

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

The right to a future

Growing inequalities and unregulated finances are expropiating people everywhere from their fair share in the benefits of global prosperity. Our children will inherit the burden of deforestation, desertification, erosion of biodiversity and climate change. To revert this trend, the promise of universal dignity brought by human rights has to be enforced and the rights of future generations need to be recognized and properly defended.

A REPORT FROM CITIZENS' ORGANIZATIONS IN 66 COUNTRIES Includes the findings of the Civil Society Reflection Group on sustainable development

SOCIAL WATCH REPORT 2012

• SOCIAL WATCH REPORT 2012 The right to a future

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Association; Kasangati Orphans Fund Society; Kasawo Namuganga Development Association; Kaserengethe Rural Development Initiative Women Group; Kasese District Development Network; Kasilo Christian Youth Association; Katakwi Evangakinos People Living with AIDS (HIV/ AIDS (KEPLWA); Kayunga District Farmers Association; Kibaale District Civil Society Network; Kibuku Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd; Kicwamba Nyankuku Rural Development; Kigezi Health Care Foundation; Kigulu Development Group; Kiima Foods: Kiira Adult Education Association: Kinawataka Women Initiative: Kinvamaseke United Women Club: Koboko Civil Society Network: Koka Women Development Programme; Kumi Network of Development Organizations: Kumi Pentecostal Assemblies of God: Kyakulumbye Development Foundation; Kvebando Associates Club: Lira Community Development Association; Literacy and Adult Basic Education; Little Sister of St. Francis; Makindye Multipurpose Youth and Vendors Group-CBO; Malukhu Youth Development Foundation; Masindi District Education Network; Matilong Youth Mixed Farming Organization; Mbarara District Civil Society Organizations Forum; Mengo Child and Family Development Project Ltd; Mpigi Widows Entrepreneurs (MWEA); Mpigi Women Development Trust (MWODET): Ms Lloanda: Mt Rwenzori Initiative for Rural Development; Mukono Multipurpose Youth Organization (MUMYO); Musingi Rural Development Association: Nabinvonvi Development Group: Namutumba District Civil Societies Network; Nangabo Environment Initiative (NEI); National Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (Nacwola) Kamuli; National Foundation for Human Rights in Uganda (FHRI); National Union of Disabled Persons in Uganda (NUDIPU); National Women Association for Social & Education Advancement; Ndiima Cares Association (NDICA); Network of Ugandan Researchers and Research Users (NURRU); Ngeye Development Initiative (NDI); Nile Vocational Institute (NVI); Northern Uganda Rural Association: Northern Liganda Vision Association: Ntulume Village Women's Association: Ntungamo District Farmers Association: Ntungamo District Local Government CBO: Ntungamo District NGOs/CBOs Forum; Ntungamo Rural and Urban Development Foundation; Nyabubare United Group; Nyio Development Association; Organization for Rural Development; Osia Integrated Farmers' Cooperative; Palissa Development Initiative; Pallisa District NGOs/CBOs Network; Pamo Volunteers; Participatory Initiative for Real Development (PIRD); Participatory Rural Action for Development; Peace Foundation; Plan International Kampala; Poverty Alert and Community Development Organization (PACDO); Poverty Alleviation Credit Trust; Prayer Palace Christian Centre Kibuve: Protecting Families against HIV/AIDS (PREFA): Rakai Children Trust; Rakai Community Strategy for Development (RUCOSDE); Redeemed Bible Way Church Organization: Riamiriam Moroto Nakapiripiriti Civil Society Network: Ruhama Bee Keeping Group; Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment; **Rural Initiatives Development Foundation** (RIDF); Rural Productivity for Development

Africa; Rushenyi Youth Drama Actors; Rushooka Orphans Education Centre; Rwenzori Agriculture Diversification Promotion Organization; Rwenzori Information Centre (RUCNET); Rwenzori Organization for Children Living Under Difficult Circumstances; Rwenzori Peace Bridge of Reconciliation; Rwoho Bakyara Twimusyane Tukore; Samaritan Partners for Development; Saving and Credit Society; Single Parents Association of Uganda; Small World Counselling Health Education Association; Soroti District Association of NGOs/CBOs Network: Soroti Bural Development Agency: South Fastern Private Sector Promotion Enterprise Limited: Spiritual Assembly of Uganda: St. Francis Tailoring Helper Programme; Sustainable Agriculture Society of Kasese; Sustainable Agriculture Trainers Network; Talent Calls Club; Tecwaa Child and Family Project Bweyale-Masindi; Temele Development Organization (TEMEDO); The Aged Family Uganda; The Forestry College at Nyabyeya; The Modern Campaign against Illiteracy; The Organization for the Emancipation of the Rural Poor; The Uganda Reach the Aged Association; The United Orphans Association; The Youth Organization for Creating Employment; Tirinyi Welfare Circle; Tororo Civil Society Network; Tororo District NGO Forum; Trinita Rural Integrated Community Development Association: Tripartite Training Programme; Triple B Kasese Community; Tukole Women's Group; Tusubira Health and Research Foundation: Twezimbe Rural Development Organization: Uganda Change Agent Association; Uganda Christian Prisoners Aid Foundation: Uganda Church Women Development Centre; Uganda Coalition for Crisis Prevention (UCCP); Uganda Development Initiatives Foundation; Uganda Environmental Education Foundation; Uganda Environmental Protection Forum (UEPF); Uganda Gender Resource Centre; Uganda Human Rights Activists; Uganda Indigenous Women's Club; Uganda Joint Action for Adult Education; Uganda Martyrs Parish; Uganda Media Women's Association; Uganda Mid Land Multipurpose Development Association: Uganda Mid Land Multipurpose Development Foundation; Uganda National Action on Physical Disabilities (UNAPD): Uganda Orphans Rural Development Programme; Uganda Project Implementation and Management Centre (UPIMAC); Uganda Restoration Gospel Churches Organization; Uganda Rural Development and Training Programme; Uganda Rural Self Help Development Promotion (SEDEP); Uganda Support for Children and Women Organization; Uganda Women Foundation Fund; Uganda Women Tree Planting Movement; Uganda Women's Finance and Credit Trust Limited; Uganda Women's Welfare Association; Uganda Women's Effort to Save Orphans; Uganda Young Men's Christian Association; Uganda Youth Anti AIDS Association: UN Association of Lloanda: United African Orphanage Foundation: United Humanitarian Development Association: United Orphanage School; Urban Rural Environment Development Programme: Victoria Grass Root Foundation for Development; Voluntary Service Team Mubende; Voluntary Services Overseas; Voluntary Services Trust Team; Volunteer

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Stiftung; The Fred Hollows Foundation; Family Health International; Foundation for International Development/Relief; Fundacion Promocion Social de la Cultura; Global Community Service Foundation; Good Neighbors International; German Red Cross - Vietnam Country Office; Research and Technological Exchange Group; Glocal Ventures, Inc.; Habitat for Humanity Vietnam; Hagar International in Vietnam; HealthBridge Foundation of Canada (formerly PATH Canada); Heifer International Viet Nam; HELVETAS, Swiss Association for International Cooperation: HUE HELP: Holt International Children's Services; Handicap International Federation: Handicap International Belgium in Vietnam: Helen Keller International-Vietnam: International Development Enterprises: Institute of International Education; Lien Aid; LCMS World Mission; Loreto Vietnam Australia Program; Mines Advisory Group; Maryknoll; Mennonite Central Committee; Medical Committee Netherlands Vietnam; Medecins du Monde France; Medical, Education, Development Resources, International Exchange; Malteser International; Management Sciences for Health; Marie Stopes International in Vietnam; Nordic Assistance to Vietnam; NGO Fontana; The Norwegian Mission Alliance Vietnam; Norwegian People's Aid; Oxfam Great Britain: Oxfam Hong Kong Oxfam Quebec: OBBIS International Operation Smile Vietnam; Oxfam Solidarity Belgium; Pact; Partage; Program for Appropriate Technology in Health; Population Council in Viet Nam: Prosperity Initiative C.I.C; Pathfinder International Vietnam; Plan in Vietnam; Pearl S. Buck International Vietnam; Population Services International, Vietnam; PeaceTrees VietNam; Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung; Room to Read; Rutgers WPF; Save the Children in Vietnam; Saigon Children's Charity; Netherlands Development Organisation SNV; Samaritan's Purse International Relief; Spanish Red Cross; The Asia Foundation; Terre des hommes Foundation - child relief (Lausanne, Switzerland); Triangle Generation Humanitaire; Vredeseilanden - VECO Vietnam: Volunteers for Peace Vietnam: Volunteers In Asia: Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped; Voluntary Service Overseas in Vietnam; Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation: Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund: Vets With A Mission: World Concern Vietnam: Woolcock Institute of Medical Research Vietnam; The William J. Clinton Foundation; World University Service of Canada; World Vision International -Vietnam; Worldwide Orphans Foundation; Xin Chao Kinderhilfe Vietnam; Youth With A Mission, Mercy, Relief and Development Asia.

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Social Watch: promoting accountability

Social Watch, a network that today has members in over 70 countries around the world, was created in 1995 as a "meeting place for nongovernmental organizations concerned with social development and gender discrimination." This network was created to respond to the need to promote the political will required for making the United Nations promises come true. Social Watch, which is continually growing both qualitatively and quantitatively, has published 16 yearly reports on progress and setbacks in the struggle against poverty and for gender equality. These reports have been used as tools for advocacy on a local, regional, and international level.

From its number 0, published in 1996, to this present issue, the 16th, the *Social Watch Report* has complied more than 670 national reports from civil society organizations, all of them with the common aim of reminding governments of their commitments and tracking their implementation, both country by country and at the international level.

The present issue, featuring contributions from more than 65 national Social Watch coalitions, carries forward the idea that brought the network into existence in 1995: the need to generate tools and strategies to rectify the lack of accountability mechanisms and ensure compliance with international commitments related to social policies and development goals.

In the decade Social Watch was created, a series of high-level United Nations conferences, starting with the 'Children's Summit' in 1990 and ending with the Millennium Summit in 2000, redefined the global social agenda. In 1995, the Social Summit (Copenhagen) and the Women's Conference (Beijing) defined, for the first time, gender equality and the eradication of poverty as common universal objectives, setting concrete targets and timelines to achieve the goal vaguely formulated in 1946 in the UN Charter as "dignity for all". To promote the political will needed for those promises to become a reality, the Social Watch network was created as a "meeting place for non-governmental organizations concerned with social development and gender discrimination" (Social Watch No. 0, 1996), by a group of civil society organizations.

Thus, the Social Watch Report was formulated as a powerful tool for the presentation of internationally available statistical information and for reporting on qualitative aspects of the issues addressed through analyses by social organizations working at a national level. A yearly publication, the Report is devoted to progress and setbacks in the struggle against poverty and for gender equality, two largely overlapping objectives, since the absolute majority of people living in poverty are women.

The Social Watch yearly reports, while adding an international dimension to local efforts and campaigns, became the first sustained monitoring initiative on social development and gender equity at a national level, and the first to combine both in one international overview.

The report N²O, published in 1996, featured contributions from 13 organizations; since then, the network has been growing steadily. Currently, Social Watch has members ("watchers") in over 70 coun-

tries around the world, and membership increases each year.

The local, the global and the Report

Every year Social Watch chooses to analyze a different topic in depth through its Report, usually focusing on issues under discussion on the international agenda that can be addressed from a local perspective. Experts from diverse origins and disciplines contribute alternative views on the issues through thematic articles. This international perspective is complemented with national and regional reports through which member organizations contribute with a local perspective, reporting on the state of affairs in their countries in relation to each year's specific theme.

In addition, Social Watch produces indexes and tables with comparable international information, presenting a macro-perspective of the situation related to certain dimensions of development while also providing national level readings. Social Watch has developed alternative indicators to measure progress or setbacks in gender equity and the meeting of basic human capacities, which are now used as reference points for both civil society and international institutions. These are: the Gender Equity Index (GEI), and the Basic Capabilities Index (BCI).

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN NATIONAL GROUPS AND THE SOCIAL WATCH NETWORK

- 1. Coalitions must be based in the country and be active in social development issues in that country (not exclusively as academics or consultants).
- 2. Their basic commitment to the international network is to provide a national report, with their own conclusions and determination of priorities, to be included in the annual publication.
- 3. They are expected to use their national report and the global report in lobbying activities at a national level.
- 4. They must be open to the incorporation of other organizations, work actively to broaden awareness of Social Watch and encourage the participation of other organizations.
- They are responsible for raising funds for their activities. National coalitions are not dependent for funds on, or financially accountable to, the Secretariat or any other international Social Watch entity.
- 6. Each coalition determines its own organizational structure.
- Social Watch membership and the exercise of governmental functions are absolutely incompatible.
- Cooperation with other national platforms should be encouraged at sub-regional, regional and global levels.
- 9. In cases of conflicts between members/participating organizations of a coalition on issues related to Social Watch (e.g. nomination of the focal point, contribution to the Social Watch Report, nomination of delegates to the Social Watch Assembly) all parties involved have to demonstrate their willingness to solve the problems at the national level. If, in exceptional cases, an agreement cannot be reached, the Coordinating Committee can take the necessary decisions.
- 10. In order to demonstrate their affiliation to the network all coalitions are encouraged to use the Social Watch logo for national activities directly related to goals and objectives of Social Watch. They are requested to inform the International Secretariat about these activities. In other cases they have to seek permission from the International Secretariat or the Coordinating Committee in advance for other uses of the Social Watch name and logo.

NOTE: The Memorandum of Understanding was adopted during the 1st General Assembly, Rome, 2000. Available from: <www.socialwatch.org>.



Although members use the document for advocacy work in diverse situations, report launches, as well as index launches, are key opportunities for dissemination of its contents, both taking place in relevant spaces for international and national debate and decision-making. The report is published by the Secretariat in several languages: Spanish, English, French, Arabic and Russian. Some national coalitions also publish their own versions of the report: Spain, Italy, Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Europe, India, Brazil and the Philippines. Other coalitions publish an array of materials. The Czech and Italian Social Watch coalition, for instance, publish the Gender Equity Index, while Ghana's Social Watch has published a compilation of its national reports and the Beninese Social Watch coalition issues a quarterly, Social Watch Bénin. Also, in February 2011 the European report was launched: Time for Action Responding to Poverty, Social Exclusion and Inequality in Europe and Beyond.

In addition, Occasional Papers are published, mainly to help build the capacity of member coalitions, regional training workshops are organized, and position papers are produced¹. For example, in

1 The first Occasional Paper by Mirjam Van Reisen, The Lion's Teeth, examines the political context in which Social Watch was created. The second, by Ana María Arteaga. Control Ciudadano desde la base, analyzes the democratization of international human rights instruments experience in Chile in 1997. The third, a compilation by Patricia Garcé and Roberto Bissio, introduces the experience of monitoring Copenhagen goals through the concrete example of Social Watch. Papers 4 and 5, coordinated by the Social Watch Social Sciences Research Team, address poverty and inequality in Latin America and the links between poverty and human rights. The Paper 6 Beijing and Beyond -Putting Gender Economics at the Forefront launched during the review of the Committee on the Status of Women marking the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Occasional Papers available from: <www socialwatch.org/taxonomy/term/459>.

2011 Social Watch published the Occasional Paper 7 entitled "*Centroamérica y la sociedad civil – Desafíos en común – Derechos humanos, desarrollo sustentable*", which offers thematic reports on problems the region is facing, and national reports.

Through communications methods via website, e-newsletter and its Facebook page, Social Watch utilizes new multimedia and tools to disseminate information on gender, development and human rights issues, generate discussions among fellow civil society practitioners, and conduct outreach to policymakers and journalists. Advocacy, communications and campaigning strategies complement each other to achieve its goals.

On several occasions, Social Watch spokespersons have addressed the UN General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies on behalf of the network or wider civil society constituencies. The network has kept national coalitions informed about global decision making processes and enabled members to participate in these developments.

A flexible network

As the "meeting place" has grown, several aspects of it have evolved, but the founding ideas and objectives remain. In preparing for their participation in the Copenhagen Social Summit, civil society organizations adopted flexible and *ad hoc* ways of organizing as a network. No formal governing structure or steering committee was created and no stable coordinating group was established. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) preferred to inform each other and coordinate activities in horizontal open spaces, an approach that some analysts regard as a forerunner of the organizational format later adopted by the World Social Forum. Many of the NGOs that took part in the Social Summit later formed the backbone of Social Watch. As a result, the structure and functioning of the network preserves much of the original flexibility and openness.

In addition to national coalitions, the network is structured around three bodies: the General Assembly, the Coordinating Committee and the International Secretariat. In recent years, some regional and sub-regional coordination structures were established as a space for discussion - not as a necessary intermediate body to link the national with the global.

The Social Watch network is not an incorporated entity and it did not start by drafting its governing bylaws. Instead, a short Memorandum of Understanding between national groups and the network (see box) became the basic framework establishing mutual expectations, respecting both the autonomy of national coalitions and democratic, horizontal decision-making. A key principle that distinguishes Social Watch from other international civil society networks is that no central body provides funds for its members. These operational principles help avoid the tensions associated with donor/recipient relationships within the network - since there aren't any - and also the loss of energy that could result from lengthy discussions about money, budgeting and reporting, as well as procedural matters. It has also resulted in members' strong sense of tenure over the network.

National coalitions organize the way they want – or can – according to the conditions in each country. The membership of Social Watch coalitions is very diverse, including research institutes or centres, NGOs, grassroots organizations, trade unions, women's groups, rural organizations and others.



Global Assembly

The Global Assembly is the Social Watch network's highest directive body. Policy discussion and medium- to long-term strategic planning happens in its realm, which serves as a decision-making forum. However, it is also a space for reinforcing the sense of belonging and strengthening the network's identity and unity. In addition to setting mediumand long-term priorities and identifying potential alliances in advocacy strategy, the Assembly elects members of the Coordinating Committee to whom coordination and political leadership between assemblies are delegated. It takes place every three years and has been held five times: in Rome 2000, Beirut 2003, Sofia 2006, Accra 2009, and most recently, in 2011², in Manila. The Manila Assembly concluded that the current growth-led economic model is economically inefficient, socially unjust, environmentally damaging and politically unsustainable and pledged to challenge the prevailing economic paradigm based on GDP growth worldwide. Social Watch will also contribute to the current climate negotiations and advocate for innovative sources of financing for poverty eradication and gender equality.

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee (CC) is the key political body for the 'daily' work of the network, with an organizational structure which requires fluid communication, facilitated principally through an email list, plus biannual face-to-face meetings and regular telephone conferences to discuss specific issues.

As the CC's task is to "ensure the political visibility and participation of the network in relevant spaces and processes,"³ its composition endeavours to represent a geographical and gender balance, as well as considering the contribution, in terms of experience and capabilities, that members can provide to the whole network. In general, the CC's decisions are adopted by consensus, and every single decision (and discussion) is communicated to the watchers in a timely manner. The constant participation of two Secretariat members as *ad hoc* members of the CC ensures coordination between the two bodies, with the function of the Secretariat being to support and implement the strategic decisions made.



Vice President of the Philippines, Jejomar Binay, with members of Social Watch network at the official inauguration of the Social Watch Global Assembly, Manila, July 2011.

International Secretariat

The Secretariat is the main executive body of Social Watch. The first external evaluation of the network (1995-2000) noted that, "Of the various roles in the Social Watch network, that of the Secretariat has changed the most" (Hessini and Nayar, 2000). Originally the Secretariat's function was limited to responsibility for the production of the Report, but due to the network's growth it has subsequently incorporated a series of new functions, including research, capacity building, campaigning, promotion of the network and its representation in international forums.

Promoting accountability

The Accra Assembly, held in October 2009, endorsed the concept of "mutual accountability" among members and among the different bodies of the network (Secretariat, CC, members). Social Watch believes that the key action to achieve poverty eradication, gender equality and social justice happen primarily at the local and national level and, therefore, its international activities and structures should be accountable and at the service of national and local constituencies, and not the other way around. Social Watch will achieve its objectives through a comprehensive strategy of advocacy, awarenessbuilding, monitoring, organizational development and networking. Social Watch promotes peoplecentred sustainable development. Peace is a precondition for the realization of human rights and the eradication of poverty. But also poverty and lack of respect for human rights are at the root of many armed conflicts. Therefore the devastating impact of conflict and post-conflict situations on people is of particular concern for Social Watch.

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² Final reports, working papers and other materials from these five Assemblies available from: <www.socialwatch.org/node/62>.

³ The document describing the nature and mandate of the Coordinating Committee was agreed upon at the 2nd General Assembly in Beirut 2003. Available from: <www.socialwatch. org/node/9388>.

THE KEY ROLE OF SOCIAL WATCH

Juan Somavia¹

As many of you know, I am a great supporter of Social Watch. I believe that this accountability movement that you initiated within, and after, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen has certainly proven its worth and my civil society soul is fully, fully with you. Thank you for the magnificent job you have done in monitoring the commitments of governments. You have persistently reminded them, as well as international organizations, business, and NGOs of the need to act on them.

The major conferences of the 1990s defined agendas for transformation from the UN. It was a time when governments began to question prevailing dogmas with a sustainable development vision. Many governments were then ready to give leadership in shaping new approaches. But the commitments of the 1990s became increasingly subordinated to the demands of a model of deregulated globalization that has become increasingly unbalanced, unfair, and I believe politically unsustainable. Today the courage, the resolve, and the space to think and act differently are much, much weaker. So this puts a premium on the role of civil society and social movements as agents of change. And today Social Watch is more necessary than ever before.

Dear friends, tempting as it is to look back, we must take stock of the current reality and move forward. The reason: financial and economic crises are clear manifestations of an inefficient growth pattern that has created indecent levels of income and wealth concentration. Not surprisingly, there has been a distinctive weakening of a human rights approach. We know that the transformations we wish to see in our societies must be driven by the force of social movements and of social struggle. Social progress demands constant vigilance and constant activism. The Millennium Development Goals helped to bring a certain focus and a means of measuring progress and we can chalk off some successes in the reduction of absolute poverty since 1990. But at the same time, the facts are that globally 3.5 billion people have the same income as the top 61 million people.

Even here in dynamic Asia we see rapid growth in output, but slow growth in decent jobs and wages. Also more than 200 million are officially unemployed worldwide, including nearly 80 million young women and men, and youth unemployment rates are sometimes seven to 10 times higher than the rate for others. And the number of workers in vulnerable employment, 1.5 million, and those working but surviving on less than two dollars a day, some 1.2 billion, are on the rise again. This is certainly not the path to sustainable development. People are rightly demanding more fairness in every aspect of their lives. In three quarters of the 82 countries with available information a majority of individuals are getting increasingly pessimistic about their future quality of life and standards of living. Too many feel squeezed, including the middle classes. At the same time, they see many governments with either too little strength or too little will to reign in the unaccountable power of financial operators who have come to wield so much negative influence on our societies. On the one hand, we have financial institutions deemed too big to fail, and on the other many people who feel they are treated as if they are too small to matter. This can't go on

The financial and economic crises shocked the world into realizing that change was essential. Yet there are many, too many, indications of a return to business as usual, and this is a recipe for disaster. So how can we move forward? To begin with, by putting decent work and social protection as key objectives of sustainable development growth patterns. Many, perhaps most of the tensions we are experiencing come together in the world of work. Decent and productive work is central to human dignity, to the stability of people's lives and families, to peace in our communities, as well as in our societies and to strong, sustainable economic growth. Let me quote: "Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere". This principle of the ILO's constitution reflects, as you have said, the right of all people not to be poor. And every person living in poverty knows that working out of poverty, a productive job, is their best chance at a life of dignity. Labour is not a commodity, work is central to human dignity, if you want peace you must cultivate social justice, these are the operating principles of the ILO. And the labour market is a gateway to social justice when it respects human dignity, guided by the notions of freedom, of equity, and equality.

The ILO and its agenda are at the heart of real social processes. We were born as an institution in 1919 out of the social struggles at the end of the 19th



century. In the unfolding Arab revolt and revolution we have heard impassioned calls for jobs and social justice, freedom and democracy, all embodied in decent work. Moving towards a different pattern of growth with social justice is technically possible, yet we know politically difficult – too many entrenched interests. And that's where you are key.

Social Watch can play a major role in driving this agenda. It requires, for example, a new policy mix that generates higher levels of investment in the real economy, in particular, small enterprises, and not in financial products that do not create value or jobs; yields a fairer relationship between productivity gains and salaries; produces income led growth and strikes a balance between export led strategies and domestically driven demand; enables all to participate through relevant training and educational opportunities; allows for balance and synergy through policy coherence -- for example, in the creation of green jobs; places rights at work and social dialogue at the heart of policy making, and this policy mix must be guided by the objective of sharing the benefits of globalization equitably in a context where voice, participation and democracy flourish.

This year at the International Labour Conference, which is our annual conference, we had two major breakthroughs that can be important elements in the new paradigm for growth with social justice. First, the new convention on domestic workers brings the system of rights to the informal economy. Domestic workers have long mobilized to get the protection and respect to which they are entitled and now we must ensure that the convention is ratified and implemented. And secondly, we are moving towards approving next year in ILO standards, on a universal social protection floor to promote social security strategies that are protective and empowering, productive and sustainable, and which stimulate aggregate demand. Today we must remember 80 percent of workers have no access to social security. This is set within the framework of broader national strategies to reduce poverty and formalize informal employment. These I believe are strong building blocks of social justice and I invite you to mobilize around them and your support can be invaluable. I also want to mention that there is a nascent decent work movement that coalesces around the 7th of October each year, which has been declared by the International Trade Union Confederation as International Decent Work day and you may wish to join in.

Dear friends, let me conclude; we have all been inspired by the courage, the clarity, the energy of Arab youth, but turning dreams into reality is a task for all of us. And the direction of change is never guaranteed, we must all be watchful. We must drive change towards balanced and just outcomes. And we must all be held accountable. The current growth model that has evolved since the early 1980s has become economically inefficient, socially unstable, environmentally damaging and politically unsustainable. So it must be changed. But getting there will probably lead to increased social conflict. But as we know, history tells us that out of social struggle can come positive change. And as you know, when you choose to challenge prevailing dogmas, when you choose to defend human rights, gender equality and other values that are under assault, when you want to make societies better, you also make another choice: the choice to swim against the tide of entrenched interests. So it is difficult, and will always be difficult. And that is why commitment, conviction, persistence, the positive energy not to be discouraged is so essential. And you all have that. And that is the spirit of Social Watch. What you are doing is vital. I wish you the strength and imagination to carry on your invaluable work and invite you to work with the ILO towards a new era of social justice. Thank you so very much.

¹ Speech from General Director of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to the General Assembly in Manila, Philippines 2011, <www.socialwatch.org/varios/ manila/videos.htm>

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The right to a future

An overview of the Social Watch Report 2012

Roberto Bissio Social Watch International Secretariat

FIGURE ⁻



"Sustainable development" was defined at that time by the Brundtland Commission¹ as a set of policies that "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." It has been commonly understood as providing for the requirements of the social sphere (by eradicating poverty), while allowing for the economy to grow and respecting the environment.

The 1992 Rio summit did not provide a definition of what precisely the "needs of the present" are, but in the subsequent series of UN conferences of the 1990s several social commitments were defined, including those of eradicating poverty and achieving gender equality and several indicators and targets were identified. Each country should decide on the policies that would allow for the achievement of these universally agreed goals and targets. Yet, after the collapse of the Warsaw pact and the desintegration of the Soviet Union, there seemed to be a widespread consensus that free trade and economic liberalization were the way to go.

Thus, the World Trade Organization, created in 1995, announces in its homepage that "the opening of national markets to international trade (...) will encourage and contribute to sustainable development, raise people's welfare, reduce poverty, and foster peace and stability." In a similar way, the first of the Articles of Agreement of the World Bank, as amended in 1989, establishes as a major purpose "to promote the long-range balanced growth of international trade and the maintenance of equilibrium in balances of payments by encouraging international investment for the development of the productive resources of members, thereby assisting in raising productivity, the standard of living and conditions of labor in their territories."².

These two powerful international institutions have shaped the economic policies of the developing



countries in the last two decades through their rulings on international trade and through the loan conditionalities imposed on indebted economies. Both clearly agree on trade and economic growth as the key objectives of their policies and the most important contributions to the sustainable development of their member countries.

And they have met these objectives: Total world exports multiplied almost five times in 20 years, growing from a total value of USD 781 billion in 1990 to USD 3.7 trillion in 2010. Over the same period, the world's average inhabitants more than doubled their income, from USD 4.08 a year in 1990 to USD 9.12 in 2010.

The dignity deficit

These indicators suggest a global abundance of resources, which are sufficient to guarantee for the essential needs of all of the world's 7 billion inhabitants. And yet, too many of these inhabitants suffer from hunger. According to the 2010 report of the Food and Agriculture Organization, 850 million people are undernourished in the world, and that number is increasing due to rising food prices.

To monitor trends in global deprivation, Social Watch has developed a Basic Capabilities Index³, which combines infant mortality rates, the number of births attended by trained personnel and enrolment rates in primary school. Together these indicators of basic well-being provide elements of what should be

considered a "minimum social floor." They should add up to 100%, meaning that no children should be out of school, no women should deliver their babies without assistance and no kids born alive, or at least less than 1% of them, should die before their fifth birthday, since the major cause of those avoidable deaths is malnutrition and poverty.

The indicators computed in the BCI are part of internationally agreed goals that reflect what a minimum social floor should achieve. Below that, there is a dignity deficit. Dignity for all is what the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights set out to achieve and what world leaders committed themselves to achieve in the Millennium Declaration.

But the world is far from achieving these basic targets. The BCI moved up only 7 points between 1990 and 2010, which is very little progress. And over this period, progress was faster in the first decade than the second - increasing over four percentage points between 1990 and 2000 and of barely three percentage points between 2000 and 2010. This trend is the opposite for trade and income, both of which grew faster after the year 2000 than in the decade before (see figure). It is surprising that progress on social indicator slowed down after the turn of the century, despite steady growth in the global economy and despite international commitment to accelerate social progress and achieve the MDGs. This situation can only get worse as the most developed countries are facing severe financial and economic crisis that spreads all over the world. Austerity fiscal policies that cut on social

¹ The World Commission on Environment and Development, known for its Chair, former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, issued the report titled *Our Common Future* that inspired the deliberations of the Earth Summit.

² IBRD Articles of Agreement, (16 February 1989), <siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTABOUTUS/Resources/ ibrd-articlesofagreement.pdf>.

³ See more about the Basic Capabilities Index in pages 45-49 of this report.

spending started to be implemented in debt-affected countries and are now spreading even to countries that do not suffer from debt problems or fiscal deficit. According to a study by the Policy and Practice division of UNICEF, the UN organization for children, out of 128 developing countries surveyed, more than 90 were introducing austerity measures that affect their social sectors in 2011 or were planning to do so in 2012. In at least one quarter of them the contraction was deemed "excessive", meaning will have a direct impact on the well being of children and their families.

The glaringly obvious reason for the bad performance of social indicators even when the economy shows positive trends is the arowing inequality within and between countries. According to the September 2011 issue of "Finance and Development", a publication of the International Monetary Fund, "in 2010, real per capita income in the United States was 65 percent above its 1980s level and in the United Kingdom, 77 percent higher. Over the same period, inequality in the United States increased from about 35 to 40 or more Gini points, and in the United Kingdom, from 30 to about 37 Gini points. These increases reflect significant adverse movements in income distributions. Overall, between the mid-1980s and the mid-2000s, inequality rose in 16 out of 20 rich OECD countries". The Gini coefficient is the most used measure of inequality and ranges from 0, when everybody has the same income, to 1 when a single individual receives all the wealth of a society. Brazil is one of the few countries where inequalities have diminished in the last decade from over 60 to nearly 55. The world as a whole is more unequal than any country, with a Gini value of around 70.

Thus, the hard numbers prove that prosperity does not "trickle down." It used to be common sense that a growing economy benefits the poor, that a rising tide will lift all boats, big or small, or that the pie has to grow first before we can share it, but the trends in terms of the indicators of social progress seem to show the opposite. And that is also what many members of the Social Watch network around the world report.

Growth at any cost

Economic growth is a priority for all governments. Some identify growth as the key policy priority because it has been very slow or even declined during the global financial crisis that started in 2008. Other have lots of it; including a number of African countries such as Zambia and Cameroon, helped by increasing commodity prices. But that growth is not benefitting the majorities. In Zambia and Mozambique, as also in countries as diverse as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Vietnam, extractive industries are the main motor of growth. In an effort to attract investors, safeguards and performance requirements have been waived and the result has been environmental deterioration without social benefits. The description of the situation in Vietnam is echoed in countries in all regions: "The country's rapid economic



growth is placing tremendous strains on the natural environment, but while legislation protecting the environment is strong, its implementation is often weak."

"As the population, economy and process of urbanization all grow," the Vietnam report continues, "the main threats to the environment include overexploitation of forests, loss of arable land, water and air pollution, soil erosion due to unsustainable land practices, loss of biodiversity through – among other factors – poaching in national parks and environmental damage due to mining."

The same is true elsewhere. In Thailand, for example, unrelentless pursuit of economic growth has induced at village level "a movement away from subsistence livelihoods to an increased focus on monetary income." Thus, the Thai now face "the challenges of rapid degradation of marine and coastal resources and the multiple consequences of urbanization and industrial and tourism development."

And in Mozambique : "The benefits of economic growth have not reached the people who need them most and the poor are getting poorer."

Not surprisingly, the watchers are alarmed. In Argentina, for example, they find it "paradoxical" to promote investments "at any cost" in order to insure growth, while at the same time approving environmental protection policies. The watchers in Finland go even beyond and suggest that "it is time for an open discussion on the fundamental issues of well-being, equality and development, including forsaking the unending quest for material growth."

Inequality is the reason why, against all theories and models, poverty is not receding, or doing so very slowly, even in countries where the economy is growing fast. By giving corporations more rights without corresponding obligations, globalization exacerbated inequalities between and within nations.

Inequality is the predominant concern in the reports from Hungary and the Dominican Republic, but the issue appears in a majority of the national contributions of this Social Watch 2012 global report. In rich and poor countries alike, only a small minority benefitted from the excellent economic performance of the world up to the financial crisis of 2008. And then, those that did not benefit from the boom were asked to pay for the bailouts of banks in the richest countries of the world that had become "too big to fail."

Not surprisingly the economic crisis and its social and environmental costs is a major issue in most of the European reports, particularly those of the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia.

Economic growth requires energy, and energy is at the heart of many of the problems denounced by the Social Watch country coalitions in this report. Oil extraction is easily identified with pollution but supposedly "cleaner" energy sources; such as hydro-electrical dams appear as problematic in several testimonies.

In Malaysia, where the official national goal is to achieve developed country status by 2020, an entire area of rainforest is being flooded and at least 15 communities relocated in order to construct a huge dam for hydro-electrical power. This is considered unsustainable and "irresponsible" by the Malaysian watchers, who warn about "loss of endemic species, increasing social discontent and environmental threats." In Brazil and Mexico huge hydroelectric megaprojects are being planned or constructed. In Cameroon the Lom and Pangar dam project will displace thousands of people and ruin one of the richest ecosystems in the world.

Biofuels, often labeled as "green," are a major cause of environmental disruption in Colombia, where the governmental support for agro-industrial monocultivation (which provides the input for biofuels) is causing the displacement of entire populations of small scale farmers. To add insult to injury, this does not even result from domestic demands but from the needs of the United States, subsidized by loans from multilateral development banks.

In Guatemala the monocrop is sugar cane, also a major source of biofuels, and its industrial cultivation

has similarly led to population displacement, human rights violations and deforestation.

Coffee is the culprit in Nicaragua. The country depends on its exports for cash and the expansion of this crop is depleting soil fertility, polluting water resources and promoting deforestation as peasants are displaced from their traditional lands.

In Sri Lanka deforestation is another consequence of armed conflict and in the Central African Republic the loss of 30,000 hectares of primary tropical forest has been registered due to the pressure of farmers, which in turn results from droughts in the north, northeast and eastern regions, which in the past were known for their agricultural production.

Desertification appears again and again in the reports as a major problem, particularly in Africa. In Nigeria almost 350,000 hectares of arable land are being lost annually to the advancing desert, as a result of droughts and human overexploitation, overgrazing, deforestation and poor irrigation, practices that derive from the extremely hard socioeconomic conditions in which the people live.

Climate change is also the root cause of the opposite disaster, catastrophic floods that devastated Central America in 2011 and Benin in 2008 and 2010, where crops were destroyed and outbreaks of cholera, meningitis and yellow fever were registered.

In Ghana, the impact of climate change is reported by the local watchers as: "hotter weather, reduced or increased seasonal rainfall, changes in rainfall patterns, flooding, sea surges, tidal waves and a rise in sea-level causing inundation and coastal erosion. The result is a reduction in food security, increased transmission of vector and water-borne diseases, significant economic losses through weather crises and the displacement of the population."

Even governments that have been leaders in acknowledging the problem find it difficult to sustain coherent policies. Bolivia, which champions the combat against climate change among developing countries, relies heavily on oil and gas production to fund its antipoverty strategies. In Germany, as part of the strategies to contain the European financial crisis, subsidies for solar energy are being reduced and the item for economic compensation to countries affected by climate change has been deleted from the 2011 draft budget.

Carbon and space

One of the countries most severely affected by climate change is Bangladesh, where rainfall and flooding is already leading to food shortages and millions of people risk becoming "climate refugees."

Paradoxically, Bangladesh is one of the countries which has contributed least to the problem, since its per capita carbon emissions are among the lowest in the world.

The graph in page 46 shows, precisely, the ranking of countries by CO_2 emissions from fossil fuels, in the horizontal axis, and by their Basic Capabilities Index in the vertical axis.

ECOLOGY AND ECONOMY

Two modern sciences carry in their names the Greek word *oikos* (house). *Ecology* is the science that studies the relations that living organisms have with respect to each other and their natural environment. Ecology can establish the limits above which a certain activity may cause irreversible damage. The science that deals with the relation between finite resources and infinite human wants is *economics*. In 1932 Lionel Robbins defined economics as "the science which studies human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses."

It is not the notion of limits that is new. The "novelty" – and the urgency – is that human activities have reached global limits and thus globally agreed strategies are needed.

This graph shows that while 50% of carbon emissions are generated by 13% of the population, 45 countries with a total population of 1.2 billion people have managed to achieve social indicators that are better than the world average with per capita emissions of CO, from fossil fuels below the world average. And none of them are labelled as "high income." Yet, the members of that group of the "clean and virtuous" have no recognition or compensation for their achievement. Quite to the contrary, similar to other middle-income countries and those considered as "least developed," they often find their space for making domestic policy choices to achieve sustainable development squeezed by external demands, conditionalities and impositions that press them to take steps such as slashing tax rates and spending on social services

The graph also shows that there is no direct relation between better progress on social indicators and CO_2 emissions. With carbon dioxide emissions of three tonnes of per capita a year, Costa Rica and Uruguay have managed to lower their infant mortality rates to the same level as a country that emits 20 tonnes a year: the United States. At the same time, with the same level of emissions as Norway, South Africa has a set of social indicators similar to that of Indonesia, which consumes five times less fossil fuels.

Between 1990 and 2000 the world's index of basic capabilities improved five points (from 79 to 84) while the world per capita emissions of CO_2 from fossil fuels actually decreased from 4.3 tonnes of coal equivalent to 4.1. In the first decade of the 21 stcentury, the social indicators moved uponly 3 points in the global average, but world CO_2 emissions moved up to 4.6 tonnes per capita.

The amount of global warming-causing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere reached a record high in 2010, and the rate of increase has accelerated, reports the World Meteorological Organization. Scientists attributed the continuing rise in levels of carbon dioxide, which is responsible for two thirds of climate warming, to fossil fuel burning, deforestation and changes in land use.

Countries with CO₂ emissions way below the world averages and low rankings on social indicators

argue that they need a certain "space" for more emissions in order to ensure an improvement in well being of their populations. This argument is sound, particularly since OECD countries countries have already used up more then their fair share of "atmospheric space" for emissions. However, empirical evidence shows that some countries have managed to reach social indicators at levels comparable to the average of the OECD countries with less than half the world emissions average. OECD members, in turn, not only consume much more than the world average, but have historically contributed to the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and thus used up their share of the atmospheric space.

If fulfilment of basic dignity levels of enjoyment of social, economic and cultural rights is not incompatible with sustainability and achievable with existing resources, not doing so is not just an ethical fault but also a threat to the global system, increasingly perceived as unjust, unfair, designed to create more and more inequality and therefore illegitimate.

Rights as the basis of sustainable development

When basic civic and political rights are absent civil society is unable to organize peacefully, people cannot make their voices heard and the quality of government policies suffers. In Eritrea, "the hell of Africa" and Burma, the need for some democratic governance as prerequisite is clearly spelled out, while in Palestine it is inescapable that no development is possible under foreign occupation and in Yemen it is evident that "*little progress can be made towards sustainable development because the country is teetering on the edge of civil war and faced with widespread famine and social catastrophe.*"

Yet, civil society shows amazing resilience and displays creativity as soon as it is given a slight opportunity. In Iraq the demonstrations that shook the country in February 2011, calling for the elimination of poverty, unemployment and corruption illustrate the new role that Iraqi citizens are beginning to play in a society where democratic participation was formerly violently repressed or silenced altogether. Although still amidst a backdrop of insecurity and highly deficient civil liberties, civil society organizations are growing and playing an ever-increasing role in the nation's development and joining the regional "Arab Spring" democratic insurgency.

In Kenya, after many years of struggle for true sovereignty and citizenship, citizens finally managed to negotiate a groundbreaking Constitution in 2010. Its focus on basic rights, participation, and accountability to citizens provides the basis for defining the role of the State as central to constructing an economy that fulfils the promise of equity and basic social and economic rights. In environmental terms, the new Constitution is also a step forward since it establishes the right of every Kenyan to a clean and healthy environment.

In Bolivia and Ecuador constitutional reform processes similarly backed by big majorities have strengthened the rights of indigenous peoples and, instead of using the language of "sustainable development" found inspiration in their cultures to establish at constitutional level the rights of Pachamama (Mother Earth). However, as watchers make clear, the protection of those rights from the ravages of the relentless quest for economic growth demands constant struggles. Environmental concerns, Bulgaria watchers recall, were extremely important in the country's struggle for democracy. Now, after years of increasing apathy, more and more people are becoming involved in environmental issues. The introduction of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in the market and several flaws in the implementation of the NATURA 2000 programme for conservation of natural areas have become two major issues in the political debate and the mobilization of citizens. In Italy, even when sustainable development was never part of the Berlusconi Government's priorities, successful referenda promoted by civil society (against nuclear power, forced privatization of water and other public services and against the exemption of the Prime Minister from the rule of law) brought almost 27 million Italians to vote, and succeeded in pushing the country in a more sustainable direction.

In some countries, Serbia and El Salvador among them, civil society organizations are vocal in supporting sustainable development policies that they have actively contributed to formulate through open consultations. Yet, success is not taken for granted, as it depends on "implementation, monitoring and enforcement, raising awareness and securing political support."

Sustainable development: goals or rights?

By monitoring antipoverty efforts and development strategies at national and international level, Social Watch has found, as summarized above, that economic indicators and social well- being indicators do not correlate. It is therefore urgent to revise economic strategies to achieve the internationally agreed sustainable development goals and make the enjoyment of human rights a reality for all.

At the Earth Summit, the leaders of the world stated that "the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries (...) aggravating poverty and imbalances." This is as true today as it was in 1992.

Global public goods cannot be provided by any single state acting alone, and they include the preservation of the life supporting functions of the atmosphere and the oceans (threatened by global climate change) or the reliability and stability of a global financial system, indispensable for trade and development but threatened by unhindered speculation, currency volatility and debt crises. The failure to provide those public goods impacts the livelihoods of billions of people around the world and threatens the one public good that inspired the creation of the United Nations: global peace.

Further, in spite of the recommendations formulated by the Earth Summit to develop sustainable development indicators and all the work done in this area since then, the international community still lacks agreed indicators to measure the sustainability of the global public goods under its surveillance.

The report of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission⁴ clearly suggests that well-being indicators and sustainability indicators are of a different nature and likens them to the dashboard of a car, with separate displays for speed and remaining gas. One informs about the time needed to achieve a destination, the other one refers to a required resource that is being consumed and may reach a limit before the destination is reached.

The human rights framework sets clear goals for well-being indicators. The rights to food, to health, to education impose the mandate to achieve universal attendance of all girls and boys to education, the reduction of infant mortality to less than 10 per thousand live births (since all mortality above this figure is related to malnutrition and poverty), the universal attendance of all births by trained personnel, the universal access to safe water and sanitation and even the universal access to phone and internet services.5 Basically all of the first six goals of the MDGs can be read as a request to fulfill existing rights in accordance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCRs). And human rights demand other goals, not included among the MDGs, such as the right to social security (article 22 of the Universal Declaration), now recognized as the basis for a "minimum social floor".

