities is often administratively beyond smaller firms – and the heavy bureaucratic demands for registration drive many SMFEs into informality.⁽¹⁴⁾

b. Active discrimination against SMFEs

Powerful decision makers may change the rules of the game to discriminate against SMFEs for pragmatic reasons. For

13. Lewis, F, J Horn, M Howard and S Ngubane (2004), *Small and Medium Forest Enterprise in South Africa*, Small and Medium Forest Enterprises Series, No. 7, Institute of Natural Resources (INR) Forestry South Africa, Fractal Forests and International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED), London, UK.

14. Auren, R and K Krassowska (2004), *Small and Medium Forest Enterprise in Uganda*, Small and Medium Forest Enterprises Series, No. 8, Uganda Forest Sector Coordination Secretariat and International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED), London, UK.



example, in Guyana there has been a recent decreasing trend in issuing small-scale logging licences (State Forest Permissions).⁽¹⁵⁾ Official reasons for this include: closure due to a degraded resource base, the need for a more rigid land allocation system which made some small producers ineligible, and the need for a more stringent revenue collection system (again making some operators ineligible).

Mozambiquan forest legislation also favours large concession-holders over small operators. The simple annual licence (Licenças Simples) goes only to large operators who can invest in processing machinery and implement blocked harvesting. Alternative systems are considered unsustainable. Communities have legal rights to land but may use forests only for subsistence use. Obligatory consultations between concessionaires and communities are rarely more than perfunctory – resulting in little benefit to the rural poor.⁽¹⁶⁾

In India, the government has actively discriminated in favour of SMFEs. Licensing and investment restrictions confine production of many commercially viable forest products to SMFEs only. Yet India's accession to the World Trade Organization has led to much of the protection for wood products being stripped away, instead favouring larger enterprises (though protection for non-timber forest products persists).

c. Marginalization of SMFEs by excluding them from decision-making processes

Large-scale enterprises tend to fare better than small businesses in influencing government processes. In South Africa, an elite group of large “grower-processors” in forestry has the ear of the government, while small-scale contractors and growers are unable to evoke influence – despite the national government's primary focus on poverty reduction and broad-based black economic empowerment.

India's accession to the World Trade Organization has led to much of the protection for wood products being stripped away, instead favouring larger enterprises

15. Thomas, R, D J Macqueen, Y Hawker and T DeMendonca (2003), *Small and Medium Forest Enterprise in Guyana, Small and Medium Forest Enterprises Series, No. 5*, Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), London.

16. Macqueen, D J and A Bila (2004), *Gleanings on Governance – Learning from a Two Year Process of Forest Policy Support to ProAgri*, IIED, Edinburgh, UK (available at: http://www.iied.org/docs/flu/Mozambique_FGLG_final.pdf).



Grower-processors in South Africa drive industry policy to the exclusion of small-scale enterprises, setting the terms for guaranteed buying arrangements and outgrower schemes with small growers

Grower-processors also drive industry policy to the exclusion of small-scale enterprises, setting the terms for guaranteed buying arrangements and outgrower schemes with small growers,⁽¹⁷⁾ and remaining intransigent to the financial difficulties and poor terms of employment forced upon small-scale contractors.⁽¹⁸⁾ Both government and industry make efforts to include SMFEs in roundtable policy processes. But legitimate representative bodies remain weak: formal unionization is difficult among SMFE workers who are mainly seasonal and scattered, while SMFE representative organizations such as SAFCA (the South African Forestry Contractors' Association) do not yet have wide enough membership, because of high joining fees and a heritage of representing white-owned businesses.⁽¹⁹⁾

A similar problem persists in Vietnam, where empowerment of small-scale enterprises is a government priority, but exclusion of these enterprises from policy processes at national, provincial or even district level remains the norm. Meanwhile, larger state-owned forest enterprises enjoy close communication with relevant government departments. A recent initiative in Quang Ninh province brought SMFEs (chiefly growers and traders) together with representatives from government at various levels, along with the police. It transpired that small-scale growers were unaware of many of the policies in their favour, such as tax breaks and subsidies, while provincial and district policy makers were unaware of lack of implementation of these policies on the ground.⁽²⁰⁾

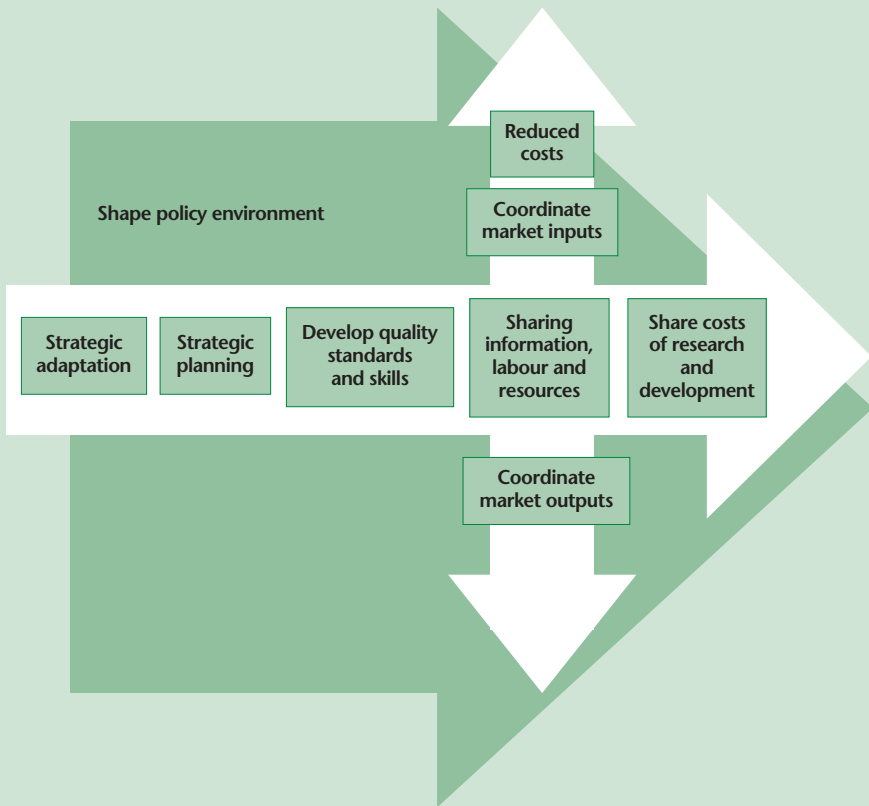
Experience from India shows that government protection of SMFEs can encourage inefficient production because SMFEs do not receive scarcity signals that demand investment in improved technology. If SMFEs have no way of adopting new technologies, they will simply go out of business when

17. Howard, M, P Matikinca, D Mitchell, F Brown, F Lewis, I Mahlangu, A Msimang, P Nixon and T Radebe (2005), *Small-scale Timber Production in South Africa: What Role in Reducing Poverty? Small and Medium Forest Enterprises Series, No. 9*, Fractal Forest Africa, Fakisandla Consulting, Institute of Natural Resources, Rural Forest Management and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), London, UK.

18. Clarke, J and M Isaacs (2005), *Forestry Contractors in South Africa: What Roles in Reducing Poverty? Small and Medium Forest Enterprises Series, No. 10*, Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies, University of the Western Cape, South Africa, and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), London, UK.

19. Ibid.

20. Le, T P, V D Nguyen, N Q Nguyen, L V Phan, E Morrison and S Vermeulen (2004), *Making the Most of Market Chains: Challenges for Small-scale Farmers and Traders in Upland Vietnam*, IIED, London, UK.

Figure 4.1: The possible advantages of forming an association

Source: developed from a figure in Macqueen, D.J. (2004) Associations of small and medium forest enterprise: an initial review of issues for local livelihoods and sustainability. IIED, Edinburgh, UK. Available at: <http://www.iied.org/docs/flu/SME_pubs/SME_Associations.pdf>

governments remove the protection. Thus, feedback between SMFEs and government is crucial. Before any change in policy, it is necessary for SMFEs to seek, and government to assist with, training (or at least essential information) for all the businesses that will be affected.

V. HOW MIGHT ASSOCIATIONS OF SMFES HELP?

'Association' here is used to reflect a wide range of groups, the formal constitution of which may take a number of forms including trusts, cooperatives, companies limited by guarantee, companies limited by share, and informal



For cost reduction, the government in Guyana encourages small enterprises to club together to be eligible for larger land-concession categories, to overcome the otherwise prohibitive costs of logging licences

groupings. Boyd⁽²¹⁾ describes the advantages and disadvantages that come with these different legal forms.

SMFEs form associations for a number of reasons (Figure 4.1). The initial impetus is often financial. For example, In India, the dormant Saharanpur Wood Carving Association revived in 1999. The trigger was government's imposition of a sales tax on wooden handicraft products – a tax that was withdrawn, as a result of the association's protests. In Brazil, associations of migrant settlers along the Amazon forest frontier often group together to negotiate financial deals with external companies.⁽²²⁾ Many Brazilian SMFE associations formed initially to take advantage of government credit programmes such as FNO-Especial (that require registration as an association). While initial motives might be financial, the majority of associations also state social and environmental aims – and in some cases these form the real reason for association. In Brazil, associations without these additional aims have a high level of attrition once they achieve their initial objectives.⁽²³⁾

Many of the advantages of association come from mitigation of the effects of passive or active discrimination – working together to counter negative scale effects or perverse policies. Some of the advantages of association are to do with the reduction in costs (the vertical axis in Figure 4.1), while others rely on strategic cooperation between SMFEs to develop new market opportunities (horizontal axis). For example, for cost reduction, the government in Guyana encourages small enterprises to club together to be eligible for larger land-concession categories, to overcome the otherwise prohibitive costs of logging licences. The Ituni Small Loggers and Chainsaw Association is an example of small enterprises that did indeed join together to gain access to a larger concession area.⁽²⁴⁾

21. Boyd, G (2005), *Organizational Mechanisms that Best Serve the Poor*, IIED, Edinburgh, UK (available at: http://www.iied.org/docs/flu/SME_pubs/OrganizationalMechanisms.pdf).

22. Merry, F and D J Macqueen (2004), *Associations for Business Partnerships*, IIED, Edinburgh, UK (available at: <http://www.policy-powertools.org/Tools/Organising/ABP.html>).

23. Campos, M, M Francis and F Merry (2005), *Stronger by Association – Improving the Understanding of How Forest-resource Based SME Associations in Brazil can Benefit the Poor*, IPAM and IIED, London, UK.

24. Macqueen, D J (2001), *Evidence-based Policies for Good Governance – the Applicability of Growth and Yield Modelling to the Forest Sector in Guyana*, IIED, London, UK, 118 pages.



Strategic cooperation can often evolve when there are new market opportunities. In China's Yunnan province, the Association of Persimmon in Zhaijiawan Village, formed in 2003, collectively addresses emerging problems. Most fruit used to be sold at the Baoshan market by individual households, but through the association they have reached new markets. Marketing has also been improved with new packaging designs to get added value. Information about the group was posted on the Forestry Bureau's website bulletin board and attracted procurement from businesspeople as far away as Shanghai. The association also invites technicians to provide onsite training and other services to the member farmers, including provision of fertilizer, pesticides, pruning and other maintenance procedures.

Associations can go beyond dealing with passive and active discrimination, to shaping the policy environment – the “rules of the game”. A good example of this strengthening of political voice is the Coffee Chamber in Baoshan. The Coffee Chamber aims to shape the policy environment by interacting with local government and government agencies to make the coffee industry better attuned to market demand, new technology, secondary processing rather than export of raw materials, and opportunities for improving quality and efficiency. Similarly in South Africa, the Small Growers Group of Forestry South Africa, the country's leading representative organization for timber growers, targets local municipalities as the most effective leverage point for improving the policy environment for SMFEs. Municipal officials in prime forestry areas are exposed to forestry's potential in local development and not only encouraged to include forestry in municipal development plans but assisted with ideas on how to support existing and emerging SMFEs.

Resilient associations typically have a suite of internal characteristics, such as a clear agenda, dynamic leadership, equitable distribution of costs and benefits, and rigorous operating principles. These often evolve over time. While

The Coffee Chamber in Baoshan, China, aims to shape the policy environment by interacting with local government and government agencies to make the coffee industry better attuned to market demand, new technology, secondary processing rather than export of raw materials, and opportunities for improving quality and efficiency



While dynamic leadership may spark an association into life, longevity often requires the development of clear institutional procedures concerning membership, taking decisions and managing the distribution of finance and other benefits

dynamic leadership may spark an association into life, longevity often requires the development of clear institutional procedures concerning membership, taking decisions and managing the distribution of finance and other benefits. The Guyanese Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association, established in 1993, has strong leadership – but it has also worked hard to develop managerial capacity. It has developed meticulous financial and stock records of each transaction. The executive body has a rigorous set of criteria against which to assess the quality of craft produced by members for quarterly sale through the association. The association has been the main sustained source of income since 1993 for the village, also providing social and economic security such as provision of loans and assistance to sick persons.

The transition towards institutionalized decision-making procedures and administrative functions can also be important to avoid a tailing-off of interest, legitimacy and effectiveness. RECA (Reflorestamento Econômico Consorciado e Adensado) in Brazil is an SMFE association that is robust and delivers results. It has stringent membership conditions, requiring aspiring members to attend all meetings for a year before they are accepted as members. It has also developed a high level of financial and administrative decision-making. Continued membership requires adherence to organic farming standards, preservation of the environment, sale of produce through RECA and continued participation in 80 per cent of meetings.⁽²⁵⁾

Equity in the distribution of costs and benefits is also a critical element of association resilience. Campos et al.⁽²⁶⁾ note a strong record of practical democracy within Brazilian associations – in a recent survey, 94 per cent of association members stated that decision-making was taken by equitable vote. Where problems have arisen, for example in the Brazilian association APLUMA (Associação dos Produtores Rurais em Manejo Florestal e Agricultura), poor

25. Campos, Francis and Merry 2005, *op. cit.*

26. *Ibid.*



leadership and growing lack of trust have blighted some of the associations' promise. In Guyana, one of the new small-scale logging associations, the Orealla loggers' group, intends to ensure greater equity through adopting a quota system for resource extraction in community lands. There were previously no planning systems in place for resource management, and so resource depletion and inequitable resource use were commonplace. Equity over time is also an important consideration. In Uganda, some forest associations have deliberately sought to diversify their interests so that long-term benefits, say from tree planting, are supplemented by short-term benefits, such as from seedling sales.

VI. WHAT IS THE BEST EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR SMFE ASSOCIATIONS?

Increasingly, international aid is channelled towards direct budgetary support for central government departments – away from small projects. Such aid is often conditional on a number of structural adjustments to trade, institutional accountability and public services. The preference of bilateral donors and multilateral banks for working with big central clients on big grants or loans is easy to understand. It is much easier and cheaper to manage than working with multiple small and diverse groups scattered across often-inaccessible geographical regions. The rationale is one of transaction costs. Why bear the cost of these transactions if you can pass them on?

The problem with passing on transaction costs is that the aid recipients may also struggle to reach those many SMFEs that deserve support. The effectiveness of budgetary support to the public sector depends closely on the effectiveness of that public sector. But, as described above, public-sector services are often not well disposed to SMFEs or their alliances. In many instances, public services actively discriminate against SMFEs – often precisely because centralized government services find them hard to reach. In other cases, public services are captured by larger enterprise

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In a survey in Brazil, 55 per cent of respondents recollected help in establishing the association, and 58 per cent could point to current external assistance. Even the more advanced cooperative structures had benefited from financial, administrative, technical and logistical support

and marginalize SMFEs entirely. In the few examples where the public sector has implemented protectionist policies for SMFEs (such as in India), international pressure from international banks and the World Trade Organization has acted against their continuation.

The alternative approach lies in carefully targeted external support. SMFEs flourish when local people help themselves through local associations. These draw in turn on local trusted intermediary organizations because, in practice, most SMFE associations are not entirely self-sufficient. In a survey in Brazil, 55 per cent of respondents recollected help in establishing the association, and 58 per cent could point to current external assistance.⁽²⁷⁾ Even the more advanced cooperative structures such as RECA had benefited from financial, administrative, technical and logistical support. The nature of this support was highly specific, targeted at particular needs. Similarly, in Guyana, some support had always been required, in all the associations interviewed, for:

- capacity building and leadership skills training;
- financial training;
- resource management and planning for utilization of resources;
- market information on value-added products from timber species;
- development of non-timber forest products;
- training to produce more creative or innovative products;
- access to loans for feasible technology for value-added production;
- finding markets, especially overseas, and how to market.

One example of targeted support is that provided by NGOs to the Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association, established by indigenous people in the Orealla community. The association's aim was to manage an agro-processing

27. *Ibid.*



business to provide an income for Amerindian Women from the Orealla-Siparuta community. It also aimed to support Orealla farming activities by purchasing fruits from the local farmers to curb over-harvesting of timber resources in village lands. Twelve people received training in agro-processing techniques using local fruits to make fruit cheeses. The development of unique environmental packaging was also supported, and this has proved crucial to fruit cheeses gaining recognition locally, and from the overseas Guyanese community.

What are the trusted and sometimes unorthodox intermediary organizations that provide such support? In Brazil, NGO and Church groups figured heavily within surveys of the most useful support to associations in Brazil.⁽²⁸⁾ For example, the STR (Sindicato de Trabalhadores Rurais de Brasília e Epitaciolândia) was established with the help of the Catholic Church. The national advisory body for rubber tappers (CNS) provided additional informational support and documentation. The Acre workers union (FTA) helps with representation at state level, while the Amazonian Workers Group (GTA) does the same at Federal level. Another Brazilian example is that of RECA, which received considerable support from the Pastoral Commission and a group called CERES from the Catholic Church. The Dutch NGO, SEBEMA assisted RECA with its first loan to work with agroforestry systems. NGOs, state and national research and extension organizations such as PESACRE, EMBRAPA and INPA later became involved with research and technical assistance.

The higher-level affiliations of intermediary organizations do not appear to be as critical as the form and function they take on locally. A study in Vietnam looked at why some remote mountain villages developed thriving SMFEs and relatively high standards of living, while other villages with similar resources did not.⁽²⁹⁾ All villages had government-sponsored local institutions, most importantly the

The higher-level affiliations of intermediary organizations do not appear to be as critical as the form and function they take on locally

28. Ibid.

29. Le, Thi Phi, Tong Van Chung and Le Bang Tam (2004), *What Maintains Poverty? A Study of Factors Affecting Poverty in Mountainous Areas of Quang Ninh Province, Vietnam*, IIED, London, UK.



In some villages in Vietnam these groups functioned merely as sinecures for more powerful families, but in others – those villages with thriving small-scale industries – they enjoyed wide legitimacy and participation. In some villages, Women’s Unions, with mandates covering issues from contraception to literacy, functioned especially well in supporting women’s small-scale enterprises

Commune’s People’s Committee, but also associations such as the Youth Associations, Veterans’ Associations and Old People’s Associations. In some villages these groups functioned merely as sinecures for more powerful families, but in others – those villages with thriving small-scale industries – they enjoyed wide legitimacy and participation. In some villages, Women’s Unions, with mandates covering issues from contraception to literacy, functioned especially well in supporting women’s small-scale enterprises. Consequently, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization has used Women’s Unions as conduits for revolving loan schemes for women’s SMFEs.

A good strategy for donor aid in support of the MDGs would therefore be to cultivate such trusted intermediaries, which are well placed to deliver requisite administrative and technical inputs. Both aid managers and those intermediaries would need to have more than a passing knowledge of the challenges facing specific enterprises in specific sectors and regions. In other words, there is need for long-term in-country aid managers if such a strategy is to work.

This chapter argues that support to local enterprise institutions is a vital tactic to implement the MDGs. Development interventions that direct money exclusively to central government budgets are not advised. Experience argues for long-term, carefully tailored support directly to local institutions such as SMFEs. Such an approach might rankle with economic-aid decision makers, because of the high transaction costs involved. However, reaching out to poor people’s own initiatives and enterprises – many of which are at the margins of formality – is not going to be a cost-free exercise. Directing financial and other assistance to associations of SMFEs rather than individual enterprises is a smart way to emulate the route that SMFEs themselves have taken to overcome discrimination and marginalization.

5

Meeting the MDGs in urban areas: the forgotten role of local organizations⁽¹⁾

David Satterthwaite⁽²⁾

I. INTRODUCTION

Most of the unmet needs that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) identify and seek to address are a result of limitations or failures of local organizations. Thus, meeting most of the MDGs in urban areas depends on much-improved performance by local organizations – including government agencies, NGOs and community-based organizations and, in many places, private enterprises. A large part of this improved

1. This draws on two previously published works: Satterthwaite, David (2005), "Meeting the MDGs in urban areas; the forgotten role of local organizations", *Journal of International Affairs* Vol 58, No 2, pages 87-112; and Hasan, Arif, Sheela Patel and David Satterthwaite (2005), "Editorial: How to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in urban areas", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 17, No 1, pages 3-19.

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After more than a decade of “good governance” and decentralization, there is not much evidence of significant improvements for low-income groups in most locations

performance is addressing the needs and priorities of those who lack good provision for water, sanitation, health care (and essential drugs), schools, secure homes and adequate incomes. For these are the unmet needs at the centre of the MDG targets.

Yet much of the discussion on meeting the MDGs seems to forget the role of local organizations. Increasing international aid flows will achieve little unless this can support improved performance by tens of thousands of local organizations across Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Yet the very structure of official bilateral aid agencies and development banks makes them ill-suited to supporting this. Indeed, the current trend in most bilateral agencies is towards less support for local action and local organizations, and more emphasis on balance-of-payments support and sector support. This means that it will be up to the national governments through which donor funds are channelled to support improved performance by local organizations in each country. But after more than a decade of “good governance” and decentralization, there is not much evidence of significant improvements for low-income groups in most locations. Indeed, much of the support for “good governance” focuses on national reforms and not on whether these actually deliver better results on the ground.

This chapter discusses why local organizations are crucial in meeting most of the MDGs in urban areas. Within this, it emphasizes the importance of both urban governments and the organizations formed by the urban poor, including homeless people and “slum” and shack dwellers, themselves. It then discusses how the large, centralized aid agencies and development banks can support them and other local organizations to meet the MDG targets.

II. THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OF OTHER LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Local government organizations have great importance for low-income urban dwellers. Local government agencies, or the local offices of higher levels of government, determine



whether their rights are protected and their entitlements are met. Local government rules and procedures determine whether urban poor households:

- can send their children to government schools, and afford to keep them there;
- get treatment and appropriate medicines when ill or injured;
- are connected to water, sanitation and drainage networks;
- have street lights and electricity in their neighbourhoods;
- get land on which they can build their own home legally, or otherwise have to build illegally – often on a dangerous site (because they would be evicted from any safer site) – and can avoid eviction;
- can vote, or even whether they can get their names on the voting lists;
- have access to politicians and civil servants;
- are protected from violence and crime (and corruption) by a just rule of law;
- can set up a small enterprise, and get a loan to help them do so;
- can influence development projects, especially those that threaten their homes or livelihoods.

