

proffered to control armed conflict in the Niger Delta and also regenerate the region's dwindling forest resources.

- **Political Dialogue:** The Federal Government should engage the people of the region in a sustained and honest dialogue, and create mutual trust and confidence, which would allow it to address the grievances of the people in the troubled region.
- **Community Development:** Oil producing companies operating in the Niger Delta should accelerate community development by alleviating poverty and promoting social equity. They should also adopt best practices approach to oil exploration and production, minimizing oil spillage and abolishing gas flaring.
- **Reforestation:** Government should initiate re-forestation programmes aimed at restoring the region's forest cover already lost to unsustainable human activities.

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NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND LOCAL INSTITUTIONS IN “POST-CONFLICT” MOZAMBIQUE AND ETHIOPIA

By Richard Black, Elizabeth Harrison, Jessica Schafer and Elizabeth Watson

The Marena¹ project researched the impact of conflict(s) on local resource management practices and national level policies in Mozambique and Ethiopia. Research took place in 1999 and 2000, in numerous case study areas, and was carried out by researchers from Mozambique, Ethiopia, and the UK. Fieldwork methods included household surveys and in-depth interviews, collection of grey literature, participant observation in communities, and exchange of findings with other researchers.

Findings touched on a wide range of issues: the notion of post-conflict; stakeholder relationships; how government policy is influenced by the post-conflict context; examples of land tenure policies for natural resource management; state and community forests; participatory plans

for natural resource management; gender in the policy process; memory and the policy process; institutions and legitimacy at the local level; the concept of 'indigenous' natural resource management institutions; the contested nature of the 'traditional', intra-community differences; the effects of migration and return on knowledge and experience; contested land tenure and return; and the role of demobilized soldiers. The following is a summary of findings in relation to state and community forests in the post-conflict contexts of Mozambique and Ethiopia.

The extent of forests in Ethiopia and Mozambique differs widely. In Mozambique, substantial areas of forest remain, and in some areas actually increased during 30 years of almost continuous fighting, as bush reclaimed abandoned land formerly cultivated for agriculture. In contrast, in Ethiopia, although the past extent of forest cover is debatable, the 1990 Ethiopian Forestry Action Plan (EFAP) estimated forest cover now to be only 2.7%. Extensive forest fires – common in both countries –resulted in further losses in Ethiopia in early 2000. Deforestation in Ethiopia has also been associated with political transitions from the Imperial to Derg regimes and from the latter to the regime of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).

In Ethiopia, under the Derg (1974-1991), no real sense of community ownership was fostered in government-sponsored 'community forests'. In the context of large-scale villagization programmes, compulsive collective farming and public works, the 'communities' involved in tree planting projects felt little sense of responsibility for, or likelihood of benefiting from, these resources. Indeed very often

there was outright opposition from these communities, since forestry projects came into conflict with the use of hillsides for grazing, and compensation was not provided for lost land. Given this lack of consent, it is not surprising that 'community forests' were frequently subject to looting.

During the last months of the Derg and in the early transitional period, the levels of forest use and destruction increased. The state institutions that had controlled forest access and use withdrew or became obsolete. Many different groups including Derg soldiers, returnees from resettlement, EPRDF soldiers and poor peasants, took advantage of the resulting institutional vacuum either to cut down trees or to use the resource, in order to be recognised as the legitimate 'customary' users by the new regime. Competition between these different groups may have accelerated deforestation. Increasing urban demand for wood for fuel, construction and furniture was another contributing factor.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture considers these remaining state forests as their natural heritage and as a valuable source of bio-diversity. Some experiments in participatory community forest management have been attempted and NGOs, such as SIDA, SOS Sahel and GTZ, have sought particularly to promote these, most working in partnership with the government. In practice, the success of these attempts has been limited. Concepts such as 'participation' and 'community' have been defined in many different ways, causing confusion among practitioners on the ground and precluding the development of clear policy objectives. Tenure issues, and any innovations in the delineation of rights to forests, are fraught, sensitive and

political. Finally, the participatory community forest projects are time-consuming, and are often seen as failing to deliver in a country where the problems caused by repeated droughts, and in some cases, new political insecurities are seen by many as too pressing for these approaches.

In Mozambique, community forestry management is the official policy of the government, and several experimental programmes are underway to implement this policy, with considerable help from external donors. There is concern in the conservation camp, however, that forests are now disappearing at such an unsustainable rate that more urgent action is needed. Changing unsustainable agricultural practices and introducing sustainable forest management is a process that will require long term investment, and yet conservationists fear that it will be too late by that stage to recover the lost forests and biodiversity contained within them. Therefore, officials are implementing a combination of interventionist practices with participatory management, which leaves local people in some confusion as to the real intentions of government.

Furthermore, some government actions are contradictory, leaving local people suspicious of the motives of government for forest conservation, given the past history of external exploitation of local forest resources under the guise of conservation. In a similar manner, local people see hunters from outside the community taking away their animals, while they are urged not to hunt and told they will be fined if they do. This situation has created a serious failure of trust and cooperation between local people and government conservation

agents.

A central finding in both contexts is that the notion of 'post conflict' is problematic. A post-conflict period tends to be one of intensification of processes already taking place, including internal population movement, and institutional breakdown and rebuilding. Thus, the gap between conflict and 'post-conflict' can be blurred. The end of war is also often accompanied by the outbreak or continuation of other conflicts. Formal authority may still be contested. Divisions hitherto suppressed may resurface, and communities may become more divided and interest groups more polarised. In Ethiopia, formal (armed) conflict broke out with neighbouring Eritrea. Meanwhile, local-level conflicts have remained in both countries well beyond the cessation of formal hostilities. Rather than being conflicts *over* natural resources, these are often political conflicts in which control of access to natural resources represents a marker of political gains or losses.

Post-conflict situations may also be ones of greater change, opportunities, and state and market interventionism for better or for worse. This occurs as a result of the stability created, the concern to make up for lost time, and to redress the balance of previous detrimental policies and the negative effects of conflict.

All briefings and working papers from this project can be downloaded free of charge at: <http://www.geog.sussex.ac.uk/research/development/marena/>

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DEFORESTATION, ENVIRONMENTAL INSECURITY, POVERTY AND CONFLICT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND GREAT LAKES

By Mersie Ejigu

There is an emerging consensus that environmental security is a useful concept for understanding armed conflict in Africa and elsewhere. A society becomes insecure in an environmental sense when severe deforestation and biodiversity loss threaten national, community and individual welfare and survival.

Whilst the correlation between environmental insecurity and armed conflict has become widely accepted, scholars caution that the link between environment and conflict is never direct. A wide range of factors including governance, socio-economic variables, culture, level of technology and property rights influence how the environment affects conflict.

To contribute to the understanding of these links and their implications for policy development and peace building, the Partnership for African Environmental Sustainability (PAES) launched a study of Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda funded by the European Union.

Study approach

This four-country study pursued a multidisciplinary and multilevel approach to understanding the role of environmental insecurity in causing and amplifying armed conflict. Household surveys and community focused group discussions were organised to capture communities' perceptions.