The national and international development discourse should not be about picking certain goals as a priority, since all have already been agreed upon, but about when they will be progressively achieved. The realization of those rights is a responsibility of governments "individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of available resources," according to the Covenant on ESCRs. The prioritization of 'maximum available resources' also applies to international assistance. In order to monitor the effective use of the maximum available resources (including those of international cooperation) the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council should be strengthened to perform this task. Further, the Optional Protocol to the Covenant on ESCR should be ratified, so as to allow citizens to claim their rights in court, and the bilateral and multilateral development agencies have to be made accountable for their human rights impact.

Sustainability indicators, on the other hand, refer to the depletion of certain non-renewable stocks or assets. When those are part of the global commons international agreements are required to ensure sustainability. Contrary to human well-being, which can be formulated in terms of goals, sustainability needs to be addressed in terms of **limits**. Limits can be formulated as an absolute ban on certain activities, such as the ban on whaling or on the emission of ozone depleting gases (Montreal Protocol), or they can establish quotas to ensure non-depletion, which can be assigned to economic actors through different market and non-market mechanisms respecting the equity and solidarity principles.

Internationally, more work needs to be done, for example, on fisheries in order to avoid further depletion of species that are vital to feed millions of people. But above all, an ambitious agreement is needed on the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol that limits temperature rise to well below 1.5° to prevent catastrophic climate change and ensuresjust and fair sharing of drastic emission reductions, in accordance with common but differentiated responsibilities and historical responsibility.

Any formulation of "sustainable development goals" that does not include adequate climate change targets or does not address the human rights aspects and the sustainability aspects simultaneously and in a balanced way, risks derailing the comprehensive sustainable development agenda without any compensatory gains.

Instead of the establishment of new goals, what is needed is a monitoring and accountability system that can actually make **all** governments, North and South, subject to review for their obligations at home and **simultaneously** creates an entitlement for support when those domestic obligations are met but the available resources are still not enough.

The principle of "special and differential treatment" for developing countries enshrined in the WTO agreements is there because of that same logic, but in practice this principle is seldom applied. The notion of "historic responsibility" mentioned in the preambular paragraph of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change goes one step beyond.

⁴ Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, (2009), <www.stiglitzsen-fitoussi.fr>

⁵ Article 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

In the current international trade system, when a country fails to meet its obligations, the affected country cannot impose a change in the offending tariffs or subsidies (as that would violate sovereignity) but is allowed to impose a retaliation up to levels determined by an arbitration panel. A similar construction can be imagined, where a country that is unable to get from "international assistance and co-operation" the additional resources needed to fulfill its human rights obligations, can carve exemptions in its trade and investment obligations to the level required, by for example raising trade tariffs beyond what would usually be allowed in WTO agreements, impose additional obligations on foreign investors without risking being sued under investment agreements, deferring debt-related payments, or any other measures the affected government might deem necessary. These arbitration formulas are not completely different from those proposed for countries facing difficulties in their external debt payments.

In fact, such a principle was already enunciated by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2005 in his "In larger freedom" report when he proposed that debt sustainability be defined as the level of debt that allows a country to achieve the MDGs by 2015 without an increase in its debt ratio. Financial and technical assistance is only one aspect of the obligations of developed countries (and, in fact, of all countries, including middleincome countries, once they have achieved a satisfactory level of fulfilment of basic ESCR obligations). Countries also have a collective international responsibility to ensure that the governance of the global economy is consistent with human rights. Cambodia, for example, is receiving currently some USD 700 million in ODA a year, but it has accumulated reserves of USD 2.5 billion in the last few years, most of them in US Treasury bonds, which amounts to an LDC providing a soft loan to one of the world's richest countries.

Can the Cambodian Government be blamed, on this account, for diverting precious resources in this way instead of allocating them to essential social services? While this is a description of what actually happens, those reserves are needed as an insurance against even greater risks derived from speculation and financial volatility. The G7 and perhaps even the G20 governments are much more responsible for having created those risks, by liberalizing financial flows and deregulating the financial industry. By not meeting their responsibility to create a sustainable global financial system, the most powerful countries are also not allowing poor country governments to use their available resources properly.

New rights and institutional mechanisms need to be established with regard to sustainability. The civil society Reflection Group on sustainable development, comprised of members of Social Watch, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, terre des hommes, Third World Network, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, DAWN and the Global Policy Forum has incisively identified the deficit in this regard and proposes explicit recognition of the rights of future generations and mechanisms to defend them. (See pages 9-16 of this report)

This "right to a future" is the most urgent task of the present. It is about nature, yes, but it is also about our grandchildren, and about our own dignity, the expectations of the 99% of the world's 7 billion men and women, girls and boys that were promised sustainability two decades ago and have found instead their hopes and aspirations being melted into betting chips of a global financial casino beyond their control.

Citizens around the world are demanding change and this report is only one additional way to make their voices heard. The message could not be clearer: people have right to a future and the future starts now.

Human rights should be at the core of economic recovery

The world is still experiencing the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis, with no real recovery in sight. Only an enduring commitment to respect, protect and fulfil legally binding human rights obligations enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and core international treaties can provide the basis for reforms to ensure a more sustainable, resilient and just global economy. The G20 leaders must enforce reforms aimed at preventing speculative activity in financial markets from undermining the enjoyment of human rights; also, they should agree to increase relative fiscal pressure on the banking sector and to cooperate to promote transparency and mutual accountability in revenue mobilization.

Civil Society Statement

More than three years after the onset of the global financial crisis the world economy faces an uncertain future scenario. The world has at no point been close to a "recovery" from the human rights toll of the financial crisis. Poverty and inequality have increased and economic growth, where it has taken place, has not led to more jobs or higher wages but has been unevenly distributed to the wealthiest sectors of society.

As the world braces for another economic downturn, countries and households barely able to cope during the last recession are now in an even worse situation, with negative consequences for fundamental human rights in rich and poor countries alike.

States' human rights obligations embedded in the International Bill of Rights require that governments carefully assess their various choices and courses of action against the human rights consequences in transparent, participatory, non-discriminatory and accountable ways. Only an enduring commitment to respect, protect and fulfil legally binding human rights obligations enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and core international human rights treaties can provide the basis for reforms that ensure a more sustainable, resilient and just global economy.

Large-scale deprivations of human rights stemming from the financial and economic crises are not inevitable, natural phenomena. The Group of 20 (G20) agenda outlined at Cannes provides several actionable opportunities for governments – individually and in concert – to choose alternative, human rights-centred paths to sustainable economic recovery.

Issues and recommendations

The seriousness of problems threatening the world economy today warrants a cohesive and coordinated response from G20 countries to stimulate their economies. The premature move to pursue austerity policies, and the consequent reduction in aggregate demands, have been the main reasons why the world is falling back into an economic crisis. These policies threaten to continue to deprive people of access to finance, jobs and services while their governments for the most part refuse to establish fair systems for the private sector to share the burden of public debt restructuring.

Human rights standards and principles provide a framework for the design and implementation of economic stimulus measures that are participatory, transparent, accountable and non-discriminatory, and the G20 should enforce the implementation of measures designed within such a human rights framework. Introducing stimulus measures without adequately assessing their effects is not desirable, especially when they may place new strains on public budgets to benefit private risk-taking. Genderand environmentally sensitive public infrastructure programmes are among the measures that should be undertaken to ensure that any recovery benefits those most in need.

Governments' obligations to take steps to fulfil their responsibilities for economic and social rights cannot be upheld without a thorough evaluation of the contribution that the financial sector makes to public budgets through taxation. In general, the liberalization of capital over the last two to three decades has meant more indirect and regressive taxes, disproportionately raising fiscal pressure on poorer and middle-income households.

The scale and complexity of financial institutions is another pressing issue. Large financial firms, some of them operating in dozens of jurisdictions, have successfully resisted calls to reduce their complexity or size. They are able to profit from tax and regulatory dislocations that such a position makes possible, while their complexity and size limits the chances that the resulting risks can be successfully resolved without disrupting vital banking activities in the event of a collapse. The G20 should undertake measures to address this problem as it relates to systemically important financial institutions, including through direct regulatory intervention to break up large firms. It is especially important that G20 members agree to adopt and impose a tax on financial transactions and make a clear commitment to use this newly generated revenue to fulfil their human rights obligations. Governments should take decisive steps to cooperate internationally in order to ensure transparency and mutual accountability in domestic revenue mobilization.

In addition, governments should enforce banking regulations that fully recognize the duty of States to prevent, protect against and provide effective remedies for human rights infringements by private actors, including the financial sector. In the short to medium term, governments must be fully empowered to consider regulation of banking services as an essential tool to enhance the enjoyment of human rights for all.

¹ Adapted from the Joint Civil Society Statement to the Group of 20 Leaders on Embedding Human Rights in Financial Regulation (October 2011). For the complete statement and list of signing organizations see: <vww.coc.org/rbw/ g20-asked-uphold-human-rights-responsibilities-financenovember-2011>.

Rio+20 and beyond: no future without justice

Over the last 20 years, little has been done to change patterns of production and consumption that pollute, erode biodiversity and lead to climate change, while commitments to human rights and gender justice have not been fulfilled. We are facing societal and ecological disaster. The State can respond quickly to this, if based on democratic legitimacy and accountability. In times of growing global interrelationship between societies, economies and people, universally agreed principles are the precondition for living together in justice, peace and in harmony with nature. Here we propose eight principles as the foundation for a new sustainability rights framework.

Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Development¹

The world is in need of fundamental change. We live in a world in turmoil; too many people are tossed around in a global boom and bust, a global casino gambling with our livelihoods, our security, our futures and our planet.

We live in a world where the top 20 percent of the population enjoy more than 70 percent of total income and those in the bottom quintile get only two percent of global income. Gains from economic growth and globalization have been unevenly shared. In most countries, the rich have become richer at the expense of the middle class and low-income groups. Unfettered economic growth has further increased social inequalities even though it has generated the resources to do the opposite and finance more equitable access to public and essential services. Persistent poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and higher levels of inequality are threatening care systems, social cohesion and political stability.

We live in a world where 50 percent of carbon emissions are generated by 13 percent of the population. Fast spreading unsustainable production and consumption patterns have been linked to the rapid depletion of natural resources, including clean water, as well as to unequal sharing of the promised "benefits" of economic growth and expanding trade. They have led to global warming that produces rising sea levels, higher frequency of extreme weather conditions, desertification and deforestation. For bio-diversity, the loss of environmental heritage is permanent. We have exceeded the ecological limits and ignore the planetary boundaries. With the climate change threat we are already living on borrowed time. However, we refuse to cut back on emissions and allocate the scarce resources to those who have not yet benefitted from their exploitation.

All too often national and international policies have not aimed to reduce inequalities. Their dedication to stimulating economic growth has provided the incentives to exploit nature, rely on the use of fossil fuels and deplete biodiversity, undermining the provision of essential services as countries compete in a race to the bottom offering lower taxes and cheaper labor as incentives.

Persistent discrimination locks women in precarious reproductive work and violence. Women, especially the poor, remain socially discriminated and in many places are deprived of their bodily, reproductive and sexual rights. This makes them more vulnerable to exploitation and violence inside and outside their homes. Care work which is often undertaken by women within households, is given no value or recognition. Women's livelihoods and productive activities that include all forms of health care work are often left unprotected and unsupported. All these are made more distressed during times of economic crises and by policies that favor profit over social provisioning.

Biodiversity and the bounty of nature, while cherished, are not respected, protected or valued. Communities and populations that seek to live in harmony with nature find their rights ignored and their livelihoods and cultures jeopardized.

Why has this happened? Certainly it is not because of a lack of awareness or attention of policy makers at the highest levels. The climate change danger, cited in the mid-1980s at a conference of the WMO, was brought center stage in 1987 by the Brundtland Report, as was the urgency of biodiversity loss. The momentum carried to the Rio conference in 1992, which launched framework conventions on climate change and biodiversity as well as on desertification. It also adopted the Rio Declaration principles, the Forest Principles and a plan of action, Agenda 21. The global conferences of the 1990s focused on issues of human rights and social equity and adopted blueprints to tackle injustices from social exclusion and gender discrimination. In the Millennium Declaration of 2000, member states committed themselves "to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level" as "a duty to all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs".

Over the last 20 years, however, the ideals and principles of Rio have been overshadowed, as implementation has mostly not occurred. Similarly, a host of international commitments to human rights and gender justice have not been fulfilled. World product per capita has more than doubled in the last two decades, yet with widening disparities. Globalization has yielded millions of poor guality jobs. Financial and commodity speculation has undercut food security and turned millions of hectares of land away from growing food and into unsustainable uses. Little has been done to change patterns of production and consumption that pollute, erode biodiversity and lead inexorably to climate change. 45 countries with a total population of 1.2 billion people have managed to achieve social indicators that are better than the world average with per capita emissions of CO₂ from fossil fuels below the world average. And none of them are labeled as "high income". Yet, similar to other middle-income countries and those considered as "least developed", they often find their space for making domestic policy choices to achieve sustainable development squeezed by external demands, conditionalities and impositions that press them to take steps such as to slash tax rates and spending on social services.

Economic policies have on many occasions contradicted the commitments made to rights and sustainability as they and their related national and international institutions occupy the apex of governance domains. They have relied too much on markets to allocate societies' resources and distribute their wealth, singling out GDP growth as the ultimate measure of well-being. The result has been increased concentration and bigger market share ratios of a few transnational corporations, including in the food and medicine sectors.

This deliberate policy choice of hands-off came to a head when, ignited in the USA, it exploded into the global financial crisis in 2008, intensifying inequalities further as the resulting job losses and income cuts hit low-income groups disproportionately. Yet, relentlessly, the policy responses squeezed societies and communities further, relying on the

Statement produced by the Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives. It is a preliminary statement and has not been fully discussed by all members of the Group yet. It is "work in progress". Therefore, not every recommendation in this statement was explicitly endorsed by each member of the Group. But the statement captures the ideas and the fundamental consensus, which were formulated in the previous meetings of the Reflection Group. The more comprehensive final report of the Group will be published in spring 2012. Members of the Reflection Group are: Alejandro Chanona, National Autonomous University of México; Barbara Adams, Global Policy Forum; Beryl d'Almeida, Abandoned Babies Committee Zimbabwe; Chee Yoke Ling, Third World Network; Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, International Resource Panel; Danuta Sacher, terre des hommes Germany; Filomeno Sta. Ana III, Action for Economic Reform, Philippines: George Chira. terre des hommes India; Gigi Francisco, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era; Henning Melber, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Sweden; Hubert Schillinger, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Germany: Jens Martens, Global Policy Forum Europe; Jorge Ishizawa, Proyecto Andino de Tecnologias Campesinas, Peru; Karma Ura, Centre for Bhutan Studies; Roberto Bissio, Social Watch; Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, Tebtebba Foundation: Yao Graham, Third World Network Africa

same market actors that had been wrong before, paying little or no heed to the already fragile human and ecological systems, and pushing societies and communities to the breaking point.

Despite evidence that counter-cyclical policies acted as effective shock absorbers and enhanced resilience, many governments have sacrificed social expenditures to neo-liberal orthodoxy and a stronger dependence on financial markets. The costs of inaction and the mal-action of business as usual are amassing a mountain of social and ecological liabilities. High unemployment especially of young people, increasing food prices and widespread unfairness have created a climate of social and political tension and unrest in many countries. In countries around the globe, from Cairo to Manhattan to New Delhi, people take to the streets to express their anger with the status quo and their unwillingness to accept it any longer. Their motives and goals may differ according to the unique circumstances they live in - but their demands are all similar: greater justice and more freedom from the pressure of the "markets" and their faithful agents.

Why is governance failing us so badly? States have reneged on their democratic values and governments have become less accountable to the people. Universal norms and standards are being ignored or side-stepped by new rules that favor markets. Risks are being borne by those who had no role in taking them while a new classification of "too-big-to-fail" has re-ordered the distribution of public resources. We are confronted with a hierarchy of rights with those protecting human and eco systems relegated to the lowest rungs. This situation finds its parallels in governance at the national and international levels. Further, the fragmented global governance has led to missing the big picture and setting low demands that treat symptoms not causes.

Decades of wrong-headed policies and the impact of multiple policy failures have inevitably highlighted the role of the state and how important it is. Responses to the failure of the financial system show that the state can act and will act quickly in the face of perceived disaster with money and policies. But, the required stronger role of the state must be based on democratic legitimacy and accountability and be balanced by effective participation of civil society.

We are living in a period of turmoil, facing societal and ecological disaster. We demand of states that they act now promptly and effectively in the face of this disaster.

Reconfirming the foundation of sustainability: The framework of universal principles and rights

The need for universal principles. Every concept of development, well-being and progress in societies is based on a set of fundamental principles and values. These values are rooted deeply in our culture, our

ideologies and our belief systems. We are convinced, that there is a set of universal principles and values that is shared by most of us. Common principles and values build the foundation of societies. We acknowledge the diversity of cultural expressions as a value in itself that has to be protected and promoted. In times of globalization and growing global interrelationship between societies, economies and people, universally agreed principles are the precondition for living together in justice, peace and in harmony with nature.

A set of existing principles as common ground. There is no need to invent principles and values of this kind. In national constitutions as well as in various international treaties, declarations and policy statements of the United Nations, governments have agreed upon certain fundamental principles, which are essential to societies and international relations. We propose the following set of eight principles as the foundation for a new sustainability rights framework:

- Solidarity principle. Solidarity has been a widely accepted principle in many national constitutions to govern the relationship of citizens within a country. Central to this concept is the equality of citizens and their shared responsibility for a common good. In the notion of solidarity, assistance is not an act of charity, but a right of every woman, man and child. Solidarity differs radically from charity and philanthropy. In times of globalization, this concept has been transferred to the international level. In the Millennium Declaration, governments listed solidarity as one of the core values: "Global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice. Those who suffer or who benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most." Today, the notion of solidarity is accepted as a key principle in various international agreements such as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification from 1994.
- Do no harm principle. Originally a key principle of medical ethics reflected in the promise of the Hippocratic Oath "to abstain from doing harm", this principle has become relevant to other areas. For instance it has been included in humanitarian principles of UNICEF since 2003 and has been adopted in a code of conduct of major humanitarian organizations. In essence, the commitment to implement policies in a way that they do no harm to people or nature should be regarded as a guiding principle in all policy areas and at all levels.
- Principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. This principle marks one of the mile-

stones of the Rio Declaration from 1992. Its Principle 7 states: "In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command." For the first time in history, governments recognized their differential present and historical contribution to environmental degradation and, thus, their differential obligation to pay for the remediation and mitigation. By including the historical dimension it goes beyond the principle of "special and differential treatment" based on economic capabilities and needs, as contained in WTO Agreements. The principle is a key element of the Kyoto Protocol but its application must not be limited to the climate negotiations.

- Polluter pays principle. The simple message of this principle is that the costs of pollution have to be borne by those who cause it. This principle has been part of international environmental law since the 1970s, and was reaffirmed in the Rio Declaration, Principle 16: "National authorities should endeavor to promote the internalization of environmental costs and the use of economic instruments, taking into account the approach that the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution (...)." While this principle is widely acknowledged in international environmental law, it should be applied in other areas as well. In the context of the recent financial crisis, many asked for the "polluters", i.e. the banks and the financial industry, to bear the costs of the crisis. As the European Commissioner Michel Barnier said: "I believe in the 'polluter pays' principle. We need to build a system which ensures that the financial sector will pay the cost of banking crises in the future."
- Precautionary Principle. This principle states that in the absence of a scientific consensus if an action or policy has a suspected risk of causing harm to people or nature, the burden of proof that it is not harmful falls on the proponents of this action or policy. It is also laid down in the Rio Declaration, which says in Principle 15: "In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation." After Rio this principle has been incorpo-

rated into many other international agreements, such as the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety from the year 2000 with regard to the transboundary movement of living modified organisms and their products.

- Subsidiarity Principle. According to this principle political decisions must always be taken at the lowest possible administrative and political level, and as close to the citizens as possible. in order to ensure that women and men fully participate in decision-making. This idea is a core element of concepts of federalism and one of the central principles in the treaties of the European Union. Indigenous peoples regard this principle as an essential tool to preserve their identity, diversity and cultures. The principle recognizes the inherent democratic right to selfdetermination for people, communities, and nations, but only as long as its exercise does not infringe on similar rights of others. Therefore, it must not be misused as an argument against central governmental action at national or international levels, but must always be applied in combination with the other principles, in particular the solidarity principle.
- Principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent. According to this principle communities have the right to give or withhold their consent to proposed projects and actions by governments or corporations, that may affect their livelihood and the lands they customarily own, occupy or otherwise use. This principle is a key element of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples from 2007 and recognized in the ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (169/1989). However, this principle is not limited to the rights of indigenous peoples. It is also laid down in the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent procedure for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade from 1998. This convention provides, inter alia, for importing countries to receive information on a chemical being exported from a country that has banned or severely restricted it for health or environmental reasons.
- Principle of peaceful dispute settlement. This principle is a core element of the UN Charter, which says in Article 2: "All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered." In the Manila Declaration of 1982 governments reconfirmed that the peaceful settlement of disputes should represent one of the central concerns for states and for the UN (A/RES/37/10, 15 November 1982).

These eight principles shall build the cornerstones of a universal sustainability rights framework. They are interconnected and must not be applied in isolation.

The essential values of freedom, equality, diversity and the respect for nature. In addition to the core set of universal principles, there are fundamental values, which are also essential to international relations. Governments referred to some of them in the Millennium Declaration. They include, inter alia:

- Freedom. Men, women and children have the right to live their lives in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice. Democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people best assures these rights. But there are limits to freedom – namely where the freedom of our peers is touched. "Freedom is always the freedom of dissenters" (Rosa Luxemburg). And freedom has its limits in the principle of "do no harm".
- Equality. No individual and no nation or group must be denied the opportunity to participate in and to benefit from development. Equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured. Equality includes the concept of intergenerational justice, i.e. the recognition that the present generation shall only meet its needs in a way that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- Diversity. Human beings must respect one other, in all their diversity of belief, culture, language, looks, sexual orientation, and gender. Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue should be actively promoted.
- Respect for nature. Prudence must be shown in the conduct towards all living species and the use of natural resources. Only in this way can the immeasurable riches provided to us by nature be preserved and passed on to our descendants. The current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption must be changed in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendants. Respect for nature means much more than sound management of the human environment: it means that all living species have intrinsic rights. They should not be regarded as objects of human interaction but as subjects with value that goes beyond use and exchange. This understanding of nature as a living system is reflected in the thinking and believe systems of indigenous peoples, for instance in the concept of Buen Vivir.

Failure to translate the principles into practice. While all governments agreed to these principles in general, they have mostly failed to translate them into enforceable obligations and specific policies. If governments had taken the solidarity principle seriously, poverty and hunger could have been reduced dramatically; if they really accepted the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, the Copenhagen climate summit would not have ended in such a disaster; and had they complied with the precautionary principle, nuclear catastrophes such as those of Chernobyl and Fukushima could have been avoided.

Turning principles into rights. In order to ensure the functioning of a society and create safeguards against tyranny, values have to be translated into law, rights and legally binding obligations. At international level, the human rights system plays a key role in turning moral values into legal rights. Of particular importance is the International Bill of Human Rights that includes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Equally significant are the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. More recently, these key documents have been complemented by the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). Together with the Declaration on the Right to Development (1986) and complemented by the core set of principles we mentioned above, these documents can form the normative framework of a holistic concept of sustainability, well-being and societal progress.

Rebalancing rights. While the norms of the international human rights system are generally accepted and ratified by most countries of the world, there is still a huge implementation gap. Even worse: while states and their organs at national and international levels too often failed to respect, protect and fulfill human rights, over the last two decades they have strengthened corporate rights and the rights of capital. They promoted the free movement of capital, but restricted the free movement of people; they strengthened the rights of transnational investors, but weakened the rights of people affected by these investments. Transnational corporations may nowadays sue governments at international fora for any change in the rules, including health regulations, that affect their actual or planned profits, but people are hindered from suing companies for the pollution and other harmful practices inflicted upon them. There is an urgent need to rebalance rights, i.e. to reclaim human rights as the normative foundation of policy, and to roll-back the rights of capital in relation to the rights of people.

Filling the gaps in the rights system. There are not only gaps in the implementation of rights but also

gaps in the international rights system itself. Certain principles and values, such as the principle of intergenerational justice and the respect for nature are not explicitly translated into (codified) rights yet. There is a need of intensified debate and research on how to include the concepts of the rights of nature and intergenerational justice in the international normative system and turn them into practice.

From theory to practice: Translating principles and rights into strategies, goals and policies. To translate fundamental principles into internationally agreed rights and obligations is only the first step. The next is to formulate political goals and strategies to implement these rights. Here, public policies play a crucial role. Democratically legitimized public authorities, particularly governments and parliaments, have the main obligation to implement a rights-based approach of sustainability, well-being and societal progress. They must not transfer this obligation to the private sector or to civil society.

Redirecting policies towards present and future justice

Consequences from the failure to translate principles and rights into policies. In the past decades governments agreed formally on an almost comprehensive set of sustainability principles and human rights, but they failed to bring their policies effectively into line with them. Instead, policies are still too often sectorally fragmented and misguided with an overreliance on economic growth and self-regulation of the "markets". New concepts like "green growth" are at best attempts to treat the symptoms of the problems without tackling their root causes. What is therefore needed are fundamental changes at three levels: in the mindset, the guiding concepts and indicators of development and progress; in fiscal and regulatory policies (at national and international levels) in order to overcome effectively social inequalities and the degradation of nature and to strengthen sustainable economies; and in institutions and governance mechanisms (at national and international levels).

Changing the dominant mindset. The mindset of many opinion leaders and political decision-makers worldwide is still focused on economic arowth and market-driven solutions as the panacea for all economic, social and environmental problems in the world. Governments are not (and should not be) in a position to change the dominant mindset by command and control. But they are obliged to draw lessons from the failures of the past and reformulate the overall objectives of their policies and related concepts and metrics that guide them. Instead of subordinating their policies to the overarching goal of maximizing GDP growth, the leitmotif of their policies should be to maximize the well-being of the people without compromising the well-being of future generations by respecting the planetary boundaries.

New metrics for sustainability and societal progress. Consequently, governments should recognize the need for new metrics for sustainability and societal progress beyond GDP to guide their policies. They should actively promote the research and discourse on alternative metrics at national and international levels, within a specified timeframe, and with broad participation of civil society. The discourse should build upon existing initiatives, for instance the report of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission, Measuring Australia's Progress (MAP), and the Gross National Happiness Index of Bhutan. It should also take into account the current revision of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounts (SEEA) coordinated by the Statistics Division of the UN Secretariat.

Sustainable development goals. The 1992 Rio Summit demanded further work on the definition of indicators of sustainable development which would be the basis both for defining the concept and establishing common international goals. Two decades later, more progress has to be achieved. Links have to be established to the human rights framework which sets clear goals, for instance on the rights to food, to health, and to education. Therefore, the debate should not be about these goals, as they have already been agreed upon, but about the "when" and the "maximum available resources" (including those of international cooperation) to ensure their progressive realization. Any formulation of Sustainable Development Goals that does not adequately address the human rights aspects and the sustainability aspects simultaneously and in a balanced way risks derailing the comprehensive sustainable development agenda without any compensatory gains.

Commitment to policy coherence for sustainability. In order to translate the universal sustainability rights framework outlined above into practical policy at national level, governments and parliaments should adopt binding commitments to policy coherence for sustainability as well as strategies for implementation and monitoring. Based upon the core set of universal principles, such as the precautionary principle, the "do no harm" principle, and the solidarity principle, all public policies should be redirected towards human rights and sustainability and subject to sustainability and human rights impact assessments.

A new Charter on the Right to Sustainable Development. In order to bundle the core set of fundamental principles and human rights to a normative framework of sustainability, well-being and societal progress, we propose to adopt a new Charter on the Right to Sustainable Development. This Charter should also refer, inter alia, to the World Charter for Nature (1982) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), and update and upgrade the Declaration on the Right to Development from 1986. The new Charter should emphasize the commitment of governments to policy coherence for human rights and sustainability. It should reconfirm the obligation to progressive realization of human rights using the maximum available resources and expand it to the right to sustainable development and the rights of future generations. It should acknowledge the concept of planetary boundaries. And finally, it should confirm the principle of fair burden sharing and equitable per capita rights towards the global commons and to the emission of greenhouse gases, taking fully into account the historical responsibilities of societies.

Redirecting fiscal policies towards sustainability. Fiscal policy is a key instrument of governments to turn the rights-based approach of sustainability, wellbeing and societal progress into practice. The actual priorities of governments are reflected more clearly in public budgets than in government declarations and action programs. Moreover, the composition of state budgets allows inferences to be drawn about the political influence of different interest groups: Is the military dominant? Are business interests pushed through? Or is public spending focused on the needs of the majority in a society and correcting gender imbalances? In recent decades, we witnessed the erosion of public finance in many countries, which resulted in a growing inability of governments to provide the necessary public goods and services in support of people's welfare and care systems, thus failing to respond effectively to the aggravated social and environmental problems. Therefore, there is an urgent need to strengthen and redirect public finance.

Taking the four "R's" of fiscal policy seriously. Fiscal policy can basically have four purposes: The raising of revenues in order to provide the necessary public goods and services: the redistribution of income and wealth from the richer to poorer sections of society; the repricing of goods and services in order to internalize ecological and social costs and discourage undesirable behavior (such as currency speculation); and the justification for citizens to demand democratic representation ("no taxation without representation") and accountability . Unfortunately, governments have rarely taken advantage of these aspects of a pro-active fiscal policy. On the contrary, they have often participated in a global tax race to the bottom (particularly with regard to corporate taxation). They have given preference to indirect taxes, like an undifferentiated value-added tax, which have regressive effects and have increased inequalities, and they hesitated to introduce effective taxes on environmentally harmful resource consumption. We need steps towards countryspecific eco-social fiscal reforms, taking into account, inter alia, the following aspects:

- Emphasizing progressive taxation: A basic requirement for strengthening public revenues is a broad based system of progressive taxation. In line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities taxation should be based on the ability to pay; rich individuals, transnational corporations and large landowners should be taxed accordingly. A flat and undifferentiated value-added tax is regressive, burdens the poor, and therefore should not constitute the centerpiece of the tax system. Any form of indirect taxation should be designed in a way that it is sensitive to the poor's welfare by introducing progressivity (e.g. by taxing luxurious consumption) and mitigating the regressive features.
- Greening the tax system: A key element of any eco-social fiscal reform should be the shift from the taxation of labor to the taxation of resource consumption. Following the polluter pays principle, a system of eco-taxes should particularly increase the "price of pollution", the use of fossil fuels and other non-renewable energies, and the emission of greenhouse gases.
- Effective taxation of corporations: An essential element of an efficient tax system includes the effective taxation of corporations. Tax exemptions or fiscal incentives for transnational corporations, particularly in export processing zones, are counterproductive and an inefficient instrument to attract foreign direct investment. They should be eliminated, if possible in an internationally coordinated way.
- Initiatives against tax evasion and illicit financial flows: In many countries illicit financial flows, tax avoidance and corruption continue to prevent the establishment of a sustainable system of public finance. A bundle of national and international measures is needed to strengthen fiscal authorities, close tax loopholes and prevent capital flight. These include: Supporting governments in creating more efficient and fair tax structures and fiscal authorities; effective measures against the manipulation of transfer pricing; mandatory country-by-country reporting standards for transnational corporations, with the US American Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank Act) from July 2010 as an initial step for the extractive industries: binding rules for the automatic exchange of tax information between state agencies; effective support for stolen assets recovery as described in the United Nations Convention against Corruption; banning financial transactions in tax havens and secrecy jurisdictions.
- Applying the polluter pays principle to the financial sector – introducing a Financial Transaction Tax. Demands raised for many years for the intro-

URGENT APPEAL TO CHANGE THE MINDSET

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio 2012 - must change the dominant mindset by:

Restoring public rights over corporate privileges;

after 30 years of strengthening the power of investors and big corporations through deregulation, trade and financial liberalization, tax cuts and exemptions, and weakening the role of the State in mediating this power; and after the market-driven financial meltdown.

The principles and values of the Rio Declaration and the UN Millennium Declaration, adopted by heads of State and government, are threatened and urgently need to be re-established. These principles and values include Human Rights, Freedom, Equality, Solidarity, Diversity, Respect for Nature, and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities. Corporate interests do not uphold these principles and values.

Taking equity seriously;

after 30 years of policies that have further widened the gap between rich and poor and have exacerbated inequities and inequalities, not least regarding access to resources.

Unbridled market forces have favoured those already in a position of power, thereby widening the economic divide. This requires the state to redress the imbalance, eliminate discrimination, and ensure sustainable livelihoods, decent work and social inclusion. Intergenerational justice requires restraint and responsibility by the present generation. It is urgent to establish more equitable per capita rights towards the global commons and to the emission of greenhouse gases, taking fully into account historical responsibility.

Rescuing nature;

after more than 60 years of global warming, loss of biodiversity, desertification, depletion of marine life and of forests, a spiraling water crisis and many other ecological catastrophes.

The environmental crisis is hitting the poor much harder than the affluent. Knowledge-intensive solutions including technologies are available to restore natural systems, and dramatically reduce pressures on climate and the global environment while improving human well-being. A "green economy" is attainable but must be embedded in a holistic concept of sustainability. What we need is a change of lifestyles.

The Rio 1992 Summit adopted legallybinding instruments and embraced civil society. The Johannesburg Summit 2002 celebrated partnerships relying on a self-regulated Private Sector. The Rio 2012 Summit must re-affirm the State as the indispensable actor setting the legal frame, enforcing standards of equity and human rights, and fostering long-term ecological thinking, based on democratic legitimacy.

duction of a financial transaction tax have gained additional relevance through the current global financial crisis. Such a tax can contribute to a fairer distribution of burdens by involving the financial sector, which caused the crisis, in covering the costs of coping with it. The tax should be levied on trading shares, bonds, derivatives and foreign currency on the stock exchange, at trade centers and over the counter (OTC) transactions. Imposition of the tax ought to be internationally coordinated and performed by the responsible national fiscal authorities, but individual countries or groups of countries should be encouraged to start applying it even before it becomes global. In order to ensure that tax revenue is not exclusively used to cure budget deficits but also spent for environmental, development and rights purposes, a substantial part of the revenues should be earmarked and distributed through a fund under the auspices of the United Nations.

Reallocation of government spending. Parallel to the necessary changes on the revenue side of the budget, any effective eco-fiscal reform requires fundamental changes on the expenditure side as well. Too often public money has been spent for harmful or at least questionable purposes. By redefining priorities public spending policy can become a powerful tool to reduce social inequalities and remove discrimination and to support the transition towards sustainable production and consumption patterns. This includes the following steps:

Abolition of harmful subsidies: While subsidies can be a useful temporary mechanism to compensate vulnerable sectors for unexpected distortions or to promote desirable activities, every year governments spend hundreds of billions of dollars on harmful subsidies particularly in the agricultural, water, energy, forestry and fishery sectors. Public money is used at home and abroad (through multilateral development banks) to lower the price of fossil fuels, to support agricultural exports, or to subsidize transnational investments. These kinds of subsidies not only have detrimental social and environmental effects; by artificially lowering the prices, they often reduce the profitability of local industries and the production of renewable energy. In essence, the negative effects of subsidies are three-fold. They absorb a substantial portion of state budgets that could otherwise be used for better purposes; they contribute to environmental damage by creating misleading consumer and production incentives; and they have negative distribution effects. Therefore, governments should commit to time-bound targets to phase out all subsidies that support unsustainable production and consumption patterns or otherwise violate the do no harm principle as soon as possible.

- Strengthening public spending to stimulate sustainable production and consumption: Not all subsidies are harmful. On the contrary, subsidies can play an important role in supporting emerging local industries and introducing environmentally friendly technologies. Welltargeted subsidies can have positive redistributive and environmental effects. Governments should substantially strengthen public subsidies in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable and affordable public transport systems, eco-efficient housing, social infrastructure and consumption subsidies to poor households.
- Cutting military spending: Military expenditures absorb a significant share of state revenues in most countries. In 2010 they reached a total historic high of USD 1,630 trillion. By reducing military budgets, large sums of money could be freed up for funding environmental and social programs. A precondition for this, however, is strengthened support for conflict prevention, peaceful conflict resolution, and if needed, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. At the same time, the largest arms-producing countries (in particular the five permanent members of the Security Council) have a responsibility to improve the control and regulation of their arms exports and to support a Global Arms Trade Treaty.
- A universal social protection floor for all: Access to social security is a human right (Art. 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). But it is also an economic and political necessity, for a working social security system reduces poverty, strengthens the purchasing power of the people and hence domestic demand, and prevents social tension and societal conflicts.

A publicly financed minimal set of basic social security ought to exist in every country. It would be a necessary condition to prevent people from falling into poverty as a result of economic crises. Therefore, governments should implement the concept of a universal social protection floor, as promoted by the ILO. It should be based on the following four pillars: Universal access to public healthcare for all; guaranteed state allowances for every child; a universal basic pension provided by the state for persons in old age or with disabilities; guaranteed state support for unemployed and underemployed people living in poverty.

- Public provision of essential services: After years of a global trend towards privatization and deregulation, public authorities have to reclaim the responsibility to provide essential services for all citizens, including freshwater supply, sanitation, education, healthcare, shelter, public transport, communication, and access to energy. Governments should substantially increase the spending level in these areas. With sustainable stimulus packages governments should invest in targeted infrastructure programs in order to increase energy and resource efficiency. Following the subsidiarity principle, priority should be given to promote decentralized models of water and renewable energy supply, with strong public oversight, and to reduce the market power of oligopolistic public or private suppliers. In order to pay attention to the rights and interests of indigenous peoples and local communities, public authorities and private companies must respect the principle of free, prior and informed consent in all infrastructure projects.
- Strengthening participatory, gender and human rights budgeting initiatives: Free access to budgetary information as well as effective control are essential to increase the accountability of governments to their citizens in their use of public funds. Governments should therefore ensure the effective participation of civil society in budgetary planning. Whether and to what extent governments are actively promoting gender equity in their budgets should be determined with the help of gender-budgeting approaches. Similarly, governments should assess if budgets are complying with their obligation to promote, protect and fulfill the economic, social and cultural human rights.
- Using public procurement policies to promote sustainability: Public authorities from the local to the global level have an enormous purchasing power. So far they were guided mostly by criteria of cost-effectiveness. However, more

and more public procurement operators try to influence the production methods and products of their suppliers by introducing environmental, social and human rights standards. In addition, procurement policies could be used to specifically strengthen the local economy by supporting domestic suppliers.

Using sovereign wealth funds to finance sustainable investment. Assets under management of sovereign wealth funds increased to USD 4.7 trillion in July 2011. There was an additional USD 6.8 trillion held in other sovereign investment vehicles, such as pension reserve funds, development funds and state-owned corporations' funds. There is an enormous potential to invest these assets in accordance with specific sustainability objectives. Governments should authorize the decision-making bodies of these funds to introduce binding sustainability criteria to guide their investment policies.

A new global system of financial burden sharing beyond ODA. Even with a fundamentally strengthened system of public finance with increased tax revenues and reallocated public expenditures, in many countries the maximum available resources will not suffice to fulfill the social, economic, cultural and ecological rights of the people. External funding will therefore still be required. The current system of financial transfers is based on the concept of aid (Official Development Assistance - ODA). It is characterized by paternalistic relationships between rich donors and poor "partners". Despite all attempts to increase "ownership" and "aid effectiveness", these financial flows are often unpredictable, volatile, tied to products and services from donors and subject to conditionalities. This concept of aid is misleading, as its justification is charity instead of rights. Governments have to overcome this concept of aid and establish a new normative framework of burden sharing between rich and poor countries based on the solidarity principle, e.g. in form of a universal fiscal equalization scheme. Models for this type of compensation or equalization already exist on the national and regional level. In Germany, for example, regional inequalities are to be compensated by a concept of financial adjustment between the federal states. In the European Union cohesion and economic equalization are financially supported by a compensatory structural policy. Such a model would be consistent with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR). The realization of those rights is a responsibility of governments "individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of available resources." The prioritization of resources for ESCR also applies to international assistance.

A compensation scheme to pay off climate debt. The second pillar of a new normative system of financial transfers should build on the polluter pays principle and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. This is particularly relevant in order to allocate the costs of climate change. In accordance with these principles, those countries, that are responsible for the damage that the excessive emission of greenhouse gases is causing - and will be causing in the future - have to compensate for the costs. They have accumulated climate debt that they will have to pay off over the coming years and decades. The compensation schemes should be guided by the principles of fair burden sharing and equitable per capita rights, taking fully into account the historical responsibilities of societies.

Bevond the 0.7 percent target. Changes in the normative framework of financial transfers will also affect the so-called 0.7 percent target. In 2010 the 0.7 percent target experienced its 40th anniversary of non-fulfillment, since the governments in the UN General Assembly set the target in 1970. The decision was based on the then dominant concept of modernization. It was felt that a "big push" in foreign capital was needed to allow so-called developing countries to "take off" towards enduring economic growth. At that time, experts from the World Bank estimated the capital gap at around ten billion dollars, equivalent to around one percent of the GDP of the so-called industrialized countries. In 1969 the Pearson Commission recommended giving so-called developing countries 0.3 percent of the GDP in form of private capital and 0.7 percent in the form of ODA. This marked the birth of the 0.7 percent target.

Today, this 0.7 percent figure has only symbolic political importance as an "indicator of solidarity". The 0.7 percent target cannot explain what the fulfillment of the sustainability rights framework will actually cost, how much the respective countries could contribute themselves and how much external capital would be needed to fill the gap. All estimates of the external financial needs along with the new and additional resources required for climate mitigation measures and climate change adaptation show, however, that the financial transfers needed go well beyond the 0.7 percent of the GDP mark. The justified criticism of the original context on which the 0.7 percent target was based in no way legitimizes turning away from international obligations.

We need to change perspectives, to move away from an aid-based approach to a rights-based approach of external public finance. Further development of the UN General Assembly resolution from 1970 to adjust the normative framework of financial transfers to the realities of the present is long overdue. This could take place in the context of the proposed Charter on the Right to Sustainable Development.

Proposals for new and more predictable forms of financial transfers are not new. The North-South: A Programme for Survival report, issued in 1980 by the international Brandt Commission proposed to raise revenues for development by 'automatic' mechanisms, which can work without repeated interventions by governments. "We believe that over time the world must move to a financial system in which a progressively larger share of such revenues is raised by these means. The fact that revenues are raised automatically does not, of course, imply that their transfer should be automatic; on the contrary, they should be channelled through an appropriate international agency or agencies (...)." More than 30 years after this visionary report, it is time to turn these ideas into reality.

Strengthening the rule of law to promote sustainability. Setting rules and standards is a central task of responsible governments and a key instrument of active policy-making. Over the past 30 years however, governments have too often weakened themselves by policies of deregulation and financial liberalization. Instead, they trusted in corporate voluntarism and self-regulation of "the markets". Public standard-setting and regulation have often been denounced as command and control policies. But only unfettered financial markets made the current financial meltdown possible, weak antitrust laws allowed transnational banks to become too big to fail, and the inadequate translation of the precautionary principle into mandatory technology assessments led to the catastrophes of Fukushima and elsewhere. In response to the recent financial and food crises governments started to introduce new rules and standards, as in October 2011 the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which has set modest rules to limit excessive speculation in commodities. But much more remains to be done to restore public rights over corporate privileges and to strengthen the rule of law in the interest of present and future generations

Towards inclusive, accountable governance

The need to overcome fragmentation. To date the approach to sustainable development governance has been one of governing the three pillars of sustainable development in their own zone, complemented by coordination across them. This is attempted at all levels – global, regional, national and sub-national – and in cooperation with non-state actors, primarily civil society, indigenous peoples and the private sector.

Sustainable development has been viewed as a linking concept designed to facilitate a dialogue between those whose primary concerns relate to the environment and those who see their role as promoting growth and development. This approach has emphasized coordination and dialogue, but does not have a strong institutional basis for decisionmaking and policy change across the three pillars. Nor has it addressed human rights, inequalities and social exclusion. In practice, the environmental pillar dominates the dialogue, the economic pillar dominates impact and the social one is largely neglected apart from the limited way it is addressed through the MDGs.

Decision-making and policy development are severely handicapped by this hierarchy among the three pillars as global economic governance does not adhere to the mandates of the human rights regime or the requirements of sustainable development. The hierarchy among the three pillars is also reflected in the measures used for policy prescriptions and budget allocation. These have low-level social goals; the progress metrics count only dollars and externalize social and environmental costs. These metrics favor the private sector and penalize the public purse. We are not measuring sustainable development, but mainly economic growth.

To overcome the fragmentation of governance for sustainable development and ensure policy coherence, it is essential to re-arrange and re-configure the institutional arrangements that cover all aspects of the policy cycle: agenda setting, policy analysis and formulation, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation.

Towards a Sustainable Development Council. Adopting sustainable development as an overarching concept requires an apex institution that subsumes all other notions of development and can infuse the essence of rights and sustainability into the agenda of all developmental and environmental bodies.

This institutional configuration of sustainable development must guide the work of global institutions in integrated decision-making, policy action, implementation and review. It cannot be left to ECOSOC. Many recommend a Sustainable Development Council directly reporting to the General Assembly on the lines of the Human Rights Council. This Council would have a remit that extends to all three pillars of sustainable development - the environmental, the economic and the social.