The failure of local organizations is evident in virtually all urban centres in low- and middle-income nations in the high proportion of urban dwellers who live in very poor-quality housing that lacks provision for water, sanitation, drainage and solid waste collection. For much of the urban population, it is evident in the lack of government schools and health centres – or the very poor quality of those that are available. In many low-income nations, infant and child mortality rates in urban areas are 15-20 times higher than they would be if there were provision for good-quality health care, water and sanitation, and safety nets for those lacking the means to get adequate food. The

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inappropriateness of official rules and regulations can be seen in the fact that 30-60 per cent of all housing in most cities is illegal and is developed on land that is illegally occupied or sub-divided.

Table 5.1: The scale of urban poverty in low- and middle-income nations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, 2000/2001

Type of poverty	Numbers (%) of urban population in poverty	Note
Inadequate income for basic needs	700 million to 1 billion (36–51%)	No accurate figures are available on this, and the total varies depending on the criteria used to set the “income-level” required for “basic needs”.
Inadequate or no provision for safe, sufficient water	More than 680 million (35%)	No reliable figures are available for the extent of provision for “adequate” or “safe and sufficient” water, or on the extent of provision for “adequate” sanitation for urban areas in most nations; these estimates are drawn from a detailed UN review of individual city/urban studies.
Inadequate or no provision for sanitation in the home	More than 850 million (43%)	
Under-nutrition	150–200 million (8–10%)	No reliable figures are available for all nations; in many Asian and sub-Saharan African nations, 25–40% of urban children are underweight.
Living in housing that is overcrowded, insecure and/or of poor quality	924 million (47%)	No accurate figures are available for this in many nations; this figure is based on a UN review of the proportion of people living in “slums” and is consistent with other estimates.

SOURCES: For water and sanitation: UN-Habitat (2003), *Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities: Local Action for Global Goals*, Earthscan, London. For under-nutrition: Haddad, Lawrence, Marie Ruel and James Garrett (1999), “Are urban poverty and undernutrition growing? Some newly assembled evidence”, *World Development* Vol 27, No 11, pages 1891–1904; and Sotih, Lisa, Marie Ruel and Aida Ndiaye (2003), *Why is Child Malnutrition Lower in Urban than Rural Areas? Evidence from 36 Developing Countries*, International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington DC. For housing and living conditions: UN-Habitat (2003), *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements 2003*, Earthscan, London.

Thus, a critical question is how to make local government organizations more pro-poor – or less anti-poor. Or, to phrase it another way, how to change the relationship between those with unmet needs and local governments (city and municipal). Of course, changes are also needed from national governments and international agencies, and within global trade regimes. These changes include support for more effective and accountable urban governments from national and, where relevant, state or provincial governments. However, the effectiveness of many of these larger changes is determined by whether they make local



bodies more effective in meeting local needs, and more responsive and accountable to those with unmet needs.

This is not to suggest that local government can or should provide for all needs. But as well as its role as a provider of services, it also has a major influence on how local markets operate, including those that have particular importance for low-income groups – for instance, for land for housing, for water and, in many instances, building materials and credit. It can have a major influence on the effectiveness and accountability of local NGOs or other local organizations that provide services. And it has a significant influence on the scale, scope and effectiveness of what organizations formed by the urban poor can do. If it is not possible to make local governments more “pro-poor”, it is difficult to see how most of the MDGs can be met.

Where local governments fail to ensure provision of services, local non-government organizations and private enterprises often have importance for large sections of the urban population, providing schools, health centres, water supplies and household waste disposal in informal settlements where government provision is inadequate or non-existent. But these services are often of very poor quality. Again, local government has or could have considerable influence on the quality and coverage of these services. A supportive government framework for local services can improve their quality and coverage. Some local governments will also sub-contract provision of some services to local NGOs, community organizations and private enterprises.

The local organizations formed by urban poor groups themselves also have great relevance to whether or not the MDGs are met. This is both through what these organizations can influence in regard to what local governments do, or do not do, and through what these organizations can do themselves. In many nations, representative organizations formed by urban poor groups have demonstrated new ways to build and improve homes, and improve provision for water, sanitation, drainage, and

Local government has or could have considerable influence on the quality and coverage of these services. A supportive government framework for local services can improve their quality and coverage



Representative organizations formed by urban poor groups have demonstrated new ways to build and improve homes, and improve provision for water, sanitation, drainage, and solid waste collection, that are both cheaper and of better quality than conventional government or private sector provision

solid waste collection, that are both cheaper and of better quality than conventional government or private sector provision. Many have done this in ways in which women have central roles in decisions and implementation – also in ways that allow the poorest groups to be included.

Representative organizations have also shown how large-scale success is possible, as some have reached hundreds of thousands of low-income urban dwellers with significant improvements – where local government organizations work in partnership with them. Local non-government organizations often have important roles in supporting the work of these urban poor organizations.⁽³⁾

The performance of local schools, health care centres and water and sanitation providers determines whether many of the MDG targets are met, including Targets 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11 (listed in the table at the beginning of this booklet). Just halting and reversing the spread of AIDS will involve huge changes in the kinds of support that local organizations provide. Local organizations also have important influences on whether many of the other targets are met – for instance whether there are effective strategies to combat malnutrition, to work with youth and to ensure that everyone has access to affordable essential drugs.

III. LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S CAPACITY TO REDUCE OR INCREASE POVERTY

In urban areas, local governments have importance for their capacity either to reduce poverty, or to perpetuate or increase it. This is illustrated by recent events in Mumbai (formerly Bombay). The Mumbai Municipal Corporation began implementing a very large programme of forced evictions and demolition of “slums” in December 2004. Yet this is the same municipal government that has also been working with organizations and federations of “slum” and

3. D’Cruz, Celine and David Satterthwaite (2005), *Building Homes, Changing Official Approaches: the work of Urban Poor Federations and their Contributions to Meeting the Millennium Development Goals in Urban Areas, Poverty Reduction in Urban Areas Series, Working Paper 16*, IIED, London, 80 pages (available at www.iied.org/urban).



pavement dwellers on a range of projects to house over 50,000 of the poorest households.⁽⁴⁾ This is the same city where the Police Commissioner has been working with committees of “slum” residents to set up police stations that are accountable to local residents.⁽⁵⁾ This is the same city that pioneered new forms of resettlement for thousands of low-income households that had to move, to allow improvements in infrastructure, which ensured that those who were resettled were fully involved in the planning and management of the resettlement.⁽⁶⁾

The evictions in Mumbai are an example of how not to meet the MDGs. They destroy the homes and neighbourhoods – and often the livelihoods – of poorer groups. Those evicted have to find accommodation elsewhere, which increases overcrowding and puts more pressure on services there. It is also difficult to see how it will be possible to achieve the Chief Minister’s apparent intention to make Mumbai a successful global city. Developing partnerships with urban poor organizations to find mutually acceptable and affordable solutions to improving conditions in “slums” is likely to contribute far more to Mumbai’s international success.⁽⁷⁾

Whether the MDGs will be met in urban areas will be much influenced by local government attitudes to the urban poor. One of the ironies of urban development in Africa, Asia and Latin America is the inaccurate stereotyping of poorer groups by governments. These are the groups that are responsible for building most new houses and building much new infrastructure (although this usually has to be done illegally because legal requirements and official standards are so inappropriate). The urban poor provide the city with cheap labour and a great diversity of cheap goods and services. They move in response to changing

One of the ironies of urban development in Africa, Asia and Latin America is the inaccurate stereotyping of poorer groups by governments

4. Burra, Sundar (2005), “Towards a pro-poor slum upgrading framework in Mumbai, India”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 17, No 1, pages 67–88.

5. See Roy, A N, A Jockin and A Javed (2004), “Community police stations in Mumbai’s slums”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 16, No 2, pages 135–138.

6. See Patel, Sheela, Celine d’Cruz and Sundar Burra (2002), “Beyond evictions in a global city: people-managed resettlement in Mumbai”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol. 14, No 1, pages 159–172 (available at www.ingentaselect.com/09562478/v14n1/).

7. Burra 2005, op. cit.



Although many of the largest evictions over the last 40 years have been implemented by non-elected governments, this is increasingly not the case

patterns of economic opportunity that again serves to strengthen the city economy. Yet many government officials and politicians stereotype poor people as “the problem” or a danger to the city – which can be seen in their statements and policies that are anti-squatters, anti-migrants and anti-hawkers.

One of the results of such anti-poor attitudes is the forced eviction of millions of low-income households each year – leaving people homeless and often injured by the violence of the eviction, and entrenching patterns of poverty, discrimination and social exclusion.⁽⁸⁾ Although many of the largest evictions over the last 40 years have been implemented by non-elected governments, this is increasingly not the case. Representative democracy does not necessarily provide much protection for urban poor groups. It provided no protection for the hundreds of thousands of people evicted in Mumbai in the last few months – and this eviction programme came from a new government with electoral promises including the provision of tenure to those living in many of the settlements that were then bulldozed.

All government evictions come with some official justification that they are done “for the public good”: to help support city regeneration, to improve health and safety, to develop needed city infrastructure – or to redevelop areas that allegedly have criminal networks. The official justifications used today by democratic governments do not differ much from those used by military dictatorships in the 1970s, except that they are more likely to stress “making our city globally competitive”. Perhaps the strangest aspect of this is that those whose homes are bulldozed also want improved health and safety, better infrastructure and a more successful economy; most also want the rule of law. Many would be happy to move – since they live on land at risk of floods or landslides, or on pavements – as long as they are fully involved in

8. du Plessis, Jean (2005), “The growing problem of forced evictions and the crucial importance of community-based, locally appropriate alternatives”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 17, No 1, pages 123–134.



determining to where, when and how. There are also many precedents to show how a real engagement with urban poor groups can allow land to be freed for infrastructure and for urban regeneration but in ways that benefit the urban poor too,⁽⁹⁾ so their needs and priorities are also part of the “public good”.

Other case studies have shown the central role that people and enterprises in “illegal settlements” or “slums” have in city economies,⁽¹⁰⁾ so if governments work with “slum” inhabitants, this also avoids the economic disruptions that bulldozing brings. Of course, this does not address the hidden motives for most evictions. There is often a pretence that they are for the public good, when in reality they are clearing valuable land sites from which powerful vested interests will make large profits. Or they are pursuing an agenda driven by middle classes who do not want the poor living near them (although they still want their domestic workers and cheap services). Including the urban poor in redevelopment plans also does not appeal to politicians and bureaucrats who believe that “poor people” move to cities for illogical reasons and that “these poor people would be better off” in rural areas. This is despite four decades of research showing that migration flows are logical and usually carefully planned responses to changing economic circumstances. Of course people move to cities if they are the centres where most new investments are made – as is the case in most low- and middle-income nations.

Thus, whether or not local governments contribute to meeting the MDGs is not simply an issue of whether local governments have the resources and capacities to do so; it is also a question of what they choose to prioritize and to ignore. In many cities in low- and middle-income nations, the fact that 30-60 per cent of the population lives in illegal

There is often a pretence that evictions are for the public good, when in reality they are clearing valuable land sites from which powerful vested interests will make large profits

9. Burra 2005, *op. cit.*; Boonyabanha, Somsook (2005), “Baan Mankong: going to scale with slum and squatter upgrading”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 17, No 1, pages 21–46.

10. See for instance Benjamin, Solomon (2000), “Governance, economic settings and poverty in Bangalore”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 12, No 1, pages 35–56 (available at www.ingentaselect.com/09562478/v12n1/).



Low-income groups live in dangerous overcrowded shacks in illegal settlements lacking provision for infrastructure and services not by choice but because there is no better alternative that they can afford

settlements, with inadequate provision for water, sanitation, schools and health care, is as much to do with local governments choosing not to address this as it is with a lack of capacity and resources. In a later section, examples will also be given of local governments that have become more effective at meeting the MDGs with little or no external support, through changing their priorities and changing the way they work with urban poor communities and their organizations.

IV. THE ROLE OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT

In all urban areas, those individuals or households with the lowest incomes have difficulties affording both food and non-food needs. Low-income groups live in dangerous overcrowded shacks in illegal settlements lacking provision for infrastructure and services not by choice but because there is no better alternative that they can afford. The proportion of the urban population facing such difficulties is obviously much influenced by income distribution and by the effectiveness of any national or local safety-net programme to ensure that everyone has a “minimum income” or adequate temporary accommodation. But in most low- and middle-income nations, there are no government-provided safety nets – or if there are, these do not serve most of the low-income urban population.

The proportion of the population facing such deprivations is also much influenced by the extent to which local governments and other local organizations act to lessen the cost of necessities (for instance, keeping down the price of housing with piped water and good provision for sanitation) and provide certain key services that are available to all independent of their income (for instance, primary schools, health care, emergency services, provision for children’s special needs, access to sufficient safe water and temporary accommodation if these cannot be paid for). In most low- and middle-income nations, local organizations do little or nothing in these areas – and usually lack the capacity to do



so. This helps to explain why so many people are living in makeshift homes in illegal settlements lacking basic services.

Much of the urban population is also ill-served or not served by the organizations that should be guaranteeing their civil and political rights – including those that are meant to guarantee the rule of law (such as the police, the law courts), and citizens' right to vote and to have access to politicians and bureaucrats. Table 5.2 is an urban version of the table in Chapter 1, listing the local organizations important for meeting the needs of those with limited incomes, and contrasting how they can be supportive or unsupportive.

Thus, one of the central issues for external aid is the extent to which it supports the development of stronger local organizations that really deliver for the poor and are accountable to them in all the categories listed in Table 5.2. This also means the extent to which they support institutional changes that lessen the negative impact of local organizations, such as anti-poor local governments and legal/judicial systems that give little or no attention to protecting poorer groups' civil and political rights.

However, if most local governments and other official service providers lack the funding base and capacity to ensure that everyone's needs are met, the key issue is how to support other means to ensure needs are met – for instance supporting provision by local or international NGOs, or community organizations. The section below outlines some examples of community organizations and local NGOs that have had critical roles in meeting the MDGs, because these were the local organizations that helped meet poorer groups' needs for (for instance) housing, water, sanitation, health care, schools and emergency finance. They did so in ways that low-income groups could use and could afford. Many also did so in ways that were more participatory and accountable to those that they served. They also demonstrated that they can reach a very large scale, if supported by local governments (and other external agencies).

One of the central issues for external aid is the extent to which it supports the development of stronger local organizations that really deliver for the poor and are accountable to them

Table 5.2: The two extremes in terms of local organizations that do or do not support meeting the Millennium Development Goals in urban areas

Local organizations that are supportive	Local organizations that are unsupportive
<i>Schools (pre-school, primary and secondary)</i>	
Schools that are accessible to all and with costs kept down (e.g. fees, school uniforms, text books); special provisions to help low-income families keep their children at school and to ensure gender equality may be needed.	Schools with high user charges (formal or through informal payments requested) and that avoid admitting children from urban poor areas (for instance through requiring pupils to have official addresses which excludes children from families living in illegal settlements).
<i>Primary health care centres, hospitals and emergency services</i>	
Health services that are available and easily accessible to all, with strong outreach programmes for poorer areas, special programmes for vulnerable and at-risk groups and provision to keep down costs for users. Special outreach for those with AIDS/HIV, to provide counselling and supply needed drugs without stigmatising	High user fees and locations and opening hours which make them difficult to use, especially for working populations. Staff members who are judgemental and antagonistic to 'poorer groups' or to other particular groups (for instance adolescents or specific ethnic groups). Inappropriate or no services for those with AIDS/HIV.
<i>Providers of water, sanitation, drainage, household waste disposal and energy</i>	
Service providers with a focus on ensuring adequate provision for all – with differential service standards and support for community partnerships to ensure that all poorer groups are reached, where the resources are insufficient for universal provision through conventional systems.	Service providers who have little or no interest in reaching poorer groups within political systems that do not ensure that they do so. Piped water supplies, sewers, drains and waste collection often available only to richer groups (and often provided at below cost). Refusal to provide any services in illegal settlements.
<i>Local government planning and land-use management bodies that influence the availability of land for housing</i>	
Local government actively working to ensure land for housing is available at prices and in locations that serve low-income households wishing to build their own homes; also supporting provision of secure tenure for those living in informal settlements.	Local governments that do nothing – or actively seek to keep poorer groups out of official land for housing markets – for instance by maintaining inappropriate standards for minimum lot sizes and infrastructure, and by having slow, costly, inefficient official procedures that have to be met to acquire and develop land for housing.
<i>Public, private or NGO providers of safety nets</i>	
Official provision for safety nets to help those who cannot work or those with inadequate incomes to meet needs, or official support for NGO or community provision of safety nets (including emergency credit).	No local organization providing safety nets or supporting community-managed safety nets.
<i>Public, private or NGO finance agencies</i>	
Micro-finance programmes for individuals and support for community-managed finance for poorer households provided in ways that also wherever possible avoid creating debt burdens on poorest groups.	No local organization providing or supporting credit that is available to low-income groups.

Local organizations that are supportive	Local organizations that are unsupportive
<i>The police, the legal system and local government bodies involved in ensuring the rule of law</i>	
Providers (including police services in informal settlements) that protect poorer groups' civil and political rights. Services that also seek to be supportive of poorer groups' livelihoods and to lessen discrimination and work towards greater gender equality.	Those who do not serve poorer groups (for instance, with no police service in informal settlements) or oppress them. It is common for poorer groups living in illegal settlements to be evicted and for informal enterprises (for instance hawkers and sellers in informal markets) to be harassed. It is also common for migrants to be regarded as a problem.
<i>The local government systems for voting and accountability to citizens</i>	
The right to and the possibility of voting for local government; political and bureaucratic systems in which poorer groups have access to senior politicians and civil servants to ensure their rights are respected. This includes protection from forced eviction and appropriate support in an emergency.	Local government is not elected – or if it is, those living in illegal settlements are denied the vote (for instance because they lack an official address). Politicians and the bureaucracy are unresponsive to demands of poorer groups and to possibilities of working in partnership with them.
<i>How governments define and measure poverty and how local organizations act on this</i>	
Local processes in which urban poor groups are involved that define and measure poverty and use this to support local poverty- reduction strategies that seek to reach all poor groups; urban poor groups' involvement in monitoring poverty levels and evaluating effectiveness of poverty-reduction strategies.	Poverty defined and measured by a national government agency, usually based only on consumption levels and with little allowance when setting poverty lines for the cost of non-food necessities. Poverty measurements based on representative national samples so there are few or no relevant data for local organizations, including local governments.
SOURCE: Developed from a table in Satterthwaite, David (2005), "Meeting the MDGs in urban areas: the forgotten role of local organizations", <i>Journal of International Affairs</i> Vol 58, No 2, pages 87-112.	

V. MEETING THE MDGS FROM THE BOTTOM UP

Many of the local organizations central to meeting the MDGs in urban areas are formed and managed by low-income households. They have particular importance where local governments have limited resources, because of the scope they provide for partnerships with local government. One of the most significant political changes over the last 20 years in regard to the possibilities of meeting the MDGs in urban areas is the development of representative organizations and federations of the urban poor. These are significant because they give urban poor households and their community organizations and networks more "voice", and they offer local governments potential partners in reducing poverty (and thus in meeting many of the MDGs). In Cambodia, India, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, the Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand and



In Mumbai alone, seven housing projects have been built, including the first housing programme for families living on the pavements, which has been designed and managed by the pavement dwellers

Zimbabwe, there are urban poor federations formed by hundreds or thousands of savings groups, and comparable federations are emerging in several more nations. In all these nations, there are many examples of innovation,⁽¹¹⁾ and these will be illustrated here by examples drawn from India, Namibia and Thailand.

In India, the alliance of the National Slum Dwellers Federation, *Mahila Milan* (savings cooperatives formed by women slum and pavement dwellers) and SPARC (a local NGO) is working in some 70 cities in which around 2 million slum dwellers are involved. In Mumbai alone, seven housing projects have been built, including the first housing programme for families living on the pavements, which has been designed and managed by the pavement dwellers. The alliance has also managed a relocation programme of 22,000 households that were living along the railway tracks in Mumbai, which demonstrated how community-managed relocation was a viable (and less politically damaging) alternative to forced evictions.⁽¹²⁾ The alliance is implementing housing projects in Dharavi (a very large, high-density centrally located “slum”) to demonstrate that it is possible to provide good-quality housing without any “slum” dweller having to relocate.

In India and in other nations, large-scale programmes can develop when local governments see the possibilities presented by initiatives developed by these federations. For ten years, the federations in India demonstrated their capacity to design, build and manage community toilet blocks with washing facilities in “slums” where there is insufficient room or funding for household provision. Very large-scale community toilet-block construction programmes developed first in Pune and then in Mumbai, when local government supported them, after seeing how much better these facilities worked when designed, built and managed by the community, compared with the

11. See *Environment and Urbanization* Volumes 13, No 2, and 16, No 1, for case studies of the work of the different federations; also d’Cruz and Satterthwaite 2005, op. cit.

12. Patel, d’Cruz and Burra 2002, op. cit.



contractor-built public toilets they had previously supported. The federations and the support NGO SPARC have been responsible for around 500 community designed and managed toilet blocks that serve hundreds of thousands of households in Pune and Mumbai – with comparable toilet programmes developing in many other cities.⁽¹³⁾

In Namibia, by June 2004, the national Shack Dwellers Federation had 312 savings groups active in 41 different settlements and in all 13 regions. Some 12,350 households have members of the federation (56 per cent women, 44 per cent men), and most live in informal settlements or “backyard shacks”. The Federation is supported by a local NGO, the Namibia Housing Action Group. By mid-2004, 2,300 households had acquired land for infrastructure and housing development. The federation has also worked with city authorities to reduce greatly the cost of formal, legal housing plots, so these are affordable by low-income households and to allow the city authorities to recover the costs of development. As with most of the urban poor federations, the Namibian Federation has a national loan fund in which savings are deposited; this also manages funding provided by the Namibian government and external donors. This fund offers members loans for infrastructure, housing and income generation, so that once members secure land they can borrow to improve infrastructure, services and housing.⁽¹⁴⁾

The example from Thailand is unusual because the thousands of community organizations and networks there are supported by a national government agency, the Community Organizations Development Institute. This institute grew out of long-established partnerships between the government and community-based organizations and federations formed by the urban poor. In 1992, the Thai government set up the Urban Community Development Office to support community organizations, with a US\$ 50

The Namibian Shack Dwellers Federation has worked with city authorities to reduce greatly the cost of formal, legal housing plots, so these are affordable by low-income households and to allow the city authorities to recover the costs of development

13. Burra, Sundar, Sheela Patel and Tom Kerr (2003), “Community-designed, built and managed toilet blocks in Indian cities”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 15 No 2, pages 11-32.