The council's jurisdiction would extend to all multilateral bodies, including the international financial institutions. The new council would be charged with overseeing the reporting process supported by an enhanced Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

A Universal Periodic Review on Sustainability. The new Sustainable Development Council should be equipped with a Universal Periodic Review mechanism so that all countries report on measures to achieve sustainable development, covering all relevant issues linked to human rights, trade, macroeconomic policy, the environment, financing and political participation. The UPR concept should be enhanced to consider information provided not only by governments, but also by other stakeholders, such as civil society and the private sector. Information on reports and Universal Periodic Review findings would be made widely available through information channels that actively target all relevant stakeholders.

Upgrading the Committee on Development Policy. As presently constituted, the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) is a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC). It provides inputs and independent advice to the Council on emerging cross-sectoral development issues and on international cooperation for development, focusing on medium- and long-term aspects. The 24 members of the Committee are nominated by the United Nations Secretary-General in their personal capacity, and are appointed by the Council for a period of three years. Membership is geared to reflect a wide range of development experiences as well as geographical and gender balance. The CDP should be upgraded to undertake research and provide independent advice on policies of sustainable development that fully integrate the three pillars and on emerging issues that require inter-governmental attention and action. It should establish ad hoc working groups or task forces to deepen and supplement its work and include members from organizations with a proven commitment and track record in the relevant issues including from civil society and indigenous peoples.

International Ombudsperson and Special Rapporteurs. There are some key areas of sustainable development and intergenerational justice where the international governance system lacks the appropriate normative standards and oversight. We support the recommendation to establish the institution of an Ombudsperson for intergenerational justice/future generations. In addition, the function of Special Rapporteurs should be used to examine, monitor, advice and publicly report on problems, such as land rights, technology access and use, and fisheries, and develop recommendations not only on specific cases but also for new or upgraded norms. This could be a special procedure of the newly constituted Council for Sustainable Development.

Overcoming the governance gaps at national level. A major challenge for more effective governance at the global level is the lack of coherence at the national level. Effective international arrangements cannot be determined or strengthened without commitments and coherence at the national level, and in all countries. Restructuring ECOSOC or creating a new Council will be a futile exercise if it is not "owned" by effective national counterparts and placed in an influential governance position vis-à-vis other ministries and interests. The new governance mechanism at national level could include, for example:

 A new "Sherpa for Sustainability". Responsibility should be taken by the head of state or government to increase policy coherence for sustainability. He or she should establish a "Sherpa" function for sustainability. This function/position should have cabinet rank to ensure coordination among government ministries and authorities.

- A Parliamentary Committee on Policy Coherence on Sustainability. To secure oversight and public accountability, a Parliamentary Committee on Policy Coherence on Sustainability should complement the "Sherpa" function. These highlevel institutions in the executive and legislative branches of the state will provide the necessary national presence and representation at the relevant fora of global governance for sustainable development. Their positions and perspectives should be prepared by a permanent and meaningful consultation process with broad constituency participation that reflects the cross-sectoral dimensions of sustainable development.
- An Ombudsperson for Future Generations. The appointment of Ombudspersons for Future Generations could bring the sustainability agenda straight to the heart of governments and policy-making. The Ombudsperson could engage directly in the policy-making process and assesses the long-term effects of policies from an integrated perspective. Only an independent body without the requirement to be re-elected by current voters can fully focus on the long-term analysis and represent it without any hesitation. =

Rio+20: implementation is the key

Across the world, social marginalization, and even exclusion, is on the rise. The disenchantment of young people, women, indigenous peoples, rural and urban poor and other marginalized populations, as well as a middle class now under threat, constitutes an unprecedented challenge for governments and the UN. The ecological crisis – from resource depletion to pollution and climate change – has worsened since 1992. Human Rights provides a cross-cutting dimension for sustainable development: Rio+20 must therefore focus on implementation of sustainable development. There is an urgent need to strengthen institutional arrangements in accordance with the Rio principles.

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Expectations for the Rio+20 outcome document are inextricably linked to the unfulfilled commitments and promises of the 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development, and subsequent conventions and action plans. The commitment to make a paradigm shift from unsustainable economic growth models to sustainable development was made at the highest political levels but to date has not taken place.

Today income inequalities between and within States are pervasive. World exports have increased almost five-fold while world per capita income has more than doubled. However, the top 20% of the population enjoys more than 70% of total income and those in the bottom quintile gets only 2% of global income.

That distorted distribution of economic wealth has come about at the high price of a deregulated and destabilized international financial system, and a multilateral trade system that is largely characterized by rules that are not balanced, operating to the disadvantage of developing countries. When financial and economic crises hit, the majority— especially the poor— bear vastly disproportionate impacts.

Developed countries also agreed at Rio 1992 to take the lead in shifting from unsustainable consumption patterns. But these have remained largely unchanged, and instead have spread to developing countries with the wealthy adopting similar lifestyles while poverty eradication continues to be elusive. With income inequalities sharpening in all countries, over-consumption and unsustainable consumption dominates production choices (and hence natural resources use and financial resources allocation) while the poor and marginalized are deprived of a dignified standard of living.

Reaffirming the Rio 1992 principles

Sustainable development principles and frameworks have already been adopted, first at Rio 1992 and subsequently in action plans, programmes and measures agreed at annual sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). They have also been agreed to in all of the relevant treaties and conventions.

Components of the sustainable agenda are also contained in the outcomes of the UN Summits and Conferences since 1992. The elaboration of human rights as a cross cutting dimension for sustainable development too has ample precedent, going back as far as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The UN is the primary forum in which to agree on an Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD) for the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development and the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. In this context, there is an urgent need to strengthen institutional arrangements on sustainable development at all levels in accordance with the Rio principles, especially that of common but differentiated responsibilities.

To accomplish this integration of the three pillars and achieve sustainable development, the IFSD should at least carry out the following functions:

- Identify specific actions to fulfil the sustainable development agenda;
- Support regional structures and national mechanisms in developing and implementing their national sustainable development strategies;
- Support developing countries to participate meaningfully at the international and regional levels of decision making;
- Provide global guidance on specific actions needed in order to fulfil the sustainable development agenda;

- Monitor progress in implementation, including on the commitments to provide expertise and technology for implementation and recommend actions to correct and address challenges;
- Assess the balanced integration of the three pillars in the international system and establish the needed mechanisms to follow up on commitments and to identify gaps or weaknesses that affect the full implementation of the sustainable development agenda;
- Promote the participation of civil society in the sustainable development agenda.

The IFSD requires the Secretariat to: (a) provide research, analysis and reports and recommendations, to alert governments and the public of emerging trends and problems; (b) provide technical assistance and advice in general; (c) make arrangements for convening meetings, disseminating their reports and following up on the outcomes. It is important that for all of these, it consider the implications for all three pillars, so that each one is equitably developed in concepts, outcomes and actions.

adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948.Rio+20 must therefore focus on implementation.

Today the implementation gaps of the sustainable development agenda are widely acknowledged. It is therefore crucial for Rio+20 to acknowledge the fundamental causes for the implementation failure. These include:

- Overtaking of the sustainable development agenda by globalization characterized by economic liberalization that has created ecological and social crises, concentrated wealth in a handful of large corporations in both industry and finance and undermined the policy autonomy and space of States. Such globalization has itself created economic crises, exacerbating social tensions, conflicts and political destabilization.
- Weakening of multilateralism that is crucial for sustainable development.
- Disproportionate influence of global economic institutions and their lack of public accountability, including to the UN.
- Lack of implementation means (finance, technology and capacity building that were an integral part of the 1992 sustainable development partnership with developed countries committing to provide them.
- Lack of integration of the three pillars of sustainable development (economic development, social development, and environmental protection), at all levels of policy and governance despite initial efforts in the 1990s.

Thus there is an urgent need to:

First, reaffirm the internationally agreed principles contained in the Rio de Janeiro Declaration on Environment and Development of 1992, in particular the fundamental principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, as the political framework for sustainable development.

Second, renew political commitment to implement the agreed sustainable development agenda, building on accumulated knowledge and experiences over the past 20 years.

Third, undertake a "revitalized global partnership for sustainable development" based on States resuming their responsible role and asserting policy autonomy as a counter to the unfettered market forces that are causing instabilities at all levels.

Fourth, in any private-public sector collaboration, ensure independence of public policy and governance from undue influence by the private sector, especially transnational corporations and large enterprises. Fifth, recognizing the importance of appropriate technology for sustainable development establish an intergovernmental body that facilitates technology transfer and innovation (and deals with barriers such as intellectual property rights) and builds capacity for technology assessment. The CSD in its first session in already stressed the need for technologies to be assessed for their health, safety, environmental, economic and social impact.

Rebuilding confidence

Confidence building is needed due to the retreat by most developed countries from their international sustainable development commitments, and even rejection by some of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It is clear from the preparatory process and numerous related discussions that there is still no universally accepted definition or common understanding on the term "green economy." While parts of the UN system such as ESCAP have assisted Member States in arriving at some common understanding of green growth, its details and operationalization remain unclear to most governments.

At the level of national and local governments, communities and enterprises and civil society organizations, a wide range of policies, programmes, projects and measures are developed and implemented that all concerned regard as "green" in accordance with their respective interpretations and descriptions.

However, it is also emerging strongly from the preparatory process, especially the regional meetings, including most recently the High Level Symposium on Rio +20 in Beijing and the Delhi Ministerial Dialogue on Green Economy and Inclusive Growth, that there is a growing consensus on reaffirming the Rio principles and sustainable development framework at the international level and allowing national strategies to be formulated that can refine the three pillars in line with the best principles, approaches and practices.

Sustainable development and a renewed role for the State in the Arab region

The economies of the Arab region have been driven by a growth model that neglects development objectives and peoples' economic and social rights. The Rio+20 process offers an opportunity to reignite discussion around sustainable development, initiated in 1992, and reinforce the drive to reform development paradigms and adopt coherent strategies to revive productive sectors and capacities. It is essential to ensure that the goal of a "green economy" is not used to repackage and promote the same old economic and social models that have failed to serve people's rights.

Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)

For the last three decades, the economies of Arab countries have been constructed around an approach that priorizes a model of growth that neglects development objectives and peoples' economic and social rights. Policy makers have prioritized integration in the global economy through trade and investment liberalization, borrowing, expansion for privatization deals and publicprivate partnerships, overall economic deregulation, and over-focus on macro-economic stability2. The political powers and ruling groups gave up the project of the state as a major actor in promoting and shaping a developmental project for their countries. The lines between political ruling elites and economic powers dwindled, while in fact they re-enforced each other. Concurrently, national productive capacities have been marginalized along with the national development project generally, which includes addressing inequalities, empowering people through employment generation and wages, and establishing comprehensive rights-based social plans³. Accordingly, we saw countries achieve economic growth, while poverty, unemployment, and inequities were on the rise. This further weakened these countries, increasing their dependence on food imports, and exacerbating their vulnerability to external shocks. Accordingly, we saw these countries achieve economic growth, while poverty, unemployment, and inequities were on the rise.

The limits of such an approach were laid bare during the people's revolutions in the Arab region. Indeed, economic and social policies defined from the topdown and to serve the interest of the privileged few have often only been exacerbating inequalities, poverty, and unemployment. Economic growth numbers have been overstated by oil-exports, without proper re-distribution policies and mechanisms for local empowerment.

Nowadays, it is evident that developing countries, including Arab countries, need to move away from their exclusive focus on economic growth, towards increased emphasis on establishing a development project based on a broader "rights-based" perspective. it is evident that the process of rolling back governments' role in economic and social matters need reconsideration, in order to arrive at an effective balance between the role of the state as a regulator and facilitator and the role of the market stakeholders. Such rethinking of the role of the state, the market, and economic policy making in general is crucial to the processes of sustainable development, which integrates three interlinked pillars of environmental, economic, and social policies.

This paper will shed light on these challenges within the context of the changes seen in the Arab region as a result of the peoples' revolutions and uprisings that swept across the region since the end of 2010. It will highlight the road from the Earth Summit (1992) to Rio+20 and the challenges to sustainable development in the Arab region and the need for rethinking the role of the state, including discussing the concept of the 'Green Economy' and the viability of public-private partnerships. Moreover, the paper will look at the need for revitalizing global partnerships for sustainable development.

From the Earth Summit to Rio+20

The Earth Summit held in 1992 stated that achieving sustainable development strongly depends on the relations between three core pillars: the environment, the economy, and social policies. On one hand, it underlined the importance of adopting different consumption and productive patterns, and on the other hand strengthening the international cooperation based on the core principle of "common but differential responsibility". Eight years later the Millennium Declaration reaffirmed the importance of global partnership for development.

The Agenda 21⁴, as one of the main outcomes of the Earth Summit (1992) highlighted the nexus

between sustainable development and democratic governance in order to protect human rights, to foster and protect citizenship, and to build the state of rights and the rule of law. The Arab peoples' revolutions and uprisings reflect such interlink between sustainable development, democratic governance, and freedom.

Moreover, Agenda 21 and the Millennium Declaration explicitly confirmed the link between sustainable development and peace and security, as prerequisite to guarantee economic and social rights. Yet, the Arab region continues to witness wars, crisis and conflicts, resulting from the persistent violation of international law and the inability to implement agreed international resolutions. Indeed, it is obvious that a just and sustainable peace in the Arab region cannot be achieved unless the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination is respected.

Challenges to sustainable development in the Arab region rethinking: the role of the State

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), League of Arab States (LAS), and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), have identified a series of challenges facing processes of sustainable development in the Arab region in a reference paper entitled "Green Economy in the Arab Region: Overall Concept and Available Option"5. According to the paper, these challenges include political challenges and shortcomings, aggravating water scarcity, challenges of the energy sector, food security threats, climate changes and extreme weather events, un-sustainable consumption and production patterns as well as the population growth and youth bulge6. The paper proposes the concept of 'Green Economy' as a pathway and solution to secure the process of sustainable development in the Arab region, where "transition offers a full set of social and economic strategies, means and tools which could be selectively used by decision makers in the Arab countries"7. The paper proposes that such

¹ This paper is based on the submission by the Arab NGO Network for Development to the UN consultation for preparation of zero draft of the outcome document, available at: <www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?menu=115>, and on the outcomes recommendations of the regional convening organized by the Arab NGO Network for Development in Cairo (May 2011) and entitled: Towards a new social contract: Declaration of key principles by civil society organizations in the Arab region, <www.annd.org>.

² These are part of the package of neo-liberal policy reforms that came to be known as the Washington Consensus, see: <www.cid.harvard.edu/cidtrade/issues/washington.html>.

³ See: The report entitled "Development Challenges in the Arab States: A Human Development Approach", by the United Nations Development Program and League of Arab States (December 2009).

⁴ Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally, and was adopted by more than 178 Governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janerio, Brazil, 3 to 14 June 1992. For more information, please visit: ">http://www.un.org/esa/ds//agenda21/>

⁵ See: <css.escwa.org.lb/sdpd/1570/PaperEn.pdf >.

^{6 &}quot;Green Economy in the Arab Region: Overall Concept and Available Option" (May 2011); paper by Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), League of Arab States (LAS), and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

⁷ Ibid. p.12; available at <css.escwa.org.lb/sdpd/1570/Paper_ En.pdf>.

"pathway" would be achieved through a strategy of "Growing the Green" (increasing investment in Green sectors and increase demand of green goods) and "Greening the Brown" (restructure existing sectors to be more environmental friendly). According to the paper, the success of such strategy depends on "Public Private Partnerships"⁸.

At a historic moment like the one that many Arab countries are currently passing through, it is very important to ensure that the concept of 'Green Economy' is not used to repackage and promote the same economic and social models that failed under previous regimes to serve people's economic and social rights.

Unpacking the 'Green Economy' concept

The concept of the 'Green Economy', which is taking center place in the process of the Rio+20 Summit, should be approached solely within the context of accepted and consensual definitions and principles of 'Sustainable Development' set in the 1992 Rio Summit. The concept of 'Sustainable Development', as it emerged from the 1992 UN conference in Rio, had a comprehensive agenda, which extends "beyond environmental agreements but are rather legally binding agreements that requires development paradigm shifts in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, that is based on equity and the historical responsibility of developed countries"9. Since then, however, the concept has been shrinking as the political commitment towards sustainable development diminished as well. In the meantime, new processes emerged and claimed to have the same spirit of Agenda 21.

Given this context, there is a need to ensure that the 'Green Economy' concept does not become a step backwards from the initial commitments under Agenda 21, even as it strives to encompass a new approach to presenting the global sustainability problematic. This cannot be achieved without a wider understanding of sustainable development, which encompasses a revision of the overall production and consumption trends in the world today, and to which rights, equity, fairness, and common but differentiated responsibilities remain central. This would necessitate re-orienting investment, trade, and finance policies to focus on these objectives, including harnessing regional cooperation on these fronts towards increasing production and demand at the national and regional levels.

Such an approach is crucial in terms of working towards recovering from the current financial and economic global crises, including restoring growth in the employment markets and generation of decent jobs, as well as the stability in the markets of basic products. Indeed, divergence from the path of sustainable development and the commitments previously undertaken is contributing to weakening the global economy as a whole. These concerns need to be addressed while taking into consideration the urgency of the situation that the world sustainability faces as well as the differentiated responsibilities and capacities in the current context, both globally between developed and developing countries and nationally among the well endowed and the marginalized and impoverished communities.

Such an approach is crucial as well in the context of the Arab region, where the peoples' revolutions quest a renewed role of the state that integrates a rethinking of development models. This is crucial for the sustainability of the democratic processes into the future.

Why "Public-Private-Partnerships" (PPPs) are not the right answer?

Within this context, there is a need for unpacking the concept of "Public-Private-Partnerships" (PPPs) and evaluating the development benefits from experiences in this area. Far too often, PPPs tend to be nothing but disguised privatization or concession measures, especially where legal and institutional frameworks are weak. With no valid consensus on what they constitute, PPPs face very uncertain results and can hinge on economic processes, social rights, and sustainable development objectives. This is especially significant at the time when PPPs are being promoted in countries where corruption and mismanagement are clearly evident. For example, during the past decades, various Arab countries have witnessed vast instances of transfer of public assets into private ownership, of concessions on the exploitation of natural resources, and of attribution of public service contracts to private firms that have been implemented with very little accountability. Indeed, the recent upheavals in the Arab region have shed light on rampant corruption in privatization deals and PPPs' processes that have benefited a small number of individuals while depriving the majority of the population, all while degrading the quality of services offered and raising prices. The situation becomes even more difficult when the private companies are foreign, as they are often unaccountable to the national judiciary system.

The problem is that these agreements give private actors the advantages of state monopolies, while their objectives are limited to making profit, rather than serving the public good. Instances of failure have had tragic social and economic results even in developed countries. Accordingly, discussing possibilities for undertaking PPPs necessitate a proper discussion of mechanisms to ensure transparency, accountability measures, strong regulatory measures and capacities, as well as strong counter-part governmental institutions.

Rethinking the role of the State in sustainable development

Policy approaches that extend beyond mere economic growth towards tackling sustainable development necessitate rethinking the role of the state in sustainable development processes. Sustainable development is central to sustaining balanced and long-term economic growth, which is rooted in peoples' economic and social rights. It includes tackling the model of growth, including how growth is achieved and the purposes it is geared towards, and the place of rights within this model.

Securing economic and social rights have been one of the authentic and central goals of the peoples' revolutions in the Arab region and a natural and fundamental complement to civil and political rights. Such goals necessitate that policies extend beyond growth and income to tackle the realization of equal wealth distribution.

Within this context, the state has two functions including a role as regulator of production forces and market relations and the protector of national interests as well as the guarantor and upholder of the rights of vulnerable groups. It is the state's responsibility to ensure equitable offer and access to quality services such as transportation, health, education, energy, water, housing, as well as social protection, and all social and economic rights. It is the state's responsibility to guarantee the balance and well-connectedness between the three pillars of sustainable development, including economic, social, and environmental policies. Moreover, it is the state's responsibility to ensure multi-stakeholder democratic and participatory processes for sustainable development policy-making, in which the voices of civil society groups representing multiplicity of communities at the national level are ensured a place.

Furthermore, rethinking the role of the state necessitates re-establishing the role of strengthened institutions that operate within intra-thematic and intraregional coordination and cooperation, with a focus on participatory processes and governance. Institutions should be empowered to focus on promoting sustainable development through a balanced integration of its economic, social and environmental dimensions that is not beholden to "donor-defined" agendas. This will rest on strengthened governmental institutions that are transparent and accountable to key multi-stakeholders.

Revitalizing global partnerships for sustainable development

The global economy already suffers from production and consumption patterns that unsustainably exploit natural resources, leading to serious environmental and ecological problems and exacerbating inequalities among the peoples of the world. Such plunder remains dominant today, and problems such as climate change, soil degradation, and water scarcity emerged as global threats to biodiversity, food sovereignty and security, the livelihoods of various communities around the world, and overall right to development. Within this context, processes of sustainable development necessitate rethinking water and energy policies, food and agricultural policies, as well as environmental policies starting from the national level to the regional and global.

This situation is made all the more dangerous because of weakly managed unsustainable energy

^{8 &}quot;Green Economy in the Arab Region: Overall Concept and Available Option" (May 2011); p.13.

⁹ Third World Network; submission to the UN consultation on zero draft for Rio+20 outcome document; <www.uncsd2012. org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=510&nr=446&me nu=20>.

policies that have only exacerbated the global threat of climate change, in addition to endangering water and food security through such technologies as first generation bio-fuels that needlessly create a competition between energy and food. Higher adaptation of environmental friendly sustainable techniques, like wind or solar energy, including public and private investment in these fields, is essential.

Furthermore of all natural resources water is the most strategic, and its mismanagement threatens the world's population. Energy efficiency, water security, and food security are closely intertwined and cannot be viewed separately. This issue is pressing in the arid Arab Region, where most countries' water supply depends on expensive energy-intensive processes, leading to further resource waste because of the lack of basic expertise or oversight at the regional and local levels. Resource management can only be enhanced by ensuring that access to freshwater remains a basic human right. With the basic rights of the most vulnerable secured, they can be empowered to be more resource-efficient and active contributors to the development processes, while guaranteeing local and traditional livelihoods.

Thus, it is essential to re-evaluate existing policies on water usage and energy generation, to ensure that exhaustible resources are used in a just and sustainable manner. Enhancing inter-regional investments and cooperation in this field is essential. Moreover, regional and global partnerships in these areas are crucial for any success.

A revitalized global partnership for sustainable development necessitates re-evaluation of existing trade, investment, and finance policies and agreements that contradict the concept of 'Sustainable Development'. This includes tackling the ways in which exiting trade, investment, and finance relations often favour rich-countries at the expense of poor country livelihoods and divert resources from development and rights focused objectives. For example, international trade rules should not be used as tools to limit public support directed towards developing alternative energy sources and technologies, nor for trade protectionism, nor for blocking the use of new 'environmental' technologies by developing country peoples. Such steps are core for addressing the structural imbalance of power distribution in the global economy that is tilted to privilege the few.

Besides, it is crucial to review national regulations to address the absence or weakness of policies that frame and support sustainable development, including for example national regulations around food sovereignty and security as well as regulations related to new technologies and transfer of technologies. Such revisions would help for example to address the threat to ecosystems and biodiversity posed by land degradation and water pollution. When in comes to new technologies, enforcing the "precautionary principle" is essential in order to avoid the risks and challenges posed by unproven technologies¹⁰.

Moreover, international development cooperation has an important role to play in supporting processes of sustainable development that national state and nonstate actors establish. Aid and development effectiveness, that can re-enforce and not weaken sustainable development processes, need to be de-linked from foreign policy objectives or militarization processes as well as foreign policy conditionality that skew the economic and social context to serve specific interests or orthodox economic models. Aid and development effectiveness serving sustainable development objectives necessitate a focus on democratic national ownership and meaningful and systematic participation by civil society, re-enforced by multiple accountability systems.

Conclusions

The Rio+20 process and Summit offer an important opportunity to revive the focus on sustainable development. This will reinforce the drive, initiated in 1992, towards reform of development paradigms that integrate coherent strategies for reviving productive sectors and capacities in developing countries, including agriculture and industry, along competitive niche services sectors.

Through coordination structures at the national and local levels, this process could also foster public participation in sustainable development policy formulation and implementation. Indeed, any implementation requires policies and mechanisms that ensure the involvement of local stakeholders, represented in various forms of civil society groups and constituency groups, including women, indigenous people, and people with special abilities, who are empowered to make and implement decisions that often concern them primarily.

¹⁰ Without clear guidance or adoption mechanisms, developing economies risk ending up as a dumping ground for polluting and unsustainable technologies, and thus subsidizing the move of the developed world towards more sustainable economies. Without proper institutions for the assessment and evaluation of technologies, the developing countries risk becoming the test bed of unproven technologies, with unexpected consequences.
Switching paradigms: the only way out

The attempts to implement sustainable development have failed due to the fact that the dominant economic paradigm was not modified, as unregulated capitalism is at odds with any model of sustainability. It is up to the State to become sustainability's main promoter, promoting a broad coordination with civil society and the business community (the market) to decidedly foster a viable development model. Dignifying labor and special attention to women economics, must be key elements in any viable paradigm of development.

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The difficulty in achieving the development and human well-being goals lies in the failure of the prevalent economic paradigm, which poses for us the issue of changing capitalism from the inside or from the outside. Our response is from the inside. The weakness of the principles that sustain the neoliberal model has been shown by the recurring economic crises. However, these principles continue to be imposed as the only way forward to development.

In the last two decades, the world economy has been marked by constant crises with a common denominator: speculation in financial markets that leads to investment in speculative, high-risk instruments. At the end of the day, excess capital and lax regulations created bubbles and overheating that turned into crises.

The gap between discourse and actions

Beginning with the publication of the World Commission on the Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) in 1987, the term "sustainable development" became a reference point for the international community. With the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and the Report by the Commission on International Development Issues (Brandt Commission) as its precedents, the Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development as: "development that can meet [the] needs of the present generations to meet their own needs."

The definitive impetus for the concept came with the 1992 Earth Summit, with the adoption of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the Agenda 21. In these two documents, signatory countries committed to seeking economic growth based on sustainable development guidelines. Later, the Sustainable Development Commission was established in the UN Economic and Social Council as a body that would follow up the accords.

The concept of sustainability explores the relationship among economic development, environmental quality and social equity. It includes a long-term perspective and an inclusive approach to action, which recognises the need for all people to be involved in the process. According to the Brundtland Commission, "sustainable development is a dynamic process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent in future as well as present needs."

However, a balance sheet of this paradigm's advances shows a large gap between discourse and actions. A review of the documents that came out of the different UN development summits shows that since the Rio Summit, the discourse in favor of sustainable development has been maintained, accompanied by notions like human development and human security.

This does not mean the notion has been strengthened or that it is a priority on international agendas. Quite to the contrary: the promotion of this paradigm has suffered serious ups and downs due to factors ranging from the differences in perceptions between the North and the South about priorities and financing, or the reduction of goals to "a minimum acceptable to all," to the preeminence of the traditional security agenda since the 9/11 terrorist attacks on Washington and New York in 2001.

At the same time, the developed countries have omitted the notion of "sustainable" to favor their economic expansion and the maintenance of their populations' excessive consumption patterns. Meanwhile, in the developing countries, protecting the environment has not necessarily been a priority, while the logic of first seeking growth and only after that, development, has held sway. Thus, despite the fact that in the framework of the United Nations, states have declared themselves in favor of sustainable development, the political will has not existed to carry forward a comprehensive program that would make it possible to implement it over the entire planet.

At the same time, the breadth, multidimensionality, and scope of the sustainable development paradigm in economic, social, and environmental terms are still far from being understood, either by government decision-makers and the population in general. While the United Nations has insisted on the three pillars of the process and different NGOs are working to promote its multidimensional character, the idea of sustainability has been associated fundamentally with environmental protection. This vision has been given new impetus in recent years by natural disasters, global warming, and the challenges to energy transition. Thus, for example, the issue of a green economy has been positioned as one of the priorities on the sustainable development agenda itself. These circumstances should be understood in the framework of the international system that took on board neoliberal postulates as the paradigm for development. According to this vision, electoral democracy and free markets would bring with them the longed-for well-being, and for that reason, states should limit their functions and let market forces act. This model displayed its limits very early on with recurring economic crises and the widening social gaps that have brought globalization to a true ethical crisis.

From Rio to the Millennium Declaration: good intentions, poor results

The precedents of the movement for sustainable development and to put the individual at the center of developmental concerns date back to the 1970s and 1980s with the establishment of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, and the aforementioned Brundtland Commission.

It would be in the first half of the 1990s when development issues would take on particular importance, reflected by the series of summits held and the emergence of the concepts of human development and human security, intimately linked to the idea of sustainable development. The end of the Cold War made it possible to broaden the international agenda and incorporate the so-called "new issues" that covered both the development and security agendas.

Actually, these were phenomena that had been around for decades, but the bi-polar ideological struggle had pushed them into the background. From the perspective of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the gap between North and South had deepened because of the paradigm that considered that economic growth would automatically bring about greater benefits for society and that emphasized structural adjustment over the issue of development.¹ Thus, from within the United Nations, a new development agenda was fostered with the aim of dealing with the great inequalities reflected, for example, in the humanitarian crises in Africa and the legacy of the "lost decade" in Latin America. The curious thing is that, despite these criticisms of the

United Nations Development Program (UNDP), "Origins of the Human Development Approach," <hdr.undp.org/en/ humandev/origins/>.

neoliberal model, it gained even more strength, and it was in that framework that the attempt was made to implement the sustainable development paradigm.

In 1990, the World Conference on Education for All and the Second UN Conference on Least Developed Countries were held. That same year, together with a group of experts like Mahbub ul Haq and Amartya Sen, the UNDP proposed an alternative concept: the human development approach, defined as a process of enlarging people's choices and enhancing human capabilities (the range of things people can be and do) and freedoms, enabling them to: live a long and healthy life, have access to knowledge and a decent standard of living, and participate in the life of their community and decisions affecting their lives.²

The notion of sustainable development took on definitive impetus in 1992 with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. With the attendance of 108 heads of state, the conference resulted in the adoption of three general documents (the Declaration of Rio, Agenda 21, and the Forest Principles); the establishment of the UN Sustainable Development Commission; and the signing of conventions about climate change, biological diversity, and desertification.

The Declaration of Rio includes 27 principles of action about sustainable development, touching on such substantive topics as prevention policies, common but differentiated responsibilities, and the "polluter pays" principle. Also the inclusion of the principle of the right to development (Principle 3) for the first time meant affirming that right in an international instrument approved by consensus. For its part, the 40 chapters of Agenda 21 provide an ample framework of action to achieve the transition toward sustainable development and to measure progress toward that goal.³

It should be pointed out that one of the conference's most important aspects was the decision to foster a broad-based social movement in favor of the model. The summit was conceived to have an impact on international institutions, national and local governments, the private sector, and organized civil society around the world. Thus, the UNCED was the first international conference that allowed total access to a good number of social organizations and contributed to the development of an independent summit.⁴

Continuing with the tendency of situating human beings as the central axis for development, in its 1994 Human Development Report, the UN Development Program proposed a new vision of security that challenged the traditional perspective centered on the state and its military component. Human security means safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease, and repression, and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns off daily life.⁵ The concept is based on the logic of human development and spans economic, political, food, health, environmental, personal, and community security.

That same year the Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was held in Bridgetown, Barbados. This was the first conference to translate Agenda 21 into a programme of action for a group of countries. The Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) and the Declaration of Barbados set forth specific actions and measures to be taken at the national, regional and international levels in support of the sustainable development of SIDS.⁶

Thus, in the early 1990s, we saw emerge within the United Nations a movement for development centered on human well-being and dignity. The international community's interest in these issues was reflected in its holding several international meetings on food (the 1992 International Conference on Nutrition and the 1996 World Food Summit), human rights (the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights), population (International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, and the ICPD+5 in 1999), housing (the 1996 Second UN Conference on Human Settlements, or HABITAT II), and gender equality (the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and Beijing+5 in 2000).

Among the outstanding aspects the declarations, and action plans that came out of these conferences share are: a) an insistence on the importance of putting people at the center of the development process; b) the need to foster a comprehensive program to fulfill basic human needs; c) the commitment to reduce inequalities and facilitate sustainable possibilities for living; and d) promoting environmental sustainability, particularly in the population and housing summits.

Thus, for example, the declaration that came out of the Copenhagen Summit on Social Development recognizes that "economic development, social development, and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework for our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people."⁷

In compliance with the agreement reached at the Rio Summit, in 1997 the Special Session of the UN General Assembly was held in New York (Earth Summit+5).⁸ The session was called for to assess progress since the Rio Summit and to set future priorities. Based on reports prepared for the session, Governments acknowledged that the global environment had continued to deteriorate since Rio, renewable resources continued to be used at rates that are clearly unsustainable, the number of people living in poverty had increased and gaps between rich and poor have grown, both within and between countries.

Furthermore, North-South differences dominated in the debates. Pledges made at Rio by donor countries to increase official development assistance (ODA) and make environment-friendly technologies available on concessional terms had not been kept.

Rather, ODA had declined from an average 0.34 per cent of donor country gross national product in 1991 to 0.27 per cent in 1995.⁹

As a result of these divisions, the final document of the meeting (Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21) included a minimum of new commitments to action. Although no new specific financial commitments were made, Governments agreed to a general statement that developed countries should fulfil their commitment made in Rio related to ODA and that "intensified efforts" should be made to reverse the downward trend since 1992.¹⁰

At the end of the 1990s, the ethical crisis of neoliberal economic globalization became clearer. Deepening social inequalities, both between North and South and within countries, the weakening of the state as a guarantor of the common good, and recurring economic crises became the new Leviathan.

Hand in hand with the crises came the social justice movements who claimed "another world is possible." Their first big public demonstrations took place in Seattle in the framework of the World Trade Organization's Millennium Round in November 1999. From that moment on, all the summits of the world's great economic powers, as well as its international financial institutions, became the target of movement demonstrations. Their presence at international summits, like the one in Bangkok and the G-7 Summit in Okinawa in 2000, put the social justice movement on the map as a new actor on the new, complex international stage.

In 2000, the 189 nations gathered at the Millennium Summit expressed themselves again and again

9 UN Department of Public Information, *Earth Summit Review Ends with Few Commitments*, Press Release, (New York: 27 June 1997).

10 Ibid..

² Ibid.

³ Cfr United Nations, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development: application and implementation Report of the Secretary-General, (E/CN.17/1997/8), Commision on Sustainable Development, Fifth sesión, (7-25 April 1997).

⁴ The summit provided full access to a wide range of nongovernmental organizations and encouraged an independent Earth Summit at a nearby venue. Cfr. Robert W. Kates, Thomas M. Parris, and Anthony A. Leiserowitz, "What is sustaibable development?, Goals, Indicators, Values and Practice", Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development, volume 47, number 3, (2005).

⁵ UNDP, "New dimension of human security," *Human Development Report*, (UNDP, 1994).

⁶ Both documents listed fifteen priority areas for specific action: climate change and sea level Climate change and sea-level rise; natural and environmental disasters; management of wastes; coastal and marine resources; freshwater resources; land resources; nergy resources; tourism resources; biodiversity resources; national institutions and administrative capacity; regional institutions and technical cooperation; transport and communication; science and technology; human resource development and implementation, monitoring and review. Cfr. UNESCO, Intersectoral Platform for Small Island Developing States, From Barbados to Mauritius, cportal.unesco.org/en/ ev.php-URL_ID=12117&URL_DD=DD_TOPIC&URL_ SECTION=201.html>.

⁷ Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, adopted at the World Summit for Social Development, (Copenhagen: 1995), <www.un.org/documents/ga/conf166/aconf166-9.htm>.

⁸ UN General Assembly, Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted at the special session of the General Assembly Earth Summit + 5, New York, (September, 19, 1997).

on the issues of world inequality, poverty, health, and nutrition. They also touched on central issues like UN reform, the fight against AIDS, education, preserving the environment, international security, and, specifically, the inter-ethnic wars in Africa. The summit's final declaration itself manifested the ethical crisis of the international politics and economy of the new millennium. According to the Declaration of the Millennium, world leaders would spare no effort in liberating humanity from war, extreme poverty, the threat of environmental disaster, and in promoting democracy and the rule of law.

In theory, the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their 21 targets obey the logic of fostering human development. Actually, the goals were reduced to "minimums acceptable by all." This is the case of poverty reduction based on income, by considering that someone is no longer poor if he/she lives with US\$1 per day, or education, by limiting the goal to covering primary school education.

The seventh MDG is "to ensure environmental sustainability." However, integrating the principles of sustainable development into national policies and plans, as well as reverting the loss of natural resources (Target 7A), were commitments set from the time of the 1992 Earth Summit. At the same time, Target 7B, dealing with biodiversity loss, deforestation, and CO_2 emissions, among other things, established no specific commitment about concrete reduction levels.

From Johannesburg to Rio+20: torn between War on Terrorism and environmental calamity

In 2001, the first World Social Forum was held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, bringing together the world social justice movement. This was an exercise carried out parallel to the "For a Citizens' Construction of the World" Forum in Paris. In both cases, the aim was to analyze the current situation and propose alternatives to the prevailing forms.¹¹ Civil society has contributed decisively to promoting sustainable development. Mutual exchange of ideas and knowledge make it possible to join efforts internationally at the same time that these movements foster changes from the local level through working directly working with people.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on Washington and New York meant the return to the terms of *real politik* for the international agenda. The struggle against terrorism became the priority, not only for the United States, but for all the international agendas, eclipsing the development agenda.

The world became polarized based on the George Bush administration logic of "you're either with me or you're against me." The United States reconfigured its security and defense systems, and, with United Nations support, launched the war against Afghanistan. Thus, the ethical crisis of neoliberal globalization was joined by the momentary crisis of security.¹²

A year later, the International Conference on Financing for Development was held in Monterrey, Mexico. The Monterrey Consensus calls on developed countries to adopt concrete measures to funnel 0.7 percent of their GDP to official development assistance (ODA) for developing countries, and to earmark between 0.15 percent and 0.20 percent of their GDP for least developed nations, objectives that were reaffirmed at the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries. The document did not establish clear goals about the amount of resources that should be used to foster development through foreign direct investment and other flows of private capital.¹³

The United Nations General Assembly, for its part, recognized that the advances in sustainable development during the 1990s had been disappointing. Poverty and social exclusion increased on a par with environmental degradation. For this reason, in addition to developing its usual balance sheet about the advances of Agenda 21, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10) held in Johannesburg was conceived as a "summit centered on applying measures."

However, once again, no concrete agreements about new treaties were arrived at, nor was the Agenda 21 renegotiated. For example, a few targets were established, like reducing by half the number of people without basic sanitary services by 2012, and achieving a significant reduction in the loss of biological diversity by 2010. Meanwhile, topics linked to ODA and technology transfer from North to South continued to generate greater divisions among countries.

That year at the Group of Eight (G-8) Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, the world's most developed countries committed to increasing ODA funds from US\$80 billion in 2004 to US\$130 billion (at constant 2004 prices) by 2010, the equivalent of 0.36 percent of their combined national domestic product.

While chiaroscuros were the constant in the development meetings and the traditional security agenda linked to issues of terrorism and international organized crime were the priority, particularly due to the deepening of the war in Afghanistan and the disastrous Iraq War, the system's different crises began to converge.

On the one hand, the ecological crisis began to be increasingly evident with the rise in the number of natural disasters and conflicts over resources such as in Darfur, all a product of global warming. In 2007, on the initiative of Great Britain, the UN Security Council debated the issue, which took on noteworthy importance since it was irremediably linked to security issues on all levels. To this must be added the challenges of the energy transition —between the exhaustion of fossil fuel resources and the need to foster alternative fuels in order to cause no further damage to the environment— and the food crisis related not only to access to food, but also to the quality of food, whose prices on a world level have increased considerably since 2005.

Finally, we are witnessing what is considered the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of 1929; the current crisis originated at the very center of capitalism with the mortgage bubble and the collapse of financial institutions as emblematic as Lehman Brothers. It soon expanded to the entire world, as did its social repercussions. However, since it originated directly in the center of the world economy, it opened up an important reflection about the need to redefine the relationship between the state and the market, as well as to regulate the economy. In direct opposition to the economic crises of previous decades, this time the way out of the crisis and the responses to its challenges have once again been found in the state.

It should be pointed out that, in addition to putting at risk the fulfillment of the Millennium Goals because it threw millions of people around the world into poverty and unemployment, the economic crisis had an impact on the already affected ODA figures. The amount earmarked for ODA by the 23 members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee in 2009 was US\$120 billion, a 2.2 percent nominal drop with regard to 2005. As a result, the deficit for 2010 *vis-à-vis* the Gleneagles target was US\$18 billion. Only five countries (Denmark, Luxemburg, Norway, the Netherlands, and Sweden) have a ratio between ODA and gross national income that is higher than the UN's 0.7 percent assistance target.

Conclusions

The lack of ethics in the international economy, particularly in financial markets, is also fed by the absence of norms and regulations, which in turn feeds speculation. The neoliberal model favors the search for easy, short-term profits, a situation that is also the root of the different economic crises, the unequal distribution of wealth, and the increase in the number of people living in extreme poverty.

The socio-economic model prevalent in the world today has narrowed its vision of human development, which undoubtedly was richer when it started out at the time of the Brundtland Report and the goals of the Earth Summit. Today, it has shrunk to a minimum that is closer to a moral excuse than a real will to solve the problems.

¹¹ Through the World Social Forum, the social justice movement has managed to define the aim of its activism translating it into "the model of an alternative society, whose bases are the respect for the dignity of every human being; the defense of humanity's common patrimony; fostering democracy, environmental sustainability, the exercise of non-violence, respect for the identity and diversity; placing the economy at the service of human beings; defending the right to culture; solidarity among peoples and individuals; and the creation of social structures that make it possible for the individual to live in conditions of liberty, equality, and fraternity. "Charter of Principles of the World Social Forum" in *Foro Social Mundial*, (June 8, 2002), <www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main. php?id_menu=4&cd_language=4.>.

¹² Alejandro Chanona, "El sistema internacional: viejos dilemas y nuevos retos. La crisis de septiembre de Estados Unidos y su gran oportunidad," in José Luis Valdés-Ugalde and Diego Valadés, comps., Globalidad y Conflicto. Estados Unidos y la crisis de septiembre, (México City: Editorial UNAM, CISAN, IIJ, 2002), pp. 65-73.

¹³ United Nations, Proyecto de documento final de la Conferencia Internacional sobre Financiación para el Desarrollo, International Conference on Financing for Development, (Monterrey, Mexico: March 18-22, 2002), <www.un.org/spanish/conferences/ftd/ACONF1983.pdf>.

Thus, the advances of the sustainable development agenda have been gradual and limited. They depend directly on the political will of the states, not only for coming to agreements on goals, resources, and schedules, but also for their implementation, evaluation, and follow-up. The developed countries have bet on minimum goals and targets, at the same time that they avoid establishing specific, much more ambitious, inclusive targets and commitments.

Economic growth and monetary stability *per* se are not equivalent to less poverty. As long as the structural problems of inequitable distribution of income and wealth are not solved, it will be very difficult to advance in the fight against hunger and to reduce poverty, lessening the capacity to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals or any other, for that matter. It should also be pointed out that it is imperative to increase ODA; if what is really wanted is to reduce current inequalities; more precise indicators are required for evaluating poverty in the world. The problem is that the entire system of monitoring and indicators is part of the current economic growth paradigm and jibes with its discourse.

The liberal community that today's world is part of, and its vision of the world economy, have generated a narrative with which individuals interpret their surroundings and assign meaning to their particular and social living conditions. This is why it is important to change that narrative, to allow world leaders, heads of state or government, to reformulate their interpretation of reality and therefore the way they design and evaluate public policies.

This is why a change of paradigm must be accompanied by a renewed discursive-conceptual framework, as well as new indicators to measure social well-being. Any measurement of advances in development and social well-being must go beyond the methodology limited to the economicmonetarist vision that reduces complex, multidimensional phenomena like poverty to a narrow

NIGERIA: KEYS FOR SUSTAINABLE POVERTY REDUCTION

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Nigeria is blessed with many natural resources like bauxites, gold, tin, coal, oil, tin, forest, water land, etc.. It has the largest mangrove forest in Africa, third in the world, covering a total of 1.000 km² along the West Atlantic Coast of Africa (for environmental issues in the country, see national report). However, 70% of Nigerians wallow in want. In 2002 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) ranked Nigeria as the 26th poorest nation in the world, and the situation is still unchanged.

Factors and causes of this situation are multiple, including inappropriate macroeconomic policies, negative economic growth, effects of globalisation, corruption, debt burden, low productivity and low wages in the informal sector, unemployment or deficiencies in the labour market, high population growth rate and poor human resources development. Other involved factors are the rise in the rats of criminality and violence, environmental degradation due to climate change, retrenchment of workers, the weakening of social safety nets and changes in family structure. Traditional family, in particular, is very important in Nigerian culture, but is currently an institution falling apart due, among other reasons, to migrations from rural villages to cities.

This multiplicity of challenges cannot be confronted with simplistic or reductionist solutions. To address poverty it is important to empower the poor people and to give them an opportunity in managing the environment and natural resources. As explained by the International Fund for Agricultural Development: "Empowerment is defined as the ability of people, in particular the least privileged, to: (a) have access to productive resources that enable them to increase their earnings and obtain the goods and services they need; and (b) participate in the development process and the decisions that affect them. These two aspects are related: one without the other is not empowerment". With this in mind, it is clear that global strategies and policies for sustainable poverty reduction should integrate economic and environmental considerations.

conceptual construct from which minimal indicators are derived. For this reason, the discussion about defining new development goals must continue, so they can go beyond the categories of economic growth. A new set of indicators for poverty and other issues is needed which would mean a profound redefinition of international society, the state, and humanity itself. The current crisis of the international system as a whole opens up the possibility of rethinking the relationship between state and market, and the neoliberal paradigm that has held sway for several decades. As the Brundtland Report pointed out at the time, "Sustainable development in the final analysis must rest on political will of governments as critical economic, environmental, and social decisions have to be made."

HOW TO ASSESS THE SUSTAINABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT: LINES OF EUROPEAN INTERVENTION

Gianfranco Bologna Giulio Marco Social Watch Italy

The route to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) to be held in June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, twenty years after the famous 1992 Earth Summit, is building an "exciting opportunity for a constructive confluence of the best scientific production, theory and practices dedicated to sustainable development. In these twenty years there has been deepening and consolidated research on Global Environmental Change (GEC), the central theme for all the sciences of the Earth system and its prestigious research programs (converging in the Earth System Science Partnership¹, sponsored by the world's largest scientific organization. ICSU - International Council for Science². The Sustainability Science has also been created, with two international conferences which have been already realized and have brought together the confluence of numerous advanced disciplines (ranging from Ecological Economics and Industrial Ecology to Restoration Ecology and Conservation Biology, all the way to Earth System science³.

Moreover, the important collaboration between scientists of the natural systems and scholars of the social systems has produced important international relations, sponsored by the United Nations, such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment⁴ and TEEB, The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity⁵, which have assessed the state of health of the Earth's ecosystems, the services they provide to human welfare and the economy, the evaluation of natural capital and so on. Four reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change⁶ were also produced, taking stock of the knowledge of our climate system, the effects of our actions on it, on future scenarios, the policies needed for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and so on.

Which indicators of wealth and well-being?

The gross domestic product (GDP) is the most well known measure of macroeconomic policies. It was formulated in the 30s by economists such as Simon Kuznets, and then turned into an actual indicator of wealth and prosperity of a country. It has been used by policy makers around the world to indicate positive or negative performances of policies in general and to determine rankings among the different countries.

The reflection and actions aimed at revising our indicators of wealth and prosperity are now well under way, since it has been demonstrated that the ones used today are clearly not able to "photograph" the reality of humankind as well as the fact that, unfortunately, they ignore the health of ecosystems and biodiversity of the planet. Finally it seems now time to integrate the classical economic accounting with ecological accounting. Moreover, there is an extensive process to define a new economy that will also be part of the discussion in the UNCSD of Rio de Janeiro.

On these issues of central importance for the future of us all, official institutions like the United Nations, the European Commission, Eurostat, the OECD have produced much analysis. Non-governmental organizations as well have been involved, such as the Club of Rome and WWF, with the publication of the report, "Taking Nature into Account" (1995) and the organisation of the first major conference with the same title in Brussels in 1995, together with the European Commission and the European Parliament and subsequent initiatives, including the last major conference with the European Commission and European Parliament in Brussels in 2007⁷, which have strongly triggered world political and economic forces to realize a transition towards environmental accounting, in conjunction with economic activity. Naturally, significant contributions were also provided by the report of the committee wanted by French President Sarkozy with five Nobel Economics Prizes among its members and coordinated by Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean Paul Fitoussi8 and the OECD's work on the global project on new indicators of progress for society9.

In addition to all this, besides the work the OECD, the UN, the European Union and other international institutions and organizations are doing in creating a framework and a set of proposals, other international initiatives and practical experiences are underway through the work of research and development matured in recent years. In Canada (with the Canadian Index of Well Being) and Australia (through the work of the Australian Bureau of Statistics), there have been concrete advancements using indicators measuring well-being and supplementing GDP.

Among the many indicators used, there is the ISEW (Index of Sustainable Welfare), which calculates the environmental costs and income distribution: it has has already been adopted in several national and local contexts. Social budgeting practices, gender auditing and similar assessments are spreading more and more in local areas (but there are examples of central government such as New Zealand), and cover many hundreds of municipalities and local governments all over the world.

In some of these local experience, specific indicators such as ecological footprint or QUARS (Quality of Regional Development) are used as a tool to address economic and financial policies. In Italy, this is the case of regions such as Lazio and Tuscany. In particular, the QUARS¹⁰ with the identification of seven domains and 41 indicators of social, environmental and cultural dimensions, has become an increasingly popular tool in assessing the effects and impacts of specific policies. It is used in the town of Arezzo, in provinces such as those of Trento. Ascoli Piceno and Rome, where it is taken as a reference for the implementation of the strategic plan of development of the province¹¹. There are also many local authorities in Italy who are working on the implementation of public policies on the basis of territorial welfare indicators, such as the Network of Virtuous Townships 12 and the Network for a new municipality¹³.

- 2 <www.icsu.org>.
- 3 <www.sustainabilityscience.org>.
- 4 <www.maweb.org>.
- 5 <www.teebweb.org>
- 6 <www.ipcc.ch>.

- 8 <www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr>.
- 9 <www.oecd.org/progress>.

- 10 <www.sbilanciamoci.org>.
- 11 <capitalemetropolitana.provincia.roma.com>.
- 12 <www.comunivirtuosi.org>.
- 13 <www.nuovomunicipio.org>.

^{1 &}lt;www.essp.org>.

⁷ See: <www.beyond-gdp.eu>.

Networking cities that use new indicators in their public policies

Many concrete experiences have been carried out by municipalities and local governments – and at the international level - within the framework of Agenda 21.

Among the European capitals, there are the significative examples - inspired by Agenda 21 - of Dublin and Helsinki¹⁴. The movement of the "Covenant of Mayors" must also be mentionned: it has undertaken to translate into concrete commitments local policies on energy efficiency and use of renewable energy, in accordance with the goals of 20/20/20. It networks more than 2,600 mayors, representing over 126 million people¹⁵. These are only a few examples, some linked to an organic application of welfare indicators, others limited to certain sectors, which reflects the growing importance of the debate and the elaboration of practical means using indicators for public policy making. In this way, from a confined use as broader statistical and articulated representation and well-being, these indicators are becoming instruments that impose constraints, objectives, audits on public policies, at the same level of other indicators of macroeconomic nature.

GDP is still today considered a proxy indicator for overall development of society and progress in general. However, given its nature and its purpose, the GDP can not be the key to understanding all issues subject to public debate. In particular, the GDP does not measure environmental sustainability or social inclusion, and these limitations should be considered when it is used in the analysis or in policy debates.

Significant policies, from this point of view, are collected within the European Union. It is no

accident that the European Commission's Communication to the Council and the European Parliament dated August 20th, 2009 and titled "GDP. Measuring progress in a changing world", foresees that by 2013 for all EU countries physical environmental accounts will be available, along with the classic economic accounts.

The attempt that the Commission is making is to also summarize in one indicator the status of global environmental health to be summed to the GDP. It is believed that indicators that summarize important issues in the single digits are essential communication tools that trigger public debate, allowing people to see if progress has been actually achieved. GDP and unemployment rates and inflation are significant examples of such summary indicators, but their purpose is not to take stock of the situation on issues such as environment or social inequalities.

Four lines for European intervention

In recent years, in conclusion, we have tried to translate the welfare indicators in public policy and good practices. Regarding the relationship between indicators and policies, there are the four lines that could be followed by governments, parliaments and local authorities on a European scale. The first is the adoption of the indications made by the "Stiglitz Commission", which could be appropriately used in financial, budgetary laws and in the economic and financial planning documents.

The second is the definition of a "economic, social and environmental stability pact, setting objectives and constraints for public policies related to the chosen indicators.

The third is the use of welfare indicators in the Economic and Financial Planning: depending

on the countries and territories, there are several tools, areas and fields of application which can usefully be referenced to help build the identified indicators.

Finally, there is the point of so-called "satellite accounts": with environmental budgeting, social and gender auditing it is possible to build instruments to measure well-being and to assess the effects and impact of policies, and which are able to help indicate the choices and verify the results.

One point that emerges in the debate between indicators and public policies is the legitimacy of the choice of indicators¹⁶. In this context, the public process of building participatory and shared indicators with all stakeholders concerned becomes a crucial point in defining a set of domains and indicators that have institutional and social legitimacy.

In this context, an example is the progress in Italy, where on the initiative of ISTAT (National statistics agency) and CNEL (National Council for Economy and Labour), a "steering committee on the inter-institutional initiative to develop indicators of progress and prosperity" began its work in 2011 and will conclude in 2012, with the aim to "develop a shared definition of the progress of Italian society, to express the economic, social and environmental major areas (...) Furthermore, we intend to select a set of high quality statistical indicators and representative of the various domains (...) these indicators will then be disseminated to citizens through a widespread distribution of the evolution of these indicators.¹⁷

For Italy, this could be a decisive step towards the widespread use of indicators in public policy at national and local levels.

¹⁶ On the dimension of the relationship between indicators and public policies, an important reference is the document "Health and solidarity" of the campaign Sbilanciamoci (www.sbilanciamoci.org) operating in Italy.

¹⁷ See: <www.cnel.it/19?shadow_comunicati_ stampa=3090>.

^{14 &}lt;www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21>

^{15 &}lt;www.eumayors.eu>

Current practices are threatening our very existence

The development path pursued by the wealthiest nations is ravaging the planet's natural resources. There is need for a radical change in the current economic system that continues to produce and reflect sharp economic and social inequalities around the world. If structural imbalances are to be addresses successfully, the introduction of democratically managed control and regulatory mechanisms that seek to enhance and protect public rights as opposed to corporate privileges is of crucial importance. Eradicating poverty, diminishing inequalities, striving for more inclusive and just society and respect for the environment should be core pillars and goals of such strategy.

EUROSTEP

The future of the world, its 7 billion people and the generations to come will be determined by the way in which we respond to the significant challenges that confront our planet. Our current practices are threatening our very existence.

The international community adopted a set of principles and obligations at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, endorsing sustainable development. Unfortunately, implementation of these principles has been limited. Industrialized countries have failed to provide the means (financial resources and technology transfer) to implement the Earth Summit agreements, and also to provide the leadership needed to change production and consumption patterns, particularly in their own countries.

Human activity has been the major cause of environmental degradation and climate change. The development path pursued by the world's wealthiest nations has drawn disproportionately on the planet's non-renewable natural resources, and continues to do so. Actions to achieve a far-reaching transition to sustainable development models must be undertaken, and this requires radical and urgent transformation in current approaches to economic growth and stability and to patterns of production and consumption.

Countries have common but differentiated responsibility for contributing to current unsustainable practices, and for the consequence of unsustainable use of the world's natural resources. Since the actions of industrialized nations have contributed most to creating the global environmental problems we collectively face, they should actively assist developing countries in migrating and adapting to the adverse effects they now face.

The limits of the "green" economy

Taking the actions necessary to put in place effective mechanisms for the sustainable management of natural capital and resources will inevitably impact on economic actors. The creation of a green economy is likely to create new "green jobs," but will also destroy "brown" ones; thus, during the process of transformation towards a green economy some individuals, groups, communities and countries will lose whereas others will win. Sustainable development is about improving the well-being of both present and future generations, and is concerned with not only environmental but also social, economic and intergenerational justice: greening the economy alone will not bring about sustainable development.

Eradicating poverty, diminishing inequalities, striving for a more inclusive and just society, along with respect for the environment and ensuring accountability should be core pillars and goals of any sustainable development strategy; a green economy, while it may be less dependent on natural resources, will continue to promote inequity unless other fundamental changes are also made.

The idea of rethinking the conventional model of economic progress is envisaged by the European Union in its position towards the upcoming Rio+20 Earth Summit, but despite valuable proposals for policies and strategies, much emphasis is placed on technological innovations as a means to achieve further resource efficiency. Innovations such as geo-engineering techniques, nano-technology or synthetic biology do have the potential to contribute to sustainability, but undoubtedly must be subject to rigourous systematic impact assessments.

Furthermore, sustainable development is a concept that goes beyond resource efficiency: radical reforms dealing with production and consumption patterns, social and political rights and economic practices are needed if the multi-dimensional aspects of sustainability are to be properly addressed.

Equity, empowerment, human rights and democratic participation

The first principle of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development states that "human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development." In this perspective, promoting social, gender, economic and environmental equity, the reduction of inequality and the observance of human rights should be the basis of any development strategy. This can only be achieved by engaging citizens in the process of making the changes necessary to ensure sustainability, changes which have to be pursued with full transparency and accountability. Ensuring access to information, raising awareness about sustainable development issues and improving participation of citizens and stakeholders in decision-making processes are key elements for sustainable development.

A sustainable economy cannot be achieved without involving all parts of a society. Social protection needs to be extended to all members of society as a right, and not just to those in formal employment. A human-rights based approach should be taken to addressing poverty in financing for development strategies with a particular focus on women. Regarding food security, for example, the role of women (who produce 60-80% of food in agricultural societies) should be recognized.

Financing for sustainable development

Significant levels of financing will be required from developed countries in order to advance the implementation of effective global strategies. The commitment to provide new and additional finance towards tackling climate change also needs to be recognized within this context.

New forms of innovative financing that have been under discussion for more than a decade can also be an important contribution towards the implementation of sustainable development strategies. The proposal for a financial transaction tax (FTT) should be taken forward, and most local and national taxation systems need to be revised so that they promote sustainability. New systems must be based on the principle that polluter pays, and all subsidies that undermine sustainable development must be eliminated.

Conclusions

The recent crises have shown the limits of current economic models. Increased liberalisation will not deliver development, understood as a multidimensional concept encompassing economic, environmental and social progress. This model has led to increased instability, the emergence of multiple crises, an over emphasis on personal accumulation of wealth, increasing social inequalities and environmental degradation.

The structural imbalances in the global economic system that perpetuates inequalities and trap millions in cycles of poverty must be addressed, redistributing power and putting in place democratically managed control and regulatory mechanisms. People should be put at the centre of any strategy devised to ensure social, economic and environmental security.

Rio 2012 is an important opportunity to build on past commitments and secure their implementation. Adopting binding internationally agreed time-bound commitments and strategies must be its ultimate objective.

Green and equal: financing for sustainable and equitable development

Men and women play dissimilar roles in areas such as food production and resource management. Climate change funds that overlook women's role in those fields miss an opportunity to make a significant impact on both food security and mitigation efforts. Gender budgeting can make a significant contribution; in fact, placing women's empowerment in the centre of climate change strategies is the most effective way to go. Special attention to women economics must be a key element in any viable paradigm of development.

Kate McInturff Feminist Alliance For International Action (FAFIA)

An essential element in ensuring the substantive implementation of any international agreement is adequate financial and political support. Civil society organizations have begun to track not only political commitments to address climate change, but also the financial resources that underwrite them.1 The gap between promised funds and actual funds allocated is itself a key measure of the durability of political commitments. Following the money, however, is not sufficient to ensure that climate change funds are being directed in an equitable and sustainable manner. Climate funds must also integrate a gender budgeting approach in the design and disbursement of those funds in order to address and mitigate the differential impact of climate change on women. Moreover, the administration and design of the funds must be conducted in a gender equitable manner, including by involving women and women's rights organizations in decision-making at every level.

The Climate Funds Update project, supported by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation and the Overseas Development Institute, has led the way in tracking and analysing financing in this area. The project charts:

- the financial support that has been pledged by donors to climate funding mechanisms,
- money that has actually been deposited in climate funds,
- money that has been approved for climate adaptation and mitigation projects and
- money that has been disbursed.²

Across 23 climate funding mechanisms, the gaps are significant: USD31,896 million pledged, USD13,199 million deposited, USD6,569 million approved and USD,162 million dispersed. The gap between the amount of support pledged and the amount actually given over to climate funds demonstrates a failure of political will that has the potential to further damage the credibility of the ongoing process of negotiation among state actors. It suggests that there is not only a gap between the commitments of different state actors, notably between high-income countries and low-income countries, but also a gap between the stated and the actual financial commitments of those actors in practice.

The Global Gender and Climate Alliance brings together civil society and multilateral actors "to ensure that climate change policies, decision-making, and initiatives at the global, regional, and national levels are gender responsive."3 Analysis has demonstrated, however, that there continues to be a significant gap between the stated commitments of fund administrators, such as the World Bank, to gender equitable development policies and a near total absence of gender-based analysis of climate change fund policy and programming by these administrators.⁴ The consequences of this absence are significant, not only for closing the gap between the well-being of women and that of men, but for the overall success of any climate change strategy.⁵ This is because men and women play distinct roles in the economy, particularly in areas such as food production, fuel consumption, resource management and in disaster response. As a result they are affected in unique ways by climate change and are positioned to make unique contributions to adaptation and mitigation efforts.

Women make up the majority of small-scale food producers. They are far more likely than men to be responsible for cultivation, food preparation and managing the distribution of food to their families and communities. For example, in the Philippines, women make up 70% of the agricultural labour force engaged in rice and corn production.⁶ As elsewhere, farmers in the Philippines must now

- 5 Ibid..
- 6 A. Peralta, Gender and Climate Change Finance: A Case Study from the Philippines, Women's Environment and Development Organization, (New York: 2008).

respond to shifting weather patterns and increased food production costs. However, in Montalban, Rizal, women have responded to the impact of changing weather patterns and increased fertilizer costs by changing their methods of cultivation and the variety of rice that they grow – resulting in lower greenhouse gas emissions, less fertilizer use, and crops that are better adapted to the shifts in weather patterns.⁷ As this example demonstrates, climate change funds that overlook the role women play in food production miss an opportunity to make a significant impact on both food security and adaptation and mitigation efforts.

Gendered climate funding

Climate change funds must also address the broader structures of inequality, or risk widening the gap between women and men. Although women make up the majority of small-scale farmers, and are best positioned to respond to food insecurity, they are far less likely to hold formal title to the land they cultivate. They are less likely to have property rights, including rights of inheritance. Research has also demonstrated that in times of food scarcity women often allocate more food to male family members than female family members. A gender-sensitive evaluation of climate change funds must consider not only how the funds are distributed, but the extent to which funding is allocated to address the structural impediments to women's full participation in adaptation and mitigation efforts. To return to the example from the Philippines, it is not enough simply to ensure that funds go to female as well as male farmers, it is also necessary to ensure that female farmers have control over the resources that go into food production and that the food produced benefits women as well as men.

A gendered analysis of climate change funds must also be attentive to the division of paid and unpaid labour. This is an area where gender budgeting can make a particularly significant contribution to understanding how to improve climate change financing. Women continue to perform a disproportionate amount of unpaid labour, much of which is directly impacted by climate change. This labour includes care for family and community members, who may experience increased negative health effects from climate change. It includes labour per-

See: <www.climatefundsupdate.org>; <www. faststartfinance.org>; <www.climatefund.info>; <www. globalclimatefund.org/>.

^{2 &}quot;Chart: Pledged v deposited v approved v disbursed," Climate Funds Update, (2011), <www.climatefundsupdate org/graphs-statistics/pledged-deposited-disbursed>.

^{3 &}quot;Global Gender and Climate Alliance, "Welcome", <www. gender-climate.org>.

⁴ A. Rooke, et al. Doubling the Damage: World Bank Climate Investment Funds Undermine Climate and Gender Justice, Gender Action and Heinrich Böll Foundation North America, (2009).

⁷ Peralta, op cit.

GENDER EQUALITY AT THE CORE OF SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES

Women around the world work longer hours, participate less in formal labour markets, receive lower incomes and have fewer social protection benefits than do men. Feminist economics demands a new development paradigm that is not based exclusively on economic growth and which is not measured by per capita GDP – which conceals the half of the economy that is non-monetary.

In the classic model, activities that are essential for the existence of the family and community are ignored as they take place outside markets. These include maintaining a household, child rearing, caring for the elderly and a large part of food production and crop maintenance. Since these activities are carried out informally, without contract or exchange of money, they are considered "noneconomic activities," not only in the economics textbooks but also the in the international System of National Accounts.

In the current economic paradigm growth equals economic development and GDP is the most used indicator to measure the "wealth" generated. However, feminist economics has shown that over 50% of all work hours are unpaid and therefore are not recorded in GDP. If this invisible work were considered we would see that nearly two thirds of wealth is created by women. The traditional divisions of tasks by gender, such as women's "specialization" in domestic and caregiving work, do not take into account the fact that this "specialization" is a social construction based on gendered power relations that have an impact in the economy. Therefore, it is necessary to redefine macroeconomics and recognize that the monetary economy is just the tip of the iceberg that rests on an extensive care economy in which the main work force is female, and that women account for at least half the total work force.

In response to the global economic crisis, as many countries have emphasized the need to stimulate employment as central to economic recovery, the resulting programmes are typically "blind" to gender differences, both in paid and unpaid employment. The provision of support to poor households, through Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes (income granted to poor households conditional upon children going to school and having health care), while important in helping poor families to weather the shock of job and income losses nevertheless fail to consider the impact they may have on women's work time, even though their success depends on this very factor.

From what has been learned from previous crises, it is clear that the maintenance of public social expenditure is of vital importance, but we also know that social indicators take twice as long as economic ones to recover and many people are left by the wayside. This means that human capital is lost, and that the equation "when the economy recovers, the social indicators will recover" is not valid.

Women, in their strategies to cope with the crisis, typically give priority to the family's survival; they take on additional part time jobs, usually in the informal economy, accept lower wages, and do more unpaid hours It is important to know which sectors of the economy women work in, and not to fall into generalizations as if they were all in one uniform category called "workers". For example, government spending cuts will always tend to cause an increase in unpaid work.

Gender discrimination is not just a matter of poverty, it is also a question of equity and citizenship, and the problems that emerge from inequality cannot be solved by these Conditional Cash Transfer Programs alone. To go further, we need systems of social protection that are universal and holistic.

Sustainable, inclusive and equitable development requires a change in economic theory and this must be reflected in practice. It is not a question of aiming for growth and formulating some policies for women, but of designing and implementing a new development paradigm with equal rights and equal opportunities for everyone without any kind of discrimination whatsoever.

Source: *Social Watch Occasional Paper 06*: Beijing and Beyond. Putting gender economics at the forefront, (2010), < www.socialwatch.org/node/11571>.

formed in the cultivation and preparation of food and water, which is made more difficult by drought and other changes in weather patterns, and it includes collecting and using fuel to clean, cook, and sterilize. All of these burdens are increased by the negative impact of climate change.

Yet, much of this work is not part of the monetized economy. Thus, climate change financing mechanisms that measure impact in terms of paid work and GDP or GNP do not capture either the growing burden of unpaid work on women or the impact of mitigation strategies in decreasing that burden. For example, a survey of rural women's energy use in India allowed women to identify their priorities for reducing energy use. Their priorities were directly tied to time use. They identified more sustainable sources of energy production. Higher energy efficiency reduced their burden of unpaid labour, which has, in turn, provided more opportunities for participation in income-generating activities.⁸

Funding for this kind of gender-specific programming has multiplier effects. Lower burdens of unpaid work not only increase women's capacity to engage in paid work and, thus, potentially increase their economic independence but may also increase educational opportunities for women and girls. Increased education levels for women, in turn, have demonstrated positive impacts on their health and the health of their families. None of these impacts, however, can be measured without measuring the nature and effect of unpaid work on women and their communities.

The example of unpaid work raises a more fundamental tension in climate change fund monitoring efforts. Gender and climate budgeting are both based on the premise that budgets are statements of values, not simply mechanical responses to market and other economic dynamics. Gender and climate budgeting assumes that spending is an opportunity for change for the better – for a macroeconomics that is sustainable and equitable, that measure progress in terms of well-being and not GDP, that captures change in quality of life, not just the monetized economy. As such, this kind of monitoring and analysis is a radical reframing of neo-liberal economic theory.

⁸ Power Surge: Lessons for the World Bank from Indian Women's Participation in Energy Projects, Bretton Woods Project, (2011).

FROM AID EFFECTIVENESS TO TAX JUSTICE

Barbara Adams Global Policy Forum

Looking at one source of development financing – ODA, it is clear that fewer countries are now dependent on ODA and the traditional donors are becoming more explicit about securing their own interests as donors – through trade, property rights and support to their own economic actors in the private sector. The picture is now further complicated by the emergence of new sources of development financing, both public and private. The shifting financing picture challenges all players to ask whether sustainable development requires a whole new approach – beyond FFD to FFSD

Transparency about aid and investment flows has long been demanded by women's groups and CSOs as they monitor who benefits from ODA flows and procedures, and advocate for greater fairness. Their advocacy has contributed to securing more, albeit limited, financing for constituencies that are socially excluded and whose rights have been identified

In practice, however, gender and climate budgeting projects often invoke both the ideas of fairness or justice and traditional economic arguments regarding cost-effectiveness and growth. In times of global economic crisis it is difficult to make arguments that do not attend to the cost and prothrough UN processes and promoted in legal instruments.

The international and multilateral terrain has been very valuable for advancing women's rights and has generated legal commitments, programmes of action and institutional support to carry the struggle to the national governance domains.

The process, engaged over the years since 1975, the International Women's Year and the 1st UN Conference for Women in Mexico City, has also generated a number of challenges, not least how to operationalize the human rights approach and the universalization of women's rights, how to move beyond the proclamation in communiques and legislation to specific outcomes and targets, implementation and financing.

Fiscal policy is a key instrument of governments to turn the rights-based approach into practice. Governments priorities are reflected more clearly in public budgets than in government declarations and action programmes. Gender equality advocates have impressed upon the FFD process the importance of public finance management for gender equality and of fiscal policy for establishing a universal social protection floor. Even with a strengthened system of public finance with increased tax revenues and reallocated public expenditures, the maximum available resources will not be sufficient in many countries to fulfill the social, economic, cultural and ecological rights. External funding will still be required and this calls for a new global system of burden-sharing. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) offers a model for developing a global financing regime as the realization of those rights is a responsibility of governments "individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of available resources."

Today we are not only economically independent, but also ecologically and socially connected. The ability of a government to provide its peoples with economic security, through decent work and social protection has to be negotiated and brokered through a myriad of rules that are all too often not accountable to national political processes. ODA should be governed by a process of restoring that accountability to the people. Not of choosing winners and losers and placing some peoples' rights higher than others.

ductivity. However, when state actors begin to step back from international commitments to climate change and gender equity they often do so by citing the cost of meeting those commitments. In the face of the argument that justice and equality are too expensive, proponents of the values that underwrite climate and gender budgeting projects must face the contradiction within their own tactics—they must consider whether or not they are willing make claims for justice and equality even when those end goals are antagonistic to market growth and productivity.

Intergenerational justice: satisfying needs instead of greed

Intergenerational justice is an integral part of such concepts as sustainable development, social justice, children's and youth rights, global warming and climate change. It is the concept of fairness or equitable rights between generations, children, youths, adults and survivors and also between present, past and future generations. Rio 2012 must reiterate that sustainable development based on social, equity, economic growth and environmental preservation is in contradiction with development based purely on economic growth and bring governments back into action. Sustainable development must get a political endorsement that can be achieved only through transparent governance and regulation – and not through a free market regime.

C.J.George

Regional Coordinator - South Asia terre des hommes Germany

The search for justice is as old as human civilization itself. This search has been becoming more inclusive over the centuries. Moving from the struggle for rights of underdogs like slaves, it has progressed to include all sections of humanity irrespective of caste, gender, race, religion and age. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) of 1989 is the latest human rights convention oriented towards guaranteeing just and fair treatment to all children and is now ratified by almost all countries to include the future generations as well. In the process of operationalizing the UNCRC the global community has asserted its commitment to the future generations. This commitment however is still far from being adequate.

Conceptual overview

The concept of intergenerational justice which underlies various theories of justice was put forth in 1974 by economist James Tobin, who wrote: "The trustees of endowed institutions are guardians of the future against the claims of the present. Their task in managing the endowment is to preserve equity among generations."¹ The unsustainable use of natural resources leads to intergenerational injustice.

Perceiving ourselves as a collective whole, it is easy to argue that we are obliged to be concerned about the fate of people in future generations. But the question is how and to what extent our present actions and decisions must be oriented to the future. Theoretical discussions on these aspects have been mainly a concern of the post human rights declaration era, as political philosopher John Rawls made clear. Rawls considered political constitutions and the principles of economic and social arrangements as major institutions and defined justice as the way in which these institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and regulate the sharing of advantages from social cooperation. Having accepted the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, he combined them with the principles of justice. Equality then becomes equality of fair opportunity and fraternity the principle of difference.² What is essential however is agreement on "the proper distributive shares": "The principles of justice simply are the principles for regulating distribution that will be chosen by people in a society where the circumstances of justice hold."

Does this principle extend to the future generations? Each generation must put aside a suitable amount of capital in return for what it received from previous generations, that enables the latter to enjoy a better life in a more just society. "It is a natural fact that generations are spread out in time and actual exchanges between them take place only in one direction. We can do something for posterity but it can do nothing for us. The only reciprocal exchanges between generations are virtual ones."³

Redefining posterity

Is this intergenerational reciprocity practical or real? Since only posterity can bring to fruition our projects or our contributions, this cannot be done on the basis of contractual relationships. While the present generation can bind itself to do something for the future, the future is not yet there to be party to the contract. This is where the idea of community becomes useful. A community is constituted by members of a collective that understand themselves as having certain continuity over time and who see "their own interest as bound up with those of future members of that collective."4 It is in a community where members of a collective find "a sense of identity that spreads across time." As this community exists at local, national, regional and global levels, concern for its future members must also exist at all these different levels.

Hence justice considerations apply to relations which are beyond the present one. This is particularly true in the case of distributive justice. In some sense the present generation exercises power over the future ones, and has the possibility of using up resources in such a way that it negates the rights of the future ones. The future has no way of controlling the present. Moreover the present generation even has power over the very existence of the future ones. This could be an even greater influence than that on the current generation, where the influence would at most affect the survival of the people. This is enough ground for asserting rights to future persons, though there could be contrary arguments.

Another attempt to define future generations has been made by the University of IDWA in an attempt to reconcile human interests with those of Nature, which are distinguishable but not separable. Sociologist Elise Boulding has proposed that 'future generations' can be defined in terms of "the 200 years present" that is a period of time beginning from 100 years in the past and ending with 100 years in the future, from any point of the present:

"A continuously moving moment, always reaching out one hundred years in either direction from the day we are in. We are linked with both boundaries of this moment by the people among us whose lives began or will end at one of those boundaries, three and a half generations each way in time. It is our space, one we can move around directly in our lives, and indirectly by touching the lives of the linkage people, young and old, around us."⁵

This approach and understanding makes the idea of community more real and concrete. If one lives at any moment she/he is continuously in relation directly or indirectly with a 100 year span of time in both directions of past and future. This concept of time-space helps to understand the inheritance from the past and relations or interconnections with the future. It cannot be doubted that we are essentially linked to other generations, past and future because these linkages are in the realm of our personal experiences. A similar approach helps one to see the linkages with children as they need their rights to be represented, which becomes the obligation of the adults (duty bearers). So also the rights of the future generations become the obligation of the present one.

Environmental poverty as our legacy

The idea of intergenerational considerations was taken up by political leaders in Stockholm at the UN Consultation on Human Environment (UNCHE) in 1972 and has since been debated on various oc-

¹ J. Tobin, "What Is Permanent Endowment Income?" American Economic Review 64, May 1974.

² J. Rawls, A Theory of Justice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

³ Ibid., cited in V. Muniz-Fraticelli, "Achieving Inter-Generational Justice Through Education." Available from: <www.scribd.com/doc/26475623/Achieving-Inter-Generational-Justice-Through-Education>.

⁴ J. O'Neill, *Ecology, policy and politics: human well-being and the natural world* (London: Routledge, 1993), cited in ibid.

⁵ E. Boulding, "The Dynamics of Imaging Futures," *World Future Society Bulletin* 5, Sept-Oct 1978, p.7.

casions, often reaching agreement. But in practice, progress has not been so steady, rather the contrary. In 1972 the UNCHE put forward 26 principles and 129 recommendations, but no legally binding outcomes were agreed upon.

The World Commission on Environment and Development report (Brundtland Report), 'Our Common Future' of 1987 was a milestone, as it introduced the concept of sustainable development, defining it as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs."⁶ According to this report the pursuit of sustainable development was an important goal for all the nations in the interest of the future generations.

The Rio 1992 Earth Summit adopted several legally binding environmental treaties, particularly, the UN Framework on Climate Change (UNFCC) and the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity. In a certain sense the Earth Summit was a starting point. It was attended by 108 heads of State, 172 governments and some 2400 NGO persons and reflected the concerns of the 1980s particularly those from the WCED report of 1987, referred to above.

The Summit highlighted intergenerational justice or equity as an underlying principle of all environmental and developmental concerns. This was accepted by all participating nations. It was recognized that the rights of the future generations have to be respected while pursuing the needs of the current one. These recognitions were to be brought into the realms of policies and laws by conceding nations.

The 3rd principle, "the right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of the future generations,"⁷ summarized the spirit of the commitment to the future. The 21st principle "the creativity, ideals and courage of the youth of the world should be mobilized to forge a global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and better future for all" calls for an action plan involving the young people towards creating a better future for all.

Much has happened since Rio, the essence of which was in reaching binding commitments and creating consequent obligations on the part of the nations across the world. The same spirit prevailed in the deliberations at Kyoto five years later and the adoption of the Kyoto protocol in December 1997. The protocol, which finally came into force in February 2005, has been signed by 195 countries. Under it 37 countries agree to reduce emissions of greenhouse and other gases to prescribed levels. Despite legally binding provisions regarding reduction, the efficacy of the measure were neutralized through the flexible mechanisms.

In the final analysis the protocol and related mechanisms has had only marginal effect in reducing global gas emissions. The absence of binding levels of reduction for developing countries was used as the reason that the USA did not ratify this Protocol. Australia, though it ratified the treaty, has not implemented it. Moreover the practices of legally binding responsibilities and the role of national governments have been greatly eroded by new economic policies based on trade liberalization and a lean state. This was further accentuated by the geo-political security concerns of the first decade of the new century.

Subsequent meetings such as those in Johannesburg 2002 and in Copenhagen in 2009 have not inspired much confidence among people world the over. The latest conference, in Cancun, even risked negating whatever gains remained out of the Kyoto protocol agreements. These agreements had binding targets for the developing countries to reach regarding the emissions of green house gases (GHG) based on climate service. It also took into account the historical fact of the developed countries having used up much of the carbon absorptive capacity of the biosphere and therefore being more liable to reductions as against the poor economies.

Last year's Climate Change Conference in Cancun was seen by most participants and the media as an improvement over Copenhagen. While it did adopt an outcome document, which is viewed as positive for the multilateral climate system, it did little to pave the way to save the planet from climate change. It instead passed the burden of climate mitigation to developing countries, threatening to abandon "the legally binding and top down Kyoto protocol system and to replace it with a voluntary pledge system."⁸

Nevertheless it is urgent to strike a sustainable relationship between nature and humans for the benefit of future generations including children. As pointed out by Rio +20 conference Secretary General Sha Lukang, two decades have not brought the world closer to eradication of poverty; on the contrary the world has moved further into environmental crisis and climate change. It is this environmental poverty that the future generation will inherit.

Challenges ahead

Rio 2012 must reiterate the conviction that sustainable development based on social, equity, economic growth and environmental preservation is in contradiction with development based purely on economic growth. It is often said that Rio 92 was all about bringing civil society and the corporate sector to sustainability issues. Rio 2012 must now bring governments back to take action. Sustainable development including the rights of the future generations can be achieved only through transparent global governance, not through a free market regime.

Over the same period a concern with intergenerational justice has surfaced in other international human rights instruments, notably the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which came into force in 1990 and now has 194 States Parties. The declaration on the survival, protection and development of children, agreed to at the World Summit for Children that year concludes: "We do this not only for the present generation but for all generations to come. There can be no task nobler than giving every child a better future."⁹

Twelve years later, the declaration at the UN General Assembly and Special Summit [United Nations General Assembly Special Session] (UNGASS) on Children in May 2002 reiterates that the nations have obligations to the future generations: "We must safeguard our natural environment with its diversity of life, its beauty and its resources, all of which enhance the quality of life, for the present and future generations."10 The plan of action agreed by 190 world leaders recognized the urgency of acting on various environmental problems and trends to ensure the well-being of children and committed to measures to manage, protect and conserve our environment in a sustainable manner: "A number of environmental problems and trends, such as global warming, ozone layer depletion, air pollution, hazardous wastes, exposure to hazardous chemicals and pesticides, inadequate sanitation, poor hygiene. unsafe drinking water and food and inadequate housing, need to be addressed to ensure the health and well being of children."11

The wealth of knowledge and experience that has emerged since the UNCRC needs to be understood in the context of children's rights. The much discussed phenomena of anthropogenic global warming and climate change, aggravated by loss of biodiversity threaten the earth to an unprecedented degree, and will directly affect future generations, including children living today and those yet to be born. This demands global instruments which are binding and geared to defending the ecological rights of the present and future generations. This includes the call for recognition of ecological rights of children and much more.

It is relevant to quote from a Memorandum to the UNEP High Level Expert Meeting on the New

⁶ Brundtland report to Rio 2012: Sustainable development forum. Available from: www.rio.2012/trademarks.org/ node/3423>. 2. A. Gosseries, "Theories of intergenerational justice: a synopsis," S.A.P.I.E.N.S , 2008

⁷ Available from: <www.unep.org/Documents.multilingual/ Default.asp?DocumentID=78&ArticleID=1163>.

⁸ See: M. Khor, "Complex Implications of the Cancun Climate Conference," *Economic and Political Weekly* XLV, no.52.

⁹ Available from: www.unicef.org/wsc/declare.htm>.

¹⁰ UNGASS Declaration, "A World Fit for Children," New York, 2002. Available from: </www.unicef.org/specialsession/ wffc>.

¹¹ Ibid., p 23.

Future of Human Rights and the Environment presented by Burns H. Weston on 30 November 2009:

"Anthropogenic global warming and consequent climate change that, together with accelerating biodiversity loss worldwide, now pose threats to life on Earth as we know it, and to a degree unparalleled since the dinosaurs. Building on the pioneering work of Georgetown University law professor Edith Brown Weiss, the project set out to answer intriguing and, indeed, generally unexplored legal questions: Is it possible for US law, the law of other countries, indigenous peoples' law, and/ or international law to define the rights of future generations to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment?"¹²

Opportunities at Rio 2012

While concerns of sustainability and commitment to future generations have been an integral part of the advance of justice and human rights understanding for two decades, this has not been matched by the necessary actions. So the challenge now is not only to reiterate these commitments to future generations from the position of justice but also to rebalance the economic and social concerns. Rebalancing would mean bringing the State back to the social and regulatory realms of political action by assuming responsibilities both to make services equitably available and to regulate free-market approaches.

Markets are inherently competitive and follow the logic of survival of the fittest which is contrary to the concept of equity that is a necessary condition for sustainability. Mahatma Gandhi's assertion that the "earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed" still holds true. Thus regulation of the free market economy and transparent governance are urgently needed. Rebalancing would further involve reaching a consensus on development as the measure of well-being of all people. This will demand a new kind of economic planning focusing on the well-being of the poorest person on the earth, as Mahatma Gandhi envisioned, and based not on altruism but on rights and justice. If Rio 2012 contributes to this it will be one step forward.¹³

Further any step that would be taken must be followed through with binding instruments. The future needs to be enabled, as stated by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: "As for the future your task is not to foresee it but to enable it."¹⁴ This enabling can be achieved only through creating appropriate mechanisms and in this regards the proposal from World Council for Future to appoint a "legal representation or a Guardian" is interesting.¹⁵ Some of the countries have such institutions already. Setting up of an international Ombudsperson or calling for such arrangements nationally, can be a concrete outcome of Rio 2012 towards sustainability and enabling of the future, which amounts to guaranteeing intergenerational justice.

¹³ See: Rio 2012, Another opportunity to making progression in climate change. Available from: <www.stakeholderforum. org/st/outreach/index.php/day9item6>.

¹⁴ Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Citadelle* (The Wisdom of the Sands), Paris, 1948.

¹⁵ Cited in World Future Council, "Guarding our future: How to include future generations in policy making," <www. worldfuturecouncil.org/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/ brochure_guardian3.pdf>.

¹² B.H. Weston, "Recalibrating the law of humans with the laws of nature: Climate change, human rights and intergenerational justice,"2009. Available from: <www. vermontlaw.edu/cli >.

The *indignados* are asking the right questions about Europe's future

The questions the indignados are posing should be taken seriously and change the EU's discourse. The current prominence given to socalled "self-interest" in business and trade must shift to issues that really matter such as the future of our planet. Development, if truly sustainable, needs to take place for and through people; human rights have to be placed at the core of any developmental approach. At the same time living conditions and general well-being have to be improved in a sustainable manner. In this regard emphasis should be placed on promoting gender equality, advancing women's rights and empowering women.

Mirjam van Reisen Tilburg University Simon Stocker and Georgina Carr Eurostep

In October 2011 the *indignados* from Madrid went to Brussels to share their concerns and raise serious questions. They were joined by people from other European countries who were also inspired by Stéphane Hessel's book *Time for Outrage!* (*Indignezvous!* in the original French). Hessel, a 93-year-old man who was in the resistance during World War II, urges his readers to defend the values of modern democracy and reject the "selfish" power of money and markets.¹ These values are embodied in the setting up of the United Nations as a way of mediating conflicts, the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the establishment of the European Union.

The *indignados* came to ask what Europe had to offer them. With one out of two young people in Spain unemployed it was natural that they were seeking answers. European Commission President José Manuel Barosso recognized that times were especially difficult in his 2011 State of the Union speech to the European Parliament, saying: "We are now facing the greatest challenge our Union has ever seen, I believe, in its history."² He warned that countries could leave the EU and that there would be a reversion to nationalism. Two weeks earlier the Polish Finance Minister had cautioned the Parliament that a Eurozone collapse would probably lead to the break-up of the Union and the real prospect of war in Europe within 10 years.³

The *indignados* are correct to wonder whether our leaders are asking the right questions or are asking the questions in the right way.

Trapped in conservative discourses

Europe is currently trapped within two primarily conservative discourses. One of them stems from the anxiety of citizens and national leaders who regard the EU as no longer to their benefit and want to return to the primacy of a national identity and policy framework. The second, led by a corporate sector badly in need of an EU that can compete at the global level, is fear of the devastating consequences a breakdown could pose.

Missing in both of these discourses is a concept of an EU that benefits its citizens and contributes to greater understanding among countries in the region and to peace and prosperity for all. While the EU was based on an approach that integrated the economic and social dimensions, the social dimension is no longer part of a discourse dominated by "self-interest," Europe's "needs" and Europe's "competitive power." The emphasis on short-term profit rather than long-term economic sustainability betrays Europe's heart and soul. It also sacrifices the goal of an economic policy that can be sustained and can benefit everyone.

Increasingly Europe's economic development has been fuelled by both the consumption and depletion of global resources,4 resulting in wealth generation for the region but environmental degradation inside and abroad. Much of this development has relied on acquiring resources in third countries and acting with self-interest in terms of business and trade. The Lisbon Strategy was adopted in 2000 with the stated aim of making the EU "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" by the end of the decade.5 It sought to enhance economic growth through better policies for the information society, structural reform for competitiveness and innovation and increased investment in research and development. Modernizing the European social model, investing in people

Although the European Commission argued
 that the Strategy had prepared the ground for purply

obiectives.

economy.

that the Strategy had prepared the ground for pursuing needed structural economic reforms, by then the global environment was significantly more challenging than it was 10 years earlier. Regenerating the EU's economy became even more urgent, particularly in the face of competition from the emerging economies. It was in this context that the EU adopted the Europe 2020 strategy⁶ in 2010 as a follow up to the Lisbon Strategy, Europe 2020 also places economic growth at the core, prioritizing smart growth (knowledge and innovation), sustainable growth (efficient, greener and more competitive) and inclusive growth (employment, social and territorial cohesion). This strategy is to be implemented through seven "flagship" initiatives, including promoting resource efficiency and focusing on poverty. The new strategy seeks to "fully mobilize" all of the EU's instruments to achieve its goals, including external policy tools,7 and this has been a central topic in current reviews of EU policies.

and combating social exclusion were also set as

growth had further declined, and while employment rates were slightly higher than at the beginning

they were far short of the target of a 70% overall

employment rate. In overall terms the strategy was

widely acknowledged to have failed. The 2008 global

financial crisis was a contributing factor, but even

before the financial meltdown it was clear that the

Lisbon Strategy would not deliver on its ambition to

make the EU the most competitive knowledge-based

By the end of the decade however economic

Sustainable development policies

In relative terms the EU has been fairly progressive in sustainable development policy, with the Lisbon Treaty creating new legal obligations that it must fulfil in its relations with third countries.⁸ In addition to making poverty eradication the overarching goal

¹ J. Lichfield, "The little red book that swept France," The Independent, 3 January 2011. Available from: <vvvv. independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/the-little-red-bookthat-swept-france-2174676 htmls

² J. M. Barosso, President of the European Commission, "State of the Union Address 2011," 28 September 2011. Available from: <ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/ president/state-union-2011/index_en.htm>.