14. Mitlin, Diana and Anna Mueller (2004), “Windhoek, Namibia: towards progressive urban land policies in Southern Africa”, *International Development Planning Review* Vol 26, No 2, pages 167-186.



In 2003, the Community Organizations Development Institute programme in Thailand set a target of improving housing and tenure security for 300,000 households in 2,000 poor communities in 200 Thai cities within five years

million capital base.⁽¹⁵⁾ This provided loans, small grants and technical support to community organizations for upgrading their homes and neighbourhoods, or developing new settlements, and for supporting micro-enterprises. It also supported community organizations in any city or province to join together to form a network to negotiate with city or provincial authorities, or to influence development planning, or simply to work together on shared problems of housing, livelihoods or access to basic services. The Urban Community Development Office increasingly provided loans to these networks rather than to the community organizations that formed the networks, with the networks managing loans to member organizations. This decentralized the decision-making process so that it was closer to individual communities and was better able to respond rapidly and flexibly to opportunities identified by network members.

In 2000, the Urban Community Development Office was merged with the Rural Development Fund to form the Community Organizations Development Institute, and this institute is now implementing an ambitious national programme supporting community-led upgrading and secure tenure for urban poor households. In 2003, the programme set a target of improving housing and tenure security for 300,000 households in 2,000 poor communities in 200 Thai cities within five years. By December 2004, initiatives were underway in 175 communities, involving more than 14,600 households.⁽¹⁶⁾ But more importantly, all these initiatives were part of city-wide strategies in which urban poor organizations and their networks were involved, and which sought to ensure that all urban poor groups benefited.

All these federations or networks of community organizations have, at their base, community-managed savings and credit groups that provide their members with emergency credit. Most members are women. By learning to save and to manage finance together, each community

15. Boonyabantha 2005, *op. cit.*

16. *Ibid.*



group develops the capacity to work together – either independently or with government. These savings groups also develop upgrading and housing initiatives, and improvements in provision for water and sanitation. Their federations develop a strong information base about their members’ needs and how they can be addressed, through undertaking detailed city-wide surveys to show the scale of the problem,⁽¹⁷⁾ and household enumerations in local settlements (which also produces the detailed maps needed for upgrading initiatives and for installing infrastructure). All the federations support their member community organizations to try out projects, and these projects serve as points of learning for other community organizations through community-to-community exchanges. They stimulate other urban poor communities to take initiatives themselves. These initiatives then show government agencies what the federations can do, and set precedents from which the federations can negotiate changes in government policies, standards, regulations and practices – as illustrated above by the community management of toilets in India, and the changes in housing-plot sizes and infrastructure standards in Namibia that made house plots affordable to low-income households.⁽¹⁸⁾

The work of these federations contributes to the achievement of many of the MDGs. They obviously contribute to MDG target 11 which is to significantly improving the lives of slum dwellers. Many of their initiatives also contribute to increasing the proportion of people with good-quality provision for water and sanitation, either through upgrading or through new developments. As the quality of homes, neighbourhoods, infrastructure and services improves, this also contributes to reducing infant and child mortality rates and reducing the incidence of many diseases. The partnerships that the urban poor organizations develop with local governments often lead to improvements in health care, schools and other public

All the federations support their member community organizations to try out projects, and these projects serve as points of learning for other community organizations through community-to-community exchanges

17. Ibid.; also ACHR (Asian Coalition for Housing Rights) (2004), “Negotiating the right to stay in the city”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 16, No 1, pages 9–26.

18. Patel, Sheela (2004), “Tools and methods for empowerment developed by slum dwellers federations in India”, *Participatory Learning and Action* 50, IIED, London.



The urban poor federations in the different nations have formed their own transnational umbrella organization, Slum/Shack Dwellers International, to support inter-federation learning and to support the development of representative organizations and federations of the urban poor or homeless in other nations

services. For instance, in Mumbai, a partnership between slum dwellers' federations, *Mahila Milan*, and the police has led to the setting up of police stations in many "slums" where police officers are accountable to the local population and work with committees of residents to ensure law and order and resolve most local disputes.⁽¹⁹⁾

The urban poor federations in the different nations are also all linked, as they learn from and support each other – and they have formed their own transnational umbrella organization, Slum/Shack Dwellers International, to support inter-federation learning and to support the development of representative organizations and federations of the urban poor or homeless in other nations. This umbrella organization also promotes changes in the policies and practices of international agencies, so these become more supportive of the federations.⁽²⁰⁾

There are many other instances of local, "bottom-up" processes that contribute to meeting the MDGs. One of the most important of these is the work of a Pakistani NGO, the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP). Set up in the early 1980s to support households in Orangi, a large informal settlement in Karachi, to develop a solution to the lack of sanitation and drainage, it has developed and demonstrated a locally driven model of sewer and drain construction that low-income households can afford. This method has been widely used in Orangi, in many other areas of Karachi and in many other urban centres in Pakistan, with widespread adoption by official (national and local) government agencies.⁽²¹⁾ Although the local NGO initially supported the community-developed sewers as an alternative way to get these built and financed, it was never its intention to promote alternatives to official provision. As with the urban poor federations, the new approach here was developed to change the way official provision worked, so it would be affordable for low-income households.

19. Roy, Jockin and Javed 2004, *op. cit.*

20. See <http://www.sdinet.org> for more details.

21. Hasan, Arif (1997), *Working with Government: the Story of the Orangi Pilot Project's Collaboration with State Agencies for Replicating its Low Cost Sanitation Programme*, City Press, Karachi; Rahman, Perween (2004), *Update on OPP-RTI's Work, Orangi Pilot Project – Research and Training Institute, Karachi.*



OPP's experience has two features of great relevance to the achievement of the MDGs. The first is the possibility of providing good-quality sewers and drains to low-income dwellers at costs that they can afford. Official water and sanitation agencies usually refuse to consider extending sewers to low-income settlements, claiming that it is too expensive or that residents will not pay. The second feature is OPP's work in showing how to develop the larger systems into which community initiatives for water, sanitation and drainage can integrate at a cost that the local authorities can fund, without a need for external funding. The OPP model illustrates that the achievement of ambitious MDG targets for improving provision of water and sanitation is as much about the development of competent, capable, accountable local agencies or utilities able to work with community organizations as it is about external finance. The "component-sharing" model for water and sanitation developed by OPP – where the inhabitants of streets and neighbourhoods take responsibility for the pipes, sewers and drains in their neighbourhood, and official service providers install the water mains and sewer and drainage trunks into which the neighbourhood systems can connect – has relevance for other services too, and OPP has also supported better-quality housing, schools and health care.⁽²²⁾ The OPP also uses the same kinds of mapping and household enumeration techniques employed by the urban poor federations to develop a strong local information base about each low-income settlement – which can then be used for designing and implementing improvements in infrastructure and services.⁽²³⁾

To get local organizations and processes that better serve low-income groups also needs forms of local governance in which poorer groups have more influence and power. If most citizens have their physical needs met and their rights protected – as in high-income nations – they are more likely to be content with representative democracy. Most people

The achievement of ambitious MDG targets for improving provision of water and sanitation is as much about the development of competent, capable, accountable local agencies or utilities able to work with community organizations as it is about external finance

22. The Orangi Pilot Project expanded in 1988 to form four institutions: the Orangi Pilot Project Research and Training Institute, the Orangi Charitable Trust, the OPP Society and the Karachi Health and Social Development Association.

23. Orangi Pilot Project – Research and Training Institute (2002), *Katchi Abadis of Karachi: Documentation of Sewerage, Water Supply Lines, Clinics, Schools and Thallas – Volume One: the First Hundred Katchi Abadis Surveyed, Orangi Pilot Project, Karachi.*



Where urban poor groups and their organizations and federations are fully involved in developing city-wide strategies with local governments, this can change the perspectives of both partners and allow negotiations that resolve difficult, city-wide structural issues such as poorer groups' access to land and public services

do not want to participate actively in the planning, construction and management of roads, footpaths, water supply systems, sewers and drains, electricity systems and telephones, or in the management of street cleaning, solid waste collection, parks and playgrounds. They are content as long as provision for these is adequate, bills are not too high and there are complaints procedures they can use and (local and national) politicians or civil servants they can reach if they feel they have been poorly served or cheated by any public service. But different local governance systems are needed when 30-60 per cent of the population does not have infrastructure or services. Many low- and middle-income nations have had representative democracies for decades, yet large sections of their populations continue to have unmet needs and little influence on local governments.

This raises the question of whether there are forms of local governance that will give urban poor groups, and other groups facing discrimination or exclusion, more influence in local development. The relationships developed between urban poor organizations and local authorities in the examples given above do represent more participatory forms of local governance. The Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI) in Thailand has put particular stress on supporting city-wide strategies for upgrading in which urban poor organizations and their networks have central roles – because effective upgrading needs their support and depends on changing the relationships between city governments and urban poor groups.⁽²⁴⁾ Where urban poor groups and their organizations and federations are fully involved in developing city-wide strategies with local governments, this can change the perspectives of both partners and allow negotiations that resolve difficult, city-wide structural issues such as poorer groups' access to land and public services. It also allows city-development strategies that avoid forced evictions, and urban regeneration that benefits poorer groups and to which poorer groups contribute.⁽²⁵⁾

24. Boonyabanha 2005, op. cit.

25. See Boonyabanha 2005, op. cit., for a detailed discussion of this, drawing on experience in Thailand.



Participatory budgeting institutionalizes a more direct influence by citizens on how government budgets are spent, both in their own neighbourhood and city-wide

There are also many innovations in cities in Latin America with more direct forms of participation – including “participatory budgeting” that was developed in cities in Brazil and which has had a wider influence on local government policies in other nations.⁽²⁶⁾ Participatory budgeting institutionalizes a more direct influence by citizens on how government budgets are spent, both in their own neighbourhood and city-wide.⁽²⁷⁾ More participatory local governance has considerable importance for the achievement of the MDGs in urban areas, but this has also received little attention from international agencies, in part because most of the innovations in direct citizen participation are in local government, whereas international agencies focus on “good governance” initiatives at national level.

Thus, there are precedents from many different nations that show how local organizations, including local governments, urban poor organizations and NGOs, can ensure that the MDGs are met in urban areas. This is done in ways that draw on local knowledge, tap local resources and have modest demands for external funding and little or no need for external expertise. Many of these precedents also show how urban poor communities can be empowered – indeed the effectiveness of these precedents is largely because urban poor communities and their organizations have central roles in design, implementation and monitoring. This in turn helps develop a more productive relationship between urban poor organizations and local organizations that then increases the effectiveness and scale of their partnerships. Given their importance and effectiveness, and the relatively modest demands they make on external funding, one would expect these local organizations and their partnerships to be at the centre of the discussions on how to meet the MDGs. Unfortunately, they are not.⁽²⁸⁾

26. Cabannes, Yves (2004), “Participatory budgeting: a significant contribution to participatory democracy”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 16, No 1, pages 27–46.

27. Menegat, Rualdo (2002), “Participatory democracy and sustainable development: integrated urban environmental management in Porto Alegre, Brazil”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 14, No 2, pages 181–206.

28. This is discussed in more detail in Satterthwaite 2005, op. cit.



Although the understanding of how international agencies can support development has changed greatly since the 1950s, the basic structure of how funds are transferred from official donors to “recipient national governments” has changed much less

VI. THE MISMATCH BETWEEN DONOR AGENCIES’ STRUCTURE AND LOCAL PROCESSES

Most aid comes from the bilateral aid agencies of governments in high-income nations – whether they spend this directly in their bilateral aid programmes or channel it through multilateral development banks (for instance the World Bank and the regional development banks), other multilateral agencies (including the United Nations’ many specialized agencies) or international NGOs. There are also the “non-concessional” loans provided by development banks that are an important part of development assistance but do not qualify as aid because they have to be repaid in full.

These official international aid agencies and development banks were not set up to support local organizations and processes. Their whole structure and mode of providing grants, soft loans (with grant elements) or non-concessional loans were never designed to support the kinds of pro-poor local organizations that can, or already do, make a difference to those with the least income or asset base (whether these organizations are community organizations, local NGOs or local governments). In large part, this is the legacy of the 1950s conception of development assistance which centred on capital to help national governments invest in productive activities and infrastructure supported by “expert” foreign technical assistance. Although the understanding of how international agencies can support development has changed greatly since the 1950s, the basic structure of how funds are transferred from official donors to “recipient national governments” has changed much less.

Most official development assistance agencies still have structures that are largely to provide national governments with large lumps of “capital” (as loan or grant). Most development assistance relies on national “recipient” governments to manage the use of this capital. All official development assistance agencies are also under strong pressure from the governments that fund them to keep down their staff costs. This stems from an assumption that an “efficient” aid agency is one that spends as low a



proportion of its total budget as possible on staff costs. For the World Bank and the regional development banks, keeping down staff costs relative to total loan amounts is also a priority – as it is in any bank. Combine this need to spend large sums of money, or to loan as much money as possible, with these agencies’ formal relationship with national governments, and the limited possibilities of them supporting local processes becomes obvious. This is now being reinforced by the large transfers made direct from aid agencies to national governments as budgetary support. This practice has an official justification of supporting recipient government priorities, when in reality it is much linked to convenience and the small amount of staff time needed to manage the large transfers within international agencies. As noted in Chapter 1, the institutional structures of official aid agencies and development banks are largely incapable of supporting the diverse local processes that really deliver for the poor (except in a few showcase projects) – and (as importantly) of doing so in ways that minimize dependence on foreign funding.

One of the most important characteristics of “good” development is to minimize reliance on external funding. The potential scale of any initiative is maximized if it draws mainly on local funding sources. As examples given above have shown, keeping down unit costs and supporting low-income residents to mobilize funding has meant that major improvements were possible with little or no external funding. The nationwide upgrading programme in Thailand described above draws very little from international sources – since it is almost entirely funded by contributions from community organizations, local governments and national government agencies. Similarly, for the needed city-wide systems of sewers and drains into which each neighbourhood could feed, the Orangi Pilot Project has shown how the need for external funding was much reduced or even eliminated by alternative designs and careful attention to keeping down costs.⁽²⁹⁾

One of the most important characteristics of “good” development is to minimize reliance on external funding. The potential scale of any initiative is maximized if it draws mainly on local funding sources

29. Hasan, Arif (1999), *Understanding Karachi: Planning and Reform for the Future*, City Press, Karachi.



The whole international funding structure is biased not only against supporting local processes but also against minimizing dependence on external funding

In theory, international funding agencies might applaud such innovation but, in practice, it undermines their need to spend large capital sums or give large loans. Similarly, the loans provided by CODI in Thailand to community organizations were from an organization that encouraged households and community organizations to avoid such loans wherever possible. In development terms, this is what all loan-providing agencies should do, because low-income households will always face difficulties in meeting loan repayments. But for any international funding or microfinance agency, the measure of success of a household loan programme they support is how many loans were provided, not how many households were supported to avoid taking loans. Funding agencies also rely on large numbers of loans (and large average loan amounts) to ensure that their own costs are covered. Thus, the whole international funding structure is biased not only against supporting local processes but also against minimizing dependence on external funding.

This suggests the need for some creative institutional rethinking about what large centralized “foreign” aid agencies and development banks, which inevitably know little about the reality of “poverty” and what underpins it in each locality (with great diversity of the actual forms it takes between locations), can actually do to address this. This means thinking about the kinds of intermediary organizations through which funding can be channelled to support the local processes on which the achievement of the MDGs depend. There has been some rethinking about this – for instance the increased support provided by many international agencies to social funds – but these have not gone very far in rethinking the kinds of organizations on the ground that can deliver for, be accountable to and be influenced by the poor. Some donor agencies have strengthened their country offices in recipient nations in the hope that this will increase their capacity to support local processes – but if decisions are largely made by their own expatriate personnel who are there for short terms (so there is a constant change in staff), the capacity to understand



and work with local processes is still limited. Recipient governments will also want to limit or control any development assistance steered to local processes, especially those that may support non-government organizations or initiatives in localities where the local government is controlled by a political party or faction different from the one in power nationally. Certainly working in urban areas, the organizations and federations formed by the urban poor and homeless constitute a very important partner for donors – but official donors have difficulties working with them because they are neither official Northern NGOs nor part of recipient governments. In many nations, many of the leaders of the federations do not speak English or any other language understood by the donor agency staff.

There are good examples of donor-funded initiatives that support poorer groups' own organizations (for instance to support emergency credit, services and infrastructure), or strengthen the social, political, physical or financial service providers that serve them. But these constitute only a very small proportion of the total funding provided by official donors. Much of the international funding for the work of the urban poor and homeless federations has come not from official donors but from international NGOs or private foundations – for instance, European charities such as MISEREOR, Homeless International, SELAVIP, Cordaid and the Big Lottery Fund UK, or foundations such as the Ford Foundation and the Sigrid Rausing Trust.⁽³⁰⁾ However, some official donor agencies have developed the institutional means to support local processes. Two examples will be given here. These have importance not only for the support they provide to local processes but also for demonstrating the institutional means by which official development assistance agencies can do this. Their importance was also recognized by the Millennium Project's Taskforce on significantly improving the lives of slum dwellers.⁽³¹⁾

Working in urban areas, the organizations and federations formed by the urban poor and homeless constitute a very important partner for donors – but official donors have difficulties working with them because they are neither official Northern NGOs nor part of recipient governments

30. D'Cruz and Satterthwaite 2005, *op. cit.*

31. Millennium Project (2005), *A Home in the City, Taskforce on Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers*, Earthscan, London.



The long-term goal is to develop and institutionalize a participatory model for the provision of infrastructure and services and for support for housing improvement and micro-enterprise development that can be sustained by local organizations in different urban areas

The first example is a range of institutions in different Central American nations that provide loans to low-income families to improve or expand their homes or build new ones. With US\$ 50 million from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), some 400,000 people have been reached.⁽³²⁾ The external funding was complemented by each family's own resources and, in some instances, by government housing subsidies to low-income households. In some nations, grants were provided to local governments for infrastructure and services, as long as communities participated in the decision-making and implementation process. In each nation, the long-term goal is to develop and institutionalize a participatory model for the provision of infrastructure and services and for support for housing improvement and micro-enterprise development that can be sustained by local organizations in different urban areas. Perhaps their greatest significance for the MDGs is their demonstration that it is possible for official donor agencies to reach agreements with national governments about setting up donor-funded organizations within the recipient nation that can support a multiplicity and diversity of local initiatives through local organizations and local processes with community participation.

The second example is of a donor-funded finance facility that makes funding available to community organizations formed by the urban poor and homeless. The Community Led Infrastructure Finance Facility (CLIFF), in India, provides funding to the National Slum Dwellers Federation, *Mahila Milan*, and SPARC, whose work was outlined above. This facility allows these organizations to carry out and scale up community-driven infrastructure, housing and urban services initiatives at city level, in conjunction with municipal authorities and the private sector (including banks and landowners).⁽³³⁾ It is unusual in that it makes available a fund on which projects that are developed locally can draw

32. See Stein, Alfredo with Luis Castillo (2005), "Innovative financing for low-income housing improvement: lessons from programmes in Central America", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 17, No 1, pages 47–66.

33. Burra 2005, *op. cit.*



– and does so on a larger scale than is usually available to NGOs and people’s organizations and in a form that helps leverage funds from other groups and, where possible, recoups the capital for reinvestment. It also greatly cuts the time needed to review a project proposal. Around US\$ 10 million is available to kick-start large infrastructure, upgrading and resettlement projects. Much of this funding is then recovered from the Indian government which has many subsidy programmes to support community initiatives but which community organizations cannot access because they become available only when a project has reached a certain stage, or only after long delays. A large part of the funding for the projects that CLIFF supports comes from resources contributed by low-income households and their community organizations. Sida and the UK government’s official bilateral agency, the Department for International Development have contributed external funding to CLIFF.

Both CLIFF and the institutions in Central America demonstrate a structure through which official aid agencies or development banks can channel support to local organizations. Both use external funding to help local organizations leverage local (governmental and community) resources. Both seek to recover costs for reinvestment. Neither of these new structures was problem-free. Both faced opposition from within the international agencies that funded them. Both also face expectations from some groups within donor agencies that are unrealistic – for instance, the possibilities of full cost-recovery and for drawing in large amounts of private capital when working with programmes that support and work with the poorest households. However, their achievements, in terms of how many people have been reached per dollar of external funding, how much funding was recovered for re-use and how much they helped support more participatory forms of local development, are remarkable.

Some national governments in low and middle-income nations may also develop their own institutional support for community-driven development, as in the example of CODI

A large part of the funding for the projects that The Community Led Infrastructure Finance Facility in India supports comes from resources contributed by low-income households and their community organizations



Support for these kinds of intermediary organizations and local processes that minimize the amount of external funding implies significant changes in the way that most international donors are structured

in Thailand given above. In these cases, official development assistance can be channelled through such organizations. Most of the urban poor federations also have their own funds through which support to them can be channelled – and these funds are also audited and managed to show external funders how their funding is used. But support for these kinds of intermediary organizations and local processes that minimize the amount of external funding implies significant changes in the way that most international donors are structured. It also implies a long-term engagement rather than a focus on “exit strategy”.

VII. CONCLUSION

The discussions on how to meet the MDGs rightly have a strong focus on how the global system must change, how low-income nations’ debt burdens must be cut, how special attention is needed for the least developed nations and how more aid is required. They also emphasize the need to improve public administration (or governance) at national level and donor coordination. But there is little discussion on the changes needed in the way that aid is “delivered” on the ground, to whom it is delivered and in what form. The Millennium Project which seeks to show governments and international agencies how to meet the MDGs has many recommendations for what should be done but not much discussion on what is needed, on the ground, in each (rural or urban) locality to ensure that this brings benefits to the poor and excluded. Little consideration is given to how to ensure that “the poor” are central to the design, implementation and management of interventions.⁽³⁴⁾ Most of the Millennium Development Goals are very clear about what they want to achieve – reduced poverty, reduced infant, child and maternal mortality, reduced incidence of certain key diseases, much-expanded provision of education, and water and sanitation – but less clear about how to put in place the local organizations and processes that will ensure that this happens. For instance, there is little discussion on

34. See UN Millennium Project (2005), *Investing in Development; a Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, Earthscan, London.



how the official bilateral aid agencies and multilateral banks can systematically support the kinds of local processes that ensure the MDGs are met in each locality.