³ L. Phillips, "Poland warns of war 'in 10 years' as EU leaders scramble to contain panic," 14 September 2011. Available from: <euobserver.com/18/113625>.

⁴ WWF has said that the EU and other high-income regions are using five times the amount of natural resources as lowincome countries ("WWF contribution to public consultation on the EU position for the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development," April 2011).

⁵ ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe, "The Lisbon Agenda: An Introduction," Brussels, 2006. Available from: <www.esib.org/documents/publications/official_ publications/lisbonhandbook.pdf>.

⁶ European Commission, "Communication from the Commission: Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth," 3 March 2010. Available from: <eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=C0 M:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>.

⁷ Ibid., "Executive Summary."

^{3 &}quot;Treaty of Lisbon Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community," entered into force 1 December 2009.

in its relations with developing countries, the EU also has a duty to foster sustainable development in the region and contribute to that of developing countries as set out in the General Provisions on the Union's External Action (Title V) of the Treaty.⁹ Moreover the legal basis for the principle of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), which was formally put in place in 2005 in the European Consensus for Development, was strengthened in the Treaty amendments. This ensures that synergies are found between the 12 policy areas¹⁰ and development targets, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Sustainable development has also been identified as a fundamental and overarching objective of the EU, most concretely in its Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) in 2006 and the subsequent SDS review in 2009. The SDS aims at mainstreaming the principles of sustainable development in a wide range of EU policies, with a particular focus on climate change and renewable energy. Yet despite these promises a number of inconsistencies between legislation and practice can be identified.

The EU is currently reviewing these policies as it plans its budget and work plan for the 7-10 years starting in 2014. While the outcome of the current Eurozone crisis will have a significant impact on the EU's future, the nature of its future policies is being driven by the economic objectives of the 2020 strategy. Although the papers from the Commission for the policy reviews are all set within the context of sustainability, inclusion and the promotion of equality, they are also rooted in the current short-term profits approach to the economy. Greater emphasis is given to access to energy, investing in agriculture and the role of the private sector but strategies for pursuing this are not well defined.

A striking example of the profits approach is the detrimental effect the EU's renewable energy target, or more specifically biofuel policy, has had on developing countries. In April 2009 the EU adopted the Renewable Energies Directive, which set individual targets for each member country in order to achieve the goal of sourcing 20% of the EU's energy needs from renewable sources including biofuels. However the target has been widely criticized since it has led to land grabbing by large agri-businesses, which not only displaces local communities but also contributes to food insecurity since land formerly used for food production is now used to provide energy security for the EU: in one case 20,000 people were at risk of losing their homes and livelihoods.11 The views of local communities are not considered and no compensation is provided. Clearly this is not in line with

11 ActionAid, "Fuelling Evictions: Community Cost of EU Biofuels Boom," 2011. Available from: <www.actionaid. org/eu/publications/fuelling-evictions-community-cost-eubiofuels-boom>. either the PCD or the EU's obligations as laid out in the Lisbon Treaty. "EU leaders have got the policy wrong. Under no circumstances should communities be evicted to grow fuels to meet the EU's energy needs," David Barissa, ActionAid Kenya's biofuels expert, recently stated.¹²

The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has also been widely criticized for encouraging vastly unequal business relations between farmers in Europe and in the global South. In particular EU dependence on imported animal feed, especially soy, has contributed to the growing demand for land abroad, leading to deforestation, the displacement of communities and an expansion of genetically modified soy in South America¹³ and thus both environmental and socially detrimental effects. In addition EU export subsidies encourage overproduction of certain crops, which leads to the dumping of excess agricultural commodities on the world market - that is, selling at prices below those that would prevail in undistorted markets and in many cases at prices below the cost of production. This has contributed to the general downward trend of world market prices for agricultural commodities over the past several decades, creating little opportunity for equal inclusion of farmers in developing countries in the global agricultural market.

The CAP will be reformed in the coming period, and the 5,600 papers and commentaries received during the consultation process reveal widespread concerns about the environment, biodiversity, climate change and the viability of rural communities. The European Commission's new policy on biodiversity is actively addressing these problems at home but highlights the need for a coherent global European policy in this respect. The competition for investment in land in Africa and elsewhere, including security in response to financial volatility, is driving production for the European market to developing countries and displacing the livelihoods of small farmers. Recently 300,000 hectares of land were acquired in Ethiopia for intensive agricultural production for export at the same time as humanitarian organizations were raising funds to fight spiralling hunger there due to the loss of livelihoods in rural areas. It is clear that only an integrated policy approach to energy, biofuels, agriculture, finance and climate can reverse such perverse trends.

The focus on energy, emphasizing increasing renewable sources, coincides with the EU's own need to secure reliable energy supplies from outside the Union. Prominent in the Africa-Europe Energy Partnership are goals that increase European access to both electricity and gas from Africa.

A recently published Commission Communication sets out plans for a resource-efficient Europe as one of the initiatives under the Europe 2020 strategy.14 This initiative aims to increase economic performance while reducing resource use, boost EU competitiveness and growth, ensure security in accessing essential resources and reduce carbon emissions. It provides a long-term framework for action in many areas, supporting policy agendas for climate change, energy, transport, industry, raw materials, agriculture, fisheries, biodiversity and regional development. The strategy aims to reduce the link between economic growth and resource use, acknowledging that the economy is on an unsustainable path. However the Commission recognizes that, despite the wide range of policies in place that aim at improving resource efficiency, the EU's objectives are failing to be achieved.

Strategies on social exclusion and protection

The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, one of the 2020 strategy flagship initiatives, aims to establish a "platform for cooperation, peer review and exchange of good practice" that helps "foster the commitment of public and private players to reduce social exclusion." It envisages "an assessment of the adequacy and sustainability of social protection and pension systems" and identifying "ways to ensure better access to health care systems."¹⁵ The European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) welcomed the multi-dimensional approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion but regarded the lack of recognition of the negative impact of increasing inequalities as a major weakness.¹⁶

EAPN stresses that poverty and social exclusion cannot be sustainably reduced, nor inclusive growth achieved, without tackling inequality and discrimination. It also points out that employment alone does not guarantee a route out of poverty. Priority needs to be given to building a more socially responsible economy that provides access to decent jobs and defends social rights and services. It calls for the EU financing on poverty and social exclusion to be a binding priority to ensure a more holistic delivery model, increased transnational exchange and the enablement of stakeholder involvement and access to finance by community-based NGOs.¹⁷

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Trade, environment and climate change, security, agriculture, bilateral fisheries agreements, social policies (employment), migration, research/innovation, information technologies and transport and energy.

¹² Cited in M. Banks, "EU energy policy could push world's poor 'further into poverty," The Parliament, 9 May 2011. Available from: www.theparliament.com/latest-news/ article/newsarticle/eu-energy-policy-could-push-worldspoor-further-into-povertys.

¹³ European Parliament, "Opinion of the Committee on Development for the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development on the CAP towards 2020: meeting the food, natural resources and territorial challenges of the future," 13 April 2011. Available from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ 0202&language=EN#title2.

¹⁴ European Commission, "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe," 20 September 2011. Available from: <ec.europa.eu/ environment/resource_efficiency/pdf/com2011_571.pdf>.

¹⁵ European Commission, 2010, op. cit.

¹⁶ European Anti Poverty Network, "EAPN First Response to the European Flagship Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European Framework for social and territorial cohesion," 17 January 2011. Available from: www.europolitique.info/pdf/gratuit_fr/286638-fr.pdf.

¹⁷ Ibid

Green jobs but no justice

From the very beginning the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy has been hit by the deepening Eurozone crisis. The policies of austerity being rolled out across Europe are undermining the strategy's objectives as governments cut public expenditure and social benefits, lay off public sector workers and squeeze incomes. Although the Commission promotes itself as the staunchest promoter of a social economic approach, there is growing concern that its liberalization tendencies will increase demands on national governments to impose further cuts in public expenditure as part of increasingly stringent monetary discipline. This has been made possible by recent decisions supported by member countries and the European Parliament to give increased powers to the Commission over the management of national public accounts.

The publication of the EU position before the June 2012 UN Sustainable Development Conference should be seen in this context. The EU will wish to avoid making new commitments in Rio unless it strengthens its own ability to deliver. This is disappointing given previous EU commitments to sustainable development in international fora. In the European Commission's Communication "Rio+20: Towards the green economy and better governance," the green economy proposed does not constitute the significant break from the current macroeconomic model that many critics believe is needed. The definition of a green economy focuses on green growth and job creation.18 This is not necessarily a social market economy,¹⁹ which is problematic if the notion of justice (which is at the core of sustainable development) is to be taken seriously. If the concept is to truly contribute to sustainable development, the current definition must be broadened to place the characteristics of a social market economy and protection of the environment at its core.

Self-regulation of the private sector is also an approach pursued and encouraged by the EU in common with other industrialized partners. In addition there is a growing trend to promote a greater role for the private sector in EU development strategy. This is due to the need to levy investment outside of the public domain, which is unsurprising given the air of austerity now prevalent. That this is clearly misguided can be seen from the disastrous results of having a self-regulated private sector, examples of which include food price spikes, environmental and social ruin as a result of private sector activity in developing countries and of course the 2008 financial meltdown.

Moreover proper environmental and social regulations or tax systems are too often not in place in developing countries (at the encouragement of donors in order to stimulate foreign direct investment) and render it near impossible for the population to benefit from the growth generated by private sector activities. Developing countries must be able to capture the gains of private sector activity within their borders instead of disproportionately suffering due to irresponsible business practices. Reducing shocks (in their various forms) requires private sector activity to be environmentally and socially responsible - current proposals for an EU-wide financial transaction tax (FTT)²⁰ are encouraging in this respect. However for the most part a responsible private sector is not encouraged in EU strategy.

Moreover the green economy as outlined in current EU strategy does not fundamentally address imbalances in the economy. Greening the economy, for the EU, is the investment in and proper management of natural capital. Natural capital is essentially the stock of natural ecosystems that yields the flow of valuable ecosystem goods or services into the future. However placing natural capital within the current economic system and therefore under the same economic management mechanisms will ultimately lead to power remaining with the few and billions disproportionately exposed to financial shocks. This will not bring about sustainable development, at least if we adhere to the Brundtland definition.²¹ Encouragingly the EC Communication does acknowledge the need to rethink the conventional model of economic development.²² However it is unclear how the strategy outlined in the remainder of the document achieves such a rethink.

It is also striking to note that the Commission does not stress in any part of the Communication women's particular vulnerability to natural disasters or the need to protect and empower them against these. Women have a crucial role to play in sustainable development and a particular emphasis should be put on advancing their rights and promoting gender equality. In any truly effective approach to sustainable development, structural and societal discrimination against women must be eliminated and the necessary policy instruments to redress these imbalances put in place.

Conclusion

To be truly sustainable, development needs to take place for and through people; human rights have to be placed at the core of any approach to development while living conditions and general well-being have to be improved in a sustainable manner. As the *indignados* of Europe march to Brussels, our hope should be that the questions they raise will be taken seriously and will change the EU discourse from one that is focused only on so-called "self interest" into one that focuses on issues that really matter such as the future of our planet.

¹⁸ The EC definition of a green economy is "an economy that generates growth, creates jobs and eradicates poverty by investing in and preserving the natural capital upon which the long-term survival of our planet depends." See: <ec. europa.eu/environment/international_issues/pdt/rio/ com_2011_363_en.pdf>.

¹⁹ A social market economy may include combining private enterprise with government regulation to establish fair competition and maintaining a balance between a high rate of economic growth, low inflation, low levels of unemployment, good working conditions and social welfare.

²⁰ PricewaterhouseCoopers, "Flash News: The EU Financial Transactions Tax Draft Directive and the Implications for the Global FS Industry," 30 September 2011. Available from: <www.pwc.lu/en/tax-consulting/docs/pwc-tax-300911.pdf>.

²¹ The Brundtland Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainable development as meaning that humanity "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs." See: -www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm>.

^{22 &}quot;There are compelling reasons to fundamentally rethink the conventional model of economic progress: simply working at the margins of an economic system that promotes inefficient use of natural resources, will not be sufficient in bringing about change" (EC, "Rio 20: towards the green economy and better governance," 20 June 2011, p. 5. Available from <register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/11/st11/st11845.en11. pdf>.)

Housing, land and sustainable development

One of the pillars of sustainable development is the right to adequate housing and land. However some 1.6 billion people are currently living in sub-standard housing, 100 million are homeless and around a quarter of the world's population is estimated to be landless. In developing countries the number of people living in slums is 828 million; all of them lack access to improved water sources and adequate sanitation and live in distressed housing conditions without sufficient space or secure tenure. More than 60 million new slum dwellers have been added to the global urban population since 2000.

Miloon Kothari and Shivani Chaudhry

Civil society organizations and social movements worldwide are articulating the "right to the city," promoting land as a human right and stressing the need to recapture the social function of property. These movements and campaigns provide the beginnings of the radical rethinking necessary to challenge the neo-liberal economic policies that have been institutionalized around the world.

The adoption and implementation of the human rights approach is essential if sustainable development is to become a reality for all, especially the world's marginalized. Failure to embrace this approach will lead to more hunger, dispossession, homelessness, landlessness and environmental degradation across the globe. The impact of rights violations will be particularly severe for women, children, indigenous peoples, coastal communities, forest dwellers, small farmers, landless workers, and the urban poor.

Sustainable development and the indivisibility of human rights

The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 marked a significant moment in the history of international law and policy. It affirmed the progress made at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 and further established, through legal and moral commitments, the inextricable link between human beings and their environment and between nations and peoples. Using the framework of key principles such as sustainability, inter-generational equity, common but differentiated responsibility, polluter pays, and the precautionary principle, UNCED helped launch an international campaign to meet our responsibilities towards protecting not just the rights of the less fortunate and marginalized but also of future generations and the planet.

A significant outcome from Rio 1992 was the affirmation of the indivisibility of human rights and the inseparability of human rights and environmental rights. While stressing the inter-connectedness and inter-dependence of nations and peoples, Agenda 21 also helped establish the different responsibilities and duties of more advanced nations including the principle of international cooperation.²

Sustainable development is often invoked as a means of reconciling important objectives that include respect for human rights, promotion of socially and environmentally sustainable economic growth and protection and wise use of the natural environment. All mainstream definitions of sustainable development share three characteristics: first, achieving sustainable development requires integrating policies related to social justice, environmental protection and economic development; second, the interests of future generations must be taken into account; and third, transparency and public participation at all levels of decision-making from local to global are essential.³

The concept of *environmental justice* is useful for integrating equity, social justice and environmental principles within the framework of sustainable development. Environmental justice has been defined as the right to a safe, healthy, productive and sustainable environment for all, where "environment" is considered in its totality including ecological (biological), physical (natural and created by human labour), social, political, aesthetic and economic conditions.⁴

Environmental degradation and the denial of human rights exacerbate poverty and unleash a cycle of human rights violations. Poverty and marginalization further impede equitable access to resources and the realization of the right to an adequate standard of living and to a healthy environment. Implementation of the indivisibility of the human rights approach is therefore the only way to ensure that the health and well-being of the planet and its people are maintained and that sustainable development becomes a reality for all.

Where are we? 20 years after Rio 1992

Significant advances have been made globally since Rio 1992 in the articulation and deepening of commitments towards protecting the environment and achieving sustainable development. International standards that have been adopted include the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Action and a host of guidelines, declarations and principles.

UN Habitat has reported that the population of slum dwellers around the world continues to grow at around 10% every year. In a worst-case scenario the number of slum dwellers will rise from 1 billion in 2005 to 1.6 billion by 2020. According to the World Health Organization, 884 million people worldwide do not have access to an improved water source while an estimated 2.6 billion people lack access to improved sanitation (more than 35% of the world's population). In 2006, 7 out of 10 people without access to improved sanitation were rural inhabitants.⁵ Up to one quarter of the world's population is estimated to be landless, including 200 million people living in rural areas, and approximately 5% of the world's population lives in extreme poverty.⁶

This grave situation poses significant risks to the lives and health of a large majority. It also impacts a range of human rights, including the right to an adequate standard of living and the right to a healthy environment. Globalization policies, including trade and investment agreements, have adversely impacted the urban and rural poor, especially women and indigenous peoples.

Given the fact that sustainable development still eludes the majority of people despite the existence of strong international legal provisions and a progressive body of soft law, it is imperative to review the situation and propose a radical alternative to the way these issues are being addressed. While the challenges to the realization of human and environmental rights continue to rise, there is hope in holistic, integrated and durable solutions that use the human rights approach.

¹ Miloon Kothari is the former UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, UN Human Rights Council; Shivani Chaudhry is Associate Director of the Housing and Land Rights Network, India.

See: <www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?D ocumentID=52&ArticleID=87>.

^{3 &}quot;One Species, One Planet: Environmental Justice and Sustainable Development," Center for International Environmental Law, (Washington, DC: 2002), <www.ciel.org/ Publications/OneSpecies_OnePlanet.pdf>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ A. Prüss-Üstün et al., Safer Water, Better Health: Costs, benefits and sustainability of intervention to protect and promote health, WHO, (Geneva: 2008).

⁶ UN-Habitat and Global Land Tools Network, "Secure Land Rights for All," (2008), <vww.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid =5698&catid=503&typeid=24&subMenuId=0>.

Human right to adequate housing and land

The UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing has defined the human right to adequate housing as: "The right of every woman, man, youth and child to gain and sustain a safe and secure home and community in which to live in peace and dignity."7 The realization of this right is crucial to achieving sustainable development including environmental security and the right to a healthy environment. Unless all citizens of the world are able to live in safe and secure housing that is affordable, ecological and enables them to live in dignity, and unless they have legally recognized rights to own, control and manage the natural resources on which they depend for their lives and livelihoods, the principles of sustainable development cannot be realized. It is therefore essential not just to realize the important link between the rights to adequate housing and land and environmental sustainability but also to ensure that laws and policies protecting these rights are drafted and implemented using the indivisibility of rights approach.

Linkages between human rights

The rights to adequate housing and land are integrally linked to the human rights to health, food, water, work/livelihood, development and the environment. Access to adequate and nutritious food, clean and potable water, a secure livelihood and the highest attainable standard of health are critical to promoting sustainable development and maintaining the health and well-being of people and the planet.

General Comment 14 (2000) of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CE-SCR) provides a holistic interpretation of *the right to health.*⁸ It has been recognized that housing conditions have direct consequences for enjoyment of this right.⁹ In environmental terms the right to health implies the absence of pollution and protection against natural hazards.

The *right to a healthy environment* is an expansion of the legal interpretation of the right to life and is therefore binding on all States. The environment must be understood as the broad physical environment on which human well-being depends. The right to a healthy environment implicitly emphasizes adequate access to "vital needs," which are those that provide the necessary conditions for reaching and maintaining a decent standard of living.¹⁰ This right also includes the right to chemical- and toxic-free food, soil, air and water. The link between the environment and development is also evident in article 24 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples'

- 8 General Comment 14, 'The right to the highest attainable standard of health,' UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. (2000). See. in particular, paragraph 11.
- 9 World Health Organization, *Health Principles of Housing*, WHO, (Geneva: 1989). See also the work of WHO on the Social Determinants of Health.
- 10 "One Species, One Planet: Environmental Justice and Sustainable Development," Center for International Environmental Law, (Washington, DC: 2002), <www.ciel.org/ Publications/OneSpecies_OnePlanet.pdf>.

Rights, which states: "All people shall have the right to a general satisfactory environment favourable to their development." Over the years, the *right to development* has been established as meaning the *right to environmentally sound, sustainable development.* Under the concept of sustainable development, both the right to development and the right to a healthy environment must be viewed as interdependent.

Integral to human survival and the right to life with dignity is the *right to work*. Violations of human rights to housing, land and natural resources often violate the right to work and result in loss of livelihoods and development opportunities.

Meaningful participation in decisions that affect one's life is a human right as well as a means to ensure enjoyment of other human rights including the right to adequate housing. Denial of the right to participation has adverse effects on the right to adequate housing. Where participation in housing design, plans and policies is ensured, the housing provided is more likely to meet the criteria of adequacy¹¹ and sustainability. Most violations of human rights occur because people are not consulted in decisions that directly affect their lives and livelihoods. Meaningful participation mandates that the process of consultation be ongoing. It must also guarantee the right to adequate information.¹²

Environmental and human rights principles need to be integrated and implemented with a gender perspective to ensure that women are equal beneficiaries and enjoy equal protection of their rights. While there are many social, economic and political situations that render people insecure, homeless and without a sustainable source of livelihood, women are particularly vulnerable given the low socio-economic status accorded to them in most societies. Rising poverty resulting from unjust and unbalanced "development" policies and projects has had a devastating impact on women and their right to adequate housing. Poverty and environmental degradation particularly affect women as they face greater risks of homelessness, landlessness, loss of livelihoods, violence and adverse health impacts.

Human right to adequate housing: using the lens of sustainability

When the elements of adequate housing are provided in consonance with environmental principles, the simultaneous realization of the human rights to adequate housing, land, a healthy environment, and sustainable development is warranted. This includes ensuring access to natural resources necessary for communities' survival and livelihoods; the use of 'green' technologies and adherence to ecological building codes; construction of disaster-resistant housing; location of housing on environmentally safe sites in proximity to places of work, education and healthcare; use of culturally appropriate and indigenous materials and designs for housing; provision of tenure security and protection against violence and eviction; and guaranteeing the prior informed consent of affected populations.

It is also important to link the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with the ongoing effort to realise sustainable development and human rights. For instance, target 11 of MDG 7 calls for a significant improvement in the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. A global initiative has sought to achieve this by creating "slum-free cities." However the ironic result has been an increase in the number of slum dwellers evicted in cities across the world. Efforts to improve the living conditions of some must not encroach on human rights of others, such as through forced evictions or the rampant phenomenon of land-grabbing.

Guaranteeing access to drinking water is another key focus of the MDGs and cannot be isolated from other goals. A human rights approach must inform the normative discussion and also guide the MDG process in order to prevent the collateral erosion of other human rights. Such a strategy, coupled with existing international human rights and environmental treaties, declarations and guidelines, provides a framework by which the rights to adequate housing and land – as key components of sustainable development – can be realized.

Obstacles to the realization of the human rights to adequate housing and land

Given the mutual inextricability of all human rights, the current failure to secure the rights to adequate housing and land has resulted in a cycle of deprivation that has impeded the enjoyment of several related human rights, including the rights to food, water and health, which are fundamentally linked. A number of structural and related global phenomena continue to serve as obstacles to the full realization of the rights to adequate housing and land in the context of sustainable development. It is difficult to conceive of implementation of these rights for the majority of the world's people without tackling these issues.

Economic globalization

While rapid global economic integration continues to create new and unprecedented sources of wealth, offering the promise of reducing poverty and alleviating want, the fact remains that deepening inequalities of income and opportunity between and within nations have led to an increase in the number of people living in inadeguate and insecure conditions without access to potable water and sanitation. Policies of economic globalization tend to impair the ability of States to provide adequate resources, services and other provisions critical to the fulfilment of economic, social and cultural rights. There is thus a crucial need to ensure the consistency of trade and investment agreements with human rights obligations, keeping in mind the primacy of States' responsibilities to protect and promote human rights

⁷ M. Kothari, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing," E/CN.4/2006/41, (21 March 2006).

¹¹ As expounded in CESCR, "General Comment 4, 'The right to adequate housing' (Art. 11.1 of the Covenant)," (1991); see also section below on "Human right to adequate housing."

¹² See also the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) of 1998, which guarantees rights of access to information and to participation in decision-making and includes strong provisions for access to justice in environmental matters, including the enforceability of rights conferred by the Convention.

as recognized at the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights.¹³

Processes of increased economic integration have lent further momentum towards privatization of basic services.¹⁴ This phenomenon, coupled with the inability of governments to provide their citizens with affordable access to human rights such as water and housing, tends to disproportionately impact the poorest and most vulnerable sections of society. The continuing deterioration of living conditions that confront the majority of the urban and rural poor around the world calls for a re-examination of the presumptive arguments of "trickle-down benefits" and poverty reduction that continue to be used to justify neoliberal economic policies.

Land grabbing and land speculation

Spiralling land and property speculation across the world is contributing to the displacement of the urban and rural poor. In addition, increased competition among cities to attract capital and business has led to widening inequalities between cities, with consequent discrepancies in the quality of essential services provided to citizens. In large cities the growing takeover of central spaces has witnessed increased gentrification and residential segregation, further polarizing society and resulting in a new form of "apartheid." Coupled with soaring property values, processes of gentrification continue to push low-income families into increasingly precarious situations including homelessness. In rural areas the growing thirst for minerals and energy has led to unprecedented grabbing of land for mega development and mineral extraction projects, severely threatening livelihoods and food security.

The trend among governments to invoke powers of "eminent domain" to justify seizure of public and private property is also cause for alarm and has grave implications on the rights to adequate housing and land. This doctrine imparts sweeping and ill-defined powers to the State to seize land under the pretext of the "public good."

Loss of common property

The failure of States to recognize the importance of common property resources in urban and rural areas as well as their failure to legally recognize collective and community-based property rights¹⁵ leads to the demise of institutions and cultural patterns that pro-

15 For more information, see, O. Lynch and S. Chaudhry, "Community-based Property Rights: A Concept Note," Center for International Environmental Law, (2002), <www.ciel.org>.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR URGENT ACTION

Some global policies must be urgently implemented in order to immediately improve habitat conditions for the most disadvantaged members of the human population. The most important of these measures for States are:

- Implementing human rights and environmental principles and legal commitments;
- Stopping land grabbing, forced evictions and property and land speculation;
- Putting measures in place to check against rampant growth of the market and privatization of housing and basic services;
- Reviewing the operation and regulation of the housing and tenancy markets and, where
 necessary, intervening to ensure that market forces do not increase the vulnerability to forced
 eviction of low-income and other marginalized groups;
- Harmonizing local and national laws with international human rights and environmental standards;
- Introducing human rights-based urban and agrarian reforms;
- Developing consolidated plans to ensure the simultaneous and collective development of all groups, with a special focus on the immediate realization of rights for the most marginalized;
- Ensuring strong gender equality provisions in laws, policies and practice;
- Providing communities and individuals with equal access to legal and other remedies, including
 judicial redress, for violation of human rights and environmental harm (effective grievance redress mechanisms could help to promote environmental justice and sustainable development);
- Taking seriously commitments, as articulated in international environmental and human rights instruments, to extra-territorial obligations.

tect and sustain these resources. This also results in the destruction of the natural resource base on which indigenous and other local communities depend through changes in land tenure and agricultural systems, and by undermining local economies, skills and identities. Such an assault on local resources severely impacts the ability of rural communities to sustain their housing and living conditions including as an expression of cultural identity.

Unplanned and forced migration

The lack of adequate investment in rural development, housing and livelihoods - coupled with growing displacement and an acute agrarian crisis - poses serious threats to the viability of rural livelihoods, forcing people to migrate for survival on an unprecedented scale. Owing to a lack of affordable housing, rental alternatives or investment in social housing, many of these migrants end up living in precarious or inadequate housing conditions, often with little or no access to basic amenities such as water and sanitation. Countless others are rendered homeless with limited access to social and civic services. This has an adverse impact on the health and economic security of affected populations. The need for human rights-based agrarian reform and land reform and wealth redistribution in urban and rural areas is acute and warrants immediate attention

Forced evictions

The practice of forced evictions has assumed alarming proportions around the world. A large number of these take place in the name of "development" and include evictions due to urban renewal, city beautification, large infrastructure projects (including mining, roads, ports and dams) and acquisition of agricultural land for industry. Many instances of forced eviction arise out of situations of violence such as those resulting from armed conflict, civil or political dislocation and communal or ethnic strife. Globally, resettlement policies for those who have been evicted are either non-existent or not based on human rights standards. The continued lack of recognition of customary rights to tenure in rural areas¹⁶ as well as rights to a place to live in cities has led to insecure living conditions for millions.¹⁷

Climate change

The impacts of global climate change and measures taken to mitigate or adapt to these impacts are already affecting individuals and communities around the world, and "will potentially have implications for the full range of human rights."¹⁸ Most affected are poor people living in the 'least developed' States, arid and semi-arid regions, arctic regions, and small-island States, where climate change will

¹³ For an articulation of what the primacy of human rights means for international cooperation obligations of States see 'Maastricht Principles on Extra Territorial Obligations, adopted at Maastricht in September 2011, <vww. maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/show/id=596286/langid=42>.

¹⁴ For a longer discussion on privatization and human rights, see M. Kothari, "Privatizing human rights: The impact of globalization on adequate housing, water and sanitation," Social Watch Report 2003: The Poor and the Market, www.socialwatch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/en/ privatisinghumanrights2003_eng.pdf>.

¹⁶ In this context the work of the FAO on Voluntary Guidelines for Good Governance in Land and Natural Resource Tenure is promising, <ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/ak280e/ak280e00. pdf>.

¹⁷ For an operational instrument to safeguard people's rights prior to, during and after displacement, see "UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Displacement," Annex 1 of the report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, A/HRC/4/18, <www.ohchr. org/FM/Issues/Housing/Pages/ForcedEvictions.aspx>.

¹⁸ Report of the Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, A/HRC/10/61, (January 2009).

have its most negative impacts and where adaptive capacity is low.¹⁹ Climate change is likely to result in widespread displacement and forced relocation of vulnerable communities. States must take adequate measures to protect human rights when working to mitigate climate change or adapt to its impacts. It is also important to link climate change negotiations and structures with existing human rights law and norms.²⁰

A practical way forward

Given the continued failure of State and non-State actors to respect, promote and fulfil the human rights to adequate housing and land, there is an urgent need to rethink "business as usual" and chart a new way forward. We propose the further development and practice of two approaches – the right to the city and the right to land and natural resources – as conceptual bases for the articulation of the indivisibility of human rights and the promotion of the human rights to adequate housing, land and sustainable development.

Underlying both approaches must be environmental and human rights principles. Critical among these is the principle of non-discrimination, which calls for special protection of and priority to the rights of the most marginalized groups. These include the homeless, landless, persons belonging to historically discriminated groups, single women, victims of violence, domestic workers, migrants, persons with disabilities, mental illness or HIV and AIDS, religious and sexual minorities, workers in the informal sector, internally displaced persons, refugees, coastal communities, forest dwellers, small farmers and those living in precarious conditions. Within each of these groups, special attention must be given to children, women and older persons.

Right to the city

The development and renewed articulation of the "right to the city" presents an opportunity for a durable solution, one that uses a holistic and sustainable approach to realizing both human and environmental rights.

The movement for the right to the city has been launched by social groups and civil society organizations in an attempt to ensure better access to and opportunities for everyone living in cities, especially the most marginalized and deprived sections.

The right to the city is "the equitable usufruct of cities within the principles of sustainability, democ-

racy, equity, and social justice. It is the collective right of inhabitants of cities, in particular of vulnerable and marginalized groups, that confers upon them legitimacy of action and organization, based on their uses and customs, with the objective to achieve full exercise of the right to free self-determination and an adequate standard of living."²¹

The right to the city is not to be viewed as a new legalistic right but merely a demand for multiple human rights to be realized within cities, towns and villages. It is a means to combat the rampant paradigm of exclusionary development, selective benefit sharing, marginalization and discrimination.

While implementing the right to the city, the principle of mutual responsibility and sustainability is critical – especially with regard to the environment and use of land, water, electricity and other resources. There need to be enforceable checks and penalties on excess use. This could include taxation of consumption of certain critical resources such as water and other energy resources beyond a certain amount to enable minimal levels of consumption for all and to ensure environmental security.

This principle also calls for the sustainable and responsible management of natural resources, including energy. Urban areas must not grow at the cost of rural areas or other cities. The right to the city should be expanded to include the right to the village/town. It should also imply the right to live in a sustainable and healthy environment. Given the threat of climate change and the rise in natural disasters, disaster mitigation, preparedness and response must be components of city planning and development. When people have to be relocated in order to protect their life and health, their right to adequate resettlement must be respected and guaranteed.²²

The right to the city must be defined as the right to an inclusive and gender-sensitive political, social, cultural and spiritual space and must include a strong commitment to poverty reduction. This includes removing discriminatory provisions in laws and policies that negatively affect the poor and economically weak. Financial incentives, subsidies, credit, land and priority housing must be provided to the homeless, landless, and those living in inadequate conditions.

States must recognize diversity in all its forms and promote a culture of tolerance and mutual respect that enables all individuals and groups to realize their full potential.

Right to land and other natural resources

Legal recognition and protection of the human right to land and other natural resources are critical for promoting sustainable development and environmental justice. The right to land needs to be upheld to ensure equality in land ownership and use of land and public spaces. This includes the right to collectively own and manage land, property and other natural resources such as forests and water bodies. Legal recognition of communitybased property rights is important to help ensure sustainable use and management of natural resources as well as protect the right to an adequate standard of living.

The right to land is also integrally linked to the provision of legal security of tenure over housing and land. Recognition of the human right to land would ensure protection against forced evictions and dispossession; check against land aggrandizement; enable sustainable development of settlements; promote agrarian reform, environmental protection, collective agriculture and community-based natural resource management; and prioritize social uses of land such as public housing and playgrounds.

Land laws and policies should define "public good/interest" to prevent the takeover of land for undemocratic purposes and should revoke the principle of eminent domain since it is largely misused by States.

The social function of property

In both urban and rural areas the principle of "social function of property" should guide land use planning to ensure that land is not diverted to meet the interests of the rich at the expense of the poor. The social function of property should ensure ecological use of land and also implies that there should be limits on the size of landholdings to promote equality in land ownership. Where land is not meeting its social function, provisions should be available to either redistribute it – as in national constitutions such as Brazil's – or to institute penalization provisions. The promotion of the principle of social function of property is integral to the realization of environmentally sustainable and equitable development.

The human rights principle of non-retrogression must be upheld. States, including local governments, must not regress on their human rights commitments including progress made in improving housing and living conditions.

¹⁹ See M. Orellana, M. Kothari and S. Chaudhry, "Climate Change in the Work of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights," (2010), <www.fes-globalization. org/geneva/documents/CESCR%20Climate%20Change_ May2010.pdf>.

^{20 &}quot;Climate Change and Human Rights: A Primer," Center for International Environmental Law, (2011), <www.ciel.org/Publications/CC_HRE_23May11.pdf>.

^{21 &}quot;World Charter on the Right to the City.", <www.globalgovernancewatch.org/resources/world-charteron-the-right-to-the-city>.

²² M. Kothari and S. Chaudhry, "Taking the Right to the City Forward: Obstacles and Promises," paper for UN Habitat, *State of the World's Cities 2010/2011.*

• MEASURING PROGRESS

BASIC CAPABILITIES INDEX 2011 The boom and the busted

BCI values for 2011 ranged from 47.9 to 99.5, with Japan in the top position and Chad at the bottom. The global BCI has progressed between 1990 and 2011, although in general there has been a slower rate of progress between 2000 and 2011 than between 1990 and 2000. In the first decade of the XXI century, in fact, the social indicators moved up just 3 points, while world CO_2 emissions moved up to 4.6 tons per capita. World trade and per capita income grew faster in the first decade of the XXI century than the decade before, but progress against poverty slowed down. In spite of the declared commitment with poverty eradication and the Millennium Development Goals, the year 2000 was a turning point for the worse: social progress slowed down while environmental destruction accelerated.

The Basic Capabilities Index (BCI) was designed by social watch as an alternative way to monitor the situation of poverty in the world. Most of the available poverty-measurement is based on the premise that poverty is a monetary phenomenon and they measure, for example, how many persons live with an income of less than one dollar a day. The BCI is an alternative non-monetary measure of poverty and well-being based on key human capabilities that are indispensable for survival and human dignity. The indicators that make up the BCI are among the most basic of those used to measure the millennium development goals (MDGs).

The BCI assigns equal weight to three basic capabilities: (1) the capability to be well-nourished;(2) the capability for healthy and safe reproduction; (3) and the capability to be educated and be knowledgeable. The index is computed as the average of three indicators: 1) mortality among children under five, 2) reproductive or maternal-child health (measured by births attended by skilled health personnel), and 3) education (measured with a combination of enrolment in primary education, the proportion of children reaching fifth grade and adult literacy rate).

All the indicators are expressed in percentages and they range from 0 to 100. Under-five mortality, which is usually expressed in number of deaths per thousand children born alive, is expressed as 100 minus that value. So that, for example, a value of 20 deaths per thousand becomes 2% and, when deducted from 100, yields a basic indicator value of 98. Thus, the theoretical maximum value in infant mortality is 100, which would mean that all children born alive survive until they are five years old. Reproductive health takes the maximum value 100 when all women giving birth are attended by skilled health personnel. Similarly, the education indicator registers 100 when all school age children are enrolled in education and they all attain five years of schooling. These three indicators are then averaged, so the total value of the index will vary between 0% and 100%.

BCI levels

BCI values for 2011 were computed for 167 countries where data are available out of the 193 member states of the United Nations. The BCI values for 2011 ranged from 47.9 to 99.5 with Japan, along with Norway, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Iceland occupying the top five positions. The top performing countries having the highest BCI are mostly from the developed world of Europe. North America and East Asia/Pacific. In contrast, the countries with the lowest BCI values are mostly from Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, with Chad at the bottom, along with Sierra Leone, Niger, Somalia and Guinea Bissau.

Countries with basic BCI level have reached a reasonable level of human development and have basically met the MDG targets way ahead of the 2015 deadline. Countries with medium BCI level have achieved a certain level of momentum to address key human development concerns and have a fair chance of meeting the MDG targets by 2015. Countries with low BCI level are still struggling to provide basic serv-

ices for their citizens and will more likely miss the MDG targets by 2015. Countries with very low and critical BCI levels will certainly miss the MDG targets. Most of these countries, particularly those with critical BCI level, are experiencing severe economic difficulties, social unrest or wars. Some have just emerged from armed conflict and are still transitioning to normalize Government operations and public services.

The number of countries with medium BCI levels increased from 44 in 1990 to 52 in 2011. Countries that have scaled up their BCI levels from low/very low to medium include the following: Algeria, Iran,

THE WORLD TURNS RIGHT INSTEAD OF MOVING UP

With carbon dioxide emissions of three tons of per capita a year, Costa Rica and Uruguay have managed to lower their infant mortality to the same level of a country that emits twenty tons a year: the United States. At the same time, with the same level of emissions than Norway, South Africa has a set of social indicators similar to that of Indonesia, which consumes five times less fossil fuels. The notion that eradicating poverty and reaching basic dignity for all requires a model of development that destroys the environment is wrong. The leaders of the world made that point in Rio twenty years ago at the "Earth Summit" and stated that "the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries (...) aggravating poverty and imbalances".

Between 1990 and 2000 the world's index of basic capabilities improved five points (from 79 to 84) while the world per capita emissions of CO_2 actually **decreased** from 4.3 tons to 4.1. In the first decade of the XXI century, world CO_2 emissions moved up to 4.6 tons per capita but the social indicators only moved up 3 points (see chart 3). In spite of the declared commitment with poverty eradication and the Millennium Development Goals, the year 2000 was a turning point for the worse: social progress slowed down while environmental destruction accelerated.

A LOST DECADE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY

World trade and per capita income grew faster in the first decade of the XXI century than the decade before, but progress against poverty slowed down. A gap widened, due to the unequal distribution of the benefits of prosperity. Now the boom years seem to give way to a bust. The vulnerable did not benefit from the accelerated growth in the economy, but they will undoubtedly suffer the most with a new contraction. The 2011 Basic Capabilities Index show that economic performance and well being of the people do not go hand in hand (see chart 4). Progress on education, health and nutrition was already too slow when gross income was growing fast. While using the latest available figures, the Index does not capture yet the whole impact of the global financial and economic crisis that started in 2008, because social indicators are gathered and published much slower than the economic numbers. Yet, social watch is receiving evidence from its members on how the crisis is burdening the most those already vulnerable and that situation can only become worse if the big industrialized countries enter into prolonged stagnation or recession.



CHART



CHART 3



CHART 4 Trade, income and basic capabilities World basic World per capita income World Basic Capabilities Index

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Tunisia (Middle East and North Africa); Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Maldives and Vietnam (Central, South and East Asia); and Belize, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Suriname (Latin America). El Salvador registered the highest increment in BCI in this group accounting for a 17 point increase for the period 1990 to 2011. In contrast, countries such as Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Thailand have moved down from basic BCI to medium level. (See chart 1)

Nineteen countries registered low BCI levels in 2011. Countries such as Bolivia, Honduras and Nicaragua in Latin America, and Cape Verde, Zimbabwe, and Swaziland in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, improved their standing from very low/critic BCI level to low BCI. Within this group of countries that registered low BCI levels, Bhutan in South Asia recorded the highest increase of 28 points, climbing up from critical to low BCI level.

The number of countries in the critical BCI list has declined from 42 in 1990 to only 28 by 2011. Countries such as Benin, Cameroon, Eritrea, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Togo in Sub-Saharan Africa; Guatemala in Latin America; Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco and Yemen in the Middle East and North Africa; Laos and Myanmar in East Asia; and Bhutan and India in South Asia, have moved up from their previous critical BCI levels. Nonetheless, the number of countries in the critical list remains substantial especially if one considers that many poor countries with no reliable data collection system, indicating poor functioning institutions, would more likely fall in the critical BCI levels.

The global BCI has progressed between 1990 and 2011, although in general there has been a slower rate of progress between 2000 and 2011 than between 1990 and 2000. In 1990, the average BCI value (population weighted) for countries with available data was 79.4. In 2000, the BCI increased by 4.9 points to 84.3. BCI further increased to 87.1 by 2011, but at a lower increment of 2.8 points – lower than the rate of increase registered in the previous decade. (See chart 2) =

TECHNICAL NOTES¹

The following are the indicators used for computing the Basic Capabilities Index:

- Under-five mortality rate. Under-5 mortality rate is defined as the probability of a child born in a specific year or period to die before reaching the age of five, if subject to age-specific mortality rates of that period, that is, a probability of death derived from a life table and expressed as a rate per 1,000 live births (Health statistics and health information systems, World Health Organization, <www.who.int/healthinfo/statistics/ indunder5mortality/en>). We express this indicator by subtracting x/1000 from 100, where x is the number of deaths under-5 per 1000 live births. Data for this indicator were obtained from UNICEF State of the World's Children 2011.
- Births attended by skilled health personnel. This is defined as the percentage of live births attended by skilled health personnel in a given period of time. Data for this indicator were mainly obtained from Global Health Observatory Data Repository (World Health Organization), and from the UN official website for MDG indicators and UNdata 2003-2008 (<data.un.org/Data.as px?q=births+attended+by+skilled+person nel&d=SOWC&f=inID%3a21>) was used for countries with no data available from the WHO. Data were imputed for first world countries (such as Germany, Norway, US, etc.) which have no available data from the sources mentioned.
- Education. The education indicator consists of three sub-indicators:
 - Adult literacy rate. The adult literacy rate is the percentage of population aged 15 and above who can both write

and read a short simple statement on their everyday life. It is calculated by dividing the number of literates (aged 15+) by the corresponding population age group and multiplying the result by 100 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics Glossary, <glossary.uis.unesco.org/ glossary/en/home>).

- Primary Net Enrollment Rate (NER). This is defined as the enrollment of the official age group expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population, which is calculated by dividing the number of pupils (or students) enrolled who are of the official age group for primary level by the population for the same age group and multiplying the result by 100 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics Glossary, <glossary.uis. unesco.org/glossary/en/home>).
- Survival rate to fifth grade. This is the percentage of a cohort of pupils enrolled in the first grade of a given level or cycle of education in a given school year who are expected to reach fifth grade (UNESCO Institute for Statistics Glossary, <glossary.uis.unesco.org/ glossary/en/home>).

The main source for these sub-indicators is the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) data centre, <stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF_ Language=eng&BR_Topic=0>. The earliest data available from 1990 to 1995 were used for the year 1990, data available from 1998 to 2002 were used for the year 2000, and the latest available data from 2005 to 2011 were used for the year 2011. Data for the year 1990 were mainly gathered from Global Monitoring Report 2010 and World Bank database, since data from UIS were only available from 1999, except for the adult literacy rate indicator. Data not available from UIS and GMR were obtained from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2010 Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean in <www.eclac.org/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/ publicaciones/xml/7/42167/P42167.xml&xsl=/ deype/tpl-i/p9f.xsl&base=/tpl-i/top-bottom. xslt>, accessed on May 2011 and from the United Nations Statistics Division, <unstats.un.org/ unsd/demographic/products/indwm/tab5e. htm> accessed on May 2011. Since there are many missing data for the Survival rate to fifth grade indicator, survival rate to the last grade of primary school (also obtained for UIS) was considered for countries with no data.

Data for each sub-indicator were rescaled from 0 to 100 using a formula which was adopted from the Human Development Report (HDR). After rescaling all the values of each subindicator, the education indicator is computed by averaging three rescaled sub-indicators, if three have values, or taking the average of two, if one has missing value. No value is given if more than one sub-indicator is absent.

Rescaling was also done for the two other indicators - Under-five mortality rate and Maternal health indicators. The raw BCI value is computed by taking the average of the rescaled values of the three indicators, if all three have values, and the average of two indicators, if only two have values. No value is given if more than one indicator is missing.

The index values expressed from 0 to 100 are then "rescaled back" to put the values back into the original range of BCI values so that comparison with previous BCI calculation becomes possible.

1 The BCI/GEI Technical Group is composed of the research team from Action for Economic Reforms (AER) and Social Watch Philippines (SWP) - Rene Raya, Maria Luz Aniagan, Karla Machel Raya and Alvelyn Joy Berdan.

BASIC CAPABILITIES INDEX 2011

	Surviving under-5	Birth atended	Children reaching 5th grade	BCI		Surviving under-5	Birth atended	Children reaching 5th grade	BCI
Afghanistan	80				Egypt, Arab Rep.	98	79	80	90
Albania	99	99	88	96	El Salvador	98	84	79	91
Algeria	97	95	82	92	Equatorial Guinea	86		53	66
Angola	84	49	61	67	Eritrea	95		38	72
Argentina	99	99	96	98	Estonia	99	99+	96	99
Armenia	98	98	91	96	Ethiopia	90	6	33	58
Australia	99+	99		99	Finland	99+	99+	97	99
Austria	99+	99		99	France	99+	99		99
Azerbaijan	97	89	92	93	Gabon	93	86	76	86
Bahamas, The	99	99	90	97	Gambia, The	90	57	44	70
Bahrain	99	97	94	97	Georgia	97	98	97	97
Bangladesh	95	18	55	70	Germany	99+	99+	95	99
Belarus	99	99+	97	98	Ghana	93	59	61	77
Belgium	99+	99+	92	98	Greece	99+	99	97	99
Belize	98	95	94	96	Guatemala	96	51	70	80
Benin	88	78	56	76	Guinea	86	46	42	64
Bhutan	92	72	70	81	GuineaBissau	81	39	32	56
Bolivia	95	71	84	86	Guyana	97	83	90	92
Bosnia and Herzegovina	99	99+	89	96	Haiti	91	26		67
Botswana	94	95	80	90	Honduras	97	67	79	86
Brazil	98	98	89	95	Hungary	99	99+	94	98
Brunei Darussalam	99	99+	93	98	Iceland	99+	99+	98	99
Bulgaria	99	99+	94	98	India	93	47	62	76
Burkina Faso	83	54	36	62	Indonesia	96	73	87	88
Burundi	83	34	69	66	Iran, Islamic Rep.	97	97	89	94
Cambodia	91	44	64	73	Iraq	96	80	76	87
Cameroon	85	59	73	73	Ireland	99+	99+	97	99
Canada	99	99+		99	Israel	99+	99	97	99
Cape Verde	97	78	79	89	Italy	99+	99	98	99
Central African Republic	83	53	38	62	Jamaica	97	98	76	92
Chad	79	21	17	48	Japan	99+	99+		99+
Chile	99	99+	95	98	Jordan	98	99	91	96
China	98	96	97	97	Kazakhstan	97	99+	95	96
Colombia	98	96	84	94	Kenya	92	44	78	77
Comoros	90	62	73	78	Kiribati	95	65		84
Congo, Dem. Rep.	80	74	40	64	Korea, Dem. Rep.	97	97		95
Congo, Rep.	87	86	51	75	Korea, Rep.	99+	99+	98	99
Costa Rica	99	99	92	97	Kuwait	99	99+	89	97
Cote d'Ivoire	88	57	40	68	Kyrgyz Republic	96	98	90	94
Croatia	99+	99+	94	98	Lao PDR	94	20	61	71
Cuba	99	99+	97	99	Latvia	99	99+	97	99
Cyprus	99+	99+	96	99	Lebanon	99	98	88	96
Czech Republic	99+	99+	91	98	Lesotho	92	62	62	77
Denmark	99+	99+	96	99	Liberia	89	46	47	68
Djibouti	91	93	30	75	Libya	98	99+		97
Dominica	99	99+	87	96	Lithuania	99	99+	95	98
Dominican Republic	97	98	71	90	Luxembourg	99+	99+	94	98
Ecuador	98	80	82	90	Madagascar	94	44	59	75

	Surviving under-5	Birth atended	Children reaching 5th grade	BCI		Surviving under-5	Birth atended	Children reaching 5th grade	BCI
	Sur	•	Ğ			Sur	8	Ċ	
Malawi	89	54	57	72	Senegal	91	52	44	70
Malaysia	99	99+	92	98	Serbia	99	99	95	98
Maldives	99	95	94	97	Sierra Leone	81	42		58
Mali	81	49	46	61	Singapore	99+	99+	96	99
Malta	99	99+	88	97	Slovak Republic	99	98		98
Mauritania	88	61	42	69	Slovenia	99+	99+	98	99
Mauritius	98	99+	90	96	Somalia	82	33		57
Mexico	98	94	93	96	South Africa	94	91	81	89
Moldova	98	99+	90	96	Spain	99+	99	99	99
Mongolia	97	99+	91	96	Sri Lanka	99	99	87	96
Montenegro	99	99		98	Sudan	89	49	49	69
Morocco	96	63	67	82	Suriname	97	90	80	91
Mozambique	86	55	51	68	Swaziland	93	74	75	83
Myanmar	93	37	70	75	Sweden	99+	99+	96	99
Namibia	95	81	85	89	Switzerland	99+	99+		99
Nepal	95	19	46	68	Syrian Arab Republic	98	95	87	95
Netherlands	99+	99+	99	99	Tajikistan	94	88	98	92
New Zealand	99	99+		99	Tanzania	89	51	76	76
Nicaragua	97	74	60	84	Thailand	99	99	88	96
Niger	84	33	28	57	Togo	90	62	68	77
Nigeria	86	39	45	64	Trinidad and Tobago	97	98	94	95
Norway	99+	99+	98	99	Tunisia	98	95	87	94
Oman	99	99+	83	95	Turkey	98	91	89	94
Pakistan	91	39	41	68	Turkmenistan	96	99+		94
Panama	98	89	90	94	Uganda	87	42	62	69
Papua New Guinea	93	53		77	Ukraine	99	99	93	97
Paraguay	98	97	83	94	United Arab Emirates	99	99+	89	97
Peru	98	83	86	92	United Kingdom	99	99+		99
Philippines	97	62	81	86	United States	99	99		99
Poland	99	99	96	98	Uruguay	99	99	96	98
Portugal	99+	99+	95	99	Uzbekistan	96	99+	93	95
Qatar	99	99+	91	97	Venezuela, RB	98	95	91	95
Romania	99	99	91	97	Vietnam	98	88	89	93
Russian Federation	99	99+	96	98	Yemen, Rep.	93	36	53	72
Rwanda	89	52	57	71	Zambia	86	46	67	70
Saudi Arabia	98	99+	85	95	Zimbabwe	91	60	87	82

99+ refers to a value above 99.5. It is not rounded up to "100" as that would imply a perfect accomplishment which is impossible to achieve in reality.

GENDER EQUITY INDEX 2012

	Education	Economic Activity	Empowerment	GEI		Education	Economic Activity	Empowerment	GEI
Afghanistan	4	17	25	15	Egypt	83	29	22	45
Albania	94	57	13	55	El Salvador	98	55	34	62
Algeria	86	44	16	49	Equatorial Guinea	92	28	7	42
Angola	70	73	50	64	Eritrea	45	58	30	44
Argentina	100	68	53	74	Estonia	99	80	52	77
Armenia	100	74	36	70	Ethiopia	37	71	25	44
Australia	100	83	57	80	Finland	100	87	76	88
Austria	100	68	54	74	France	100	79	51	77
Azerbaijan	98	64	32	64	Gabon	92	67	23	61
Bahamas*	100	0	34	0	Gambia	79	71	26	59
Bahrain	97	35	30	54	Georgia	98	63	39	67
Bangladesh	81	65	18	55	Germany	100	78	62	80
Belarus	100	71	22	64	Ghana	79	88	19	62
Belgium	98	79	61	79	Greece	99	68	49	72
Belize	100	62	46	69	Guatemala	89	50	6	49
Benin	43	66	14	41	Guinea*	34	78	0	0
Bhutan	72	41	9	41	Guinea-Bissau	57	52	20	43
Bolivia	92	64	43	66	Guyana	98	39	57	64
Bosnia and Herzegovina	98	68	9	58	Haiti	84	45	16	48
Botswana	100	78	41	73	Honduras	100	52	39	63
Brazil	98	75	43	72	Hungary	98	82	40	73
Brunei Darussalam	99	78	39	72	lceland	100	82	80	87
Bulgaria	99	81	47	76	India	66	33	12	37
Burkina Faso	48	75	20	48	Indonesia	93	57	36	62
Burundi	69	91	47	69	Iran	95	42	16	51
Cambodia	71	73	21	55	lraq*	61	0	23	0
Cameroon	65	44	15	41	Ireland	100	74	48	74
Canada	100	83	57	80	Israel	100	81	44	75
Cape Verde	91	62	62	72	Italy	99	66	45	70
Central African Republic*	26	69	0	0	Jamaica	97	75	16	63
Chad	13	52	12	25	Japan	93	65	14	57
Chile	99	60	56	72	Jordan	97	39	11	49
China	95	76	21	64	Kazakhstan	99	82	44	75
Colombia	99	71	21	64	Kenya	86	75	14	58
Comoros	74	70	1	48	Kiribati	96	0	6	0
Congo, DR	40	55	12	36	Korea, DPR	0	0	0	0
Congo, Rep.	34	40	12	29	Korea, Rep.	84	68	26	59
Costa Rica	100	61	60	74	Kuwait	97	57	33	62
Côte d'Ivoire	42	41	12	32	Kyrgyzstan	99	71	48	73
Croatia	99	79	44	74	Lao, PDR	75	69	23	56
Cuba	100	48	56	68	Latvia	100	81	51	77
Cyprus	95	76	32	68	Lebanon	95	42	28	55
Czech Republic	100	74	46	73	Lesotho	100	83	34	72
Denmark	100	87	66	84	Liberia	86	52	29	56
Djibouti	59	64	14	46	Libya*	0	0	0	0
Dominica*	100	0	60	0	Lithuania	98	83	48	77
Dominican Republic	100	71	44	72	Luxembourg	100	75	30	68
Ecuador	97	57	58	71	Madagascar	94	84	33	70

	Education	Economic Activity	Empowerment	GEI		Education	Economic Activity	Empowerment	GEI
Malawi	89	57	32	59	Senegal	63	57	28	50
Malaysia	98	40	31	56	Serbia	98	75	51	75
Maldives	97	60	31	63	Sierra Leone	33	87	11	44
Mali	35	42	19	32	Singapore	94	71	40	69
Malta	100	58	31	63	Slovakia	100	75	43	73
Mauritania	69	61	28	53	Slovenia	100	79	47	75
Mauritius	98	59	42	67	Somalia*	0	0	0	0
Mexico	98	56	37	64	South Africa	98	74	66	79
Moldova	98	87	45	77	Spain	99	71	73	81
Mongolia	99	94	50	81	Sri Lanka	97	58	31	62
Montenegro*	0	0	0	0	Sudan	76	25	20	40
Morocco	72	29	19	40	Suriname*	98	62		0
Mozambique	59	68	48	58	Swaziland	93	73	31	65
Myanmar*	97	65	0	0	Sweden	99	85	77	87
Namibia	100	76	54	77	Switzerland	98	80	58	79
Nepal	65	56	21	47	Syria	89	38	24	50
Netherlands	100	82	56	79	Tajikistan	74	67	13	51
New Zealand	100	83	63	82	Tanzania	71	68	42	60
Nicaragua	100	58	64	74	Thailand	97	77	39	71
Niger	21	38	18	26	Togo	53	54	14	40
Nigeria*	60	38	0	0	Trinidad and Tobago	99	72	64	78
Norway	100	90	78	89	Tunisia*	93	18	0	0
Oman	94	13	27	45	Turkey	83	34	19	45
Pakistan	55	19	14	29	Turkmenistan	100	73	13	62
Panama	99	69	60	76	Uganda	82	59	48	63
Papua New Guinea	89	88	2	60	Ukraine	100	67	41	69
Paraguay	99	70	49	73	United Arab Emirates	98	49	43	63
Peru	96	69	43	69	United Kingdom	100	81	47	76
Philippines	100	67	61	76	United States of America	100	69	47	72
Poland	100	75	52	76	Uruguay	100	72	51	74
Portugal	99	78	55	77	Uzbekistan	87	71	13	57
Qatar	98	53	30	60	Venezuela	100	65	28	64
Romania	99	80	39	72	Viet Nam	95	75	41	70
Russian Federation	100	81	44	75	Yemen	30	40	2	24
Rwanda	84	72	74	77	Zambia	78	49	18	49
Saudi Arabia	93	4	15	37	Zimbabwe	88	57	21	55

* There are no available data on GEI.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS FULFILLMENT INDEX (SERF) A new Human Rights approach

Countries have a duty to progressively realize economic and social rights to the maximum of available resources. This means that assessing the extent of each State's obligation requires specifying what is reasonably feasible to achieve using best policy and technological practices. Measuring economic and social rights fulfillment requires considering the perspectives of both the rightsholding individual and the duty-bearing government. The composite SERF Index does this and is comprised of separate scores for each economic and social right considered, and estimates obligations for progressive realization by using an innovative approach that maps an 'achievement possibilities frontier'.

Although other human rights indices exist, almost all focus on civil and political rights, while the new Social and Economic Rights Fulfillment Index (SERF Index) provides a means of determining the extent to which countries are meeting their obligations to fulfil five of the substantive human rights enumerated in The International Covenant of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR): the right to food, the right to adequate shelter, the right to healthcare, the right to education, and the right to decent work¹. What makes the SERF Index methodology unique is the construction of Achievement Possibilities Frontiers (APFs) which specify each country's level of obligation for progressive realization with regard to the various aspects of each economic and social right considered.

Moreover, many human rights and governance measures rely on subjective information, using expert opinion to rate conditions in countries. This raises issues about who is making these judgements, what criteria are used, who is publishing the indices for what purpose, and local advocacy groups replicating the measures. Aware of these pitfalls, the SERF Index uses survey based quantitative data series, published by international agencies that assure comparability across countries and that is readily accessible through the internet.

The SERF Methodology²

States bear the primary responsibility for the realization of the rights of citizens and individuals residing within their borders. States have a three-fold responsibility – to protect, respect, and fulfill rights – and with respect to each, obligations for conduct

TABLE 1													
Indicators of Core Ri	Indicators of Core Rights												
Social/Economic Right Core SERF Index High-Income OECD SERF Index													
Right to Food	% Children under 5 not stunted	% infants without low birth weight											
Right to Education	Primary School Completion Rates Combined Gross School Enrollment Rates	Combined Gross School Enrollment Rates Average Math and Science PISA scores											
Right to Health	Under 5 Survival rate (%) Age 65 Survival rate Contraception Use rate	Under 5 Survival rate Age 65 Survival rate											
Right to Adequate Housing	% Rural Population with Access to Improved Water Source % Population with Access to Improved Sanitation	Data Not Available											
Right to Decent Work	% with income >\$2 (2005 PPP\$) per day	% with Income > 50% median income % Unemployed not Long Term Unemployed											
Right to Social Security	Data Not Available	Data Not Available											

as well as obligations of result. Composite SERF Index scores are comprised of separate scores on each economic and social right considered. The SERF methodology draws on international law - in addition to the ICESR, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the General Comments of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), reports of Special Rapporteurs, and reports of relevant task forces, seminars, and working groups, to define relevant aspects of substantive economic and social rights guaranteed under the ICESCR as well as the obligations of State Parties to the Covenant. When considering any given aspect of an economic or social right, two pieces of information are compared: 1) the level of achievement on a socio-economic indicator reflecting fulfillment of the aspect of the socio-economic right concerned, and 2) the level of achievement feasible on the socioeconomic indicator concerned given the country's resource capacity.

Standard Socio-Economic Indicators Measure the Extent of Rights Enjoyment

The General Comments of the CESCR single out six substantive rights – food, adequate shelter, healthcare, education, decent work and social security – and expand on the relevant aspects of each right. The selection of indicators of rights enjoyment for the SERF Index involved translating the narrative of the legal documents into specific aspects of rights, the enjoyment of which can be quantitatively measured using socio-economic indicators. A number of criteria governed the selection of indicators used to construct the SERF Index, beyond making sure the indicators adequately reflected the right aspect of concern. First, selected indicators had to be based on reliable data, measured with objective methods, legitimately comparable over time and across countries, and publicly accessible. Second, indicators were selected to reflect the current challenges to fulfillment of a given right for the context at hand and not to encompass all aspects of each right. Bellwether indicators sensitive to a variety of relevant challenges were prioritized over multiple distinct indicators of each relevant aspect of a right. Further, emphasis was placed on selecting indicators that discriminate well between degrees of enjoyment in the context at hand. Some of the indicators relevant to high income OECD countries differ from those relevant to developing countries. For example, an indicator of the quality of education is much more relevant to high income OECD countries than an indicator of the proportion of children attending or completing primary school. Further, the latter does not discriminate between levels of enjoyment of the right to education in high income OECD countries. As a result, the SERF Index is actually a pair of indices, the Core SERF Index covering most countries, and a supplementary index, the SERF Index for High Income OECD Countries.

United Nations (1966) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Adopted 16 Dec. 1966, General Assembly Res. 2200 (XXI), U.N. GAOR, 21st Sess., Supp. No. 16, U.N. Doc. A/6316 (1966), 993 U.N.T.S. 3 (*entered into force* 3 Jan. 1976).

² A full discussion of the SERF Index and the methodology underlying its construction can be found in the following papers all available from the Economic and Social Rights Empowerment Initiative's website, <www.serfindex.org> Fukuda-Parr, Lawson-Remer, and Randolph, "An Index of Economic and Social Rights fulfillment: Concept and Methodology", *Journal of Human Rights*, 8: 195-221, (2009): Randolph, Fukuda-Parr, and Lawson-Remer, "Economic and Social Rights Fulfillment Index: Country Scores and Rankings," *Journal of Human Rights*, 9: 230-61, (2010); and Fukuda-Parr, Lawson-Remer, and Randolph, *SERF index Methodology Version 2011.1: Technical Note.*

Achievement Possibility Frontiers (APFs) : Identifying the Level of State Obligations

The ICESCR commits governments to achieve realization of economic, social and cultural rights *progressively*. As stated in Article 2.1:

Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant, by all appropriate means including particularly the adoption of legislative measures.

The "progressive realization" provision recognizes that States have very different starting points in their ability to achieve full enjoyment of economic and social rights. Inherent in the idea of progressive realization is that a government's ability to achieve realization of rights depends on the level of resources (financial and other) available in the country. The enjoyment of the right to highest attainable standard of health, for example, cannot be achieved overnight, as facilities need to be built, personnel trained, and policy incentives for business and households put in place and so on, so that people have access to healthcare. These arrangements require financial resources which may be beyond what governments and households can mobilize.

Consequently, the human rights performance of States cannot be judged on the basis of outcomes – enjoyment of rights by people – alone. For example, the performance of the United States and Malawi cannot be compared on the basis of their respective levels of maternal mortality considering the hugely different levels of capacity in these two countries. A country's performance in fulfilling obligations for economic and social rights depends on both: (a) the actual ESR outcomes people enjoy, as indicated by socio-economic statistics that proxy for particular rights; and (b) a society's capacity for fulfillment, as determined by the amount of economic resources available overall to the duty-bearing State.

A State's level of obligation depends on its resource capacity and this implies that assessing the extent of each State's obligation requires specifying what is reasonably feasible to achieve using best policy and technological practices in the face of its resource constraints. This is not a straightforward task. Specifically, how does one determine whether a country has committed "the maximum of [a country's] available resources" to fulfilling economic and social rights? As Audrey Chapman notes, it: "necessitates the development of a multiplicity of performance standards for each right in relationship to the varied ... contexts of countries"³.

Achievement Possibility Frontiers benchmark each country's level of obligation at a given time for each right aspect considered. Achievement Possibilities Frontiers (APFs) were specified by first constructing a scatter plot of achievement on a given indicator against per capita GDP (measured in constant purchasing power parity dollars. PPP\$), our indicator of available resources, using data from all countries over the 1990 to 2008 period. Frontier observations were then identified from the scatter and statistical techniques were used to fit a curve to the boundary observations. The resultant APF shows the level of achievement on an indicator that is feasible using best practices at each per capita GDP level, our indicator of resource capacity. It could be argued that states with larger budgets, more revenue, or better institutions have a greater capacity to fulfill economic and social rights than those with the same per capita income, but smaller budgets or poorer institutions. However, a State's capacity depends on the choices it makes with regard to its taxing policies and institutional structure. The obligation to progressively realize economic and social rights requires states to collect and expend resources at the level necessary to meet their economic and social rights obligations. It is therefore appropriate to measure resource capacity as reflected by the total resources available to the state, not the portion of those resources the state chooses to tap. The use of data from a recent, but relatively long period allows us to trace out a frontier that is stable over the medium term facilitating comparisons over time.4

For example, Box 1 shows the APF for the child survival rate, one element of our right to health index. Each black dot is the child survival rate (100% the % under 5 mortality rate) in a particular country at a particular year. The APF for the child survival rate rises with per capita income until the per capita income level reaches \$6,350 (2005 PPP\$) and then remains constant (plateaus) indicating that using best practices, it is possible to fully ensure this aspect of the right to health once a country's per capita income level reaches \$6.350. The shape of the frontier for per capita income levels below \$6.350 shows the rate at which it is feasible to transform resources into further improvement in the child survival rate. The APFs for different aspects of rights have different shapes and plateau at different per capita income levels indicating that it is easier to transform resources into some aspects of rights enjoyment than others and feasible to fulfill some aspects of some rights at a lower per capita income level than others. A country's level of obligation at a given time with regard to any given aspect of a right is then specified as the frontier value of the APF at that country's per capita GDP level.

Assessing the Extent to which Countries Meet their Obligations of Result

A striking feature of each of the frontier plots is the large difference in rights enjoyment levels among countries with similar per capita GDP levels. For ex-

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ample, as the frontier plot for the child survival rate shows, child survival rates range from around 75% to 98% for countries with per capita income levels of \$2000 (2005 PPP\$). The range is surprisingly high, even in countries with per capita income levels of \$10,000 – from about 80% to nearly 100% – even though this is well beyond the per capita income level necessary to fully realize this aspect of the right to health. These differences are indicative of differences in the extent to which countries meet their commitments to fulfill a particular right aspect.

A performance indicator score for a given right aspect is calculated as the percentage of the frontier value of the indicator achieved. So, for example, if the country achieves a child survival rate of 72%, but the frontier value of the indicator at the country's per capita GDP level is 90%, then the country's performance indicator score with regard to the child survival rate is 80%, indicating the country is only achieving 80% of the level feasible given its resources.5 In the case that a country has more than enough income to ensure full enjoyment of the right aspect but fails to do so, their performance indicator score incorporates a penalty - the penalty is greater, and hence their performance indicator score reduced more, the lower is their achievement and the greater is the ratio of their per capita income to the per capita income level needed to ensure full enjoyment of the right aspect.6

A Right Index is constructed for each of the substantive economic and social rights and the SERF Index aggregates the component Right Indices. The Component Right Indices are constructed as the simple average of the performance indicator scores relevant to each right. The Core Right to Education Index, for example, is the average of the adjusted performance indicator scores for the primary school completion rate and the combined school enrollment rate. In those cases where a single indicator is used to measure performance on a substantive right, the substantive right index is simply the performance indicator score on the corresponding indicator. The Core right to Food Index, for example, is the adjusted performance indicator score for the percentage of children that are not stunted (low height for age). The SERF Index itself is constructed as the average of the Component Right Indices.7

³ Chapman, Audrey. "The Status of Efforts to Monitor Economic, Social and Cultural Rights," Chapter 7, in Economic Rights: Conceptual, Measurement and Policy Issues Shareen Hertel and Lanse Minkler (eds.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). pp. 143-164

⁴ A potential concern was that knowledge of the kinds of policies and technologies that promote aspects of rights enjoyment change rapidly so that the frontier would be defined by the most current observations. However, this turned out not to be the case; the frontier observations are reasonably balanced over time implying that the assumption that the APFs are stable over the medium term is reasonable.

⁵ The practical range of indicators differs. For example, the lowest child survival rate observed in any country since 1990 is 68%, while the lowest Age 65 survival rate observed is 20%. As a result, indicators are rescaled to reflect their practical range before computing the performance indicator scores. See SERF Index Methodology Version 2011.1 Technical Note at <vww.serfindex.org/datas for more details.</p>

⁶ The penalty formula was specified on the basis of a set of axioms defining the characteristics one would like to have in such a penalty (see Fukuda-Parr, Lawson-Remer, and Randolph, "An Index of Economic and Social Rights fulfillment: Concept and Methodology", *Journal of Human Rights*, 8: 195-221, 2009) and subjected to review in multiple seminars and workshops. The final penalty formula adopted is elaborated in "SERF Index Methodology Version 2011.1 Technical Note available at <www.serfindex.org/data>.

⁷ Alternative weighting schemes can be employed that place more weight on those rights where a country's performance falls shortest.

Country Performance on the SERF Index⁸

The Core SERF Index can be calculated for 99 countries and the Supplementary SERF Index for High Income OECD Countries can be calculated for an additional 24 countries. The Component Right Indices can be calculated for a significantly larger number of countries. In the case of the Core SERF Index, the Right to Food, Education, Health, Housing, and Work Indices can be calculated for 123, 145, 131, 144, and 118 countries, respectively. With regard to the Supplementary Index it can be calculated for and 28, 27, 28, and 25 countries in the case of the Right to Food, Education, Health, and Work Indices, respectively.

The extent to which countries honor their commitments to fulfill economic and social rights obligations varies widely. None of the countries for which either the Core or Supplementary SERF Index can be calculated succeeds in fully meeting its commitments with regard to all economic and social rights simultaneously. The best performing core country, Uruguay, achieves a score of just over 94% on the SERF Index while the best performing OECD country, Finland, achieves a score just shy of 95%. Although a number of countries fully meet their commitments with regard to specific economic and social rights, other countries fall far short of meeting any of their commitment with regard to each of the five economic and social rights. Equatorial Guinea scores 20% on the SERF Index and its scores on the component right indices range from just above 3% to just under 29%. The mean score on the Core SERF Index is just shy of 72%; it is substantially higher, just under 90%, on the Supplementary Index for high income OECD countries. There is variation in the mean score across the different component right indices. For core countries, the range is 71% to 79% for the right to food and the right to education, respectively. For high income OECD countries, the range is larger-62% to nearly 98% for the right to work and education, respectively. What is clear is that there is considerable room for improvement for most countries. The Economic and Social Rights Empowerment Initiative's website, www.serfindex.org/data, provides downloadable spread sheets showing each country's performance on the SERF and component right indices.

Shedding light on important policy questions: virtuous and vicious cycles

The ICESCR commits countries to devote "the maximum of available resources" to enhancing the enjoyment of economic and social rights. A key question is whether countries that honor this commitment do so at the expense of generating additional resources that could enable even greater enjoyment of economic and social rights in the future. A recent application of the SERF methodology,

THE ACHIEVEMENT POSSIBILITY FRONTIER: CHILD SURVIVAL EXAMPLE

The level of State obligation is determined by constructing an Achievement Possibilities Frontier that identifies the highest level of enjoyment observed by any country at each per capita income level. The Achievement Possibilities Frontier is identified by first constructing a scatter plotting the value of the indicator concerned observed in each country against its per capita GDP income at the time (adjusted for inflation and differences in purchasing power by using 2005 PPP\$) and then using statistical techniques to fit a curve to the boundary observations. The Achievement Possibilities Frontier for the Child (Under 5) Survival Rate is shown below. Each black dot is an observation from a particular country for a particular year between 1990 and 2008. The green curve is the resultant Achievement Possibilities Frontier for the Under 5 Survival Rate. A country's level of obligation is specified as the under 5 survival rate corresponding to the country's per capita GDP level.

Frontier: Under 5 Survival = 100.895 – 7334.1/GDP Per Capita Maximum Constrained to 99.74%



the *Historical International SERF Index* sheds light on this question (forthcoming at www.serfindex. org/data). In addition, it also identifies those countries where rights enjoyment in relation to resource capacity is growing over time signifying improved compliance with their obligations under the ICESCR as well as those countries in violation of the principle of non-retrogression.

In general, country compliance with their obligations of results is improving; the cross-country average value of the Core Historical International SERF Index increased from 60% to 75% between 1975 and 2005. Progress was most robust with regard to the right to education with the mean score on the historical education index increasing from 35% to 72% over the 40 years. Progress was less pronounced, but not negligible for high income OECD concern. First, progress for the Core countries was most robust between 1975 and 1985; the pace of improvement slowed between 1985 and 1995, and was further dampened between 1995 and 2005. Further, there was wide variation in performance and the principle of non-retrogression is frequently violated over the period of a decade or more. Retrogression occurred in half the countries on some right over one or more periods.

countries. Despite these gains, there is reason for

One way to examine the question of whether there is a trade-off between fulfilling economic and social rights obligations today and building resources to enhance economic and social rights enjoyment in the future is to look at country outcomes from one decade to the next. To address this question, we first split the countries for which the Core Historical

⁸ The results presented here are for the most recent version of the dataset (International SERF Index Dataset Version 2011.1 available at <vwww.serfindex.org/data>). This version reflects several refinements over the version reported on in Randolph, Fukuda-Parr, and Lawson-Remer, "Economic and Social Rights Fulfillment Index: Country Scores and Rankings," *Journal of Human Rights*, 9: 230-61, (2010).



PROMOTING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS IS GOOD FOR GROWTH

The diagram above tracks where countries that start out in 1995 end up in 2005. Four possible initial and final positions are considered: 1) countries with per capita GDP growth rates and SERF Index scores both below the median of the sample—vicious cell, 2) countries with per capita GDP growth rates and SERF Index scores above the median of the sample—virtuous cell, 3) countries with per capita GDP growth rates above the median but SERF Index scores below the median—growth lopsided, and 4) countries with SERF Index scores above the median, but per capita income

growth rates below the median—SERF lopsided. The bubbles show the percentage of countries that end up in each of the four positions depending on their starting point. As can be seen, countries that prioritize meeting their economic and social rights obligations over growth are the most likely to end up in the virtuous position, whereas countries that prioritize growth in per capita income over meeting the economic and social rights commitments are very unlikely to end up in the virtuous cell and quite likely to fall back to the vicious cell.

International SERF Index could be computed for both the decade of the 1990s and the decade of the 2000s into four groups:

- Countries whose SERF Index score and per capita income growth rate over the decade were below the median values—countries trapped in a vicious cycle.
- Countries whose SERF Index score and per capita income growth rate over the decade were above the median values—countries in a virtuous cycle.
- Countries whose SERF Index score was above the median value but whose per capita income growth rate was below the median value—call them SERF lopsided—.
- Countries whose per capita income growth rate was above the median value but whose SERF Index score was below the median—call them growth lopsided.

Given a country's starting point—vicious cycle, virtuous cycle, SERF lopsided or growth-lopsided one can then look at where the countries end up in the next decade. Box 2 details the outcome. The findings from this analysis clearly reveal that growth-lopsided countries seldom converged to the virtuous cycle and in fact were as likely to converge to the vicious cycle as remain in the growth-lopsided category. On the other hand, SERF-lopsided countries were far more likely to converge to the virtuous cycle, and if not, with few exceptions, remain in the SERF-lopsided category. In summary, countries that emphasized meeting their economic and social rights commitments were unlikely to face reduced per capita income growth as a result. Quite the contrary, the results suggest that promoting economic and social rights is good for growth.

Country	Core Country SERF Index Value	Core Country Right to Food Index Value	Core Country Right to Health Index Value	Core Country Right to Education Index Value	Core Country Right to Housing Index Value	Core Country Right to Work Index Value	Country	Core Country SERF Index Value	Core Country Right to Food Index Value	Core Country Right to Health Index Value	Core Country Right to Education Index Value	Core Country Right to Housing Index Value	Core Country Right to Work Index Value
Countries with Complet	e Data												
Uruguay	94.05	79.45	95.63	98.98	100.00	96.17	Togo	76.73	99.75	70.26	78.15	35.50	100.00
Jordan	93.65	96.27	84.57	93.76	95.27	98.37	Azerbaijan	76.38	63.03	76.95	91.85	50.05	100.00
Belarus	93.41	95.79	85.23	92.45	93.56	100.00	Peru	75.89	57.34	88.72	96.88	58.04	78.46
Moldova	92.15	100.00	88.69	85.42	89.83	96.82	Congo, Dem. Rep.	75.49	73.29	66.70	92.28	45.21	100.00
Kyrgyz Republic	92.13	100.00	80.59	92.52	97.48	90.06	Malawi	74.39	31.40	69.14	77.11	94.31	100.00
Cuba	92.07	98.16	97.15	87.72	87.98	89.32	Burundi	73.85	19.41	59.95	93.50	96.37	100.00
Ukraine	90.69	76.61	83.00	98.62	95.24	100.00	Timor-Leste	73.24	24.23	70.03	91.31	80.64	100.00
Chile	90.59	100.00	87.60	86.64	79.43	99.30	Bolivia	72.17	59.40	78.45	95.78	47.51	79.74
Serbia	90.35	89.48	78.83	90.96	92.48	100.00	Ghana	71.95	86.59	60.01	78.67	52.25	82.22
Jamaica	89.84	98.57	86.03	86.70	83.19	94.73	Kenya	71.57	67.65	56.31	84.98	51.09	97.81
Guyana	89.25	91.02	68.95	98.24	94.68	93.33	Rwanda	68.83	33.71	59.07	72.49	78.90	100.00
Bulgaria	88.52	88.49	78.02	76.62	100.00	99.48	Nepal	67.91	37.96	86.58	79.01	72.99	63.02
Argentina	88.34	88.33	87.31	97.78	77.58	90.69	Comoros	66.88	35.41	68.66	81.02	76.25	73.05
Brazil	87.42	91.11	90.08	96.47	75.81	83.61	Guatemala	65.83	17.78	76.11	72.31	86.60	76.38
Georgia	86.62	92.35	80.15	92.41	96.86	71.31	Indonesia	65.71	45.01 50.90	85.16	93.43	63.88	41.09
Kazakhstan	86.60	72.77	70.51	98.42	91.31	100.00	Bangladesh	64.18		87.27	58.28	83.42	41.05
Tunisia	86.11 85.15	91.11 75.93	86.84 84.08	84.04 80.04	81.58 95.71	86.97 90.00	Senegal Sierra Leone	63.31 61.46	98.91 49.90	47.96 30.20	52.41 100.00	62.60 27.20	54.68 100.00
Malaysia Thailand	85.15	79.38	88.09	74.52	95.71	90.00 87.51	Mozambique	61.33	49.90 50.98	46.94	76.79	31.94	100.00
Armenia	84.98	83.58	83.14	89.34	91.17	77.65	Mauritania	60.94	76.86	46.81	59.63	42.84	78.57
Russia	84.82	76.18	82.24	85.49	80.18	100.00	Lesotho	60.58	45.20	49.44	73.07	66.53	68.65
Albania	84.76	62.33	89.58	81.80	97.60	92.48	Botswana	60.36	52.64	59.63	86.67	63.08	39.79
Iran	84.74	72.35	89.82	91.03	79.94	90.56	Guinea-Bissau	60.15	52.51	44.91	49.81	53.53	100.00
Mexico	84.37	72.78	90.02	92.66	77.98	88.43	Cambodia	59.87	53.71	66.85	73.14	49.96	55.69
Turkey	84.24	75.29	88.80	78.96	88.96	89.20	Bhutan	59.78	32.70	65.16	71.16	77.30	52.59
Romania	83.98	82.57	88.43	88.54	63.85	96.52	Namibia	58.71	58.52	70.52	70.22	57.26	37.02
Dominican Republic	83.85	88.15	86.59	78.50	80.13	85.87	Ethiopia	58.10	39.21	58.08	67.36	25.85	100.00
Sri Lanka	83.81	85.61	91.14	88.29	91.05	62.97	Cameroon	56.92	59.19	47.31	67.97	57.13	53.02
Paraguay	83.78	83.82	92.97	86.56	68.59	86.99	Pakistan	56.73	48.55	65.94	49.06	74.09	46.02
Macedonia	83.54	82.92	68.08	80.10	91.45	95.18	Zambia	56.71	44.18	46.98	91.94	61.46	39.00
Ecuador	83.51	58.51	90.56	95.13	88.10	85.24	India	56.06	32.70	74.74	82.64	62.55	27.67
Liberia	83.13	90.10	73.17	99.08	53.29	100.00	Cote d'Ivoire	55.76	54.52	51.14	46.03	54.45	72.65
Algeria	82.67	79.77	83.78	90.41	85.48	73.91	Djibouti	55.59	54.52	52.37	31.72	63.01	76.33
Gambia	81.65	88.99	53.44	75.22	96.71	93.88	Lao PDR	55.07	36.16	72.44	70.40	61.14	35.22
Belize	81.60	70.05	77.22	90.74	93.82	76.18	Mali	53.70	65.09	32.75	62.11	53.01	55.57
Nicaragua	81.55	93.29	94.09	76.23	67.04	77.09	Guinea	53.52	64.18	52.26	63.10	51.53	36.53
Egypt	81.41	58.37	84.92	84.88	96.64	82.25	Benin	52.50	45.81	58.51	68.76	48.59	40.81
Venezuela	80.55	74.91	90.96	89.61	60.95	86.32	Yemen	51.84	13.29	63.89	57.91	62.31	61.81
El Salvador	80.04	67.94	87.64	78.86	80.05	85.71	Niger	51.14	27.56	48.10	47.06	32.99	100.00
Tajikistan	79.91	71.17	73.86	93.60	84.65	76.25	Swaziland	50.54	61.76	50.69	63.89	57.81	18.56
China	79.73	90.43	94.82	83.58	65.83	63.98	Gabon	50.03	52.30	54.07	54.06	20.29	69.44
Colombia	79.54	78.23	91.74	95.19	67.64	64.92	Congo, Rep.	48.35	61.86	53.70	66.61	33.27	26.31
Vietnam	78.79	58.39	98.59	85.80	92.52	58.66	Madagascar	47.87	29.91	66.44	81.89	25.98	35.14
Uzbekistan	78.60	93.59	85.79	89.14	94.36	30.12	Tanzania	47.70	49.33	57.12	76.75	43.73	11.60
Trinidad and Tobago	78.56	92.96	68.18	66.58	84.06	81.05	Burkina Faso	46.77	49.13	45.12	41.36	51.44	46.80
Mongolia	77.79	73.34	81.47	92.20	52.46	89.46	Nigeria	42.51	47.70	33.35	66.71	43.29	21.50
Philippines	77.53	69.17	83.36	90.79	86.60	57.70	Chad	39.79	46.94	30.12	38.53	32.39	50.95
Suriname	77.42	86.89	74.24	74.87	80.03	71.07	Angola	34.75	26.61	23.51	45.78	45.30	32.57
Morocco	77.33	77.42	87.12	68.34	65.93	87.85	Equatorial Guinea	20.22	26.99	23.12	28.89	18.66	3.41

Country	Core Country SERF Index Value	Core Country Right to Food Index Value	Core Country Right to Health Index Value	Core Country Right to Education Index Value	Core Country Right to Housing Index Value	Core Country Right to Work Index Value	Country	Core Country SERF Index Value	Core Country Right to Food Index Value	Core Country Right to Health Index Value	Core Country Right to Education Index Value	Core Country Right to Housing Index Value	Core Country Right to Work Index Value
Countries with Incomplete	e Data												
Aruba							Lithuania			77.30	83.25		100.00
Andorra							Latvia			78.46	86.60	77.48	100.00
Afghanistan		13.13	24.32	59.10	51.13		Macao SAR, China				86.93		
Anguilla							Monaco						
Netherlands Antilles							Maldives		61.48	76.29	89.26	92.68	
United Arab Emirates		41.18	74.10	78.40	94.68		Marshall Islands						
American Samoa							Malta				85.92	100.00	
Antigua and Barbuda					86.64		Myanmar						
Bahrain		71.16	86.45	86.38			Montenegro		89.81	77.79		91.06	100.00
Bahamas				82.33			Northern Mariana Islands						
Bosnia and Herzegovina		86.58			95.50	100.00	Montserrat						
Bermuda							Mauritius		82.33	88.49	75.94	91.93	
Barbados					100.00		Mayotte						
Brunei Darussalam				85.58			Nauru						
British Virgin Islands							New Caledonia						
Central African Republic		59.75		50.38	61.01	100.00	Niue						
Channel Islands							Oman		75.00	75.08	51.64	68.53	
Cook Islands							Panama		68.98		92.55	65.26	75.40
Cape Verde			87.70	85.28	72.20	67.70	Palau						
Costa Rica			97.77	79.06	90.39	96.27	Papua New Guinea		43.73	62.19		45.78	47.88
Cayman Islands							Puerto Rico						
Cyprus				90.47	100.00		Korea, Dem. Rep.						
Dominica				70.01	84.45		French Polynesia						
Eritrea		57.65	60.70	56.31	49.50		Qatar				77.19	100.00	
Estonia			88.27	95.56	92.19	100.00	Saudi Arabia		81.34	71.14	80.47	70.75	
French Guiana							Sudan		57.68	47.83	43.43	50.03	
Fiji			75.83	81.99	61.34		Singapore		91.79	91.34		100.00	
Faeroe Islands							Solomon Islands			69.74	57.65	55.25	
Micronesia					63.62		San Marino						
Guadeloupe							Somalia						
Gibraltar							Sao Tome and Principe		83.73		79.02	66.87	85.85
Grenada			85.42	92.01	94.18		Slovenia			94.60	88.11	98.98	100.00
Greenland							Seychelles				95.82		100.00
Guam							Syria		64.74	88.80	88.31	91.53	
Hong Kong SAR, China				85.21			Turks and Caicos Islands						
Croatia			91.27	90.84	96.54	100.00	Turkmenistan		80.65	70.43			66.27
Haiti		87.31	72.41		45.91	58.02	Tokelau						
Isle of Man							Tonga			70.88	97.54	97.97	
Iraq		71.13		68.31	68.30		Tuvalu						
Israel				92.99	100.00		Uganda		65.45	50.02		73.77	77.60
Kiribati				96.39	48.71		St. Vincent and the Gren.				93.68		
St. Kitts and Nevis				88.25	95.51		Virgin Islands (U.S.)						
Kosovo							Vanuatu			75.60	68.85	67.23	
Kuwait		30.29		76.46			West Bank and Gaza						
Lebanon		74.47	83.87	73.89	98.46		Wallis et Futuna						
Libya		60.51			76.45		Samoa			77.58	92.77	95.45	
St. Lucia			79.72	86.75	91.00	49.06	South Africa			57.58	71.39	70.22	46.60
Liechtenstein				88.39			Zimbabwe				97.62		
Country	OECD High Income Country Right to Food Index Value	OECD High Income Country Right to Health Index Value	OECD High Income Country Right to Education Index Value	OECD High Income Country Right to Work Index Value	OECD High Income Country SERF Index Value								
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Countries with Complete Data													
Finland	99.75	98.43	100.00	80.38	94.64								
Sweden	100.00	99.85	82.66	88.49	92.75								
Korea, Rep.	99.56	97.76	95.65	76.22	92.30								
Norway	97.84	99.61	79.28	89.28	91.50								
Denmark	97.13	96.30	87.53	84.86	91.46								
Canada	95.26	98.04	90.59	73.53	89.36								
Netherlands	96.78	98.76	92.07	67.71	88.83								
Australia	94.41	99.05	92.23	68.31	88.50								
Poland	96.06	92.79	90.94	67.21	86.75								
Austria	92.48	98.55	82.52	72.29	86.46								
France	93.73	98.90	83.09	62.05	84.44								
Czech Republic	93.98	95.77	84.51	62.52	84.19								
Switzerland	93.19	99.23	82.46	60.18	83.77								
Spain	92.95	99.30	83.61	57.88	83.43								
Hungary	92.30	89.89	87.67	61.20	82.76								
United Kingdom	91.81	97.45	81.44	59.65	82.59								
Ireland	98.03	98.72	86.71	43.99	81.86								
Japan	86.80	99.72	86.46	53.94	81.73								
Belgium	91.04	98.12	86.93	48.36	81.11								
United States	88.58	94.44	75.81	57.55	79.09								
Slovakia	94.19	91.83	81.30	48.44	78.94								
Italy	93.87	99.50	76.04	43.44	78.21								
Greece	89.24	99.35	80.77	42.61	77.99								
Luxembourg	97.51	98.27	58.85	44.55	74.79								
Countries with Incomplete Data													
Germany	93.44	98.37		46.52									
Iceland	100.00	99.85	83.70										
New Zealand	96.42	98.15	93.77										
Portugal	93.31	98.01	79.58										

• From the grassroots: NATIONAL REPORTS

AFGHANISTAN

No sustainable development without peace and security



Decades of armed conflict and unrest have almost destroyed Afghanistan's institutions and territory. Although the country has a new Government and a new Constitution, it faces major challenges in terms of sustainable development. One of these is how to ensure the right to education for both females and males. Despite remarkable progress in rebuilding the education system, the Government's efforts have been insufficient and much remains to be done. Other challenges include tackling environmental problems and rehabilitating and managing the country's natural resources.