To meet the MDGs in urban areas, perhaps the central issue for external development assistance is the extent to which it supports the development of stronger local organizations that really deliver for poorer groups, are accountable to them and are able to work in partnerships with them. This includes the extent to which assistance supports organizations formed by the urban poor, and supports changes in local organizations and processes that reduce inherent anti-poor biases. This also implies a shift among international agencies from seeing “the poor” as clients or targets to which “development” and “environmental management” must be delivered, to recognizing them as active agents with knowledge, resources and rights to influence what is done and how donor assistance is used. As the head of India’s National Slum Dwellers Federation, Jockin Arpurtham, pointed out to government representatives at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development meeting in 2004, governments need the slum dwellers as partners, if they are to meet the MDGs.

There are two other needed shifts for external aid. The first is from specifying what should be done (such as the focus on “quick wins” like providing bed nets and anti-malarial medicines, or expanding school meals in areas of under-nutrition)⁽³⁵⁾ to supporting local choices and priorities made by local organizations, formal and informal, in which poorer groups have influence. The second shift, as discussed in Chapter 1, is to “localize” the monitoring of the MDGs in ways that fully involve those whose needs the MDGs are trying to meet.

The importance of local organizations and processes for achieving the MDGs, and of changing how donors support them, is not getting the attention it deserves. If this is neglected, it is unlikely that most of the MDGs will be met

As the head of India’s National Slum Dwellers Federation, Jockin Arpurtham, pointed out to government representatives at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development meeting in 2004, governments need the slum dwellers as partners, if they are to meet the MDGs

35. UN Millennium Project 2005, *op. cit.*



in urban areas. If the urban poor lack voice, influence, rights and protection by the rule of law, then they will not get much benefit from increased donor flows, debt relief and fairer global markets. Indeed, greater prosperity within national economies will mean more pressure to evict poor people to make way for infrastructure developments and new enterprises. Even in nations with representative democracies, there is little protection for the urban poor from these pressures – as can be seen by the many large-scale recent and current evictions in many cities in South Africa and India.⁽³⁶⁾ International donors do not have a good record on poverty reduction in urban areas. The “urban poor”, on whose poverty their programmes are justified, surely have a right to greater influence on what is done and by whom. As the examples given in this chapter show, this can transform the quality, scale and cost-effectiveness of development assistance. It can also be a central part of building more effective governance systems – but from the bottom up.

36. du Plessis 2005, *op. cit.*

6

Supporting locally determined food systems: the role of local organizations in farming, environment and people's access to food

Michel Pimbert⁽¹⁾

I. INTRODUCTION

Food systems include not only the production of food but also processing, distribution, access, use, recycling and waste. Today there are still many diverse food systems throughout the world, particularly in developing countries. Indeed, most of the world's food is grown, collected and harvested by over a billion small-scale producers, pastoralists and artisanal fisherfolk. This food is primarily sold, processed, resold and consumed locally, with many people deriving their incomes and livelihoods through work and activities at different points of the food chain – from seed to plate.

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Despite their current role and future potential in meeting many of the MDGs, locally determined food systems – and the local organizations that govern them – are largely ignored, neglected or actively undermined by the international development community

Such localized food systems provide the foundations of people's nutrition, incomes, economies and culture throughout the world. They start at the household level and expand to neighbourhood, municipal and regional levels. And localized food systems depend on many different local organizations to coordinate food production, storage and distribution, as well as people's access to food. Moreover, the ecological and institutional contexts in which diverse food systems are embedded also depend on the coordinated activities of local organizations for their renewal and sustainability.

But despite their current role and future potential in meeting many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), locally determined food systems – and the local organizations that govern them – are largely ignored, neglected or actively undermined by the international development community. Using specific examples, this chapter highlights some of the many ways in which local organizations manage and oversee different links in the food chain from seed to plate. The roles and significance of local organizations in sustaining diverse food systems, livelihoods and environments, in producing knowledge and innovations, and in designing regulatory institutions are briefly analysed. Finally, reversals needed to support locally determined food systems and organizations are identified. These reversals in policy and practice fundamentally challenge the current development paradigm promoted by the MDG process.

II. LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS, LIVELIHOODS AND ENVIRONMENTS

A significant number of livelihoods and environments are still sustained by a diversity of local food systems throughout the world. For example, half of all working people worldwide are farmers. And most of the world's farming population lives in the South (Table 6.1). The majority of these farmers are small-scale producers who do their agricultural work by hand (about 1 billion farmers), or by using animals such as bullocks for ploughing (300 million). In contrast, a relatively

Table 6.1: Number of farmers worldwide (billion)

	Total population	Active population	Active farming population
World population	6.1	2.6	1.35
North	1.2	0.4	0.045 (11% of total active population in North)
South	4.9	2.2	1.29 (59% of total active population in South)
• India	1.1		0.27 (20% of world total active farming population)

SOURCE: Charvet, J P (2005), *Transrural Initiatives*, 25 January, Paris.

small number of farmers in the South rely on modern farm machines such as tractors (20 million).

However, the figures in Table 6.1 do not account for all the additional livelihoods and jobs associated with localized foods systems. Each link in the food chain offers economic niches for many more people – as millers, butchers, carpenters, iron workers and mechanics, local milk processors, bakers, small shopkeepers and owners of food outlets, for example. The livelihoods and incomes of a huge number of rural and urban dwellers are thus dependent on the local manufacture of farm inputs and on the local storage, processing, distribution, sale and preparation of food. Even in affluent Western countries such as the USA and the UK, there is strong evidence that localized food systems generate many jobs and help sustain small and medium-sized enterprises. This economic fact usually becomes more apparent when local economies and food systems are displaced by large supermarkets, international competition and the global industrial food system. For example by 1992 in the UK, the building of 25,000 out-of-town large-chain retailers had corresponded with the closing of roughly 238,000 independent shops (grocers, bakers, butchers and fishmongers) in villages and high streets.⁽²⁾ When 235,000 US small- and medium-scale farms were squeezed out by market competition in the mid-1980s, about 60,000 other local rural businesses also closed.⁽³⁾

2. DOE/MAFF (1995), *Rural England: a Nation Committed to a Living Countryside (the Rural White Paper)*, HMSO, London.

3. Norberg-Hodge, H, T Merrifield and S Gorelick (2002), *Bringing The Food Economy Home: Local Alternatives to Global Agribusiness*, Zed Books, London.



For as long as people have engaged in livelihood pursuits, they have worked together on resource management, labour-sharing, marketing and many other activities that would be too costly, or impossible, if done alone

Most local food systems are embedded in complex, risk-prone and diverse environments, where most of the world's rural poor people live. These environments include mountains, hills and wetlands, as well as the vast tracts of the semi-arid and humid tropics. They include the full range of ecosystems, from those relatively undisturbed, such as semi-natural forests, to food-producing landscapes with mixed patterns of human use, to ecosystems intensively modified and managed by humans, such as agricultural land and urban areas. People associated with localized food systems thus live in ecosystems of vital importance for human well-being.⁽⁴⁾ As participants in localized food systems, local communities actively influence key ecosystem functions such as:

- the provision of food, water, timber and fibre;
- the regulation of climate, floods, disease, wastes and water quality;
- ecological support functions like soil formation, biodiversity for resilience, photosynthesis and nutrient cycling;
- the basis for culture through the provision of recreational, aesthetic and spiritual benefits.

III. THE ROLE OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS IN SUSTAINING LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS AND LIVELIHOODS

For as long as people have engaged in livelihood pursuits, they have worked together on resource management, labour-sharing, marketing and many other activities that would be too costly, or impossible, if done alone. Local groups and indigenous organizations have always been important in facilitating collective action and coordinated management of food systems and their environments at different spatial scales. In *Mutual Aid*, first published in 1902, Petr Kropotkin draws on the history of guilds and

4. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005), *Ecosystems and Human Well Being: Synthesis*, Island Press, Washington DC.

unions in Europe, travel and colonial accounts outside Europe, and the experience of village communities everywhere, to show how collaboration and mutual support are at the heart of whatever makes human beings successful.⁽⁵⁾ Negotiated agreements on the roles, rights and responsibilities of different actors in a common enterprise are at the heart of the forms of collaboration described by Kropotkin. To this very day, local organizations continue to play a central role in this process of negotiation and coordinated action in a variety of settings and at different scales.⁽⁶⁾

The different types of local organizations concerned with food, farming, environment and development include:

- traditional and indigenous organizations;
- governmental and quasi-governmental organizations;
- non-governmental and voluntary organizations;
- emergent, popular or “community-based” organizations, including new social movements.

Local organizations exist across a range of scales – from individual through national to international federations, consortiums, networks and umbrella bodies. One reason for linking up and federating in this way is to increase the effectiveness of organizations in managing localized food systems and their leverage in policy and political debates on farming, environment and people’s access to food. However, local organizations and federations are not always welcoming spaces for women, nor inclusive of the weak and marginalized, nor free from manipulation and co-option by more powerful insiders and/or outsiders. While this is by no means universal, some local organizations and federations concerned with food and farming do have shortcomings in relation to equity, gender and entitlements of the very poor and marginalized.



One reason for linking up and federating is to increase the effectiveness of organizations in managing localized food systems and their leverage in policy and political debates on farming, environment and people’s access to food

5. Kropotkin, P (1955), *Mutual Aid: a Factor of Evolution*, Extending Horizons Books, Boston, Massachusetts, USA (first published 1902).

6. Borrini-Feyerabend, G, M P Pimbert, M T Farvar, A Kothari, and Y Renard (2004), *Sharing Power: Learning by Doing in Co-management of Natural Resources throughout the World*, IIED and IUCN/CEESP/CCMWG, Cenesta, Tehran.



Important differences have surfaced between two radically different types of spaces for participation: invited spaces from above, and popular or citizen spaces

More generally, important differences have surfaced between two radically different types of spaces for participation: invited spaces from above, and popular or citizen spaces. Governments and donor-led efforts to set up co-management committees and groups of resource-users are examples of invited spaces from above. In contrast, citizen or popular spaces are created by people who come together to create arenas over which they have more control, for example indigenous peoples' platforms for negotiation and collective action, or do-it-yourself citizens' juries that frame alternative policies. While there are notable exceptions, popular spaces are usually arenas within which, and from which, ordinary citizens can gain the confidence to use their voice, analyze, deliberate, frame alternatives and action, mobilize, build alliances and act.⁽⁷⁾

Many rural communities are no longer in charge of managing their local food systems, and, importantly, they are not "trusted" by state bureaucracies to be able to do so.⁽⁸⁾ But, throughout the world, local organizations – individually and collectively – still play a key role in:

- sustaining the ecological basis of food systems;
- coordinating human skills, knowledge and labour to generate both use values and exchange values in the economy of the food system;
- the local governance of food systems, including decisions on people's access to food.

a. Local adaptive management of food-producing environments

Local organizations are crucial for the adaptive and sustainable management of food-producing environments. As Michael Cernea has put it: "resource degradation in the

7. Note that such popular spaces may also reproduce subtle forms of exclusion in the absence of a conscious social commitment to a politics of freedom, equity and gender inclusion – see for instance Adams 1996, cited in Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2004, op. cit.

8. This is one of the important insights masterfully illustrated in Scott 1998 (Scott, J C (1998), *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, USA and London). As a result of this active disempowering, which in some places has been going on for a long time, human communities and their local organizations may have become all but incapable of managing their environments and/or sharing management rights and responsibilities with others.



developing countries, while incorrectly attributed to ‘common property systems’ intrinsically, actually originates in the dissolution of local level institutional arrangements whose very purpose was to give rise to resource use patterns that were sustainable”.⁽⁹⁾ Local groups enforce rules, incentives and penalties needed for the sustainable management of landscapes, environmental processes and resources on which local food systems depend. For example, in the Marovo Lagoon in the Solomon Islands, fisherfolk rely on many complex, unwritten rules on ownership, management and use of marine and agricultural resources. The rules specify fishing and cultivation methods and limit the period and quantity of fishing in areas threatened by excessive off-take. Although the system is currently under pressure from increased commercialization of fishing and population expansion, local communities are successfully accommodating these developments within their customary framework.⁽¹⁰⁾

Moreover, local organizations are particularly well placed to monitor and respond adaptively to environmental change. This is important because variation within and among the environments in which local food systems are embedded is enormous. Daily, seasonal and longer-term changes in the spatial structure of these environments are apparent at the broad landscape level right down to small plots of cultivated land.⁽¹¹⁾ These spatio-temporal dynamics have major implications for the way food-producing environments are managed – how, by whom and for what purpose.

Uncertainty, spatial variability and complex non-equilibrium and non-linear ecological dynamics emphasize the need for flexible responses, mobility and local-level adaptive resource management in which farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk and forest dwellers are central actors in analysis,

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9. Cernea, M (1993), “Culture and organisation: the social sustainability of induced development”, *Sustainable Development Vol 1, No 2, pages 18–29*.

10. Hviding, E and G B K Baines (1992), *Fisheries Management in the Pacific: Tradition and Challenges of Development in Marovo, Solomon Islands*, DP No.32, UNRISD, Geneva.

11. Gunderson, L H, C S Holling and S Light (1995), *Barriers and Bridges to the Renewal of Ecosystems and Institutions*, Columbia University Press, New York.



planning, negotiations and action.⁽¹²⁾ Such adaptive management is mediated by local groups that coordinate planning and action at different spatio-temporal scales. More generally, collective action, based on social learning and negotiated agreements among relevant actors in an ecosystem, is often a condition for sustainable use and regeneration of that ecosystem.⁽¹³⁾ Platforms that bring relevant actors together are key in mobilizing capacity for social learning, negotiation and collective action for natural resource management and sustaining critical ecological

Box 6.1: Adaptive management of landscapes in the Peruvian Andes

With the support of a local NGO (ANDES), indigenous Queshua communities in the region of Cusco have become organized into “local platforms” for the adaptive management of mountain landscapes and livelihood assets. In early 2000, the indigenous communities celebrated the opening of the Potato Park as a Community Conserved Area (CCA). Unusually among conservation areas, the Potato Park protects not only the natural environment but also the sociocultural systems that created the landscape. It is also unusual in that many of the most important forms of biodiversity in this CCA are domesticated – in fact they are the product of hundreds of years of deliberate ecosystem management, genetic selection and breeding by the Andean farmers. The farmers are well known for their remarkable ingenuity in the use of ecological habitats and species. For example, the majority of indigenous peoples in the area continue to farm traditional crop varieties and animal breeds, maintaining a high level of genetic diversity, which is well suited to their complex and risk-prone environments. Many of their small plots contain more than 100 different varieties of potato.

Most importantly, the Association of Communities of the Potato Park is responsible for running the park. The Association’s members include the traditional head authority of each of the communities, along with representatives of local residents, non-government organizations, traditional authorities, local cooperatives and others. For the Queshua, the ecological, social, economic and cultural realms of human life are integrated through local organizations, institutions, laws and policies that transform assets (natural, physical, financial, human, social, cultural) into livelihood outcomes. Examples of such indigenous transforming structures and processes include:

- **The development of community-to-community and farmer-to-farmer learning networks based on the principle of *ayni* (reciprocity).** Exchange is promoted through the sharing of information, practices and learning processes. Local platforms (organizations) of “barefoot technicians”, elected by their own communities, network with other communities and create opportunities to share and transfer traditional knowledge and innovations.
- **The consolidation of local grassroots enterprises.** These groups are anchored in Andean principles of reciprocity and a local definition of well-being. The organizations work using the principles of Andean economy to reinforce local food systems within a holistic approach to the adaptive management of biocultural landscapes.

SOURCE: ANDES and IIED (2005), *Traditional Resources, Rights and Indigenous Peoples in the Andes*, IIED Reclaiming Diversity Series, IIED, London.

12. Gunderson et al., *ibid.*; Swift, J (1994), “Dynamic ecological systems and the administration of pastoral development” in I. Scoones (ed.), *Living with Uncertainty: New Directions for Pastoral Development in Africa*, Intermediate Technology Publications, London.

13. Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2004, *op. cit.*

Box 6.2: Spatial and temporal variation in agricultural biodiversity: some management implications

The abundance of insect pests and their predators varies enormously within and between fields –even in the more intensively managed systems. In high-input irrigated rice farms, 100-fold differences in the abundance of plant hopper populations are commonly observed on rice plants grown a few metres apart. Huge variations in insect abundance also exist at larger spatial scales, and all are marked by dynamic change over time. This implies that highly differentiated pest management approaches are needed to monitor and control pests effectively and economically. The FAO-Government programme on integrated pest management (IPM) is a clear demonstration of the advantages of such local adaptive management of pests and their predators in irrigated rice in Asia.

As local organizations that bring people together for joint learning and action, Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) have been a major innovation for the local adaptive management of agricultural biodiversity. FFSs have developed farmers' own capacity to think for themselves and generate their own site-specific solutions for crop protection. The FFSs aimed to make farmers experts in their own fields, enabling them to replace their reliance on external inputs, such as pesticides, with endogenous skills, knowledge and resources. Over one million rice-paddy farmers and local resource users in Indonesia participated, and are still involved today, in this large-scale programme.

Crops experience rapid changes in environmental conditions, both above and below ground. For example, the physico-chemical and biological characteristics of soils are rarely homogenous within a single plot, let alone between plots. The intense selective pressures associated with this kind of micro-geographical variation calls for a fine-grained approach to agricultural biodiversity management that hinges on local organizations that support farmer-led plant breeding and decentralized seed multiplication. This adaptive strategy is generally advocated for resource-poor farming systems in marginal, risk-prone environments. However, the Réseau Semences Paysannes in France (a platform of farmer organizations) sees this approach as increasingly relevant for high-input situations in which agricultural diversification can be used to solve production problems induced by genetic uniformity (e.g. pest outbreaks) or to exploit new market opportunities (such as economic niches for local or regional products).

SOURCES: Fakih, M, T Rahardjo and M P Pimbert (2003), *Community Integrated Pest Management in Indonesia. Institutionalizing participation and people centred approaches*, IIED-IDS Institutionalizing Participation Series, International Institute for Environment and Development, London; Réseau Semences Paysannes (2004), *Sélection participative: à la jonction entre sélection paysanne et amélioration des plantes*, Réseau Semences Paysannes, Cazalens.

services on which local food systems depend. Examples of platforms include joint forest management (JFM) committees, farmer field schools (FFS), local fishing associations and user groups of various kinds. And local adaptive management may focus on whole landscapes, as in the Peruvian Andes (Box 6.1), or on small plots of land and micro-geographical scales (Box 6.2).

Local organizations usually develop successful adaptive management regimes when they build on local practices and the knowledge used by rural people to manage food-producing forests, wetlands, fields, rangelands, coastal



The “learning by doing” approach of adaptive management, and the experiential knowledge shared in local organizations, often generate the skills and confidence needed to address wider livelihood and environment issues

zones and freshwater systems. Moreover, the “learning by doing” approach of adaptive management, and the experiential knowledge shared in local organizations, often generate the skills and confidence needed to address wider livelihood and environment issues.⁽¹⁴⁾ All this suggests new practical avenues for outside technical support in which land and water users’ own priorities, knowledge, perspectives, institutions, practices and indicators gain validity in the search for a liveable world and human well-being.⁽¹⁵⁾

b. Local organizations and people’s access to food

Once food has been harvested from fields, forests, pastures and water, local organizations oversee its processing in a variety of local contexts. Many local organizations and groups also determine people’s access to food. The criteria and indicators used by these local organizations to guide action often reflect culturally specific forms of economic rationality and highly diverse definitions of well-being. Indeed, the latter usually sharply contrast with the indicators and criteria used in mainstream definitions of poverty, well-being and economic exchange. For example, the international development community’s current emphasis on market-based approaches is largely blind to the fact that many local organizations mediate forms of economic exchange that exclude the use of money.

A largely invisible informal economy based on principles of solidarity, gifts and reciprocity ensures that people in much of Africa have at least some access to food in rural areas and, to a lesser extent, also in urban centres.⁽¹⁶⁾ While the monetarized economy is depressed in much of the African continent, people often live on the production of use values outside the money market and depend on informal economic exchanges. These mechanisms, such as subsistence-based markets and bartering, are mediated by

14. Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2004, op. cit.

15. Pimbert, M P and J Pretty (1998), “Diversity and sustainability in community based conservation” in Kothari, A, R V Anuradha, N Pathak and B Taneja (editors), *Communities and Conservation: Natural Resource Management in South and Central Asia*, UNESCO and Sage Publications, New Delhi and London; Posey, D (editor), (1999) *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity*, Intermediate Technology Publications, London; Richards, P (1985), *Indigenous Agricultural Revolutions*, Unwin Hyman, London.

16. Latouche, S (1998), *L’autre Afrique. Entre don et marché*, Albin Michel, Paris; Latouche, S (2003), *Décoloniser l’imaginaire. La pensée créative contre l’économie de l’absurde*, Paragon, Paris.

Box 6.3: Barter markets in the Peruvian Andes

The valley of Lares-Yanatile in Cusco (Peru) is rich in biodiversity, containing three different agro-ecological zones at altitudes of 1,000 to 4,850 metres: *yunga*, *quechua*, and *puna*. Andean tubers and potatoes are grown in the highest zone; corn, legumes and vegetables are in the middle area, with fruit trees, coffee, coca and yucca in the lower part. Every week a barter market is held in the middle area of the valley, where nearly 50 tonnes of goods are traded each market day – ten times the volume of food distributed by the National Programme of Food Assistance. Anyone can participate, and can trade any amount of any crop.

Women are key players in this non-monetary market, which is vital in ensuring that their families have enough food to eat, and that they have a balanced diet. The rainforest supplies vitamin C, potassium and sodium through fruit, such as citrus and bananas, that do not exist in the quechua and puna zones. The middle and high zones supply starches, mainly potatoes and corn, which provide desperately needed carbohydrates to the rainforest zone. Principles of reciprocity and solidarity guide the economic exchange of a diversity of foods, ensuring that important needs of people and the land are met in culturally unique ways. Indeed, recent action research has generated new evidence on the importance of Andean barter markets for:

- access to food security and nutrition by some of the poorest social groups in the Andes;
- conservation of agricultural biodiversity (genetic, species and ecosystem) through continued use and exchange of food crops in barter markets;
- maintenance of ecosystem services and landscape features in different agro-ecological belts along altitudinal gradients and at multiple scales;
- local, autonomous control in production and consumption – and, more specifically, control by women over key decisions that affect both local livelihoods and ecological processes.

A polycentric web of local organizations operating at different scales (from household to whole landscape) governs these forms of economic exchange and contributes to the adaptive management of environmental processes and natural resources. In addition to contributing to the food security of the poorest of the poor, this decentralized web of local organizations also enhances cultural, social and ecological resilience in the face of risk and uncertainty.

SOURCES: Marti, N (2005), “La multidimensionalidad de los sistemas de alimentacion en los Andes peruanos: los chalaypasa del valle de Lares (Cusco)”, doctoral thesis, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona; and www.diversefoodsystems.org.

a complex web of local organizations and groups.⁽¹⁷⁾ In the Peruvian Andes, the barter markets run by women’s organizations ensure that the poorest of the poor have some food and nutritional security (Box 6.3). Both the volume and economic value of food exchanged through these webs of polycentric local organizations can be significantly higher than that sold in money-based markets (see Box 6.3). However, most development economics, policy think tanks and international donors largely ignore the huge potential of these forms of economic organization and exchange in meeting human needs and achieving the MDGs.

17. Latouche 1998, *op. cit.*



In the drylands of India coarse cereals like sorghum and various nutritionally rich millets (pearl, finger and foxtail millets) have been the mainstay of agriculture, diet and culture

These biases of “normal professionalism” and “normal development”⁽¹⁸⁾ also exist towards locally managed and controlled food-distribution schemes in marginalized environments. For example in the drylands of India, the official Public Distribution System (PDS) that was set up as a safety net for the poor has become socially and ecologically counterproductive. In the farming belts stretching across the Deccan plateau, north Karnataka, Marathwada, the deserts of Rajasthan and many adivasi (indigenous people) areas in central India, coarse cereals like sorghum and various nutritionally rich millets (pearl, finger and foxtail millets) have been the mainstay of agriculture, diet and culture. Farming of these crops extends to 65 per cent of the geographical area of the country where agriculture is rainfed and where the concentration of the rural poor is among the highest in the world. These rainfed crops require very few external inputs and no irrigation. They offer nutritional and food security for rural communities – especially for the marginalized and most vulnerable. And yet, “progress” in food production and peoples’ access to food in India over the last decades has been fuelled just by two crops: rice and wheat (the “fine” cereals). Of every 100 tonnes increase in food production, 91 tonnes were contributed by rice and wheat. The remaining 9 tonnes were provided by coarse cereals (5.5 tonnes) and pulses (3.5 tonnes). In the last three decades, sorghum has lost 35 per cent of cropping area, and little millet has lost nearly 60 per cent of cropping area.

Despite all the rhetoric of increasing food production in the country, policy-makers and foreign development aid advisors have allowed nearly 9 million hectares of the millet–sorghum growing area to go out of production. One of the major contributors to this problem is the Public Distribution System (PDS), as practised in India, which concentrates on only rice and wheat. This centrally run national PDS provides for a regular and continued uptake of rice and wheat from the market for distribution to the poor at subsidized prices. The PDS offers a steady and remunerative price for rice and wheat

18. See Chambers, R (1993), *Challenging the Professions. Frontiers for Rural Development*, Intermediate Technology Publications, London.

Box 6.4: An alternative Public Distribution System run by women in Andhra Pradesh, India

A Public Distribution System (PDS) operates in the villages around Zaheerabad in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh, as elsewhere in India. Every month, each family having access to this system (about half of the rural population) can buy 25 kilos of rice at a subsidized rate. Although this ration is the lifeline of poor rural families, the rice sold in the PDS is unfamiliar to the women of Zaheerabad. They have never grown rice on their dry lands, instead cultivating and cooking sorghum and millets, and a wide range of pulses. With more and more PDS rice coming from the resource-rich areas of South India, dryland farmers and their food crops were being gradually displaced. Their lands were being put to fallow and local biodiversity important for food and agriculture was eroded. The PDS rice was cheap but nutritionally inferior to traditional coarse grains. Being reduced to consumers dependent on purchased food for their own survival undermined the women's self-esteem and self-respect as food providers and keepers of seed.

The women organized into *sanghams*, voluntary associations of Dalit women (the lowest social rank in the village), and discussed possible alternatives to the government's PDS. They decided to reclaim their fallow lands and grow their traditional dryland crops again. They planned to establish a completely community-managed PDS system based on coarse grains, locally produced, locally stored and locally distributed. Meetings were held in villages and the modalities of running an alternative PDS were worked out together with the Deccan Development Society (DDS), an NGO supporting the work of the *sanghams*. Formal agreements were signed between the DDS and the village *sanghams* to specify the roles, rights and obligations of each party in the joint management of the alternative PDS. Working through the DDS, the *sanghams* also approached the Ministry of Rural Development, which saw the merit of their case and approved funding for a Community Grain Fund.

In its first year, this jointly managed scheme involved over 30 villages, brought about 1,000 hectares of cultivable fallows and extremely marginal lands under the plough, produced over three million kilos of extra sorghum (at the rate of about 100,000 kilos per village) in a semi-arid area, grew extra fodder to support about 2,000 cattle, created an extra 7,500 wages and provided subsidized sorghum for about 4,000 families. Grain storage was decentralized, using indigenous storage techniques that minimized pest damage and health hazards. Biological diversity significantly increased in the area, as traditional crops and varieties were reintroduced as part of complex and diverse farming systems.

At the end of the storage period, during the food-scarcity seasons, the *sanghams* sell their grains at a subsidized price to around 100 poor households in each village. Using participatory methods, the Dalit women decide who among the villagers are the poorest and qualify for community grain support. In each village, the villagers draw social maps on the ground of all households. The villagers evolve criteria for rural poverty, and judge each household on a five-point scale of poverty, after careful deliberation in an open and transparent way. Households thus selected are issued a sorghum card by the *sangham*. Instead of the subsidized rice of the government PDS, which costs 3.5 rupees per kilo, this card entitles a family to an amount of sorghum at the subsidized price of 2 rupees per kilo, for each of the six months of the rainy season. The poorer the family, the larger its entitlement. In recognizing each person's fundamental right to food, the *sanghams* thus practice their own concepts of equity and solidarity as they distribute the benefits of the co-managed PDS.

SOURCES: Sateesh, P V and M P Pimbert (1999), "Reclaiming diversity, restoring livelihoods", Seedling Vol 16, No 2, pages 11–23; Srinivas, Ch and S Abdul Thaha (2004), *A study on Alternative Public Distribution System, Deccan Development Society, Hyderabad*.



Federated organizations have an important role in projecting the voice and concerns of small-scale food producers and other citizens in a variety of spheres

farmers who are already supported by subsidized irrigation, subsidized fertilizers and adequate crop insurance. On the other hand, farmers from the rainfed areas suffer from multiple disadvantages – no assured irrigation, no subsidies, no crop insurance, and unreliable market forces. Moreover, the flooding of the Public Distribution System with cheap rice and wheat weans away the traditional users of coarse grains and leaves the small-scale production of sorghum and millets without a market. As a result, many rainfed farms have been abandoned, and large areas of dryland agriculture are turning into fallows, enhancing desertification.

In response to these multiple crises, local organizations have developed alternative forms of PDS based on the cultivation of local grains, local storage, local processing and decentralized local control in different regions of India. Like the alternative PDS run by women’s organizations in Andhra Pradesh (Box 6.4), such community-controlled systems of food distribution contribute significantly to the alleviation of hunger and the regeneration of degraded drylands. They also significantly reduce the overhead costs incurred by the mainstream Public Distribution System (PDS), which involves energy- intensive long-distance transport of food grains, the maintenance of a huge storage infrastructure and centralized management.

c. Federations, networks and organized policy influence

Federated organizations have an important role in projecting the voice and concerns of small-scale food producers and other citizens in a variety of spheres. Many such federations that aim to influence policy-making are not entirely focused on natural resources and agriculture. They may be landless people’s movements (the clearest examples being the million-strong O Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra (MST) in Brazil and the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) in the Philippines),⁽¹⁹⁾

19. MST in Brazil has its own website, with pages in Portuguese, English, French, Spanish and Italian, such is its international prominence (<http://www.mstbrazil.org/>). KMP is a nationwide federation of Philippine organizations, which claims to have “effective leadership” of over 800,000 landless peasants, small farmers, farm workers, subsistence fisherfolk, peasant women and rural youth (http://www.geocities.com/kmp_ph/index.html).

Box 6.5: Producer organizations, collective action and institutional transformation in West Africa

Producer organizations (POs) cover a wide range of activities, from management of common woodland or pasture resources, water use, and collection and sale of a particular crop, as well as providing access to fertilizer, seed and credit. Grouping together through collective action enables producers to take advantage of economies of scale, as well as making their voices heard in government policy and decision-making. Additionally, producers hope to increase their negotiating power with companies buying their crop – increasingly necessary as globalization is bringing more concentration and integration of agribusiness throughout the world. In some cases, producer organizations have also provided a valuable bridging function between farmers and sources of technical expertise, such as research and extension structures. Foreign aid funds have often been instrumental in strengthening the role that POs can play, despite the associated risk that the leadership may become distant from the interests and needs of the membership.

Over the past decade, a range of POs have become established and strengthened their positions at local, national and sub-regional levels in West Africa. These organizations are in part the result of government withdrawal from important sectors of the rural economy, including the supply and marketing of agricultural inputs. They have also emerged in a context of greater political liberalization, and now represent a political force of which governments must take notice. This became clear from the strike by Mali's cotton farmers in the 2001 season, due to low prices and continued waste and corruption within the *Compagnie Maliennne pour le Développement des Textiles*. The strike cut output by half, with many cotton farmers switching to maize and other cash crops for that season.

Examples of POs operating at national level include the *Comité National de Concertation des Ruraux* (CNCR) in Senegal and the *Fédération des Unions des Producteurs* (FUPRO) in Benin.^a The CNCR provides an interesting case, which brings together a series of PO federations in Senegal, and has become a central actor in the dialogue between government, donors, and producers on agricultural strategy and related issues, such as land tenure. Such POs have the advantage of providing a channel to make the case for greater support to agriculture in general, as well as to take account of the particular constraints faced by smallholders. Policy and decision-making in government tend to follow both formal and informal procedures. Smallholders have less easy access to informal mechanisms that operate through networks of friends and associates, and lobbying through high-level political contacts, which are usually the preserve of powerful economic actors, such as large commercial farmers and agribusiness. Thus, POs need to make best use of official channels and opportunities to give voice to the needs of less powerful actors.

At the regional level, there has been increased interest in generating pressure on governments and regional institutions to ensure that producer interests are better taken into account in negotiation processes, such as those concerning the World Trade Organization (WTO), European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform and the Cotonou negotiations. Organizations representing West African producers include the Réseau des Organisations Paysannes de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA), the Association Cotonnière Africaine and the Union of Chambers of Agriculture for West Africa. ROPPA and its members have been particularly vocal in support of household farming, and opposed to the agribusiness model being promoted by some as the means to "modernize" agriculture: "This vision [in support of household farming] has been inspired by a global perception of the role of agriculture in society, not only for producing food and fibre but also performing many other economic, social and environmental functions".^b Thus, the argument being made by ROPPA and others supports broader debates regarding the "multifunctionality" of agriculture and of the land, and the consequent need to avoid a purely economic or market-based approach.

SOURCES: adapted from Belières, J-F, P M Bosc, G Faure, S Fournier and B Losch (2002), *What Future for West Africa's Family Farms in a World Market Economy?* Drylands Issues Paper No. 113, International Institute for Environment and Development, London; and Toulmin, C and B Guèye (2003), *Transformations of West African Agriculture and the Role of Family Farms*, Drylands Issues Paper No. 123, International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

a. GRAF/GRET/IIED (2003), *Making Land Rights More Secure*, proceedings of an international workshop, Ouagadougou, 19–21 March 2002, International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

b. Belières et al. 2002, op. cit.



Federations of the rural and urban poor are well placed to promote non-state-led forms of deliberative democracy aimed at making national and global institutions accountable to citizens – particularly those most excluded from decision-making

federations of the urban poor,⁽²⁰⁾ indigenous people's movements (such as the Coordinating Body for the Indigenous Peoples' Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA),⁽²¹⁾ peasant movements (such as Via Campesina or the Réseau des Organisations Paysannes de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA) in West Africa), or various national federations of producer organizations, such as those of Benin, Niger, Mali and Senegal.⁽²²⁾ Producers' organizations have also been active at the international level. One example is Via Campesina, a broad, worldwide coalition of peasants and farmers lobbying on land-tenure reform, agro-ecology, and food sovereignty.

Most of these organizations come to food and agricultural policy debates with wider agendas, for example on land redistribution or participatory governance. As a result, their activities may be very wide-ranging and complex. Yet, they can lead to important shifts in the balance of power in favour of poor rural people, as the rise of producer organizations in West Africa illustrates (Box 6.5). Many such federations of the rural and urban poor are well placed to promote non-state-led forms of deliberative democracy aimed at making national and global institutions accountable to citizens – particularly those most excluded from decision-making. Bold innovations such as the Prajateerpu ("peoples' verdict") on the future of food and farming in South India (Box 6.6) suggest new ways of bringing together coalitions and federations of the poor with international organizations to:

- create safe spaces and participatory processes in which expert knowledge is put under public scrutiny through appropriate methods for deliberation and inclusion (e.g. citizen juries, consensus conferences and multi-criteria mapping);
- strengthen the voices of the weak in setting agendas and framing policies and regulatory frameworks for

20. www.iied.org/urban/pubs/eu_briefs.html.

21. www.coica.org.

22. GRAF/GRET/IIED (2003), *Making Land Rights More Secure, proceedings of an international workshop*, Ouagadougou, 19–21 March 2002, International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

Box 6.6: Prajateerpu – a citizens’ workshop on food and farming futures in Andhra Pradesh, India

Prajateerpu (or “people’s verdict”) was an exercise in deliberative democracy involving marginal farmers and other citizens from all three regions of the state of Andhra Pradesh. The citizens’ jury was made up of representatives of small and marginal farmers, small traders, food processors and consumers. Prajateerpu was jointly organized by the Andhra Pradesh Coalition in Defence of Diversity (made up of 145 NGOs and POs), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, the University of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, and the all-India National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). The jury hearings took place in Medak District, Andhra Pradesh, in June 2001. Jury members also included indigenous people (known in India as *adivasi*), and over two-thirds of jury members were women. The jury members were presented with three different scenarios, each advocated by key proponents and opinion-formers who attempted to show the logic behind the scenario. It was up to the jury to decide which of the three policy scenarios provided them with the best opportunities to enhance their livelihoods, food security and environment 20 years into the future.

Scenario 1: ‘Vision 2020’. This scenario had been put forward by Andhra Pradesh’s Chief Minister, backed by a World Bank loan. It proposes the consolidation of small farms and rapidly increased mechanization and modernization of the agricultural sector. Production-enhancing technologies such as genetic modification would be introduced in farming and food processing, reducing the number of people on the land from 70 to 40 per cent by 2020.

Scenario 2: an export-based cash-crop model of organic production. This was based on proposals from the International Forum for Organic Agriculture (IFOAM) and the International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/WTO) for environmentally friendly farming linked to national and international markets. This scenario was dependent on the demand of supermarkets in the North for a cheap supply of organic produce, complying with new eco-labelling standards.

Scenario 3: localized food systems. This scenario was based on increased self-reliance for rural communities, agriculture with low external inputs, and the re-localization of food production, markets and local economies, including long-distance trade only in goods that are surplus to local production or not produced locally.

The workshop process was overseen by an independent panel of external observers drawn from a variety of interest groups. It was their role to ensure that each ‘food future’ was presented in a fair and unprejudiced way, and that the process was trustworthy and not captured by any one interest group.

The key conclusions reached by the jury members, their own “vision of the desired future”, included features such as:

- food and farming for self-reliance and community control over resources;
- maintaining healthy soils, diverse crops, trees and livestock, and building on indigenous knowledge, practical skills and local institutions.

It also included opposition to:

- the proposed reduction of those making their living from the land from 70 to 40 per cent in Andhra Pradesh;
- land consolidation into fewer hands, and displacement of rural people;
- contract farming;
- labour-displacing mechanization;
- GM crops, including Vitamin A rice & Bt cotton;
- loss of control over medicinal plants, including their export.

The Prajateerpu and subsequent events show how the poor and marginalized can be included in the policy process. By being linked with state-level and international policy processes, the jury outcomes and citizen voice have encouraged more public deliberation and pluralism in the framing of policies on food and agriculture in Andhra Pradesh. The state government that had championed Vision 2020 reforms was voted out of office in 2004. The largely rural electorate of Andhra Pradesh voted massively against a government that it felt was neglecting farmers’ needs, rural communities and their well-being.^a Similarly, the issues highlighted by the Prajateerpu have been partly responsible for the setting up of a UK parliamentary inquiry into the impacts of British bilateral aid to India, and Andhra Pradesh in particular.^b

SOURCES: adapted from Pimbert, M P and T Wakeford (2002), *Prajateerpu. A Citizens Jury/Scenario Workshop for Food and Farming in Andhra Pradesh*, India, International Institute for Environment and Development, Institute of Development Studies, Andhra Pradesh Coalition in Defence of Diversity, University of Hyderabad and All India National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, IIED, London (www.iied.org/docs/sarl/Prajateerpu.pdf); and Pimbert, M P and T Wakeford (2003), “Prajateerpu, power and knowledge: the politics of participatory action research in development. Part 1: Context, process and safeguards”, *Action Research* Vol 1, No 2, pages 184–207; www.prajateerpu.org.

a. http://www.expressindia.com/election/fullestory.php?type=ei&content_id=31318;
www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1212942,00.html.

b. www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/international_development/ind040324__21.cfm.



Local organizations and federations are increasingly becoming expressions of an emergent citizenship in the governance of food systems. People have special rights when it comes to food, and claiming and exercising these rights to “food sovereignty” has become a movement that is very much in tune with this concept of “citizenship”

development and environment – at local, national and global levels;

- support the emergence of transnational communities of inquiry, and coalitions for change committed to equity, decentralization, democratization and diversity in food systems, environment and development.

Local organizations and federations thus increasingly seek to have a greater say in the governance of food systems. In so doing, they challenge liberal understandings in which citizenship is viewed as a set of rights and responsibilities granted by the state. Instead, citizenship in the context of locally determined food systems is claimed, and rights are realized, through the agency and actions of people themselves. Local organizations and federations are thus increasingly becoming expressions of an emergent citizenship in the governance of food systems. People have special rights when it comes to food, and claiming and exercising these rights to “food sovereignty” has become a movement that is very much in tune with this concept of “citizenship”. The People’s Food Sovereignty Network defines the concept thus:

“Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture; to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives; to determine the extent to which they want to be self reliant; to restrict the dumping of products in their markets; and to provide local fisheries-based communities the priority in managing the use of and the rights to aquatic resources. Food Sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to food and to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production.”⁽²³⁾

A key goal of the more emancipatory federations and umbrella organizations is to develop a public sphere that allows for maximum democracy in the literal sense of the

23. <http://www.cine.mcgill.ca/atitlan.htm>; accessed August 19th, 2005

term. In its present form, this new politics in the making affirms the values of “confederalism” and “dual power”.

- *Confederalism* involves a network of bodies or councils with members or delegates elected from popular face-to-face democratic assemblies, in villages, tribes, towns and even neighbourhoods of large cities. These confederal bodies or councils become the means of interlinking villages, towns, neighbourhoods and ecological units into a confederation based on shared responsibilities, full accountability, firmly mandated representatives and the right to recall them, if necessary.
- *Dual power*. The larger and more numerous the linked federations and confederations become, the greater is



Box 6.7: The Peasant Rights Movement and policy change in Indonesia

The demise of the repressive Suharto Government in 1997 made it possible for civil society to organize for change on a large scale, and new peasant movements have emerged in every region of Indonesia. The Agrarian Reform Consortium and the Peasant Rights Movements launched by North Sumatra Small Farmers' Union and the Friend of Small Farmers movement in central Java, as well as the Integrated Pest Management farmers' movement, have recently created an even bigger alliance by establishing a Peasant Rights Movement. Organized as a broad federation, the movement is a strong reaction against the neoliberal approach of trade liberalization and especially the corporate takeover of food and farming. These emerging social movements are campaigning to protect the livelihoods and culture of Indonesian rural communities, and are claiming rights to food and farmer sovereignty. They argue that genuine food security and participation of farmers can be realized only in a system where the sovereignty of farmers' organizations and activities are guaranteed. Farmers and people must be able to exercise their human rights to define their food and farming policies, as well as having the right to produce their food in accordance with the diversity of their sociocultural and ecological contexts.

Many civil society organizations are linked into broad federations to exert countervailing power against what they perceive as a largely corrupt centralized government. Networks and federations get actively engaged in policy reforms at the sub-district, district, provincial and national government levels. Civil society organizations facilitate participatory policy processes and co-management settings. Networks and coalitions use a diversity of deliberative and inclusive processes to gain leverage, exert pressure from below and effect policy changes. While the primary focus is on institutionalizing participatory governance at the community level, well-organized farmer federations have secured important policy changes by engaging with civil servants at the local and sub-district government level.

SOURCES: adapted from Fakhri, M, T Rahardjo and M P Pimbert (2003), *Community Integrated Pest Management in Indonesia. Institutionalizing Participation and People Centred Approaches*, IIED-IDS Institutionalizing Participation Series, International Institute for Environment and Development, London; and Pimbert, M P (2003), *Social Learning for Ecological Literacy and Democracy: Emerging Issues and Challenges*, Proceedings of the CIP-UPWARD-FAO-Rockefeller International Workshop on Farmer Field Schools, 21–25 October 2002, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.



Achieving the MDGs for hunger alleviation and environmental sustainability will largely depend on emphasizing locally determined food systems and policy frameworks that empower local organizations to manage food systems and their environments

their potential to constitute a significant counter-power to the state and transnational corporations that largely control the global food system. Confederations can eventually exert “dual power”, using this to further citizen empowerment and democratic change. For example, they can seek power within local government through strategies of collaboration and political negotiation, while also maintaining strong community and municipal organizing strategies at the grassroots. Multiple lanes for engagement can also be used to link community-based food systems, social movements and political parties with direct local governance strategies. This dual-power approach is widely used by the Indonesian Peasant Rights movement (Box 6.7).

IV. RECLAIMING DIVERSE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

Sustaining diverse local food systems, and the hundreds of millions of livelihoods associated with them, calls for reversals in contemporary patterns of economic growth, modernization and nation-building. Achieving the MDGs for hunger alleviation and environmental sustainability will largely depend on emphasizing locally determined food systems and policy frameworks that empower local organizations to manage food systems and their environments. These are not the easy options. Dominant rules that govern food and agriculture are designed a priori to strengthen not autonomous local organizations but professional control by the state and corporations – and to facilitate not local but international trade.

a. Transforming external support agencies and their ways of working

For donors and other external agencies (such as government departments and NGOs), the following shifts in operational practice will often be needed to support locally determined food systems.