Watch on Basic Rights Afghanistan Organization (WBRAO) Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA) Sanayee Development Organization (SDO)

After decades of war and civil unrest Afghanistan faces multiple challenges, among them poverty and lack of security. Armed conflicts resulted in more than 1.5 million casualties and a nearly dismantled education system. In September 2000, when the Millennium Summit was held at the UN General Assembly in New York, the country was still wartorn and could not participate. The Government subsequently endorsed the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in March 2004 but had to modify the global timetable and benchmarks because of its lost decades and the lack of available information. Although the rest of the international community determined the MDGs should be attained by 2015, against a baseline of 1990, Afghanistan set its targets for 2020 and its baselines between 2002 and 2005.1 The Government also stated that peace and security play a critical role in achieving the MDGs and added "enhanced security" as a ninth goal;2 indeed, peace and security are key components of sustainable development and any kind of long-term planning.

Advances in education

For a long time Afghanistan had very low rates of school attendance and high percentages of illiteracy. This situation became worse under the Taliban rule: schools were closed and destroyed, curricula were restricted and women were banned from education. Between 1996 and 2001 women and girls were excluded from all aspects of educational life, from primary school to university, as schools for girls were closed and female teachers were prevented from working.³ Girls' gross enrolment ratio in Kabul fell from 32% in 1995 to just 6.4% in 1999.⁴ The Taliban

- 3 BBC World Service, Case study: education in Afghanistan, <www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/ ihavearightto/four_b/casestudy_art26.shtml>.
- 4 American Institutes for Research with Hassan Mohammad, Education and the role of NGOs in emergencies, Afghanistan 1978–2002, (US Agency for International Development, 8 August 2006), <pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADG858.pdf>.



also imposed many restrictions on educational institutions and demanded that religion be emphasized at the expense of other subjects.⁵

After this educational and social collapse the country is slowly on the road to recovery, with significant enrolment of students since the new Government took office. In the first years following the fall of the Taliban, education was a top priority for the Government as well as for donors, with a focus on getting children back into school and a particular emphasis on the primary level.⁶ The Government is also striving to achieve MDG 3 ("to promote gender equality and empower women") and has committed to eliminating gender disparity in all levels of education by 2020. The new Constitution states that education should be free for all Afghan nationals with no discrimination based on gender.

Research by 16 local organizations led by Oxfam Novib shows that although there are still significant obstacles to girls' education there has also been progress since 2001.⁷ The "Back to School" campaign launched in 2002 significantly expanded primary school enrolment, which has shown a seven-fold increase from approximately 900,000 in 2000 to 5 million in 2008 (see also chart 1).⁸ For girls, the boost has been even more dramatic: official enrolment fi-

- 7 The Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium, *Report card: Progress on Compulsory Education grades* 1–9, (March 2004), <www.oxtamamerica.org/publications/ afghanistan-education-report-card>.
- 8 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Education, 1388 (2009–10) school attendance, (2010), unpublished spreadsheet.



gures have increased from an estimated 5,000 under the Taliban to 2.4 million girls as of 2010.9

According to figures published by UNICEF, between 2005 and 2009 the primary school attendance ratio was 66% for males and 40% for females while the figures for secondary school were 18% for males and 6% for females. The secondary school enrolment rate, on the other hand, was 41% for males and 15% for females.¹⁰

Efforts made to improve education in Afghanistan are now beginning to slow down, however. The Ministry of Education has undoubtedly made progress in improving both the availability and quality of education, but due to the large influx of students over the past few years it is struggling to keep pace with demand. With donors increasingly focused on stabilization and counterinsurgency rather than development, and with security deteriorating in many areas of the country, the gains made in improving girls' education are in danger of slipping away.

Parents and students are eager for high quality education but they are increasingly frustrated by the lack of progress. If there is not significant investment in postprimary education there is the risk that these students "will be left behind, turned off, perhaps, and cut short in their personal, social and vocational development."¹¹

11 J.K. Intili and E. Kissam, How to do more, faster: The current status of Afghanistan's education system and a strategy to increase service capacity while improving learning," (Aguirre Division, JBS International, September 2008), <www. eurasiacritic.com/articles/how-do-more-faster-current-statusafghanistan's-education-system-and-strategy-increase>.

¹ UNDP Afghanistan, *Afghanistan MDGs overview*, <www. undp.org.af/MDGs/index.htm>.

² Ibid

⁵ BBC World Service, op. cit.

⁶ Oxfam International, "High stakes: Girls' education in Afghanistan," Joint I/GO Briefing Paper, (Oxford: Oxfam GB, 24 February 2011), <www.oxfam.org/en/policy/high-stakesoirls-education-afghanistan>.

⁹ Ibid., 1388 (2009–10) school enrolment by grade, (2010), unpublished spreadsheet.

¹⁰ UNICEF, Afghanistan: Statistics, <www.unicef.org/ infobycountry/afghanistan_statistics.html>.

Education and gender equality

According to an OXFAM report published in 2011, only 6% of Afghan women aged 25 or older have ever received any formal education and just 12% of women aged 15 or older are literate.¹² Of those interviewed for the report 41.2% named poverty as the single biggest obstacle to girls' access to education and 39.4% stated that early or forced marriage was another barrier. Among the other challenges regarding gender equality in education are.¹³

- There are not enough female teachers to meet the demand. More than a quarter (26.4%) of the individuals interviewed for the research named the lack of a female teacher as a major obstacle to girls' access to education. More than two-thirds of teachers (68.4%) reported that their school does not have enough teachers. Of these, more than half (54.6%) stated that they only needed additional female teachers, 27.3% said they needed both female and male teachers, 12.3% said they only needed male teachers and 5.7% were unsure.
- There are not enough education centres to meet the demand. Nearly a quarter (23.7%) of those interviewed saw distance from school as a major obstacle to girls' access to education. Distance, along with attendance in mixed classes or interaction with male teachers, becomes increasingly problematic as girls approach adolescence when cultural norms regulating their behaviour become more restrictive.
- Many schools do not have the infrastructure needed to provide quality education. Data from the Ministry of Education shows that 47% of schools lack proper facilities.¹⁴ These varied significantly across research sites and were particularly deficient in rural areas.

Lack of security, female seclusion, religious biases, household chores and threats from the insurgents are key factors for girls abandoning schools. Acid and gas attacks on girl students in 2010 caused a number of dropouts; however new hope for an increase in girls' enrolment emerged after the Taliban announced that they would not burn schools or create obstacles to girls' education.¹⁵

Environmental issues

After 30 years of political chaos and conflict Afghanistan faces a severe environmental crisis. The major challenges are soil degradation, air and water pollu-

FIGURE ⁻





tion, deforestation, overgrazing, desertification, overpopulation in urban areas and the poor management of fresh water resources.¹⁶ Military factions have used wood extensively for fuel and also cleared forests to prevent them being used as hiding places for the opposing forces.¹⁷ Uncontrolled logging of the eastern conifer forests is having a severe impact on forest area conditions.¹⁸

As forest cover disappears, the risk of environmental degradation increases. Poor management of forests leads to desertification and soil erosion, which both inevitably reduce the amount of land available for agriculture.¹⁹ If this trend is not reversed, and if the Government does not enforce a sustainable development model, the loss of agricultural land will negatively affect food security in the near future.

Extreme weather and natural disasters have also had a negative impact. The 1998–2003 drought, for example, created food shortages that drove major rural-to-urban migrations.²⁰ In 2008 conditions worsened: widespread losses of rain-fed wheat crops were reported due to a significant scarcity of rainfall and winter snowfall and thus wheat production fell significantly.²¹ The same conditions were forecast for 2011. Low levels of rainfall mean that crops cannot be sustained and cause population displacement, a scenario that is bound to happen again if precipitation – as forecast – drops below normal parameters.²²

Over 80% of Afghanistan's water resources originate in the Hindu Kush Mountains but the larger glaciers in that region and the Pamir Mountains have shrunk by 30% and some smaller ones have vanished.²³ More than 2.5 million people in the country are already affected by drought or are vulnerable to the effects of recurrent drought and water shortages. This number is likely to increase due to global warming and further aridization.²⁴

Conclusion

A new approach is urgently needed from both the Government and donors if the gains made in education are to be maintained. Decision-making around whether or not girls should go to school is based on a variety of factors that differ from province to province and even from household to household. There is also a complex relationship between demand factors (e.g., community attitudes and economic constraints) and supply factors (e.g., school buildings and qualified teachers). All these issues need to be addressed in order to increase girls' attendance in school.²⁶

The environmental crisis in Afghanistan is of major concern. Meeting the challenge will take decades and it cannot be tackled by the Government alone. Sustained financial assistance and technical support are also needed from the international community.²⁶

- 16 Afghanistan online, Environmental facts and issues concerning Afghanistan, <www.afghan-web.com/environment>.
- 17 Wikipedia, Environmental issues in Afghanistan, <en. wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_issues_in_Afghanistan>.
- 18 UNEP, Afghanistan: Post-conflict environmental assessment, (Nairobi, Kenya: 2003), <postconflict.unep.ch/publications/ afghanistanpcajanuary2003.pdf>.

- 20 Wikipedia, op. cit.
- 21 US Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Afghanistan: Severe drought causes major decline in 2008/2009 wheat production, (12 August 2008), <www.pecad.fas.usda. gov/highlights/2008/08/46fghanistan Droughb-

23 National Environmental Protection Agency of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (NEPA), Afghanistan's Environment 2008, (NEPA and UNEP, 2008), <postconflict.unep.ch/ publications/afg_soe_E.pdf>.

24 Ibid

- 25 Oxfam International, op. cit.
- 26 UNEP, Afghanistan's environmental recovery: A post-conflict plan for people and their natural resources, (Geneva: UNEP Post-Conflict Branch), cpostconflict.unep.ch/publications/ UNEP_afghanistan_Ir.pdf>.

15 Graeme Paton, "Taliban "abandons" opposition to girls' education", *The telegraph*, (14 January 2011), <www. telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/8258146/ Taliban-abandons-opposition-to-girls-education.html>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²² M. Ryan, "Hungry Afghanistan faces prospect of drought in 2011," Reuters, (11 February 2011), .

¹² Oxfam International, op. cit.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Education, 1388 (2009–10) schools infrastructure, 2010, unpublished spreadsheet.

ARGENTINA

The long road to lasting development



The country urgently needs to adopt a model for sustainable development, but it faces serious obstacles in doing so. Legislation to protect the environment is still inadequate. The Government must take steps to resolve the country's many environmental conflicts. The general public must be allowed access to information about the environment. Both the Government and the general public must recognize that Argentina's environmental conflicts stem from a paradoxical vision that promotes investment "at any cost" while at the same time wants policies to protect the environment. The absence of a sustainable development policy has had a negative impact on the most vulnerable social groups in Argentine society: peasants, indigenous communities and people living in marginal urban areas.

Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN)

According to the *Living Planet Report 2010 of the* World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Argentina is ninth on the list of ten countries that produce 60% of the planet's natural wealth.¹ As such, it has a strategic role as a global provider of environmental services. In the last 40 years, however, Argentina has been virtually stagnant as measured by the Human Development Index (HDI). It has developed less than countries that in 1970 had similar HDI ratings but nowhere near Argentina's level of natural resources (e.g., Spain, Greece, Ireland and Israel).² It is paradoxical that a country with such abundant and diverse natural resources should have unacceptable indicators of human development and wealth distribution.

Loss of biodiversity

One of the country's biggest environmental problems is deforestation. Between 1937 and 1987 some 2,355,308 hectares (about 23,553 km²) of native forest were lost, and in the last 17 years the total jumped to 5,321,001 hectares (53,210 km²). In the period 1998 to 2006 around 250,000 hectares (2,500 km²) per year disappeared, which is a rate of one hectare (10,000 m²) every two minutes. The reasons for this grim panorama are the disorganized exploitation of forests, the expansion of the agricultural frontier and the lack of public policies or incentives for private actors to undertake reforestation with native species.³

Deforestation, the loss of native forests and climate change are closely interconnected, and the implementation of environmental protection mechanisms could be a forerunner to the subsequent implementation in Argentina of UN (Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries) REDD schemes. The Government, however, does not have suitable mechanisms to cope with these problems and lacks the political will to es-

- 2 UNDP, El desarrollo humano en la Argentina (1970 2010): una mirada más allá de la coyuntura, (Buenos Aires: 2010).
- 3 Greenpeace, Un arduo camino a la Ley de Bosques.



tablish legal frameworks that foster sustainable development.

Agriculture's negative environmental impacts

Agriculture is one of the main pillars of Argentina's economy. International price increases for products from this sector have favoured agricultural production on an industrial scale, and the predominant model is the mono-cultivation of soy bean and oilseed.⁴

But today the negative consequences of this process have become more evident. Agriculture is the second biggest source of greenhouse gases in Argentina after the energy sector. Per capita CO₂ emissions in Argentina are nearly twice the average level in the region. ⁵ Further, an unrestrained use of agrochemicals has had a negative impact on the environment and people's health. The *Atlas of Environmental Risk for Children* has stated that in Argentina "approximately three million children are living in a situation of environmental risk caused by agrochemicals." ⁶ According to the Carrasco Report, glyphosate – the main agro-chemical used in the country – causes deformities in and poses a risk to various vegetable and animal species.⁷



Meanwhile agricultural production has extended its frontier, encroaching into native forest lands. This encroachment has incorporated indigenous and peasant communities into work systems that are at odds with their traditional ways and for which these communities have provided neither their free, nor prior, nor informed consent.⁸

In order to reverse this situation, Argentina needs a system of laws that defines minimum environmental standards of sustainability for the use of agrochemicals, advances towards a process of land recuperation and imposes environmentally safer agricultural practices.

Progress in legislation

In the last 10 years there has been significant progress toward enacting legislation that promotes sustainable development and protects people's right to a healthy environment. Many obstacles still exist, however, that hinder the execution and implementation of these regulations and make compliance difficult to monitor. Contradictions in the law and regulations themselves, as well as opposition from powerful economic and political interests have provoked persistent and rancorous socio-environmental conflicts.

The private sector, civil society organizations and the State seem able to reach agreement only through conflict. As a result, certain high-profile cases – many leading to prolonged legal proceedings

¹ World Wildlife Fund, *Living Planet Report 2010: biodiversity, biocapacity and development.*

⁴ Jorge E. Weskamp, "Soja: más allá de lo económico" (Buenos Aires: Clarín, 15 July 2006).

⁵ World Bank, "Datos", <datos.bancomundial.org/pais/ argentina>.

⁶ Defensoría del Pueblo de la Nación, Resolución sobre la Clasificación de la Toxicidad de los Agroquímicos (Buenos Aires, 12 November 2010).

⁷ Primicias Rurales, "Andrés Carrasco, autor de un estudio controvertido, advierte sobre glifosato para los humanos", (5 April 2009).

⁸ See The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, the United Nations General Assembly Action Programme for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and the International Labour Organization Convention 169, among others.

- have gradually put sustainable development on the public agenda. Examples include the legal wrangles over the draining of the Matanza-Riachuelo hydric basin, the conflict over the pulp mills on the Uruguay River and more recently, the debate about the application of existing environmental statutes to the conservation of glaciers and periglacial environments now under threat from mining projects.

Article 41, a provision in the country's reformed Constitution of 1994, establishes the right to a healthy environment and the obligation to preserve it, and is the essential foundation for developing a statute pertaining to sustainable development. Since 2002 the National Congress has emerged as a key actor - in addition to the courts - in enforcing compliance with environmental standards. It has passed an impressive series of measures that require minimum standards to finance environmental protections, including the management of industrial, household and services waste, the elimination of PCBs, the protection of water resources, native forests, glaciers and periglacial formations. These legislative initiatives also have helped to place environmental, social and economic sustainability on the public and private agendas.

As an example of a recurring problem, however, at the end of 2007 after a long process in which civil society organizations took an active part, the National Congress passed a law to protect native forests. Unfortunately that law has yet to be implemented in an effective way. As a consequence, the situation of the native forests remains critical. Recent and current court cases make clear that indigenous communities and small local producers continue to be vulnerable to an indiscriminate felling of trees in their communities and on their lands. ⁹ In addition, current legislation stablishes that a 0.3% of the national budget will be allocated to the native forests' conservation fund.

The Matanza-Riachuelo Basin

Argentina's water resources have high levels of pollution, caused by a lack of control over industrial effluents, unsatisfactory or non-existent treatment of sewage, excessive use of agro-chemicals and the unplanned development of urban areas. The consequences for water resources of unplanned urban expansion include pollution from precarious settlements around rivers and streams near cities, the locating of rubbish dumps in flood valleys, the unmonitored pollution of reservoirs with urban waste and agrochemicals, the discharge of untreated sewage, and mountains of solid waste that block the drains and cause contaminated water to flood large areas of land.¹⁰ A paradigmatic example that illustrates the difficulties involved in tackling pollution and overcoming obstacles to careful management of the country's water resources is the case of the Matanza-Riachuelo Basin.

The Matanza-Riachuelo Basin covers approximately 2,240 km² and is subject to the jurisdiction of 17 governmental units: the Province of Buenos Aires, 14 provincial municipalities, the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and the national Government. More than 3,500,000 people live in the Basin, and of these 35% do not have access to potable water and 55% do not have sewage facilities. There are more than 10,000 industrial units in the area that employ obsolete technologies that contravene the prevailing regulations. There are 171 open air rubbish dumps. Consequently, 96.4% of the Basin's population is exposed to at least one environmental threat while a large proportion of that population lives in alarming poverty and indigence.¹¹

The conflict over the Matanza-Riachuelo Basin - regarded as among the 30 most polluted places in the World ¹² - exemplifies the weakness of Argentina's institutions and the lack of political will of its politicians. The matter has gone all the way to the Supreme Court of Justice, the final guarantor of the Constitution, and this body has had to take control of draining and repairing the damage to the Basin.

Conflicts over mining

Large-scale mining is another highly conflictive area.¹³ Nobody can deny the enormous economic importance of the mineral extraction industries, but it is also impossible to ignore mining's ecological consequences and its negative impact on the lives of the communities that are directly affected. It has been said that "while the growth curve of investment in mining has increased exponentially in recent years, so too have conflicts over mining." ¹⁴

Mining conflicts tend to follow a pattern that usually involves the following aspects:

- There are no prior agreements with local communities and no broad-based participative processes to debate the development model to be implemented or how the ecological impact will be tackled.
- Governmental institutions that should enforce mining regulations and compel mining enterprises to comply do no evaluation or effective environmental monitoring of the environmental impact.
- There is no adequate public access to information which would reduce uncertainty and enable informed citizens' groups to become involved.
- 11 See A. Nápoli, "Recomposición Ambiental De La Cuenca Matanza-Riachuelo" in M. E. DiPaola and F. Sangalli (eds.), Informe Ambiental Anual 2010 (Buenos Aires: FARN, 2010).
- 12 See: <www.blacksmithinstitute.org>.
- 13 Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN) and Fundación Cambio Democrático, Ciudadanía Ambiental y Minería: herramientas para la transformación democrática de conflictos socioambientales (Buenos Aires: FARN, 2010), pp. 11-20.
- 14 P. Lumerman, et al., "Análisis de la conflictividad socio ambiental en Argentina. El conflicto minero: emergente de la nueva conflictividad socioambiental en Argentina,", in Informe Ambiental Anual 2009 (Buenos Aires: FARN, 2009).

Protection for the glaciers

In October 2010, a law was passed setting budget minimums for the protection of the glaciers and periglacial environments. This was a victory for the communities and social sectors involved, but the Executive has delayed final implementation of the legislation. To make matters worse, the mining sector – with backing from some provincial governments – has resorted to legal proceedings in an attempt to stop its implementation. They argue that it could block the development of extractive activities in these areas. ¹⁵

What must be done

Argentina has a long way to go to achieve sustainable development. Until the national and provincial governments make a serious commitment to effectively executing, coordinating and monitoring compliance with the prevailing regulations, it will be difficult - if not impossible - to implement a sustainable development model that recognizes and enforces human rights. To reach that goal, civil society organizations and the academic sector will have to be brought into the process in addition to active citizen participation and support.

Denied the right to health services, adequate food, decent housing, clean water and land, the peasants, the indigenous communities and the inhabitants of the marginal areas around the big cities are those who suffer most from the negative consequences of the lack of sustainable development policies and the flaws in the current tentative ones.

The ultimate responsibility for creating policies that incorporate environmental considerations and encourage sustainable development rests with public decision-makers; they should take the lead in changing the current lifestyle and consumption model. The private sector, however, is not exempt; it must become aware of the consequences of its activities and take responsibility for them.

In turn, the public at large must be allowed access to information about the environment, and this means that at long last there will have to be Government transparency. Moreover, public institutions in all three branches of the State will have to be consolidated and coordinated. National and provincial governments will have to work towards managing and preventing conflicts over the environment and overcome the problem that on the one hand the country wants to promote investment at any cost, but on the other, it must implement effective environmental protection policies. The first step will have to be to see that this paradox is not a necessary condition and that it is possible to achieve a form of development that is genuinely sustainable. ■

⁹ See the case of "SALAS, Dino y otros c/ SALTA, Provincia de y otro s/ Amparo," in progress at the National Supreme Court of Justice.

¹⁰ S. D. Matelucci and J. Morello, "Singularidades territoriales y problemas ambientales de un país asimétrico y terminal," in Realidad económica No. 169, (Buenos Aires: 2000).

^{15 &}quot;Barrick Exploraciones Argentina S.A. y otro c/ Estado Nacional p/ Ordinario"; "Minera Argentina Gold S.A. c/ Estado Nacional p/ Ordinario"; and "A.O.M.A. y otras c/ Estado Nacional p/Acción de Inconstitucionalidad", Juzgado Federal No. 1 de San Juan.

Undermining the environment



Despite recent economic growth, Armenia continues to confront economic, social and environmental challenges. The Government launched a Sustainable Development programme, but at the same time made substantial investments in mining and other extractive industries. The Teghut copper-molybdenum mining project in particular poses a threat both to the environment and to sustainable development. The Government has also failed to address pollution, deforestation, soil degradation, and other environmental issues, making the effective implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, as well as increased transparency and public participation in policy-making essential.

Center for the Development of Civil Society, CDCS Armenia Dr. Svetlana Aslanyan

Armenia's "Sustainable Development Programme (SDP) for 2009-2012,"¹ adopted in 2008, includes a series of measures designed to reduce poverty through: a) stimulation of economic growth and improvement of the business environment; b) increased employment and promotion of medium and small business; c) greater public access to infrastructure services; d) enhanced social assistance programs for the poor; e) expanded access to and consumption of culture; f) more extensive social assistance programs for youth; g) a reduction in corruption within State Government, the health and education systems, the judiciary system and local government.

Implementation of the SDP was set back by the impact of the 2008-09 global economic crisis. Reduced investment in construction hurt small and medium-sized businesses, and the proportion of the population living below the poverty line jumped from 27% to 47%. While per capita GDP had soared from USD 3,576 to USD 11,916 from 2004 to 2008² the impact of the economic crisis was negative (see chart), particularly for sustainable development. Although economic growth resumed in 2009 and 2010,³ in most cases this has helped realize only short-term economic objectives. Policies set up for the environmental and social spheres have been neglected,⁴ and the Government has decided to pursue sustainable development only in selected areas.

Environmental issues

One of the country's most pressing environmental concerns is limited access to clean water.⁵ In many cases, aging and corroded infrastructure allows sewage to seep into freshwater pipes. Yerevan,

3 Ibid

4 Edita Vardgesyan, The exploitation of the Teghut Copper-Molybdenum Mining (Republic of Armenia) and the Concept of Sustainable Development, (2009), <www.cerdi.org/ uploads/sfCmsContent/html/323/Vardgesyan.pdf>

5 Policy Forum Armenia, *The state of Armenia's environment*, (2010), <www.pf-armenia.org/fileadmin/pfa_uploads/ PFA_Environmental_Report.pdf>.



the capital, still lacks a fully functional wastewater treatment plant. In the northern part of the country, rivers such as the Debed have alarming concentrations of lead, while in places such as the Ararat Valley, most water pollution comes from pesticides containing pollutants such as arsenic and cadmium.⁶ Experts predict that the most likely climate change scenario will cause severe drinking water shortages in the coming decades.⁷

Air pollution is also increasing at an alarming rate. Yerevan, for example, is located in a geological depression in which stagnant air exacerbates heavy pollution, 90% of which is caused by vehicles.⁸ The other 10% is highly toxic, containing smoke filled with the residue of plastics burned at industrial and mining facilities near the city. The atmosphere in other cities is also heavily polluted. Alaverdi, for example, has had 11.4 times the permitted level of sulfur dioxide in recent years.⁹ Between 2001 and 2005, recorded cases of respiratory disease jumped 45%; experts believe the real incidence of diseases such as asthma is actually far higher.¹⁰

Air pollution is exacerbated by the common practice of burning waste in the open. Unauthorized

6 Ibid.

- 9 Policy Forum Armenia, The state of Armenia's environment, (2010), op cit.
- 10 Marianna Grigoryan, "Armenia: Environmental Change Spurs Respiratory Diseases," (19 October 2006), www.eurasianet.org/departments/environment/articles/eav102006.shtml.



burning releases dioxins, furans and other toxic chemicals that can cause a wide range of health problems, including skin disorders, liver problems, immune system impairment and certain types of cancers.¹¹

Deforestation, which has escalated to an unprecedented level, is another concern. Only 7% of the territory remains forested, down from 35% two centuries ago, and much of this is degraded. The leading causes include use of wood for fuel, due to a lack of alternatives, and the Government's decision to allow mining in ecologically sensitive areas, which shows the lack of official recognition of the importance of natural forests.¹²

Corruption and the environment

Many environmental problems in Armenia are closely linked to corruption, especially in forestry and mining. For example, environmental restrictions are not enforced in most mining operations; in the period from 2001 to 2007, the then-Minister of Nature Protection issued several mining licenses to relatives.

It is widely believed that cases of corruption related to businesses sponsored by high level Government officials are abundant.¹³ Certainly Government actions have not been able to stop the destruction and degradation of the forests due to illegal logging. Also, many forest areas have been

Full text available from: <www.nature-ic.am/res/pdfs/ documents/strategic/SDP_01_eng_20081030.pdf >

² Index Mundi, *Armenia GDP real growth rate (%)*, (2010), <www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?c=am&v=66>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ This Month in Armenia, Car emissions causing more respiratory problems in Yerevan, (July 2009), <thismonth. wordpress.com/2009/07/13/july-09-car-emissions-causingmore-respiratory-problems>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See: <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corruption_in_Armenia> and <www.armeniatree.org/environews/enews_ hakobyan070707.htm>.



improperly reclassified and allocated to private individuals. In 2007, for example, the Government changed the status of the central part of the Khosrov Reserve to allow private construction and agricultural activities; it made this decision without consulting experts in the field.

The Teghut mountains: a case study in unsustainable exploitation

The Government is pursuing an extraction-led development model, as evidenced by its willingness to allow massive investment in mining. The Armenian Copper Program (ACP), for example, has been granted a 24-year license to extract copper and molybdenum ore from the Teghut Mountains. ACP is developing an open-pit mine with a surface area of 240 ha, all of which is forested land.¹⁴

The village of Teghut, located in the Lori Region in the northeast has 3,600 residents, many of whom rely on subsistence agriculture. The surrounding forest is home to many rare and endangered plants and animals; species found there include 260 insects, 86 birds, 55 mammals and 10 reptiles.¹⁵

ACP has already built numerous forest access roads for exploratory drilling sites, indiscriminately ravaging several areas. Ultimately, according to ACP, the project will require 670 ha, of which 510 ha are currently forested. ¹⁶

ACP has declared that it will compensate for the damage by planting trees in Yerevan, but this plan is inadequate and unrealistic. New trees cannot replace established forest habitats; mature trees may not survive a move.

The mining operations will produce waste rock and tailings, which may contain silver, gold, rhenium, lead, arsenic, copper, molybdenum, zinc and sulfurous chemicals. In the inefficient extraction process that will be used, valuable metals such as renium will be lost; much worse, it will leave tailings that will pollute both local water and the air. If leakage occurs, toxic chemicals could get into the nearby Kharatanots River, already polluted by the copper tailing dump in the village of Aghtala, and where numerous downstream communities get their drinking water.

The deleterious environmental impact of the mine will hardly be offset by economic benefits. The project's economists estimate that it contains ore worth more than 20 billion USD, of which the country will receive only 1.2-1.7% in taxes and fees and suffer severe, long term environmental problems costing USD 6.5 million. So far, there is no independent economic analysis of the potential environmental damage.¹⁷

As currently planned, construction of the ore processing plant and exploitation of the copper-molybdenum mine will breach 77 laws, as well as a range of international conventions signed and ratified by the Republic of Armenia, including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention on Biodiversity, the UN Convention on Combating Desertification and the European Landscape Convention. However, the Government has designated the Teghut mining operation a high priority for its contribution to "economic development," reflecting its short-term perspective, as well as its corrupt practices. It also reveals its lack of expertise, respect for the law, care for the environment and interest in pursuing a long-term sustainable development model.

Conclusions

The rapid growth of some sectors of the economy, along with the lack of appropriate government management, have created serious environmental problems and challenges. To promote sustainability, the country must make environmental protection a priority.

Armenia has ratified many international conventions on issues such as biodiversity, climate change and desertification. These commitments, as well as the voice of civil society, have been largely ignored. Improving environmental governance will require effective implementation and enforcement of existing environmental laws, as well as greater transparency and public participation in policymaking. This, in turn, will require a concerted effort to increase popular awareness of environmental issues.

16 See: <www.foe.org/pdf/Teghut_Fact_Sheet.pdf> and < news mongabay.com/2008/0129-hance_armenia.html>

17 Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴ Policy Forum Armenia, *The state of Armenia's environment*, (2010), op cit.

AZERBAIJAN

The demise of the extractive economic model



One of the world's most industrially polluted territories, the country needs to change its old resource-dependent extraction economy into a sustainable one, and also a better dialogue between Government and civil society is needed. Also, abuses against freedom of speech are frequent, as the Government systematically tries to silence political dissidents and protesters. Elections do not fully meet international standards; the Parliament is under the control of the ruling party and the courts are not independent. NGOs have been closed or denied registration.

Public Finance Monitoring Centre Kenan Aslanli¹ Environmental Law Centre "Ecolex" Samir Isayev²

The country faces a number of hurdles in moving towards more sustainable development, none of which are likely to be jumped soon. The country's reliance on oil and petrochemical industries continues to cause grave environmental damage, ranging from soil contamination to water and air pollution. While the Government has taken some positive steps to address these problems, it is not clear how long these will last in the absence of serious regulatory measures. Other aspects of sustainability, primarily related to human rights, are more challenging since the ruling party controls both the Parliament and the courts, civil society is heavily controlled and political dissent and protest continue to face strong sanctions.

Serious environmental challenges

Azerbaijan also faces diverse and very serious environmental challenges. In some regions, the soil is heavily contaminated by pesticides such as DDT and defoliants used in cotton crops. Water pollution is very high; only one quarter of polluted water is being treated. Nearly half of the population has no access to sewer facilities. ³ The cities of Sumgayit and the capital, Baku, are listed among the world's most polluted.⁴ Baku, particularly, ranks at the world's lowest levels for health and sanitation.⁵

An extractive economy is not alien to this state of affairs. Being one of the birthplaces of the oil industry, Azerbaijan has a long history of economic dependency on petroleum extraction. There

- 3 Instituto del Tercer Mundo, Guia del mundo 2011-2012, (Madrid: 2010).
- 4 Super Green Me, Sumgayit, Azerbaijan: The Most Polluted City in 2007, https://www.supergreenme.com/go-greenenvironment-Azerbaijan, www.nationmaster.com/go-greenenvironment-Azerbaijan, www.supergreenmestre Polluted-City-in--2007; Nationmaster, Environment Azerbaijan, www.supergreenmestre Polluted-City-in--2007; Nationmaster, Environment
- 5 T. Luck, "The world dirtiest cities", *Forbes*, (New York: 2008), <www.forbes.com/2008/02/26/pollution-baku-oil-bizlogistics-cx_tl_0226dirtycities.html>.



is evidence that petroleum was used for trade in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, and refining activities in Baku are mentioned in the writings of 17th century Turkish scientist and traveller, Evilya Celebi. A proper oil industry was established in the late 19th century with the emergence of the so-called "oil barons," who mastered the extraction processes and contributed to the modernization and industrialization of Baku.

Currently the petrochemical industry remains the country's most prominent although in 2010 it had already reached its historical production peak of 1.12 million barrels per day. Some predictions show there will be a massive drop in production levels from 2015 to 2025 (see Figure 1).

Oil production, however, has proven not only unsustainable itself but also for the environment. Azerbaijan's long history as an oil producer has led to high levels of pollution. During the Soviet era, residential districts of Baku, for example, were built among oil fields and industrial operations located inside the city limits with minimal or no environmental concern. In many cases the Soviet era oil industry created huge petroleum lakes which literally destroyed all of the surrounding biomass. In the last 150 years, the shores of the Caspian Sea, especially on the Abershon peninsula, have been turned into an ecological disaster with an ever-increasing amount of chemical and biological toxic waste from the Volga River.

Switching models

This murky scenario has made apparent an urgent need to protect the environment. Thus, in 2009, the World Bank issued a report pointing out the importance of diversifying the Azerbaijani economy



in order to reduce dependency on oil and gas revenues and to develop long-term sustainability.⁶ This conclusion was echoed by the Asian Development Bank in its 2010 annual survey of member states⁷ and also by the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

According to the IMF, "given that oil production will no longer be the main source of growth, there is an urgent need to accelerate economic diversification." However up to 2010 non-oil sectors have not demonstrated significant growth. The growth rate in non-energy related sectors decreased from 16% in 2008 to 13% in 2010, and non-oil exports make up only 5% of the country's overall exports. To counter this trend, the IMF exhorted President Ilham Aliyev's administration to support the private sector through trade facilitation, tax and customs modernization and the reduction of State monopolies.⁸

The Government's answer was to invest in a new shipbuilding plant and telecommunications projects. It also issued a decree reducing the number of inspections of private business. In July 2010, while addressing the Cabinet of Ministers, Aliyev declared that apart from the need to maintain oil production rates, the economy was developing in a

¹ Senior economist.

² Senior research fellow

⁶ World Bank, Country Brief 2009 Azerbaijan, (Baku: November 2009), <web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/ COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/AZERBAIJANEXTN/0, menuPK:301923 ~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:301914,00.html>.

⁷ News.az, Asian Bank Urges Azerbaijan to Develop the Non-oil Sector, (23 April 2010), <www.news.az/articles/14048>.

S. Abbasov, "IMF: The Party's Over for Azerbaijan's Oil Sector," *Eurasianet*, (24 May 2010), <www.eurasianet.org/ node/61136>.

diversified manner and underscored that the development of the non-oil sector was a major priority.⁹

Already in 2004, the Government had instituted a programme focused on further diversifying the economy, placing the stress on sectors other than oil as well as improving population living standards. The results up to 2011 have been positive, despite a slowdown of economic growth after the start of the global crisis in 2008. For example, the State Customs Committee reported in March 2011 that agricultural exports rose 1.38 points from 20.1% in 2010 to 21.38% in January-February 2011.¹⁰

In fact, nowadays the Government is also showing a modest commitment towards protecting the environment. The greatest challenge for both the Government and the private sector is to discard the old extractive model and favour investments and research in environmentally friendly technologies. The Government designated 2010 as "The Year of Ecology" and launched programmes that have included tree planting, water purification and the development of alternative and clean energy sources.

Another encouraging effort was the reshaping of refining complexes outside Baku to reduce carbon dioxide emissions near populated areas. There has also been work on rehabilitating contaminated sites. The Government power company, Azerenerji, for example, has received funding from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to rebuild the Azdres Thermal Power Plant, thus allowing it to work under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) under the Kyoto Protocol.

A disheartening record on human rights

Several human rights associations warn that Azerbaijan is facing important challenges regarding basic freedoms, human rights and democracy. Elections still fail to meet international standards, and there is an insufficient division of legislative and executive power with the Parliament being under the control of the ruling New Azerbaijan Party.

A civil rights organization, Article 19, issued a report in September 2010, which outlines some key findings related to freedom of speech in Azerbaijan. Among other alarming trends, the report identified acts of violence against journalists, harassment or persecution of Government critics and misuse of criminal law for political purposes, including the imprisonment of dissidents on charges of disorderly conduct and drug possession. By 2009,



more than 50 people were considered political prisoners.¹¹

Violent attacks against media representatives are frequent. In 2005, the editor-in-chief of a local magazine was shot dead by unidentified attackers following the publication of several articles that heavily criticized the authorities. Since then, a climate of violence against journalists, impunity for their attackers and harassment and imprisonment of Government critics has emerged.¹²

The use of torture and ill treatment in police stations and detention facilities have also been reported. These incidents are not properly investigated, and law enforcement officers suspected of being responsible for acts of torture are not prosecuted.

The Government also has deployed violence against protesters. The police violently dispersed demonstrations in the aftermath of the 2003 presidential elections and 2005 parliamentary elections, and none of the officers involved were punished. Since 2005, in fact, the Government has severely restricted people's right to freedom of assembly.

Civil rights organizations and other NGOs have been closed or denied registration. Amendments to a 2009 law have allowed the Government to put NGOs under close control.13 In April 2011, Amnesty International exhorted the authorities to halt their crackdown on freedom of assembly after the violent repression of protesters in Baku. The Public Chamber Committee, which organized the rally, claimed that at least 150 people had been arrested on the streets as they attempted to demonstrate against the Government. With all access leading to the rally site blocked, hundreds of riot police were mobilized to stop the protest, which had been organized by opposition parties through Facebook. Several journalists were forbidden to photograph or film the events, and many activists were abducted from their homes in the aftermath of the protests. At least seven people were convicted and sentenced, their trials taking place behind closed doors with the defendants having no access to legal representation. 14

"The current Azerbaijani regime has a history of preventing and obstructing public gatherings," said John Dalhuisen, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for Europe and Central Asia. "Their reaction to today's protest and the demonstrations back in March this year starkly reveals the complete refusal of the authorities to tolerate any form of visible public protest."¹⁵

15 Ibid.

⁹ I. Alizex, Opening Speech at a Meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers on the Result of Socioeconomic Development in the First Half of 2010, (13 July 2010), <www.president.az/ articles/417?locale=en>.

¹⁰ Freshplaza, Azerbaijan increased exports of fruits and vegetables by 21%, (31 March 2011), <www.freshplaza. com/news_detail.asp?id=78518>.

¹¹ Article 19, Dissident Kimi Ya amaq, <www.article19.org/ pdfs/publications/azerbaijan-az-web.pdf>.

¹³ Human Rights House, A Common Statement on Human Rights in Azerbaijan, <humanrightshouse.org/ Articles/13209.html>.

¹⁴ Amnesty International, Azerbaijan Protests Broken up as Riot Police Move in, (April 2011), <www.amnesty.org/en/ news-and-updates/azerbaijan-protests-broken-riot-policemove-2011-04-02>.

BAHRAIN

Two vital resources exhausted: a degraded future



Any attempt to achieve sustainable development in this island kingdom is doomed because the country's water supply is running out. Although water is a non-renewable resource in Bahrain, not only is it is being consumed in a most irresponsible way but also the limited supply is being polluted by industrial waste from the production of oil, another resource that will soon be exhausted. These problems are aggravating inequities and social unrest, but the Government has no adequate response and no contingency plans.

Social Watch Bahrain Abdulnabi Alekry

In February 2011, as part of the so-called "Arab Spring," demonstrators took over the Pearl Roundabout in the capital city of Manama; some time afterwards Government security forces repressed them with extreme violence. The protesters were calling for political and social change and an end to the monarchy, but their demands did not include a call to tackle a problem that is a matter of life and death in Bahrain: the need for strict controls to manage the country's very limited natural resources. In a ranking of countries by the British risk analysis firm Maplecroft in 2011,1 Bahrain ranks as the most water-stressed country in the world, followed by Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Libya. This means it is most at risk of exhausting its water supply completely in the short or medium term.

A looming catastrophe

The country's biggest problem – and also the main obstacle to sustainable development – is the shortage of water. According to the International Water Poverty Index,² a county is in a water scarcity situation if its supply is less than 1,000 cubic metres per capita per year; in 2007 Bahrain's supply was only 470.3 cubic metres per person.³ The total surface area of the kingdom is just 665 square kilometres (smaller than King Fahd airport in neighbouring Saudi Arabia) but it has a population of more than 1.2 million, half of whom are foreign residents.

Almost all the fresh water consumed comes from three non-renewable aquifers that lie under the main island (Bahrain is made up of 32 islands). On World Water Day in 2010, Rehan Ahmed – an environment expert from the Public Commission for the Protection of Marine Resources, the Environment

3 ChartsBin, Total Water Use per capita by Country, <chartsbin. com/view/1455>.



and Fauna – admitted that average water consumption per person was around 400 litres per day, which is far above the world average of 256 litres; Japan, for example, consumes only 60 litres per person per day. He noted that the water consumption rate is rising by 8–10% per year and underground reserves are running low.⁴ In 1998 the amount of water from the main aquifer used just for crop irrigation came to an estimated 204 million cubic metres, but environmentalists consider it is unsafe to extract more than 100 million cubic metres per year because Bahrain's average annual rainfall is less than 80 millimetres,⁵ which comes nowhere near replacing what is being consumed.

Since the 1970s one of the main strategies to slow down the depletion of Bahrain's aquifers has been to build desalination plants to process seawater. This plan went into operation in 1974 and by 2000 there were four plants that produced a total of 73 million gallons of potable water per day.⁶ When this is added to the yield from the country's aquifers and to what is recycled for irrigation, current total production per day is 142 million gallons. Daily consumption however is 140 million gallons, which means there are no reserves of potable water. The Government is currently im-

- 5 A. Bashir et al, Development of water resources in Bahrain, <www.emro.who.int/ceha/pdf/proceedings17-water%20 resources%20in%20Bahrain.pdf>.
- 6 Global Water Intelligence, "Bahrain to Scale up Desalination Capacity", (October 2000), <www.medrc.org/old_site/ new_content/industry_news/sept00/story3.htm>.



plementing plans to build nine new desalination plants and increase production to 242 million gallons by 2030. The goal is to build water reserves up to 420 million gallons, which would provide three days' supply in case of emergency.⁷ There is a suggestion that wind energy could be used to power the new plants.⁸

Over the years the Government has made other attempts to tackle the water scarcity problem, including campaigns for households to re-use unpolluted waste water, but the results have either not come up to expectations or created new problems. An ambitious project was initiated in 1977 to recycle water from sewage treatment plants, and for decades the population was warned that this water was only for watering parks and gardens and was not suitable for human consumption. In 2006 Samir Abdullah Khalfan, the Director of Public Health, issued a warning that children or people in a delicate state of health should not be taken to parks that were irrigated in this way because there was a danger of contracting hepatitis A.⁹ This announcement led to the temporary closure of the treatment plant, but it

Maplecroft, Maplecroft index identifies Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as world's most water stressed countries, (25 May 2011), <maplecroft.com/about/news/ water_stress_index.html>.

² Peter Lawrence, Jeremy Meigh and Caroline Sullivan, "The water poverty index: An international comparison", *Keele Economic Research Papers* 2002/19, <www.keele.ac.uk/ depts/ec/kerp>.

⁴ TradeArabia News Service, Bahrain Water Consumption Soars, (23 March 2010), <www.tradearabia.com/news/ env_176867.html>.

⁷ E. Baxter, "Bahrain plans to double water production by 2030," *Arabian Business*, (30 May 2010), <www. arabianbusiness.com/bahrain-plans-double-waterproduction-by-2030-271618.html>.

⁸ WaterLink International, Wind-powered Desalination for Bahrain, (8 February 2011), <www.waterlink-international. com/news/id1687-Windpowered_Desalination_for_Bahrain. html>.

⁹ S. Hamada, "Dependent on Desalinisation, Bahrain Faces Water Conflicts," *The WIP*, (2 March 2009), <www.thewip. net/contributors/2009/03/dependent_on_desalinisation_ ba.html>.

was re-opened shortly afterwards with no research at all into the risks. $^{10}\,$

The irresponsible way that Bahrain is using up its non-renewable water reserves is like the developed world's attitude to the indiscriminate consumption of the planet's oil reserves.

Oil and food

Some 92% of the archipelago's surface area is desert and only 2.82% is cultivable land. The people's main food is fish, which is abundant in the Persian Gulf. However the area's marine ecosystem is being degraded by oil pollution, which means people are growing increasingly dependent on imported food. For an economy based on a non-renewable resource, oil, this is yet another warning sign that sustainable development may be out of reach.