Build on local institutions and social organization. Existing organizations are resources to be strengthened, changed



and developed, not ignored and suppressed. Increased attention will need to be given to community-based action through local organizations and user groups that oversee different parts of the food system. Available evidence from multilateral projects evaluated five to ten years after completion shows that where institutional development has been important, the flow of benefits has risen or remained constant.⁽²⁴⁾ Past experience therefore suggests that if this type of institutional development is ignored in food and agricultural policies, economic rates of return will decline markedly, and the MDGs may not be met.

Build on local systems of knowledge and management. Local management systems are generally tuned to the needs of local people, and often enhance their capacity to adapt to dynamic social and ecological circumstances. Although many of these systems have been abandoned after long periods of success, there remains a great diversity of local systems of knowledge and management. Despite the pressures that increasingly undermine these local systems, plans to strengthen locally determined food systems should start with what people know and do well already, to secure their livelihoods and sustain the diversity of environments on which they depend.

Build on locally available resources and technologies to meet fundamental human needs. Preference should be given to local technologies by emphasizing the opportunities for intensification in the use of available resources. Sustainable and cheaper solutions can often be found for farming, food processing, storage and distribution when groups or communities are involved in identification of technology needs, and then the design and testing of technologies, their adaptation to local conditions and, finally, their extension to others. The potential for intensification of internal resource use without reliance on external inputs is enormous at every point along the food chain. However, combinations of traditional and modern technologies are

Sustainable and cheaper solutions can often be found for farming, food processing, storage and distribution when groups or communities are involved in identification of technology needs, and then the design and testing of technologies, their adaptation to local conditions and, finally, their extension to others

24. Cernea, M (1987). "Farmer organisations and institution building for sustainable development", *Regional Development Dialogue* Vol 8, pages 1-24.



possible too. This is particularly true with the development of miniaturization, multipurpose machines, multimedia and computer-assisted technology, knowledge in agro-ecology, and efficient renewable energy systems that can all enhance local autonomy and ecologies, minimize pollution, and expand the realms of freedom and culture by eliminating needless toil. But local organizations should decide which new innovations are needed, when, where and under what conditions along the food chain.

Use process-oriented, flexible projects. In supporting the development of locally determined food systems, the initial

Box 6.8: Transforming organizations for participation and citizen empowerment

Reformers working for more accountable organizations can include donors, local and national government, NGOs and civil society organizations. Key actions to facilitate reform include:

- diversifying the governance and membership of budget allocation committees of public sector planning, services and research institutes to include representatives of diverse citizen groups, also establishing procedures to ensure transparency, equity and accountability in the allocation of funds and dissemination of new knowledge;
- encouraging shifts from hierarchical and rigidly bureaucratic structures to "flat", flexible and responsive organizations;
- providing capacity building for technical and scientific personnel to foster those participatory skills, attitudes and behaviour needed to learn from citizens (mutual listening, respect, gender sensitivity, as well as methods for participatory learning and action);
- ensuring that senior and middle management positions are occupied by competent facilitators of organizational change, with the vision, commitment and ability to reverse gender and other discriminatory biases in the ideologies, disciplines and practices animating an organization;
- promoting and rewarding management that is consultative and participatory rather than verticalist and efficiency-led, also establishing incentive and accountability systems that are equitable for women and men;
- providing incentives and high rewards for staff to experiment, take initiatives and acknowledge errors as a way of learning by doing, and engaging with the diverse local realities of citizens' livelihoods in urban and rural contexts;
- redesigning practical arrangements, the use of space and time within the workplace to meet the diverse needs of women, men and older staff, as well as their new professional obligations to work more closely with citizens and other actors (through flexible timetables, career paths, working hours, provision of paternity and maternity leave, childcare provision, mini-sabbaticals and promotion criteria);
- encouraging and rewarding the use of gender-disaggregated and socially differentiated local indicators and criteria in monitoring and evaluation, as well as in guiding subsequent technical support, policy changes and allocation of scarce resources.

SOURCES: adapted from Bainbridge, V, S Foerster, K Pasteur, M P Pimbert, G Pratt and I Y Arroyo (2000), *Transforming Bureaucracies. Institutionalising Participation in Natural Resource Management. An Annotated Bibliography*, International Institute for Environment and Development, London, and the Institute for Development Studies, Brighton; and Pimbert, M P (2003), *Social Learning for Ecological Literacy and Democracy: Emerging Issues and Challenges*, Proceedings of the CIP-UPWARD-FAO-Rockefeller International Workshop on Farmer Field Schools, 21–25 October 2002, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.



focus is on what people articulate as most important to them. Error is treated as a source of information, and flexibility permits continuous adaptation of procedures. Indicators developed from those most important to local communities are seen as milestones rather than absolute and illusory fixed targets. Local food systems based on this participatory, open-ended approach must be of realistic lengths of time for real social development and environmental conservation. Projects of short duration probably have a much greater chance of failure than do long-term projects (of five to ten years, or more). Donors and others involved must be prepared for low initial levels of disbursement, and for changes in priorities.

Support local participation in planning, management and evaluation. If activities associated with different parts of local food systems are to become adaptive and participatory, this will imply significant changes in how outside support is conceived and organized. Support is needed for participatory learning approaches in which the main goals are qualitative shifts in how people and institutions interact and work together. This – with the process-oriented approach outlined above – implies significant shifts in the internal procedures, culture and professional practice of external support agencies (Box 6.8)

Supporting locally determined food systems and organizations in the context of the MDGs also calls for reversals in international and national policies. Indeed, there is a fundamental conflict between a global food system of centralized, corporate-driven, export-oriented, industrial agriculture, and one that is more decentralized and smaller-scale, with sustainable production patterns primarily oriented towards domestic markets and localized food systems. Reinforcing such localized food systems entails shifts from uniformity, concentration, coercion and centralization, to support more diversity, decentralization, dynamic adaptation and democratization in food systems.

Reinforcing localized food systems entails shifts from uniformity, concentration, coercion and centralization, to support more diversity, decentralization, dynamic adaptation and democratization in food systems



Some of the policies and practices that can empower organizations of the weak and marginalized to regain control over resources and regulative institutions are listed below, as recommendations for the Millennium Development process.

b. Support enabling national policies and legislation

- Equitable land reform and redistribution of surplus land to tenants within a rights-based approach to development.
- Reform in property rights to secure gender-equitable rights of access and use of common property resources, forests and water.
- Protect the knowledge and rights of farmers and pastoralists to save seed and improve crop varieties and livestock breeds, for example banning patents and inappropriate intellectual property right (IPR) legislation.
- Re-introduction of protective safeguards for domestic economies to guarantee stable prices covering the cost of production, including quotas and other controls against imports of food and fibre that can be produced locally.
- Policies that guarantee fair prices to producers and consumers, safety nets for the poor.
- Re-direct both hidden and direct subsidies towards supporting smaller-scale producers and food workers to encourage the shift towards diverse, ecological, equitable and more localized food systems.
- Increase funding for and re-orientation of public sector R&D and agricultural/food-sciences extension towards participatory approaches and democratic control over priority-setting, technology validation and spread of innovations.
- Broaden citizen and non-specialist involvement in framing policies, setting research agendas and validating knowledge, as part of a process to democratize science, technology and policy making for food, farming, environment and development.



c. Support enabling global multilateralism and international policies

- Re-orient the end goals of trade rules and aid, so that they contribute to the building of local economies and local control, rather than international competitiveness.
- Supply management to ensure that public support does not lead to over-production and dumping that lowers prices below the cost of production – harming farmers in North and South.
- International commodity agreements to regulate the total output to world markets.
- Create regional common agricultural markets that include countries with similar levels of agricultural productivity. For example: North Africa and the Middle East; West Africa; Central Africa; South Asia.
- Protect the above regional common markets against the dumping of cheap food and fibre, using quotas and tariffs to guarantee fair and stable prices to marginalized small-scale producers, food processors, and small food enterprises. Prices should allow small-scale producers, artisans and food workers to earn a decent income, invest and build their livelihood assets.
- Mechanisms to ensure that the real costs of environmental damage, unsustainable production methods and long-distance trade are included in the cost of food and fibre.
- Clear and accurate labelling of food and feedstuffs, with binding legislation for all companies to ensure transparency, accountability and respect for human rights, public health and environmental standards.
- Restrict the concentration and market power of major agri-food corporations through new international treaties, competition laws and adoption of more flexible process and product standards.
- International collaboration for more effective antitrust law enforcement and measures to reduce market

The end goals of trade rules and aid should be re-oriented so that they contribute to the building of local economies and local control, rather than international competitiveness



It is becoming increasingly clear that there is a direct relationship between the vast increases in productivity achieved through the use of automated technology, re-engineering, downsizing and total quality management, and the permanent exclusion of high numbers of workers from employment, in both industry and the service sector

concentration in different parts of the global food system (concerning seeds, pesticides, food processing and retailing, for example).

- Cooperation to ensure that corporations and their directors are held legally responsible for breaches in environmental and social laws, and international agreements.
- Multilateral cooperation to tax speculative international financial flows (US \$ 1600 billion/day!), and redirect funds to build local livelihood assets, meet human needs and regenerate local ecologies.

V. CONCLUSION

Much of the Millennium Development community sees development as a process in which there will be a reduction in the number of people engaged in farming, fishing and land/water-based livelihoods. It is assumed that small-scale food producers, rural artisans, food workers and many of the rural poor will inevitably migrate to urban areas and find new and better jobs.

Indeed, most international and national social, economic and environmental policies envision fewer and fewer people directly dependent on localized food systems for their livelihoods and culture. Encouraging people to move out of the primary sector and get jobs in the largely urban-based manufacturing and service sectors is seen as both desirable and necessary – regardless of the social and ecological costs involved. This view of progress assumes that history can repeat itself throughout the world. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that there is a direct relationship between the vast increases in productivity achieved through the use of automated technology, re-engineering, downsizing and total quality management, and the permanent exclusion of high numbers of workers from employment, in both industry and the service sector. This erosion of the link between job creation and wealth creation calls for a more equitable distribution of productivity gains through a

reduction of working hours, and for alternative development models that provide opportunities and local spaces for the generation of use values rather than exchange values.⁽²⁵⁾

The social and ecological potential of local food systems and organizations must be seen in this context. While neither perfect nor always equitable, locally determined approaches and organizations play critical roles in sustaining farming, environment and people's access to food. In order to achieve the MDGs for hunger alleviation and environment, local organizations should be centrally involved in managing and governing local food systems. Linear views of development and narrow assumptions about "progress" and "economic growth" must be replaced with a commitment to more plural definitions of human well-being, and diverse ways of relating with the environment.



25. Gollain, F (2004) *A Critique of Work: Between Ecology and Socialism*, IIED Institutionalizing Participation Series, International Institute for Environment and Development, London; Gorz, A (2003), *L'immatériel. Connaissance, valeur et capital*, Galilée, Paris.



Africa: a crucible for climate change and poverty

Hannah Reid⁽¹⁾

“It is important to understand that Africa and climate change are intrinsically linked, as climate change will affect the welfare of Africans for years to come... The world’s wealthiest countries have emitted more than their fair share of greenhouse gases. Resultant floods, droughts and other climate change impacts continue to fall disproportionately on the world’s poorest people and countries, many of which are in Africa ... [There is also a need to recognize] the strength and creativity of African people in times of stress. What is needed most now is that Africans are supported in their efforts to build on these strengths.
Archbishop Desmond Tutu⁽²⁾

I. AFRICA – A SPECIAL CASE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Global warming is already affecting Africa.⁽³⁾ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that “the effects of climate change are expected to be greatest in developing countries in terms of loss of life and relative effects on

1. This paper is drawn entirely from the publication, *Africa – Up in Smoke*, which was written and compiled by Andrew Simms and Hannah Reid based on material from the Working Group on Climate Change and Development (Simms, A and H Reid (2005), *Africa – Up in Smoke? The Second Report from the Working Group on Climate Change and Development*, New Economics Foundation, London; available online at http://www.iied.org/climate_change/pubs.html#aus). The Working Group on Climate Change and Development is a coalition of development and environment non-government organizations including ActionAid, BirdLife International, CAFOD, the Catholic Institute for International Relations, Christian Aid, Colomban Faith and Justice, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Institute of Development Studies, International Institute for Environment and Development, Practical Action, Medact, New Economics Foundation, Oxfam, Operation Noah, People and Planet, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Tearfund, Teri Europe, WaterAid and the World Wide Fund for Nature.
2. This text is taken from Archbishop Tutu’s Foreword to *Africa – Up in Smoke*, op. cit.
3. Hulme, M, R M Doherty, T Ngara, M G New and D Lister (2001), “African climate change: 1900–2100”, *Climate Research* Vol 17, pages 145–168.



The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change describes Africa as “the continent most vulnerable to the impacts of projected change because widespread poverty limits adaptation capabilities”

investment and economy”. Not only is Africa more exposed to the impacts of climate change than many other regions in the world⁽⁴⁾ but the IPCC describes it as “the continent most vulnerable to the impacts of projected change because widespread poverty limits adaptation capabilities”.⁽⁵⁾

Small-scale farming accounts for most of the food produced in Africa, and employs 70 per cent of working people.⁽⁶⁾ Most farming is dependent on rainfall, which means that Africa is particularly vulnerable to the uncertainties and weather extremes of global warming. Africa’s high sensitivity to climate is exacerbated by other factors such as widespread poverty, recurrent droughts and floods, a dependence on natural resources and biodiversity, a heavy disease burden and the many conflicts that have engulfed the continent. There are further complications introduced by an unjust international trade system and the burden of unpayable debt. Even where the links to climate change are under-appreciated, Africa is a continent only too aware of the threat of “natural” disasters and the obstacles they pose to poverty reduction. Floods in Mozambique, which hit world headlines at the beginning of the new millennium, exemplify this.

All these factors call for a new model of development in which strategies to increase both human resilience in the face of climate change and the stability of ecosystems are central. It calls for a new test on every policy and project, asking whether each proposal would increase or decrease people’s vulnerability to the climate. This challenge requires a new flexibility and not a one-size-fits-all, market-driven approach to development. Recently, the role of developing new technology has been strongly emphasized. In particular, governments have focused on how to improve weather forecasting in Africa. But, there is a consensus among development groups that a greater and more urgent challenge is strengthening communities from the bottom

4. IPCC (2001), *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, IPCC Working Group II, Third Assessment Report, J J McCarthy, O F Canziani, N A Leary, D J Dokken and K S White (editors), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

5. IPCC (2001), *Third Assessment Report, Summary for Policymakers*, IPCC, Geneva.

6. Maxwell, S (2001), “WDR 2001: is there a ‘new poverty agenda?’”, *Development Policy Review* Vol 19, No 1, pages 143–149.

Box 7.1: Climate predictions for Africa

- Africa's coastal area already experiences the environmental problems of coastal erosion, flooding and subsidence. Exploitation of coastal resources, development and population pressures are all drivers. Climate change is expected to intensify these problems. The IPCC predicts "climate change will exacerbate existing physical, ecological/biological, and socio-economic stresses on the African coastal zone".
- Some "14 countries in Africa are subject to water stress or water scarcity" and "a further 11 countries will join them in the next 25 years".^a
- Land areas may warm by as much as 1.6°C over the Sahara and semi-arid regions of Southern Africa by 2050.
- In Southern Africa and parts of the Horn, rainfall is projected to decline by about 10 per cent by 2050.
- Sea level is projected to rise by around 25 cm by 2050.
- The west coast of Africa is currently affected by storm surges and is at risk from extreme storm events, erosion and inundation. With climate change, tidal waves and storm surges may increase, and inundation could become a major concern.
- East Africa's coastal zone will also be affected: climatic variation and sea-level rise may decrease coral and patch reefs along the continental shelf, reducing their buffer effects and increasing the likelihood of coastal erosion.

SOURCE: IPCC (1997), *The Regional Impacts of Climate Change: an Assessment of Vulnerability – Summary for Policymakers*, IPCC Special Report online at www.ipcc.ch
 a. UNEP (1999), *Global Environmental Outlook 2000*, Earthscan, London.

up, and building on their own coping strategies to live with global warming.

II. FOOD, FARMING AND THE ENVIRONMENT⁽⁷⁾

Africa's social and economic development is now even more endangered because climate change threatens to undermine the integrity of the continent's rich but fragile ecosystems.⁽⁸⁾ In Africa, these natural systems form the foundation of the economy of most countries, from which most people derive their livelihood.⁽⁹⁾ Africa contains about 20 per cent of all known species of plants, mammals and birds, as well as one-sixth of amphibians and reptiles. Biodiversity in Africa, which is greatest outside formally conserved areas, is under threat from climate change and other stresses. Savannahs, tropical forests, coral-reef marine and freshwater habitats, wetlands and East Africa montane ecosystems are all at risk.

7. This section is written by Dr Anthony Nyong, Centre for Environmental Resources and Hazards Research, Department of Geography and Planning, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of Jos, Nigeria, and Nicola Saltman, Climate Change Policy Advisor, WWF-UK.

8. Huq, S, A Rahman, M Konate, Y Sokona and H Reid (2003), *Mainstreaming Adaptation to Climate Change in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)*, IIED, London.

9. Desanker, P V (2003), *Impact of Climate Change on Life in Africa*, WWF, Godalming.



Poor people, especially those living in marginal environments and in areas with low agricultural productivity, depend directly on genetic, species and ecosystem diversity to support their way of life. As a result of this dependency, any impact that climate change has on natural systems will threaten the livelihoods, food intake and health of the population.

With the extinction of plant species used in traditional medicines in Africa, it is expected that the change in climate will affect people's ability to tackle illness. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 80 per cent of the

Box 7.2: Farming associations in Mozambique – using the landscape to spread risk

Despite civil war and major floods and drought, Mozambique has emerged in the twenty-first century as a country of progress and possibilities. The ADAPTIVE Research Project^a set out to investigate how rural people have adapted to these disturbances so that rural communities can be better supported in the face of future changes, especially climate change. Research focused on the community of Nwadjahane in Gaza Province in southern Mozambique, which in recent years has had to live with political and economic instability, drought and major flood and storm damage.

In Nwadjahane, villagers farm both the fertile lowlands through irrigation and the higher sandy dryland fields. Severe floods and droughts over the last two decades have increased household demand for plots of land in both areas. While the lowland can produce good crops of rice, vegetables and potatoes, these can be destroyed during floods. Highland areas can produce good crops of maize and cassava during flood years. However, during drought years the highlands are less productive, and families rely on lowland production.

Households with land in just one area have started to develop informal farming associations to lobby those responsible for land allocation. They have successfully managed to gain access to new areas to farm. The farming associations are especially important for very poor households as they enable them to share some of the production costs, and risks, and thus increase their overall resilience to both droughts and floods. The associations have also fostered innovative and experimental farming practices. When successful, farmers have been able to take learning back to their own individual farms. For example, 45 per cent of those interviewed had changed to more drought-resistant species of rice, maize, cassava and sweet potato at some point during the last six years as a direct result of the information exchange within and beyond the farming associations. The associations have also been particularly popular with groups of women, leading to a strengthening of their position within the farming community.

Within the Nwadjahane community, individuals, households and formal and informal groupings of people are all looking for ways in which they can reduce their vulnerability to disturbances and increase the resiliency of their livelihoods. Some adaptations are driven specifically by experience of extreme climatic events, but many come from a combination of climatic, environmental, economic, political and cultural issues. The study shows that we need to take climate change seriously but that it must be viewed within the everyday context of people's lives.

a. The ADAPTIVE project is based at the Universities of Oxford and Sheffield, UK, coordinated by Professor David Thomas and Dr Chasca Twyman. In Southern Africa it works with the Climate System Analysis Group at the University of Cape Town. See <http://www.shef.ac.uk/adaptive>

Box 7.3: Support for smallholder agriculture in Ethiopia

Many of the approaches that constitute “good development” also double as excellent techniques for adapting to the uncertainties of global warming. Smallholder farming in Ethiopia is a case in point. Ethiopia is crippled by unfavourable international trade rules, lack of rural roads and market access, unemployment, debt and environmental degradation. Three million people have become HIV positive. So, when the rains fail in Ethiopia there is nothing to fall back on.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which works with the agency Christian Aid, is addressing these issues through its Rural Integrated Development Programme in Bugna, in the Amhara region of northern Ethiopia. Project coordinator Deacon Abate Desale says, “the land is so degraded in this region that erosion causes floods when the rains come and drought when it does not. Most Ethiopians are dependent on the land for their livelihoods so we must invest in it.” Techniques such as terracing land on hillsides to stop erosion and collect water for irrigation, replanting trees, and protecting areas of land for regeneration are all effective long-term measures to prevent drought leading to famine in the future.

The programme shows the potential of Ethiopia. In the middle of the dry, unproductive landscape is an oasis of lush, green vegetation and birdsong. This “garden of Eden” is designed to teach neighbouring farmers how to grow vegetables and trees successfully with traditional organic methods, enabling them to earn an income and have a more balanced diet. Vegetables such as carrots, lettuces, tomatoes and onions, rarely seen in rural Ethiopia, are intercropped with a variety of seedlings such as coffee and fruit trees. Farmers learn about organic pest control, irrigation and water conservation, and are given seeds and tree seedlings.

SOURCE: information from Christian Aid, 2005;
see <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/world/where/eagl/partners/0307eoc.htm>

world’s population in low-income countries relies on these plants for primary health care. In Mali traditional medicines have declined because many medicinal plants have been wiped out by constant drought.⁽¹⁰⁾

Livelihoods built on particular patterns of farming may also become unviable. If left unaddressed, climate change is estimated to place an additional 80–120 million people at risk of hunger; 70–80 per cent of these will be in Africa.⁽¹¹⁾ With increasing temperatures and extreme weather events, climate change will further erode the quality of the natural resource base, thereby reinforcing conditions of poverty.

III. WATER, DROUGHT AND THE CHANGING RAINS

Africa is already persistently affected by drought. Local droughts occur every year and continental crises seem to occur once a decade, or, more recently, twice. Although the continent uses only around 4 per cent of its renewable

10. Information from Tearfund project partner, TNT, Mali.

11. IPCC (2001), *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, op. cit.



freshwater resources, “water is becoming one of the most critical natural resource issues”.⁽¹²⁾ Climate change is expected to intensify Africa’s increasingly critical water situation, with Southern Africa being one of many water-stressed regions which could see a further decrease in the flow of streams and the ability of groundwater to recharge.⁽¹³⁾ Reduced annual average rainfall and runoff will worsen desertification in Southern Africa.⁽¹⁴⁾ With Africa’s dependence on rainfed agriculture, its people are very sensitive to disruptions in the hydrological cycle,⁽¹⁵⁾ and drought is a serious hazard because so many Africans have subsistence livelihoods.

In the Nile region, most scenarios estimate a decrease in river flow of over 75 per cent by the year 2100. This would have significant impacts on agriculture, as a reduction in the annual flow of the Nile above 20 per cent will interrupt

Box 7.4: Living with climate variability and uncertainty in South Africa

At every level, from individual and community to nation, people have had to cope with climate variability and climate change for centuries. So, in order to improve understanding of how societies may adapt to future climate change, it is necessary to understand human behaviour and decision-making, as well as climate science. The ADAPTIVE Research Project^a investigated farmers’ perceptions of, and responses to, changes in the summer rainfall area of South Africa.

For farmers in South Africa, the concepts of “drought” or “extreme” rainfall are not necessarily sufficient to capture the dynamics of climate variability. Factors such as the timing of the onset of first rains (which affects when crops are planted), the distribution of rainfall within the growing season, and the effectiveness of the rains, all affect the success of farming. Better drought forecasting alone may therefore not be enough to help people cope with climate uncertainty and change.

The ADAPTIVE work identified different types of response to climate variability and change. Some forms of response occurred in all project study areas. For example, commercializing small-scale agricultural production was important as it created a source of cash that could then be used flexibly to meet household needs. Far from being passive victims, people recognized even subtle changes in climate, and took steps to respond to them.

a. The ADAPTIVE project is based at the Universities of Oxford and Sheffield, UK. The project is funded by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change and has received support from Oxfam, Save the Children and others. In Southern Africa it works with the Climate System Analysis Group at the University of Cape Town. See <http://www.shef.ac.uk/adaptive>

12. UNEP (1999), *Global Environmental Outlook 2000*, Earthscan, London.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*

15. Facts and figures on water from Tearfund/IPCC.



normal irrigation.⁽¹⁶⁾ Such a situation could cause conflict because the current allocation of water, negotiated during periods of higher flow, would become untenable. The IPCC states: “it seems prudent to expect drought in Africa to continue to be a major climatic hazard”, observing that even a small decrease in precipitation combined with higher evapotranspiration could result in “significantly greater drought risks”.⁽¹⁷⁾

IV. IMPACTS ON HEALTH

Health is often neglected in the assessment of vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. However, methods have been developed for assessing the impacts of climate variability and change on a range of health outcomes.⁽¹⁸⁾ Systematic health assessments are needed to inform the management of everything from water to food, housing and trade. The range of potential problems sensitive to climate change is considerable:

- heat stress (the direct effect of the thermal environment on health);
- air pollution (outdoor air quality);
- weather disasters (floods, windstorms);
- vector-borne diseases (such as malaria, dengue, schistosomiasis and tick-borne diseases);
- water-borne and food-borne diseases (such as diarrhoeal diseases);
- food security;
- demographic changes that shift the balance of vulnerable populations demanding different health services.

Despite its relative neglect as an issue, there has been a steady improvement in the understanding of the impacts of climate change on health since the first IPCC report in 1990.

Methods have been developed for assessing the impacts of climate variability and change on a range of health outcomes. Systematic health assessments are needed to inform the management of everything from water to food, housing and trade

16. Dixon, R K, J Smith and S Guill (2003), “Life on the edge: vulnerability and adaptation of African ecosystems to global climate change”, *Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change* Vol 8, No 2, pages 93–113.
17. IPCC (2001), *Third Assessment Report, Summary for Policymakers*, op. cit.



“The impacts of climate change will fall disproportionately upon developing countries and the poor persons within all countries, thereby exacerbating inequities in health status and access to adequate food, clean water and other resources”

The WHO has estimated that, globally, for the year 2002, there were 150,000 deaths and the loss of 5.5 million “disability-adjusted life years” ⁽¹⁹⁾ (a standard WHO measure to quantify and compare disease burdens) caused by climate change.

The most recent IPCC report is unequivocal: climate change will have the biggest impact on the communities least able to respond to it. “The impacts of climate change will fall disproportionately upon developing countries and the poor persons within all countries, thereby exacerbating inequities in health status and access to adequate food, clean water and other resources.”⁽²⁰⁾ These communities are also the least responsible for damage to the climate. Africa’s high vulnerability to the impacts of climate change is compounded by widespread poverty. Ongoing drought and floods, and a dependence on natural resources for rural livelihoods in turn exacerbate vulnerability. Sub-Saharan Africa already supports a heavy disease burden including HIV/AIDS, malaria, diarrhoeal diseases, respiratory infections, cholera, dengue fever, yellow fever, encephalitis, schistosomiasis and haemorrhagic fever.⁽²¹⁾

The WHO states that changes in the patterns for the spread of infectious diseases are a likely major consequence of climate change.⁽²²⁾ Malaria represents a particular and additional threat in Africa. There are between 300 and 500 million cases of malaria in the world each year, with a very high proportion of those occurring in Africa – largely among the poor. Malaria causes between 1.5 and 2.7 million deaths a year, of which more than 90 per cent are children under 5 years of age. In addition, malaria slows economic growth in Africa by up to 1.3 per cent each year.⁽²³⁾ Climate change is

18. Kovats, S., K. L. Ebi and B. Menne (2003), *Methods of Assessing Human Health Vulnerability and Public Health Adaptation to Climate Change*. World Health Organization, Health Canada, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Meteorological Organization.

19. McMichael, A J, D H Campbell-Lendrum, C F Corvalán, K L Ebi, A K Githeko, J D Scheraga and A Woodward (eds) (2003), *Climate Change and Human Health – Risks and Responses*, WHO, Geneva.

20. IPCC (2001), *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, op. cit.

21. McMichael, A J, et al., op. cit.; Nyong, A (2005), ‘Impacts of climate change in the tropics: the African experience’, paper presented at *Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change: a Scientific Symposium on Stabilization of Greenhouse Gases*, Meteorological Office, Exeter, United Kingdom, 1–3 February.

22. WHO (2003), *Climate Change and Human Health – Risks and Responses. Summary*, WHO, Geneva.

23. UNEP (2005), *Africa Environment Outlook: Past, Present and Future Perspectives. Impacts of the State of the Environment*, UNEP, Nairobi.



almost certain to make an already bad situation worse, and may already be contributing to the problem. In one highland area of Rwanda, malaria incidence increased by 337 per cent in 1987. Some 80 per cent of the increase could be explained by changes in rainfall and temperature. Further small changes in temperature and precipitation could trigger malaria epidemics at current altitudinal and latitudinal disease limits. Global warming will increase the incidence of floods, warming and drought – all of which are factors in disease transmission. In South Africa, it is estimated that the area suitable for malaria will double and that 7.2 million people will be at risk – an increase of 5.2 million.⁽²⁴⁾ Greater climatic variability can introduce the disease to areas previously free of malaria. Populations within these areas lack immunity, which will increase the impact of the illness.⁽²⁵⁾

V. DEVELOPING POTENTIAL RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

Africa has great potential for renewable energy and energy-efficiency technologies, having abundant resources of biomass, and for geothermal and hydro power. There is also a large market and human demand for sustainable energy, especially in poor communities. However, these resources and technologies remain largely unexploited.

Almost half of Africa's countries could profitably produce hydro power, but only a fraction of that potential has been reached to date because of poor infrastructure and high costs of initial investments. The continent accounts for only 1.3 per cent of the world's solar energy facilities, and only 4 of its 53 countries have started exploring underground heat sources.⁽²⁶⁾ At the same time, much of the population is surviving without electric power. Over three-quarters of sub-Saharan Africans have no access to electricity, compared to

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24. Information source: communication from WWF-UK, 2005.

25. Zhou, G, N Minakawa, A K Githeko and G Yan (2003), "Association between climate variability and malaria epidemics in the East African highlands", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 101, pages 2375–2380 (see <http://www.pnas.org/cgi/content/abstract/101/8/2375>).

26. OECD (2004), *Exploiting Africa's Huge Energy Potential as Weapon Against Poverty* (see <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/45/32285615.PDF>).



fewer than 14 per cent of people living in Latin America and East Asia.⁽²⁷⁾ Most of sub-Saharan Africa depends on biomass fuels taken from wood and agricultural waste. Families in rural and semi-rural areas have little choice but to increase their exploitation of fragile ecosystems to meet their energy needs, ultimately undermining both the fuel source upon which they depend and the rich diversity of plants and animals that live there. Fossil-fuel industries in Africa are also typified by exploitation, pollution and bad development practice.

The challenge is to create access to clean, affordable energy sources, which allow Africa to avoid the “dirty” energy development path that others have taken. These energy options also offer employment and economic development

Box 7.5: Energy loss? The Commission for Africa’s approach

Concerning energy, the approach of UK Prime Minister Tony Blair’s Commission for Africa is concentrated on funding larger power projects, rather than providing local access to energy, or clean renewable energy. The Commission supports hydro- and gas-powered energy as potential drivers of growth. Hydro resources in some African countries, notably the Democratic Republic of Congo, are noted to be huge but largely unexploited. Mozambique, it comments, has become a major exporter of electricity. “Mega-projects” in the gas industry are planned in Southern and West Africa. Work is already underway on the development of the Grand Inga hydropower project, supported by the Commission, with a new development company. More than \$4 billion is earmarked for the first phase, the building of Inga-3 and transmission lines to Southern Africa. To develop the full potential of Inga, 40,000 megawatts, would cost £50 billion.^a

But mega hydro and gas power schemes, together with grid expansion, puts all the energy eggs in one basket, soaking up the little available aid and investment, and leaving very little to deliver access to energy services for the poorest. Large power projects also tend to rely on international technologies, consultants and contractors, meaning that the funds invested will leak out of Africa, with little capacity-building taking place where the projects are built. Even so, the report itself states that the Commission “should avoid funding prestige projects that have so often turned into white elephants in the past”.

The Commission misses the potential of indigenous technology manufacture and development capable of meeting current local needs – for example, micro-hydro, biogas, small-scale wind power and solar thermal water heaters. Investment is needed in African technology for African people. All of the Commission’s other priorities for Africa – such as agriculture, promoting local enterprise and access to water – require appropriate clean energy services delivered in a way that is accessible and appropriate. Implementation of the Commission’s energy strategy, therefore, requires a bottom-up approach, built around people’s needs, rather than the current top-down strategy.

SOURCE: information from ITDG, 2005; see <http://www.commissionforafrica.org/>
 a. Guardian Newspapers Limited (2005), “US\$50-billion plan to tame the Congo River”, 25 February; http://www.businessinafrica.net/news_features/environment/417751.htm.



opportunities and could help liberate countries from their dependency on oil. Various initiatives have been established to support sustainable energy, including the Global Village Energy Partnership.⁽²⁸⁾ However, a coherent strategy needs to be developed by leading high-income countries to reorient global investment away from fossil-fuel-intensive energy infrastructure. As recently as 2003, fossil fuel projects represented 86 per cent of the World Bank's spending on energy, compared to funding for renewables of just 14 per cent.⁽²⁹⁾

VI. DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

"Extreme climate events such as floods, strong winds, droughts and tidal waves" are the main threats to Africa from climate change, according to the IPCC. Many African communities are already suffering from the effects of drought and increasingly unpredictable weather patterns.⁽³⁰⁾ Reducing vulnerability to today's climate through reduction of disaster risk is an excellent method of building adaptive capacity for the future uncertainties of global warming. This point is not lost to African countries. Mozambique's Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty 2001–2005⁽³¹⁾ states, "natural disasters... constitute an obstacle to a definitive break with certain degrees and patterns of poverty. Therefore, measures aimed at managing these risks are of the utmost importance."

In high-income countries, billions of pounds are invested in reducing the risks associated with floods, earthquakes and droughts. Yet very little international aid gets spent on helping poor communities to do the same. For example, six months before the Mozambique flood disaster, its government appealed to the international community for US\$ 2.7 million to prepare for the floods. It received less than half this amount. After the floods came, Mozambique received US\$ 100 million in emergency assistance, and a

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28. See <http://www.gvep.org/>

29. Simms and Reid 2005, *op. cit.*, page 14.

30. Information source: communication from Tearfund, 2005.

31. See <http://www.govmoz.gov.mz/parpa/eindex.htm>



The loss of social and economic fabric hampers post-disaster recovery. A narrow economic base, over-exploitation of natural resources and loss of diversity provide the weakest foundations for recovery

further US\$ 450 million was pledged for rehabilitation.⁽³²⁾

The 2001 *World Disasters Report* identifies four themes key to helping countries recover from disasters:⁽³³⁾

- Investing in sustainable livelihoods increases the speed of recovery and reduces vulnerability of the poor to disasters. People's livelihoods are as important as physical defences.
- Plugging the spending leaks by maximizing local procurement ensures that post-disaster resources re-circulate within the local economy, rather than leaking out of it, and helps boost longer-term recovery.
- Diversified local economies are best. They maximize employment and respect economic, social and environmental priorities. They are more disaster-resilient than agricultural or industrial monocultures.
- The impacts of globalization, in terms of trade and financial flows, as well as climate change, are draining the resources needed to deal with disasters from the poorest countries.

Several factors help vulnerable communities recover from "natural" disasters. These include strong, extended family structures, strong local government, and building on traditional approaches to housing and farming. Economic diversity and financial mechanisms to spread losses are also vital (for example, insurance, disaster funds, community trust funds). A dynamic civil society is important, along with good transport, communications, sanitation, good education and health services coupled with disaster-preparedness and emergency services. Conversely, the loss of such social and economic fabric hampers post-disaster recovery. A narrow economic base, over-exploitation of natural resources and loss of diversity provide the weakest foundations for recovery.⁽³⁴⁾

32. Ibid.

33. Simms, A (2001), "The ecology of disaster recovery", in *World Disasters Report 2001*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, chapter 2.

34. This section is drawn from Walter, J (2001), *World Disasters Report 2001*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva.

Box 7.6: Lessons from the tsunami: coastal management to reduce the impact of hazardous climatic events

Damage to Africa from the waves from the tsunami of 26 December 2004 was minimal, compared to the effects in Asia. However, there was a serious local impact in Puntland State, Somalia, where the village of Hafun was devastated, many other villages damaged, over 1,000 homes destroyed and 2,400 fishing boats smashed. Many freshwater wells and reservoirs were made unusable.^a The tsunami was the result of an earthquake, not global warming, but the lessons about managing disasters apply to a warming world. Analysis of the places worst hit in Asia show that in many cases they had been developed for fish farming and tourism.

Tropical mangroves provide a variety of goods and services to coastal communities, and protect inland areas from storms and tidal waves. They stabilize sediments, reduce erosion, regulate flooding and recycle nutrients. Mangroves also provide a nursery area for many commercial fish species. Despite these benefits, shrimp farming in Southeast Asia that displaces the mangroves has been encouraged, aided by World Bank loans.

Areas of Myanmar and the Maldives, where the tourism industry had not yet damaged the virgin mangroves and coral reefs surrounding the coastline, suffered less from the tsunami. Coral reefs surrounding the Maldives absorbed much of the tidal fury.^b The mangroves surrounding Simeulue Island, in Indonesia (near the epicentre of the tsunami) meant that the death toll was significantly lower there. Traditional knowledge about tsunamis following an earthquake, and the need to flee to higher ground, also reduced loss of life.

Much can be learnt from coastal communities, many of which have long experience with coastline management and fisheries rehabilitation. Disaster relief efforts must work with fisherfolk, support their organizations and use their expertise to ensure the restoration of their livelihoods. In the long term this will rehabilitate the coastline and marine fisheries, and protect them from future storms and floods likely to occur as a result of climate change.

a. Information from Oxfam, 2005; see

http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/emergencies/country/asiaquake/updates/update200105.htm.

b. In addition, the mangroves absorb significant quantities of carbon dioxide, a critical factor in global warming.

In Africa, particular risk reduction measures include participatory vulnerability assessment, rainwater harvesting, grain banks, designing and improving evacuation routes and sites, famine and flood early warning systems, protecting community buildings in flood-prone areas, and community disaster-preparedness training. Such measures are effective in saving lives and livelihoods in vulnerable regions. Importantly, many risk reduction measures are cheap and relatively simple to implement. It has been estimated that for every \$1 spent on preparing for disaster, a further \$7 is saved in the cost of recovering from it. Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into relief and development planning protects programmes from being undermined by future hazards, and ensures that projects do not inadvertently increase vulnerability. Yet donor



organizations tend to approach disaster risk reduction on an *ad hoc* basis, normally as a reaction to a major disaster.⁽³⁵⁾

VII. MIGRATION CAUSED BY CLIMATE CHANGE⁽³⁶⁾

Numbers of refugees could dramatically increase over the coming years. Global warming, more than war or political upheaval, stands to displace many millions of people, thus destabilizing the global community. Low-income nations, which already receive many refugees, stand to carry the

Box 7.7: Climate change and conflict in northwest Kenya

In northwest Kenya, the lives of the Turkana people – nomadic pastoralists who graze large herds of cattle and other animals on the dry savannah – have long been made more precarious by political pressures from outside. Their ability to roam was restricted by arbitrarily imposed colonial borders, and modern governments have done little to help them. Armed groups and automatic weapons have entered their land from conflicts in neighbouring South Sudan and Northern Uganda. Now that rainfall seems to be failing, this has triggered conflict between the Turkana and their neighbours.

The Turkana are used to dealing with drought and food shortages. But because the droughts are more frequent and more prolonged, they have less opportunity to recover from a poor rainy season before the next is upon them. Rain is also less predictable than it used to be.

There have always been tensions between the Turkana and other pastoralist groups for access to water and pasture. But these have increased as water sources have dried up and pastures have been lost. Because the water table is not being recharged, the wetland areas that the Turkana could traditionally fall back on in times of drought have dwindled. Lake Turkana has receded, resulting in more territorial disputes. Many such disputes are settled peacefully, but each time one party is perceived to have broken an agreement, the willingness to trust the next time, and to respect borders, is eroded.

Cattle-raiding is also linked to drought. Raiding has always been used as a strategy to restock herds during or after a drought. Not surprisingly, prolonged drought and more cattle deaths lead to more raids. In 2004, a particularly big raid saw a coalition of the Toposa from Sudan and the Dodoth from Uganda take away large numbers of Turkana cattle. And raids lead, in turn, to new cycles of retaliation.

As a result of the droughts and growing insecurity, the Turkana have moved from a state in which they were able to cope most of the time, to one in which destitution and vulnerability to famine is a constant danger. International aid agencies like Oxfam have been providing relief food, and continue to do so, because the rains at the end of 2004 were patchy and poor. Oxfam's approach is not just to give out food, but to link human and animal health, relief and development, and to support Turkana institutions that are tackling the problems of cross-border raiding using conflict-reduction and peace-building techniques.

SOURCE: information from Oxfam, 2005; see http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/evaluation/downloads/eafrica_pastoral_full.pdf

35. Tearfund (2003), *Natural Disaster Risk Reduction: the Policy and Practice of Selected Institutional Donors*, Tearfund, London.

36. Information source: communication from the New Economics Foundation, 2005.

Box 7.8: Conflict and water: peace-building between tribes in northern Kenya

Climate change is affecting the rainfall pattern in northern Kenya, and reducing the amount of rain. Coupled with other pressures on the natural resources of their rangelands, pastoral farmers are experiencing increasing conflict with each other over access to scarce water. During the dry periods they get water for themselves and their livestock by scooping into the sand beds of the dry streams. Such water is usually clean for drinking but quickly gets depleted.

Sand dams are an artificial enhancement of this traditional practice, which puts extra water into the sand beds. They are made by building a concrete wall across a channel at specific sites to trap and hold back the sand during flooding. Well-sited sand dams can store over 6,000 cubic metres of water, and sand-dam technology has been used successfully in Kenya in Kitui, Machakos and Samburu districts. Building sand dams gave ITDG the opportunity to help build peace between tribes in times of conflict over scarce resources. Teams of Samburu and Turkana people, in equal numbers (and with equal numbers of men and women) working together built the dams, and this helped to improve tribal relations.

SOURCE: information from ITDG, 2005; see http://www.itdg.org/?id=region_east_africa_kit_jun_03_sand_dams.

largest share of additional costs associated with environmental refugees. Yet these countries are least responsible for creating the problems associated with climate change. Environmental refugees are already with us. They are people who have been forced to leave their homes and even to cross borders because of environmental factors such as extreme weather events, drought and desertification. They are probably more numerous than their “political” counterparts.

In Africa it is the impact on farming that could force people to leave their homes. Africa’s farmers have proved skilled at adapting to changing rainfall patterns, but global warming threatens to stretch coping mechanisms too far. If the flow of the Nile reduces (and sea levels rise), the most densely populated part of Africa will be disrupted. This will affect about 66 million people (estimate for 2002), projected to rise to nearly 90 million by 2015, nearly all living along the banks of the Nile. Creating new legal obligations for states to accept environmental refugees would be one way to ensure that high-income countries accept the consequences of their fossil-fuel-intensive lifestyle choices. Environmental refugees need recognizing, and the problem needs managing before it manages us.



Rich countries need to exceed their targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, set under the Kyoto Protocol. They need to cut emissions to a level commensurate with halting global warming, so that temperatures rise no more than two degrees above pre-industrial levels

VIII. CONFLICT ASSOCIATED WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is likely to increase conflict levels in many parts of Africa. The case studies in Boxes 7.7 and 7.8 describe two examples of increasing conflict in northern Kenya, where, very much in line with climate change models for sub-Saharan Africa, droughts appear to be becoming longer and more frequent.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AFRICA

In the light of Africa's special circumstances, the Working Group on Climate Change and Development considers these proposals a minimum needed to manage the impact of global warming on the continent. Without implementation of these measures, achievements in development in Africa in the last few decades could be reversed by climate change.

Increase support for small-scale agriculture.

Dramatically increased support for small-scale agriculture is required, with an approach to farming based on maximum appropriate diversification. Highly diverse systems, as opposed to commercial monocultures, are more resilient and more productive. Farming based on expensive and energy-intensive artificial inputs will be both vulnerable to fuel-price rises, and will add to the problem of climate change. Vitality, small-scale farmers need support from a favourable policy environment and research that addresses the problems they themselves have identified. Boosting production is crucial, especially because of the enormous burden of HIV/AIDS, and requires systems that combine new insights and technologies with the wisdom of tradition.

Cut rich-country emissions of greenhouse gases. Rich countries need to exceed their targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, set under the Kyoto Protocol. They need to cut emissions to a level commensurate with halting global warming, so that temperatures rise no more than two degrees above pre-industrial levels.

Focus on local needs first. Africa needs to be freed from



a one-size-fits-all development approach. Effective responses to climate change will differ everywhere, depending on local circumstances, so a new flexibility is needed. The greatest challenge is securing livelihoods at the local level.

Map likely health impacts. In terms of health, the challenge to the international community is to help map the complex impacts of global warming, and ensure that both the resources are available to tackle them, and that the development policy framework does not make things worse. For example, as climate change puts stress on scarce water resources, a dogmatic approach to water privatization could easily increase the vulnerability of millions of people in Africa.

Help Africa leapfrog “dirty development”. The exploitation of fossil fuels in Africa does little for the development or security of its people. But the potential for sustainable and renewable energy on the continent is large, as is the market – especially in poor communities. To meet people’s need for energy, improve health at the household level, and help Africa leapfrog “dirty development,” international donors and financial institutions should switch investment from fossil fuels into promoting access to renewable and sustainable energy.

Support community coping strategies. Global warming presents a huge challenge to the coherence and coordination of aid. For example, donors are focusing strongly on the role of technology. But promoting disaster reduction at the local level by supporting community coping strategies is more effective and yields immediate benefits that stretch beyond just tackling climate-driven disasters. The integration of disaster risk reduction in relief, reconstruction, development programming and poverty reduction plans should be prioritized.

Release aid quickly and set targets for local procurement. More efficient systems are needed to ensure that aid is released quickly and that humanitarian aid is targeted well when disasters strike. To ensure the long-term

The exploitation of fossil fuels in Africa does little for the development or security of its people. But the potential for sustainable and renewable energy on the continent is large, as is the market – especially in poor communities



The international community should implement the agreement made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to help Africa prepare for and mitigate disasters at both community and national levels

development benefits of money spent on disasters, there should be targets for local procurement set for governments and agencies. This would help prevent the leakage of relief money from affected communities.

Implement existing agreements on environment and development.

Specifically, the international community should implement the agreement made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to help Africa prepare for and mitigate disasters at both community and national levels. This should include, as agreed at the WSSD, promoting “community-based disaster management planning by local authorities, including through training activities and raising public awareness”.

Test whether initiatives are climate-proof and climate-friendly.

All policies and projects should face the test of whether they will leave people in Africa more or less vulnerable to the effects of global warming. Each proposal should be assessed in terms of being climate-friendly and climate-proof. At the very latest, in line with the recommendation of the Commission for Africa, climate change should be “mainstreamed” by 2008.

New and additional funding. All funding to help Africa adapt to global warming should be new and additional to existing funds, and seen not as aid but as an obligation of the rich countries which created the problem.

8

Implementing international procedural rights and obligations: serving the environment and poor communities

Jona Razzaque⁽¹⁾

I. INTRODUCTION

Environmental laws, such as those regulating forestry, fisheries and water resources, can play an important role in the life and livelihoods of poor communities. Environmental laws and processes can have positive impacts on the quality of the environment in which poor communities live and work. However, the same laws and processes can also deprive poor communities of their livelihoods if they are developed, implemented and enforced in a manner that fails to take account of those communities' interests. If, for example, a government's pollution control laws force the closure of small factories, the law will

1. Jona Razzaque, FIELD (the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development); see <http://www.field.org.uk/>.



If implemented, recent developments in international environmental law which emphasize the importance of access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters can help to ensure that local environmental laws and processes work for poor communities and help to achieve the MDGs

adversely affect factory workers for whom there might be no alternative livelihood available.⁽²⁾ If a government prescribes a maximum residue level of pesticide in agricultural products without ensuring that the technical capacity necessary to comply with the maximum residue level is available to small-scale farmers, that policy is likely to affect disproportionately those small-scale farmers lacking the resources needed for compliance.⁽³⁾ If a government decides to build a dam without adequate and timely consultation and agreement reached with those to be displaced or otherwise affected, communities might suffer as a result of displacement and loss of livelihoods.⁽⁴⁾

Poorer communities might be deprived of their livelihoods as a result of environmental rules and processes developed without their input and without taking account of their interests. This can also happen as a result of inadequate public participation in decisions taken to implement the laws, lack of relevant information about rights and obligations, or the absence of mechanisms for seeking justice and redress. If implemented, recent developments in international environmental law which emphasize the importance of access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters can help to ensure that local environmental laws and processes work for poor communities and help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.⁽⁵⁾

How do international law and institutions influence domestic environmental law? Is the translation of recent trends in international environmental law into domestic environmental law serving the interests of poorer communities and helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals?

2. *M. C. Mehta v Union of India* (1995), 4 SCALE 789; (1996) 4 SCC 750; (1997) 11 SCC 327.

3. Hortex Foundation (2004), "National case study on environmental requirement market access/entry & export competitiveness in horticulture in Bangladesh" presented at FIELD/UNCTAD Training Workshop on Environmental Requirements, Market Access/Entry and Export Competitiveness in the Horticultural Sector in Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh (website: http://r0.unctad.org/trade_env/test1/openF1.htm).

4. The World Commission on Dams estimates the overall global level of displacement by dams to be between 40 and 80 million people, a large proportion of which are from poor communities; WWF (2004), *Rivers at Risk: Dams and the Future of Freshwater Ecosystems* (website: www.panda.org/dams).

5. See *Conclusions and Recommendations of the Roundtable Dialogue on Advancing the Millennium Development Goals through the Rule of Law*, Held at UNEP Headquarters, Nairobi, 16–17 February 2005 (<http://www.rolac.unep.org/cpresa/cpb53i/cpb53i.htm>).



II. INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROCEDURAL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration that came out of the United Nations Earth Summit states that “(e)nvironmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level”.

Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration has subsequently been translated into binding commitments recognized in international and regional agreements requiring public access and participation in processes of environmental decision-making and policy-making.⁽⁶⁾ For instance, the 1998 UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) elaborates Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration and provides standards for participation in the decision-making processes. These participatory rules relate to activities that may significantly affect the environment (e.g. construction of a power plant), or policies, programmes and plans relating to the environment (Articles 6 and 7). Of the 55 States members of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), 36 are parties to the Aarhus Convention and other states with ECE “consultative status” are also eligible to become parties to the agreement in the future.⁽⁷⁾

The right of communities to participate in discussions on major new projects is strongly rooted in the environmental impact assessment (EIA) processes that integrate economic, social and ecological objectives in the decision-making. Regional agreements, such as the 1991 UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention), provide for public participation in EIA. Members of the public in one

The right of communities to participate in discussions on major new projects is strongly rooted in the environmental impact assessment processes that integrate economic, social and ecological objectives in the decision-making

6. For a list of these agreements, see Pring, George (Rock) and Susan Y Noe (2002), “The emerging international law of public participation affecting global mining, energy and resource development” in Zillman, D et al., *Human Rights in Natural Resource Development: Public Participation in the Sustainable Development of Mining and Energy Resources*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

7. Article 17 provides that the Aarhus Convention is open to “States members of the Economic Commission for Europe as well as States having consultative status with the Economic Commission for Europe pursuant to paragraphs 8 and 11 of Economic and Social resolution 36 (IV) of 28 March 1947, and by regional economic integration organizations”. As of August 2005, there were 36 parties out of a total of 40 signatories to the Aarhus Convention (<http://www.unece.org/env/pp/ctreaty.htm>).



Although, historically, expert specialists dominated EIA procedures, in many jurisdictions these procedures have evolved to allow for public input in the assessment process

state (the area likely to be affected) have the right to participate in decision-making about activities proposed to be conducted in another state (the state of origin). Although, historically, expert specialists dominated EIA procedures, in many jurisdictions these procedures have evolved to allow for public input in the assessment process.⁽⁸⁾

Both the 1998 Aarhus Convention and the 2003 UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA Protocol) provide for extensive public participation in government policy-making in numerous development sectors. Some countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean are “experimenting” with SEA, and some regulatory structures are developed to integrate SEA elements.⁽⁹⁾

III. DOMESTIC IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROCEDURAL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

International instruments are known by many names (including treaty, convention, protocol, declaration, charter, action plan, programme of action) and may create binding or non-binding obligations for the states that sign up to them. If the instrument is a “declaration”, it may not be legally binding,⁽¹⁰⁾ as this term generally indicates that the states parties do not intend to create binding obligations but merely want to declare certain aspirations. Examples are the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the 2000 UN Millennium Declaration and the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development. On the other hand, a “treaty” is an international agreement between states that creates binding obligations, and countries ratifying treaties become bound

8. See Holder, J (2004), *Environmental Assessment: the Regulation of Decision Making*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

9. Dalal-Clayton, B and B Sadler (2005), *Strategic Environmental Assessment: a Sourcebook and Reference Guide to International Experience*, Earthscan, London, chapter 6.

10. There are examples of “declarations” which were not originally intended to have binding force, but their provisions may have reflected customary international law or may have gained binding character as customary law at a later stage, as is the case with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



to implement the obligations created under the treaty at the national level.⁽¹¹⁾

Such national implementing measures include legislation and policies in low- and middle-income countries. For example, the Kenya Wildlife (Conservation and Management) Act (1976) has adopted the provisions of 1973 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) by banning all hunting of game animals, and revoking all licences to trade in wildlife products. The influence of the 1989 Basel Convention was evident in Hazardous Wastes (Management & Handling) Rules (1989) in India.⁽¹²⁾ In addition to laws, a number of countries are preparing national strategies and plans to implement international environmental laws, such as the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 1994 UN Convention to Combat Desertification.⁽¹³⁾ National implementation plans can identify legal, policy and institutional strengths and weaknesses; and assist countries in evaluating the costs of implementation. Each of these national plans stresses the importance of consultation and participation of communities in its preparation and implementation.⁽¹⁴⁾

When environmental laws are developed and implemented it is important that they do not undermine the interests of poorer communities. The creation of green spaces or the protection of nature reserves needs to take account of those communities, especially poorer communities, that use or live in those areas. (See Chapters 3 and 6 for examples of how this has been achieved.)

In many low- and middle-income countries, laws and policies are influenced by Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio

National implementation plans can identify legal, policy and institutional strengths and weaknesses; and assist countries in evaluating the costs of implementation. Each of these national plans stresses the importance of consultation and participation of communities in its preparation and implementation

11. In countries with “monist” systems, the treaty has the force of law within the country; while countries with “dualist” systems require implementing legislation for the treaty to have legal effect. In both cases, changes to national laws and institutions are often required to reflect the new commitments. See Shaw, M (1997), *International Law*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

12. For examples, see: UNEP (2004), *Draft Manual on Compliance with and Enforcement of Multilateral Environmental Agreements* (website: http://www.unep.org/DEPI/programmes/law_implementation.html).

13. A list of those countries which have prepared a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) and National Action Programme (NAP) are available on the Convention websites: www.biodiv.org; www.unfccc.int; www.unccd.int.

14. UNEP 2004, *op. cit.*



Access to information empowers the public to take a more active role in the decision-making processes. Broad access to information promotes better decisions by mobilizing demand for sustainable solutions to problems

Declaration, and mirror the commitments set out in agreements to which they are not a party, such as the Aarhus Convention. A large number of national regulations and policies accommodate the right to information and public participation. For example, the Constitutions of Uganda, South Africa and Thailand guarantee the right of the public to information. In addition, by 2004, over 50 countries worldwide had passed legislation on access to information.⁽¹⁵⁾ Access to information empowers the public to take a more active role in the decision-making processes. Broad access to information promotes better decisions by mobilizing demand for sustainable solutions to problems.⁽¹⁶⁾ It is important for the public to have information of a high quality, setting out how data were collected and what they cover.⁽¹⁷⁾ It is also essential that information is accessible to the public, as measured by how easy it is for the public to access and understand the information, and the expenses and time involved to obtain the information.⁽¹⁸⁾ Also, the language of the information affects accessibility; for many projects supported by international agencies, much or all of the project documentation is in the working language of the international agency.

Overall, the Aarhus Convention provides a useful framework for public participation in low- and middle-income countries that are parties and non-parties alike. A number of low- and middle-income countries in the UNECE region have incorporated this convention into their legal system.⁽¹⁹⁾ However, poor implementation by public authorities at the local and provincial levels is a major obstacle to achieving the objectives of the Aarhus Convention on the ground. Some low- and middle-income countries that are parties to

15. Banisar, D (2004), *Global Survey: Freedom of Information and Access to Government Record Laws around the World*, May, available online: http://www.freedominfo.org/survey/global_survey2004.pdf.

16. Robinson, J R et al. (1996), "Public access to environmental information: a means to what end?", *Journal of Environmental Law*, Vol 8 No 1, pages 19–42.

17. Petkova, E et al. (2002), *Closing the Gap: Information, Participation and Justice in Decision-Making for the Environment*, World Resources Institute, Washington DC, pages 38–40.

18. *Ibid.*, pages 37–38.

19. For example, according to the Constitution in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, provisions of the Convention were part of their national legal systems and took precedence over national law. Although in a very preliminary stage, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine have initiated the implementation of the public participation pillar in several countries through the adoption of legislative and regulatory measures; *Synthesis Report on the Status of Implementation of the Convention* (2005), ECE/MP.PP/2005/18 (12 April) (website: <http://www.unece.org/env/documents/2005/pp/ece/ece.mp.pp.2005.18.e.pdf>).



the 1991 Espoo Convention have also adopted legal and policy instruments to implement Espoo Convention provisions at the national level.⁽²⁰⁾ Consistent with commitments under the 1998 Aarhus Convention and the 2003 SEA Protocol, communities are also participating in strategic environmental assessment (SEA), intended to allow people to participate at the policy-making or planning level of specific development projects. SEA is a procedure integrated in the political decision-making process that is intended to ensure that the long-term environmental effect of various plans are identified and assessed before the plans are adopted.⁽²¹⁾

Following the participation agenda in environmental matters at the international level, there are provisions on local community involvement in development planning and poverty alleviation projects in many low- and middle-income countries. Recent development policies have sought to decentralize decision-making and enhance local institutional capacities (through strengthening local government and NGOs) to create a more participatory approach.⁽²²⁾ These trends have been accentuated by recent global policy initiatives, such as the Local Agenda 21 movement for sustainable development. Local Agenda 21 aims to build upon existing local government strategies and resources to integrate environmental, economic and social goals. Community consultation and participation is a core principle in Local Agenda 21 programmes.⁽²³⁾ A survey in 2002 indicated that in the past ten years, more than 6,000 local governments in 113 countries have embraced Local Agenda 21 as a framework for good governance, and

Following the participation agenda in environmental matters at the international level, there are provisions on local community involvement in development planning and poverty alleviation projects in many low- and middle-income countries

20. ECE (2004), *Report of the Third Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context* (June), ECE/MP.EIA/6

(website: <http://www.unecce.org/env/documents/2004/eia/ece.mp.eia.6.e.pdf>).

21. Therivel, R and M R Partidario (editors) (1996), *The Practice of Strategic Environmental Assessment*, Earthscan, London.

22. Donor agencies consider decentralization as a crucial ingredient of “good governance”; however, any decentralization agenda would be unsustainable if it is “top down” and imposed on the community and local institutions. See discussion in: McGranahan, G et al (2001), *Striving for Good Governance in Urban Areas: the Role of Local Agenda 21s in Africa, Asia and Latin America* (May) (website: http://www.iiied.org/docs/wssd/bp_loc21s_ftxt.pdf).

23. In the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation arising from the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, the governments agreed to “(e)nhance the role and capacity of local authorities as well as stakeholders in implementing Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the Summit and in strengthening the continuing support for Local Agenda 21 programmes and associated initiatives and partnerships” (Para 167) (website: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/POIchapter11.htm).



Judiciaries in many low- and middle-income countries have become willing to hear arguments from environmental groups and concerned individuals who have no direct economic or other interests at stake

around 18 of the 49 “least-developed countries” have introduced Local Agenda 21.⁽²⁴⁾ Although Local Agenda 21 processes are in the early stages in many municipalities, and weak in implementation, some evidence of community participation can be found in the water sector (supply and quality) in Africa and Latin America, and concerning natural resource management in the Asia-Pacific region.⁽²⁵⁾

Along with the changes in the law and policy-making processes, judiciaries in many low- and middle-income countries have become willing to hear arguments from environmental groups and concerned individuals who have no direct economic or other interests at stake. For example, the Indian judiciary, since the 1970s, has permitted actions by any member of the public who had not suffered any violation of their own rights but who had brought an action on behalf of those who had suffered a legal wrong or injury under the constitution or some other law (known as public interest litigation, or PIL). According to cost rules typically applied in common-law countries, the loser pays the cost. This rule acts as a major deterrent for people who might be considering initiating public interest litigation. However, in several public interest cases in India, there was no cost order against the petitioners, who were largely from low-income communities or local NGOs. These cases dealt with livelihood, possession of tribal land, destruction of vegetation, encroachment of wetlands and construction of dams.⁽²⁶⁾ Examples of public interest litigation and judicial activism can be found in Africa (Uganda, Tanzania), Asia (Pakistan, Philippines, Nepal, Sri Lanka) and Latin America (Argentina, Chile, Peru), enabling poorer sections of the community to access the courts.⁽²⁷⁾

24. International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (2002), *Local Government's Response to Agenda 21: Summary Report of Local Agenda 21 Survey with Regional Focus*, ICLEI, Toronto. According to the survey, there are around 151 LA21 in 28 countries in Africa, 674 LA21 in 17 countries in Asia, and 119 LA21 in 17 countries in Latin America

(website: <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN007066.pdf>).

25. Ibid.

26. Examples and citation of these cases can be found in Ahuja, S (1997), *People, Law and Justice: a Casebook of Public Interest Litigation*, Orient Longman, Vol 1, Chapter 8.



IV. ASSESSMENT OF THE DOMESTIC IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROCEDURAL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

If laws are developed and implemented without the participation of those affected by them, they will be ineffective, or even harmful to the very communities they are intended to benefit. For example, if crucial decisions about “water privatization” and “cost-recovery” are made without the knowledge, participation and consent of those served, or those who should be served, by water systems, the regulation and the policy are bound to be ineffective. An inclusive system of governance and local community participation and partnership between local government, community-based organizations and water utilities could offer some solutions to make drinking water accessible to all. That partnership and any negotiated solution will have to be supported by a legal and institutional framework that defines the nature of the “participatory right” and the scope of participation. In most water privatizations, this has been neglected.⁽²⁸⁾

Environmental laws become more sensitive to the needs of poor communities if the government initiates and ensures participation, and involves relevant stakeholders in decision-making processes.⁽²⁹⁾ The emphasis within these processes should be on effective dialogue and consensus-building on decisions that affect people’s livelihoods and living conditions.⁽³⁰⁾ Building public support is particularly important in societies where development priorities compete with concern for environmental quality, or where there is a general lack of awareness about environmental problems. In these circumstances, community organizations

If crucial decisions about “water privatization” and “cost-recovery” are made without the knowledge, participation and consent of those served, or those who should be served, by water systems, the regulation and the policy are bound to be ineffective

27. Examples of case laws are available from www.elaw.org.

28. Budds, Jessica and Gordon McGranahan (2003), “Are the debates on water privatization missing the point? Experiences from Africa, Asia and Latin America”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol. 15, No. 2, pages 87–114. See also Hardoy, Ana and Ricardo Schusterman (2000), “New models for the privatization of water and sanitation for the urban poor”, *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol 12, No 2, pages 63–75.

29. Examples of such regulations can be found in Brazil and the Philippines; UN-Habitat World Urban Forum (2004), *Dialogue on Civil Society’s Contribution to Local Urban Governance* (<http://www.unhabitat.org/wuf/2004/documents/K0471975%20WUF2-4.pdf>).

30. There are “tools” outlining ways to improve community participation in the decision-making processes, and how local groups can reduce poverty and improve natural resource management. See: IIED, *Power-Tools: for Policy Influence in Natural Resource Management* (website: <http://www.policy-powertools.org/whatis.html>, visited August 2005).



Environmental laws are not self-executing and they cannot function in the absence of effective implementation, which in turn requires extensive administrative capacities, detailed regulatory mandates, strong government commitment and active civil society participating in the law and decision-making processes

or NGOs can play an important role by publicizing information to increase public awareness of environmental problems, and building support for the decision.⁽³¹⁾

While domestic environmental laws have changed under the influence of international law, institutions and agencies, enforcement of laws at the national level remains a problem. Environmental laws are not self-executing and they cannot function in the absence of effective implementation, which in turn requires extensive administrative capacities, detailed regulatory mandates, strong government commitment and active civil society participating in the law and decision-making processes. In many low- and middle-income countries, there are few systematic plans to monitor compliance or for enforcing the laws in the event of non-compliance. If legal requirements and enforcement mechanisms are well designed, law is more likely to meet the expectations of the community and achieve its desired results. Domestic environmental laws can be most effective if they have designated an authority and created an appropriate institutional framework to enforce the law, including the establishment of a “watchdog” to monitor and verify that the decision-making process is transparent, participatory and accountable.

Community engagement in the environmental law-making process is vital to ensure better enforcement of the law. Participation in the law-making process ensures that communities are interested in the enforcement of the legal rules. However, effective community participation requires that legal mechanisms integrate the community views into the final decisions. Otherwise, people become disillusioned with the process as a whole. While adopting a law or policy which affects the lives and livelihoods of communities, local governments should pay special attention to the concerns of vulnerable groups, take specific steps to ensure that their voices are effectively heard, and that the decision reflects their needs and concerns.

31. INECE (1992), *Principles for Environmental Enforcement* (website: <http://www.inece.org/enforcementprinciples.html>).

How to Make Poverty History: The central role of local organizations in meeting the MDGs

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) commit the international community to an expanded vision of poverty reduction and pro-poor growth, one that vigorously places human development at the centre of social and economic progress in all countries. The MDGs also recognise the importance of creating a global partnership for change, as high-income nations must reform their domestic and international policies related to agriculture, trade, and sustainable development; enhance the effectiveness of their aid programmes; and help poor countries to reduce their debt burdens. For their part, low-income nations must address fundamental issues related to governance, rights and social justice. In all cases, countries must set their own strategies and policies, together with their global partners, to ensure that poor people receive their fair share of the benefits of development. As an active member of this partnership, IIED has launched a programme of collaborative research, networking and advocacy on the MDGs. Meeting these ambitious goals requires more local action, local capacity and good governance.

We aim to identify policies and practices that enhance these local development processes. We also aim to challenge inadequate and inaccurate measures of poverty and development progress and increase the influence of civil society on key debates and high-level policy processes.

This booklet was produced for the UN 2005 World Summit in September 2005 and for IIED's conference, **How to Make Poverty History: The central role of local organizations in meeting the MDGs** in December 2005. For more information about IIED's work on the MDGs, go to <http://www.meetingthemdgs.org>.

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) is an independent, non-profit research institute working in the field of sustainable development. IIED aims to provide expertise and leadership in researching and achieving sustainable development at local, national, regional, and global levels. In alliance with others we seek to help shape a future that ends global poverty and delivers and sustains efficient and equitable management of the world's natural resources.

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