The oil comes from extensive deposits that stretch from the middle of the main island nearly to the southern tip. Bahrain produces 22,400 barrels of crude per day, the resulting income accounts for 60% of GDP. In 2009 its oil reserves were calculated at 124 million barrels. ¹¹

These large oil revenues have served to raise the people's general level of well-being considerably, although there are still pockets of poverty and serious inequities in society. Nearly 90% of the adult population can read and write and life expectancy at birth is 76 years. In 2002 women were given the right to vote and to stand as candidates for election, although no woman actually did so in 2002 and even today they participate little in politics. In 2008 the unemployment rate was under 4%, of which 85% were women.¹² In 2007 Bahrain became the first Arab country to institute an unemployment benefits system.

The effects of increased tourism

In 1986 the King Fahad Bridge linking Bahrain's main island to Saudi Arabia was inaugurated. Since then tourism has become a big source of foreign currency and contributes 10% of GDP.¹³ Manama has become a major entertainment centre in the region thanks to relatively more relaxed Islamic legislation than in neighbouring countries, livelier night life and more liberal cultural standards. The impact of this invasion of visitors seeking a good time has provoked

EQUALITY MUST COME FIRST

Although the majority of the people in Bahrain are Shia Moslems, the ruling family and the political elite are Sunni Moslems who control the State because the executive power has more administrative muscle than the legislative, which is freely elected. Under the prevailing system Shia Moslems cannot hold government positions and Parliament can do nothing to remedy this situation. The Sunni minority works actively against the Shia community and makes it very difficult for them to access the best paid jobs, decent housing, State services or any position of influence except what they can obtain in popular elections.

In an effort to redress the imbalance in the population, the ruling minority is even trying to encourage Sunnis from other parts of Southern Asia such as Baluchistan and Syria to settle in the country by offering them very attractive terms.

The social injustice and inequities erupted in February 2011 with demonstrations in Manama. While these began as an apparent show of support for the popular uprising in Egypt and took place in front of the Egyptian embassy, they later moved on to the Pearl Roundabout where demonstrators called for an end to the regime of King Hamad bin Isa al Jalifa, which has been in power since 1999. After several days of tension the army moved in on 15 February and opened fire on the crowd, killing one person and wounding 50,¹ but the demonstrators did not give up. Despite protests from the international community the violent repression went on. The Government had the Pearl Roundabout demolished on 19 March and even went so far as to call in foreign security forces from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to help put down the demonstration.

The protest movement eventually unravelled without obtaining significant concessions. According to the novelist Fareed Ramadan, a Sunni Moslem who supports the demonstrators' cause, many mistakes were made by the Government, by the Sunni community leadership and by the protesters as well.² The human cost of this State repression has been 24 demonstrators dead, more than 500 injured, hundreds imprisoned – many of whom have presumably been tortured – and an unknown number of non-Sunni foreigners deported.³

- Euronews, El Ejército de Baréin dispara contra la multitud, (19 February 2011), <es.euronews.net/2011/02/19/elejercito-de-barein-dispara-contra-la-multitud/>.
- 2 C. Murphy, "Why the protest movement in Bahrain failed," Globalpost, 5 April 2011. Available from: <</p>
- 3 A. Sambidge, "Bahrain minister says 24 people dead in uprisings," Arabian Business, (29 March 2011), <www. arabianbusiness.com/bahrain-minister-says-24-people-dead-in-uprisings-390813.html>.

a reaction, and in 2009 the laws regulating the consumption of alcohol and other recreational activities were made stricter. Adel Maawdah, a Member of Parliament who supported the imposition of tighter controls, commented that "Bahrain has become the brothel of the Gulf and our people are very angry about this. We are against the consumption of alcohol but we are also against all the things it brings with it like prostitution, corruption, drugs and human trafficking."¹⁴

This tourist boom has paid for an array of extravagant projects such as architectural follies in the capital city, a Formula One racetrack for the Bahrain Grand Prix and, astonishingly in a country where widespread drought is just round the corner, a large number of water parks.

Conclusion

Bahrain will be plunged into crisis in the near future when its water and oil reserves are exhausted. To quote Waleed Al Zubari of the University of the Persian Gulf: "We are using up most of our water and we do not know what will happen when it runs out. We must weigh the immediate benefits of using this water against the long term impact."¹⁵

Yet when the Arab Spring wave of protests broke out in February 2011 the demonstrators were not demanding better environmental controls or that the Government should make coherent plans to safeguard the country's future; they were demanding greater social and political freedoms and in particular an end to discrimination against the Shia majority by the Sunni minority (see box).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ GlobalEDGE, Bahrain: Statistics, <globaledge.msu.edu/ countries/Bahrain/statistics/>.

¹² Khaleej Times, 85pc unemployed in Bahrain are females, (4 August 2008), <vww.khaleejtimes.com/darticlen. asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2008/August/middleeast_ August80.xml§ion=middleeast&col=>.

¹³ Yaroslav Trofimov, "Upon Sober Reflection, Bahrain Reconsiders the Wages of Sin," *The Wall Street Journal*, (10 June 2009), <online.wsj.com/article/ SB124450701841896319.html>.

¹⁵ TradeArabia, Water demand 'threatens Bahrain's future, (9 February 2010), <www.tradearabia.com/news/ENV_174596. html>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

BANGLADESH Unsustainability increases vulnerability



Although it discharges a minimal quantity of carbon emissions into the atmosphere, few other countries are more severely affected by climate change. Government efforts to approach sustainability have been insufficient. Environmental issues such as overpopulation and deteriorating living conditions in the principal cities are not being addressed. Climate migrants are disrupting an already untenable economy, which makes the country one of the most vulnerable to food shortages and natural catastrophes.

Unnayan Shamannay Md. Akhter Hossain, Research Fellow EquityBD Rezaul Karim Choudhury, Chief Moderator Shamunnay Suzana Karim, Research Associate

Nineteen years after the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development it is time to revisit its principles. Its second proposition reads: "States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction." The impact of climate change on Bangladesh is clear; since it is ultimately caused by developed nations' misuse of natural resources, it is up to them to provide compensation.

Proposition 8 states that "to achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people, States should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies." However, developed country lifestyles are heavily based on fossil fuels, and thus clearly an "unsustainable pattern of production." Not only are hydrocarbon resources limited, they are also one of the main causes of environmental degradation and climate change. Policy makers in developed countries have failed to limit emissions and also to propose viable alternative patterns of production and ways of life that support equal environmental rights for all global citizens.

An unsustainable economy

The country has achieved many development goals in recent years. For example:

- Per capita income has increased, reaching USD 780 in 2011.¹
- Primary school enrolment has expanded in recent decades to around 90%.²
- Priyo, Per-capita income rises to \$780 as GDP growth defies recession, (1 July 2011), <www.priyo.com/story/2011/jan/07/17004capita-income-rises-780-gdp-growth-defies-recession-pm>.
- 2 Trading Economics, Total enrollment; primary (% net) in Bangladesh, (2011), <www.tradingeconomics.com/bangladesh/ total-enrollment-primary-percent-net-wb-data.htmls; Trading Economics, School enrollment; primary, female (% gross) in Bangladesh, (2011), <www.tradingeconomics.com/bangladesh/ school-enrollment-primary-female-percent-gross-wb-data.html>.



- Infant mortality rate has been reduced from 71.66 in 2000 to 50.73 in 2011.³
- Life expectancy has climbed from 50 years to over 65 in the last two decades.⁴
- Exports more than tripled between 1998 and 2010, rising from USD 5.1 billion to USD 16.24.⁵

That said, the caretaker Government of Fakhruddin Ahmed (2007-09) pursued a non-sustainable model that failed to improve food security. For example, its food adulteration measures led many food importers and food merchants to cease importing and distributing food.⁶ In addition, the Government made the paramilitary force, Border Guard Bangladesh (then Bangladesh Rifles), the sole distributor of subsidized food among the poor, despite its long history of corruption (especially smuggling) and lack of experience in the field.

After subsidies provided for pesticides and fertilizers made them widely available, overuse not only diminished soil fertility but also has posed a threat to human health.⁷ The Government's policy is clearly nonsustainable, since it violates the dictates of long-term planning and ignores the well-known link between

- 3 Index Mundi, Demographics: Infant mortality rate Bangladesh, (2011), <www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?c=bg&v=29>.
- 4 Trading Economics, Life expectancy at birth; total (years) in Bangladesh, (2011), <www.indexmundi.com/g/g. aspx?c=bg&v=29>.

6 Anonymous, "The impending food crisis in Bangladesh," in D. Hulme, Food insecurity in Bangladesh: the other crisis, (University of Manchester, Ending world poverty, 2007), «povertyblog.wordpress.com/2007/11/22/food-insecurity-inbangladesh-the-other-crisis/».



fertilizers and soil depletion and erosion. This misguided approach is particularly egregious in a country as vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change as Bangladesh. If they are not changed in the next few years, these policies will make the already poor living conditions of the Bangladeshi people even worse.

Environmental threats

Overpopulation is the main cause of environmental degradation ⁸ and resource depletion.⁹ Threats include deforestation and soil erosion; a paucity of potable water, mostly due to the size of the population, inadequate purification, and the spread of untreated contaminants.¹⁰

Even Dhaka, the capital, does not have an uninterrupted water supply. In some municipalities, water is only available two to four hours a day; major shortages are common during the dry season, between January and March.¹¹ In 1993 researchers discovered that the country's groundwater (the source of drinking water for 97% of the rural population) was naturally contaminated with arsenic; despite Government efforts, even in 2008, up to 70 million people still drank water that exceeded permitted levels. ¹² Surface

- 9 DiscoveryBangladesh, Bangladesh: Environmental Issues, (2011), <www.discoverybangladesh.com/meetbangladesh/ env_issue.html?&id=13>.
- 10 Encyclopedia of the nations, Bangladesh Environment, (2011), <www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Asia-and-Oceania/ Bangladesh-ENVIRONMENT.html>.
- 11 Wikipedia, *Water supply and sanitation in Bangladesh*, (2011), <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_supply_and_sanitation_in_ Bangladesh>.

12 Ibid

⁵ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Encyclopedia of the nations, *Bangladesh – Environment*, (2011). <www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Asia-and-Oceania/ Bangladesh-ENVIRONMENT.html>.

waste water is often polluted by human excreta, as well as urban and industrial waste. The sewerage system remains inadequate; the country has only one treatment plant.

An urban inferno

Rural to urban migration is one of the country's biggest concerns; each year, 500,000 more people arrive in Dhaka. The city lacks the infrastructure to accommodate its current residents, almost 45% of whom live in informal settlements and neighbourhoods with substandard living conditions.¹³ The major causes of this migration include natural catastrophes such as droughts, floods, cyclones; the loss of farm land due to river erosion; and the absence of a viable job market in rural areas.¹⁴ Few migrants find better living conditions in the cities: the average family income in urban areas is roughly USD 1 a day.¹⁵

This untenable situation is rooted in the historical absence of long-term planning and sustainable development efforts. Governments over the last two decades neglected agricultural production and introduced few measures to plan or regulate urban growth. Moreover, they encouraged centralization, neglected rural development and failed to increase opportunities in cities other than the capital. As a result, the geographical imbalance in income has been accentuated: Dhaka controls about 70% of the country's money supply and attracts almost 60% of total investment.¹⁶ The present Government has introduced some measures to boost agricultural production, but has not yet addressed urgent urbanization issues. Dhaka is becoming an urban inferno. Air pollution mostly from buses and trucks, is increasing. Crowds of people walk the streets in a human sea. Crime and violence are escalating.

Recommendations

It is imperative to address the rights of climate migrants spelled out in the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC). A new UN body should be formed to manage their rehabilitation. The 13th point of the Rio Declaration spells out the obligation to provide compensation for damage due to pollution and environmental damages; the new body can act as a coordinator to manage the compensation fund.

If we believe that every citizen of the world has a right to food, a new global food order must be devised to replace the current market-based global food order, which is actually increasing hunger. For example, an international court of justice on food rights should be established to rein in the monopolistic behavior of the market and political manipulation. This would be one way to help the developing and least developed countries achieve sustainable development at the global as well as the local level.

Developed countries are historically responsible for climate damages; this is particularly apparent in Bangladesh's case, as it is responsible for a minuscule

16 Ibid

CLIMATE CHANGE: WHOSE BILL IS THIS?

Bangladesh is responsible for less than one fifth of 1 percent of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions.¹ However, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), it is also one of the countries most vulnerable to its deleterious effects.² In the coming decades these are predicted to include extreme weather (e.g., tropical cyclones), increased precipitation, sedimentation and average temperature; overflowing rivers; coastal erosion; melting of the Himalayan ice cap; and rising sea levels. Bangladesh would be threatened by every one of these disasters.

UNDP reports Bangladesh is already the country that is most subject to tropical cyclones. The cyclone Aila, for example, which hit the country on 25 May 2009 displaced more than 400,000 people.³ It washed away a vast amount of land, particularly from islands near the coastline. According to the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), about 40,000 people were forced to migrate from the Khulna district, 30,000 from Paikgacha, 18,000 from Dacope and 12,000 from Batiaghata upazila. Some people from the coastal areas migrated to neighbouring countries, such as India.⁴

Climate change will reduce agricultural production and lead to a shortage of safe drinking water, thus challenging the country's ability to increase economic growth and eradicate poverty.⁵ In the worst case scenario the rise in sea levels will displace millions of people, unless existing coastal polders are strengthened and new ones built. It is essential for the Government to prepare for these challenges and engage in long-term thinking and planning.⁶

- 2 M.L.Parry et al. (eds), Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), <www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/ wg2/en/contents.html>.
- 3 See: <wapedia.mobi/en/Cyclone_Aila>
- 4 P. Gain, "Aila, Shrimp and failed mud walls," The Daily Star 3, no. 1 (January 2010), <www.thedailystar.net/ forum/2010/January/aila.htm>.
- 5 Hossain, op cit.
- 6 Ibid.

part of global carbon emissions, yet suffers far more damage from climate change than countries that make a much greater contribution to the greenhouse effect. As Principle 9 of the Rio Declaration makes clear, developed countries have an obligation to mitigate the negative impact of climate change by developing sustainable and environment-friendly technologies and transferring them to developing and least developed countries.

Climate change funds

The government of Bangladesh established two funding entities to support implementation of Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP 2009) that is focused on medium and longterm actions. The two funding entities are the Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund (BCCRF) and the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund.

The BCCRF is resourced with the contributions from four main donors: the UK (with a contribution of USD 94.6 million); Denmark (USD1.8 million); Sweden (USD13.6 million) and the EU (USD11.7 million). Switzerland has subsequently contributed USD 3.8 million. The governance arrangements of the BCCRF were finalized in an Implementation Manual following an open and intense debate and discussion between the Government and Development Partners. The government of Bangladesh wanted its major role in fund management, while the development partners wanted the World Bank to manage the fund. The World Bank receives 4.5 per cent of the fund towards a service charge. The major decision on fund management of BCCRF lies with the Governing Council and the Management Committee, which are represented by the government of Bangladesh in majority.

On the other hand, the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund is a 'block budgetary allocation' of USD 100 million each year for three years (2009-2012, totaling up to USD 300 million), in the form of an endowment. The governance mechanism of the Trust Fund is totally different from that of the BCCRF.

Financing climate change is very challenging for a country like Bangladesh, which has such a low economic base. The funding the Government has allocated to the BCCRF has come out of investment in other important sectors, such as health, sanitation, education and poverty.

In conclusion

From severe flooding to a rapidly melting Himalayan ice cap, the threats Bangladesh faces from climate change are dire and imminent. Mitigating them and promoting sustainable development will require decisive Government action informed by a long-term plan. While these efforts will be costly, particularly for such a poor country, developed countries, which have been primarily responsible for climate change, have an obligation –expressed in the 1992 Rio Declaration – to assist countries such as Bangladesh in coping with its effects. The Government's formulation of a credible long-term sustainable developed countries to continue to ignore this obligation. **–**

A.Khan, "Migration to Dhaka," *The Daily Star*, (September 26, 2009), <www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details. php?nid=106930>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid

M.A.Hossain, "Bangladesh: more poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity," Social Watch Report 2010, (Montevideo: 2010), p.66.

BELGIUM A call for climate justice for everyone



Current environmental policies in the country are far from satisfactory. Belgium will face major challenges related to climate change in the immediate future, including rising temperatures and severe disruptions in the annual distribution of rainfall. However it is not putting into practice the commitments made by the international community. The dialogue among the different regions of the country, the industrial sector and civil society has become paralysed, and this can only be overcome through massive campaigns raising public awareness of the urgent problems threatening the environment and endangering the welfare of society.

CNCD-11.11.11 Nicolas Van Nuffel

Between 1993 and 1997 Belgium established a Federal Council for Sustainable Development. This is made up of representatives of employers, unions, various NGOs and the scientific community, while all the federal ministers and the various regional governments are represented as observers.¹ In the context of a strong tradition of social dialogue, however, Belgium is missing the step between institutional mechanisms and effective implementation of a proactive policy towards sustainable development.

A clear example of this is the challenge posed by climate change, which brings social and economic repercussions of significant environmental importance. While one could argue that the impact of global warming will affect Belgium to a lesser extent than developing countries or countries with weaker economies, it is undeniable that the consequences will be far from insignificant. These will, in fact, depend on the extent and orientation of measures to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and combat the effects of ongoing changes and the speed with which they are implemented.

Heat, rain and social inequality

According to a report co-directed by Professor van Ypersele, Vice-President of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and Philippe Marbax, temperatures in Belgium could increase by up to 4.9°C in winter and 6.6°C in summer during the twenty-first century.² This will have important consequences for the environment, including a significant loss of biodiversity.³ In terms of the impact on water resources, "projections of the evolution of precipitation, by the end of the century, show an increase between 6 and 23% for winter and a (decrease) for summer (...) that would reach 50%."⁴

These disrupted rainfall patterns, and the resulting rise in more extreme phenomena such as

- 3 Ibid
- 4 Ibid.



floods and droughts, could have serious effects on the country's economy. Furthermore, the negative impact of rising temperatures will have profound impacts on the health of the population, with heat waves likely to lead to increased mortality and morbidity.⁵

Belgium has the necessary means to address these negative consequences, especially since other effects of a positive nature could in part compensate for the magnitude of the damage. For example, an increase in agricultural productivity is expected – especially for some crops (including wheat) – provided that temperatures do not rise by more than 3°C.⁶ However not everyone has the same ability to deal with these changes: "The real impact of climate change on the health of a population depends largely on its vulnerability, which in turn depends strongly on the level of life, access to health and the ability of that population to adapt to new climatic conditions."⁷⁷

Moreover global warming is not the only environmental challenge that Belgium will face in the near future. Since domestic energy resources are limited to nuclear energy and the small (though growing) sector of renewable energy, the country has become extremely dependent on imported fossil fuels such as natural gas from the Netherlands, Norway and Algeria.⁸ For this reason, the impact of depletion of these resources may make energy prices soar and become unaffordable for less affluent populations.



The obstacle of institutional complexity

Sustainable development cannot be analysed outside an international context. The 1992 Rio Summit on Climate Change established the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities between the most industrialized and contaminating countries and the less developed countries. Belgium, which is on the list of countries that must reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases, has not stopped producing alarming amounts of these gases nor has it instituted programmes to reduce emissions. In fact, in the European debate on reducing emissions of greenhouse gases after 2012, Belgium seems to be paralysed by the challenge. While a number of countries in the EU voted to move unilaterally to a 30% reduction of greenhouse gases. Belgium has not vet made any clear decision.

In this respect the institutional complexity of Belgium is not a positive factor. Since the environment is a theme shared between the federal State and the regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels), these four entities must reach agreement in order to take a position in international discussions. However, in terms of the specific problem of reducing emissions, a lack of agreement results in the implementation of de facto vetoes exercised against the proposals needed to at least advance in the debate and take on commitments seriously.

Unfortunately Belgian civil society is not unanimous in demanding the acceptance of the EU recommendations. Thus the Federation of Enterprises in Belgium (FEB) is mounting a strong lobby against any unilateral attempt to bring about an increase in Europe's commitments and therefore those of Belgium. In a notice published shortly before the Cancun climate change conference in 2010, the FEB considered that

¹ See : <www.belspo.be/frdocfdd/FR/conseil.html>

² P. Marbaix and J.-P. van Ypersele, Impact des changements climatiques en Belgique, (Brussels : Greenpeace, 2004), <www.astr.ucl.ac.be/users/marbaix/impacts/docs/GP-rep04-Sum_2-EN.pdf>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ihid

⁸ European Commission, Belgium Energy Mix Fact Sheet, <ec.europa.eu/energy/energy_policy/doc/factsheets/mix/ mix be en.pdf>.

"Europe is alone with its unilateral commitments to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Obviously this has a negative impact on competitiveness. (...) At this point, the Belgian business world does not favour continuing the reduction target of -30% because the conditions defined by the EU are not yet in place."⁹

But is it true that these conditions do not exist? A study by Climate Action Network-Europe published in February 2011 shows that Belgium could lose significant sums if Europe refuses to move to a 30% reduction in emissions: USD 2,800 million in revenues from the auction of emission rights, as well as USD 1,260 million in savings in health care could be lost.¹⁰

Furthermore, investing in the transformation of the Belgian economic and energy model would also have a long-term positive impact on the country's economy. It is clear that this transformation would require adjustments to some sectors that emit a great deal of greenhouse gases, such as the steel and auto industries, and that such adjustments should be accompanied by strong social measures, particularly in terms of job losses.

Resistance to change

While climate changes and measures to address them are good indicators of Belgium's commitment to the path of sustainable development, they are by no means the only ones. Measures to help improve access to housing and the redevelopment of public transport are also badly needed. Suggestions have been made by both the social and environmental movements, but the political decision-makers are slow to come forward with answers. These measures would also contribute to the collective welfare of humanity by reducing pollutant emissions, especially greenhouse gases, and would help combat inequality by reducing costs for low-income users and developing quality alternative transport other than cars.

LESSONS FROM FUKUSHIMA

The nuclear disaster at Fukushima in Japan caused by the earthquake and tsunami on 11 March 2011, was the most serious accident since Chernobyl and caused some governments around the world to re-think their nuclear power policies. Following in the steps of Germany, which decided to phase out its nuclear power stations between 2011 and 2020, the Belgian Government announced that it would significantly reduce its own nuclear programme by 2015.

This policy includes closing two reactors in the city of Doel and a third at the Tihange nuclear station. These are three of the oldest reactors still in operation in the country. The other reactors will be progressively shut down over the next ten years and the nuclear energy programme will cease completely in 2025.

However, the current administration has said these closure dates are "flexible", and in the interim the Government will consider the nuclear programme as a "provisional" source of power. It also reaffirmed its commitment to make every effort to develop alternative energy sources and put them to work. It has also been suggested that nuclear power could be taxed more heavily as a way of bolstering research into alternative energy technologies.¹

 Jonathan Benson, "First Germany, now Belgium: nuclear energy to be phased out b 2015", Natural News, (November 4, 2011), <www.naturalnews.com/034059_nuclear_energy_Belgium.html>.

Proposals are not what is missing on the desks of those responsible for decision-making, and Belgium is the site for many collaborations between North-South movements, environmental NGOs, peasant movements and trade unions that could develop alternatives to the current model. However it should be noted that resistance to change is still strong in many sectors of society. This is why it is not enough to question those responsible for decisionmaking but it is also necessary to launch campaigns targeting the general public. These should raise people's awareness of the social and environmental impact of their behaviour and show them that an alternative model of development is possible.

Conclusion

Belgium's attitude in international and European discussions on the reductions of greenhouse gas emissions contributes to keeping the whole of Europe below the commitments recommended by the scientific community. While the alternative model of development is still to be defined, it is clear that it should be more respectful of the rights of the population as well as of those of the populations of the least well-off countries. For this reason a campaign that brings together NGOs and trade unions to reinforce this awareness in all sectors of society will be launched in 2011 under the slogan "climate justice for all!"

⁹ Federation of Enterprises in Belgium, European and international climate policy: state of the art and current challenges, (Brussels: 21 October 2010), <vbo-feb.be/media/ uploads/public/_eustom/NoteClimatCA_21102010.pdf>.

¹⁰ Climate Action Network Europe, 30%. Why Europe Should Strengthen its 2020 Climate Action, (Brussels: February 2011).

Without dialogue or planning there can be no sustainable development



The country has been unable to implement a development model based on long-term planning. The economy is shrinking and inequality is worsening at an alarming rate, but the Government is squandering the budget on propaganda and creating yet more jobs in the bureaucracy. The country has been badly hit by natural disasters that have caused havoc in agriculture, health and education, and it is only too evident that the Government had no contingency plans in place. There has been some progress (though not enough) in improving health care and access to potable water, but overall the country's most pressing need is for a sustainable development model that works.

Social Watch Benin Dieudonné Houinsou Hugette Dossa Hyppolyte Fallade

The Government has been unable to implement a workable sustainable development model. It has refused dialogue with the different sectors of society and shown a complete lack of commitment to transparency or eradicating corruption. Its strategies to tackle economic and environmental problems not only reveal a lack of long-term planning but also cannot lead to sustainable development because they do not consider environmental or social problems. To put it bluntly, these policies have failed utterly.

For example, the economic growth rate fell from 5% in 2008 to 3% in 2010.¹ The world financial crisis has hit hard, especially in terms of reduced exports and falling incomes, and Benin has serious problems in that its departments (or provinces) are very unequal, with a particularly marked difference between the poorest, Alibori, and the richest, Littoral.²

Public employees

In recent years there has been a marked increase in the number of public employees.³ This is partly because there is no adequate pay policy outside the public sector, but another reason is that the State apparatus has returned to how it used to be, with party politics heavily involved in public organizations. The Government has not stimulated the creation of new jobs in the private sector. This emphasis on the public sector has made for increased State expenditure and the Government has no compunction in using State funds for propaganda purposes and to create more jobs in the ministries.

3 BBC News, "Public Sector Growth Accelerating".



No planning for natural disasters

The Government has also failed to make adequate plans or take contingency measures in environmental matters such as natural disasters. Between July and October 2008 heavy rains caused the rivers to rise and there was flooding in West Africa. Benin was one of the countries that suffered most: at least 150,000 people were displaced and there were outbreaks of cholera, meningitis and yellow fever.⁴ The floods also ruined crops, leading to food insecurity.

In 2010 this happened again when the Quémé and Niger Rivers rose much more than usual, causing major floods that damaged hundreds of houses and schools, left thousands of people homeless, destroyed large areas of crops, killed livestock and again led to disease outbreak. The flood victims were given shelter in schools, where they remained until November when the waters finally subsided and they were able to return to their homes.

These disasters had a very serious negative impact on education, for example, because access roads to education centres were washed away or simply remained under water. According to a November 2010 report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNO-CHA) Benin, the floods damaged more than 425 public schools throughout the country and more



than 91,000 schoolchildren were affected as their schools were wrecked and/or teaching materials were washed away.⁵

The Government's response to this disaster was to allocate funds and emergency supplies to the value of CFA 20 million (USD 42,944) for the victims, including mosquito nets impregnated with insecticide, medicines and clothing, but this was simply not enough and the country subsequently had to appeal for international aid to help the displaced people. It was made apparent that the Government had neglected to provide many essential supplies, and the consequences of this failure were so serious that many of the victims were forced to sell the goods they received under the rescue plan to meet their most basic survival needs. To make matters worse, the distribution of aid that had been donated by the private sector, in addition to Government aid, was entirely in the hands of the authorities while civil society organizations, including Social Watch, were excluded from the process.

Climate change

There is general agreement in the scientific community that climate change has increased the risk of this kind of natural disaster. It has also been established beyond doubt that human activities are a factor in global warming. Benin is among the countries that release the least greenhouse gases

¹ Index Mundi, *Benin Economy Profile 2011*, <www. indexmundi.com/benin/economy_profile.html>.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Benin, <
 Benin, <
 Benin,
 West_Africa/Benin>.

⁴ World Health Organization, "Floods in West Africa raise major health risks," (19 August 2008), <www.who.int/mediacentre/ news/releases/2008/pr28/en/index.html>.

⁵ UNOCHA Benin, "Benin Floods Situation Report," 8, no.4 (November 2010), <reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/ resources/A793C314A84DD041852577D1006AB93F-Full_Report.pdf>.

into the atmosphere, with emissions of only 0.3 to 0.6 tonnes per person in 2005 or a total of less than 2.6 million tonnes that year, compared to the industrialized countries that cause the most pollution of this type and reached totals as high as 7,200 million tonnes.⁶ Countries with the most precarious economies, such as Benin, are suffering the consequences of the pollution the more developed world is pumping out.

As the climate change situation worsens, flooding will become a chronic problem and Benin will have to make an increasingly intense long-term prevention effort. However one of the Government's main shortcomings is precisely that it does not plan for the future or take precautions, so the problems stemming from climate change are likely to be particularly serious for Benin. In addition, there will have to be new strategies that improve agricultural production and at the same time reduce this sector's ecological and social impact.

The allocation of resources to reconstruction work after the ravages of the flooding will inevitably hinder and delay development programmes. Funds that could have been invested in research, development and the implementation of more efficient production models will now have to be diverted to rebuilding the country.

"Circular agriculture"

In the last ten years the agriculture sector's contribution to Benin's economy has amounted to 35% of GNP, second only to the services sector, and agriculture employs some 45% of the total labour force.⁷ Agriculture is facing serious problems including the fact that productivity is low, a high proportion of agricultural workers are living in poverty and large swathes of the available land are not used.

Over the last ten years the Government has launched three development plans that affect this sector. From 2003 to 2005 it implemented a poverty reduction strategy, and from 2007 to 2009 implemented a growth strategy to reduce poverty, but both of these initiatives tackled agricultural problems in a non-specific way. This changed with the 2008 Strategy to Reactivate Agriculture (PSRSA), which was designed not only to ensure food security by 2015, but also to restructure the sector so it could contribute to Benin's economic and social development.

The PSRSA has various drawbacks, including the fact that the extensive use of fertilizers, which are needed if the programme's production targets are to be attained, might seriously damage the environment. Moreover the plan's agriculture growth model will seriously damage the soil. One of the consequences of soil erosion is that it reduces the ground's capacity to absorb water and this increases the risk of serious flooding. It is evident from this analysis that there are long-term defects in the strategies the Government is implementing and these are so serious that the policy cannot be considered a model for sustainable development.⁸

It has been suggested that the "circular agriculture" system, which was developed in China at the end of the 1990s, might be suitable for Benin (ibid.). This system is based on the so-called "circular economy," which in broad outlines involves the efficient use not only of resources but also of waste. Recycling is an important part of the process, and thus a circular flow of materials is set in motion. For example, the heat that some processes generate can be used to activate other processes that require lower temperatures. The aim of this system is to create an economy that is more efficient and generates less polluting agents. The cornerstone of the proposed model in the sphere of agriculture is the efficient use of biomass resources, which includes energy sources.

Implementing a circular agriculture system in Benin calls for in-depth research into the natural resources available and a reformulation of the prevailing laws and regulations governing environmental protection and the use of resources. Another aspect to consider is the cost of acquiring the necessary technology, which could be an obstacle to adopting this production model.

One positive consequence of these circumstances is that the Government is gradually coming to recognize the importance of the agriculture sector. The plans implemented up to now have fallen short of what is needed and have lacked a longterm perspective, but at least they have been steps, however faltering, in the right direction.

Progress in other areas

Despite the development models being far from satisfactory, there has been some progress in terms of meeting people's basic needs. For example, a considerable effort has been made to improve the potable water supply in rural areas and as a result in 2009 some 55.1% of the rural population had access to this resource, a big increase on the 2003 figure of only 36%. However, it has been pointed out that greater growth could have been achieved if State planning in this respect had been more efficient.

As regards health, there has been a significant improvement in maternal and infant mortality in recent years. Maternal mortality fell from 474.4 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2002 to 397 per 100,000 live births in 2007 and infant mortality decreased from 86 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003 to 63 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2010⁹. The HIV/AIDS situation is not as bad as it could be: the estimated rate is 1.8%, which is among the lowest in West Africa (in Ivory Coast, for example, it is 7.1%, in Nigeria 3.9% and in Togo 3.2%). Despite such hopeful trends, however, most health indicators are below what they should be in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Conclusion

Sustainable development must inevitably be based on long-term planning and must involve consideration of the relations among the various actors in society, but as things stand, the Government's vision is not just limited but is actually responsible for the impoverishment of the people and the slowdown in economic growth. There is little dialogue between the Government, civil society organizations and other social sectors. Organizations such as Social Watch that are working actively to point out the Government's mistakes have made some progress in this regard but all too often they are blocked and intimidated by the powers of the State. ■

7 C.N Gangnibo et al., "Sustainable agriculture in Benin: Strategies for applying the Chinese Circular Agriculture model," *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 3(1): 69–80, <www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/jsd/article/ view/5354/4462>.

8 Ibid.

9 Index Mundi, Benin Mortality Rate, (2011), <www. indexmundi.com/benin/infant_mortality_rate.html>.

⁶ World Resources Institute, "Climate Analysis Indicators Tool (CAIT)", <cait.wri.org>.

BOLIVIA Progress and setbacks in the defence of Pachamama



The Government has made an explicit commitment to a coherent policy to combat climate change, but the current development model in the country is built around the extractive sector. The economy and the strategies to overcome poverty are based on oil and gas production and mining. The Government is opting for the carbon credits system and the REDD initiative, but this has raised serious doubts about the development path the Morales administration is taking.

Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario (CEDLA) Wálter Arteana

Bolivia enjoys an extraordinary wealth and diversity not only of plant and animal species but also, with its 36 indigenous peoples, of human culture. It ranks sixth in the world in extent of tropical forest and fifteenth in wooded cover.¹ Around 80% of its forests are in a region called the flatlands or lowlands, which comprises three sub-regions, Amazónica, Platense and Gran Chaco, and includes the areas reserved for indigenous peoples.

In its public policies, the administration of President Evo Morales recognizes that the forests are strategically important ecosystems, and since the end of the last decade, under his guidance, Bolivia has become one of the leading countries in the world in urgently insisting upon holistic, integrated development in harmony with nature. This means, in effect, that Pachamama, the Andean indigenous peoples' mother goddess who is a combination of the earth and nature, is regarded as having rights.

An uncertain policy

However, in spite of the Government's explicit commitment to a climate change policy in line with its environmentalist stance, the development model that it is actually implementing is an extractive-lead one, and this casts doubt as to how far it is really committed to the principles of sustainable development. In other words, the Government's policy is very uncertain as there is a marked discrepancy between its public pronouncements about defending Mother Nature, along with the pursuit of the "*buen vivir*" (living well) philosophy, and the promotion of extractive-led growth. Oil production and mining have become the mainstays of the country's economy, the basis of public finances² and the crucial element in



² Official data show that more than a third of the income of the department (province) governments comes from hydrocarbon profits (35.6% in 2005, 43.3% in 2006 and 43.2% in 2007), according to CEDLA, *Las Prefecturas no usan la renta de los hidrocarburos para el desarrollo*, (La Paz: 2010).



Bolivia's attempt to overcome the severe poverty that 60% of the population is living in.³

Official data processed by the Centre of Studies for Labour and Agrarian Development (CEDLA) show that in the last five years the economy has become more dependent on the export of prime materials. Foreign sales of primary products from the oil, gas and mining sectors now account for no less than 69% of total export revenues, in contrast to the previous five-year period when there was a more balanced distribution and these sectors only had a 47% share.⁴

The CEDLA analysis also shows that the growth in national product in the last ten years has gone hand in hand with the resurgence of the hydrocarbon and mineral extraction sectors. GDP growth in the period 2001-2005 was largely due to increased production of hydrocarbons, especially natural gas. Then, in the 2006 to 2009 period, mining came to the fore; it increased by an annual average of just over 20% and became the biggest factor in national production.⁵

In addition to these violations of Mother Nature's "acquired rights", the Government is also putting the country's environmental and ecological balance in danger by plans to build hydro-electric mega-dams in the Bolivian Amazon to export electric power to Brazil, by subscribing to the inter-oceanic highway project that is part of the Initiative to In-



tegrate Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) and by pressure to cash in on the forests by exploiting them for timber.

The expansion of extractive activities, with their inevitable environmental damage to the land and negative socio-economic impact on indigenous and peasant communities, shows how easy it is for Government pronouncements about ecology and protecting indigenous people to become empty rhetoric or, on the contrary, to make its own economic development policies completely unworkable.

The carbon market

One of the most difficult problems the Morales administration is facing is that it has to develop an institutional structure in the framework of the new State Policy Constitution that respects the rights of autonomous indigenous communities in the plurinational State. This will enable Bolivia to qualify for economic incentive mechanisms that have been set up for countries that preserve their forests and make them sustainable. This is particularly important now that there is general recognition of the key role forests play in reducing carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, an effect called "carbon sequestration" (also "carbon capture and storage" or "carbon capture and sequestration").⁶

6 Kanninen, Markku, "Secuestro de carbono en los bosques, su papel en el ciclo global", FAO documents: <www.fao.org/ DOCREP/006/Y4435S/y4435s09.htm>.

³ Fundación Tierra, "Cifras macroeconómicas no resuelven pobreza en Bolivia", El Diario, (6 June 2011), <www.ftierra. org/ft/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=626 7:rair&catid=98:noticias&Itemid=175>.

⁴ CEDLA, *Análisis del gasolinazo y de la política energética boliviana*, (La Paz: 2011, unpublished).

⁵ Ibid.

The Kyoto Protocol includes an anti-pollution mechanism known as "carbon credits", which is a measure to reduce or counteract the greenhouse gas emissions that are a direct cause of global warming. One credit is given for each ton of CO₂ that is no longer emitted or that is absorbed by plants due to forestation or reforestation development, and because a monetary value is assigned to these measures the credits can be traded.7 With this policy, the dey to the design and scope of the ecological initiatives lies in defining how the economic incentives to capture and store carbon will be distributed. This system could benefit the indigenous peoples and their environment, or alternatively it might tend to feed into the capitalist market. The crucial questions here are: who pays the subsidies, who holds the rights to these "carbon credits", and who will be the direct beneficiaries

According to the Government's stated vision, these payments should go directly to the indigenous people and peasant communities in the framework of a plurinational State. Of course, this incentive system does not mean the industrialized countries escape the obligation to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, although unfortunately many companies today opt to deal in carbon credits instead of making an effective reduction in CO_2 emissions.

To make this line of action feasible, Bolivia will have to adopt a new national policy to tackle the causes of deforestation and forest degradation, and it will also need a specific strategy for these incentive mechanisms known as REDD (reducing carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation).

In constructing a specific public policy for REDD, Bolivia will have to overcome institutional, legal and political barriers and other obstacles including the need to develop the capabilities of national Government, local government and civil society organizations.

A vital component of the Government scheme will be to strengthen the National Climate Change

Programme in terms of capabilities and financing. A stronger programme will make it feasible to establish a system to monitor forests and the use of soils. In addition, bringing the reference levels for greenhouse gases up to date will make it possible to formulate an action plan to reduce emissions caused by deforestation and forest degradation.

An analysis of the Government vision shows this strategy entails other problems and challenges. The Government will have to:

- Involve indigenous communities and peoples and incorporate them into these initiatives.
- Open up this area for other actors to participate.
- Take advantage of the knowledge and experience gained from past REDD initiatives in the country.
- Promote land organization and the official registration of rural land.
- Design and implement mechanisms so the economic benefits of the scheme can be managed and administered as public investment resources and used to improve conditions of life in the indigenous communities in areas where these initiatives are in operation.

All in all, this strategy would show how near or how far the Bolivian Government is from putting into practice its stated aims of working towards establishing a harmonious relationship with nature and the real possibilities of "living well".⁸

Prospects and questions

A detailed examination of the REDD initiatives shows that in some ways they would support an ideological perspective and a sustainable development model based on indigenous practices and knowledge, and in some ways they would not. The positive points are as follows:

 The REDD initiatives would foster the sustainable management of forests. They would be an opportunity for indigenous communities to consolidate their rights to their land.

Two of the negative points are as follows:

- The REDD initiatives would have no effect on the direct causes of forest degradation or deforestation.
- They would cause conflicts about who would be entitled to the carbon credits.

The REDD initiatives also have a spatial dimension insofar as they involve public policies that would govern access to and the use of forest resources. In fact, these initiatives are a way of analyzing how the Government intends to handle the whole matter of the rights indigenous peoples and communities have to their lands and their natural resources. Therefore it is important to ask how far the REDD initiatives will contribute to the development of indigenous communities in three crucial aspects: the recovery of control over their ancestral lands through autonomy and self-government, the redistribution of resources and the means of production in the indigenous lands, and the administration and exploitation of natural resources.

Some other arguments against implementing the REDD have been put forward. For example, it has been said that this initiative is a mechanism that would stimulate a move towards cutting down native forests and replacing them with monocultivation plantations and even bringing in transgenic trees. Thus the REDD would not only be promoting the privatization of the atmosphere⁹ but would also make the forests of the South vulnerable to new kinds of exploitation by polluters or speculators in the carbon or environment services markets.¹⁰

This argument is based on the possibility that the developing countries might be compelled to adopt this mechanism and so the developed countries would not have to make a serious reduction in their own greenhouse gas emissions.

⁷ Sanz, David, "Créditos de carbono", *Ecología verde*, (10 July 2010), <www.ecologiaverde.com/creditos-de-carbono>.

^{8 &}quot;Living well" is a philosophy related to sustainable living and sustainable development based on indigenous traditions and beliefs. See <www.decrecimiento. info/2009/02/el-buen-vivir.html>

⁹ For the concept of "Privatizing the atmosphere" see: Barcena, Iñaki, Miñambres, Ignacio, "Copenhague-2009, ¿fracaso de quién?", CONGD, <www.cvongd.org/showNews/52/244>.

¹⁰ ALAI, *REDD: Premio a la deforestación y usurpación masiva de territorios*, (2010), <alainet.org/active/41263>.

BRAZIL The rape of the Amazon



Brazil is a mixture of great prosperity and terrible deprivation. If it is administered in the right way its potential for development is almost unlimited, but the inequalities in society are so vast that it seems they will never be overcome. For the country to achieve sustainable development it will have to tackle many obstacles, and the biggest of these, which affects not just Brazil but the whole world, is the indiscriminate destruction of the Amazon jungle, mainly through logging. This large scale attack, which is being promoted and driven by interest groups of landowners, livestock enterprises and international companies, and facilitated by very poor environmental protection policies and rampant corruption, is well on the way to destroying "the lungs of the world".

Institute of Socioeconomic Studies (INESC) Alessandra Cardoso Alexandre Ciconello

In recent years Brazil has established and expanded a development model in which income and power are increasingly concentrated in the hands of political and economic elites with links to big agro-industrial and financial capital. One of the main foundations of this model is agrarian exploitation, especially the mono-cultivation of crops like soybean and sugar cane (for producing sugar and ethanol), which use genetically modified seeds and agro-toxic products purchased from transnational enterprises. The country is also implementing big infrastructure, energy and mining projects in the Amazon region. Another aspect of this macroeconomic model is high interest rates, and this is a problem for the Government because in the 2000 to 2007 period, for example, amortization and interest payments on the public debt came to around 430,000 million dollars, which was an average of 30% of the State budget per year.

This development model is predatory and unsustainable. Brazil is on the point of making big changes to its environmental protection legislation and it has already relaxed some regulations in the Forest Code.¹ These amendments are geared to protecting the private interests of rural landowners and the big estates, groups that are over-represented in Parliament because the political system is weighted in their favour.

The cornerstone of the Government's current development policy, which is exactly in line with the strategies of transnational enterprises, is to exploit the Amazon basin and accumulate capital by implementing energy, mining and agro-industrial projects and paying for environmental services. In the period 2000 to 2010, exports from the states that make up Legal Amazonia² increased by 518% (from USD 5,000 million to 26,000 million),³ which is a much higher growth rate than the 366% of the country's exports as a whole.



In 2010 the state of Pará alone was responsible for 48% (USD 12,8 billion) of the value of exports from this region. In the export pattern, mineral products are by far the biggest item on the list followed by agricultural produce, particularly meat. In the case of Pará, exports by just three enterprises, Vale, Alunorte and Albrás (iron and aluminium) accounted for 78% of the total value sold abroad (USD 10 billion).

The apparent wealth now flowing from the Amazon area is going straight into the pockets of the transnational enterprises' shareholders, and what is left behind is a legacy of inequality and unsustainability. The production of aluminium alone consumes nearly 6% of the electrical power generated in the whole country. According to the specialist Celio Bermann, "Aluminium is selling at a low price on the international market and it generates few jobs. Seventy times fewer workers are needed for this product than in the food and drink industry, for example, and forty times fewer than in the textile industry."

The logic of regional integration

Another aspect of this extraction-for-export model is that the Government is allowing Brazilian and international companies to expand their operations in the Amazon basin. This is bringing about accelerating changes in the environment there and in how people live not just in the Brazilian part but in the Pan-American Amazon as well. In a series of steps, the Federal Government has increased investment in logistics infrastructure including ports and land and waterborne transport systems. Most of these funds have gone to pay for big construction projects like the huge hydroelectric dams at Jirau, Santo Antônio and Belo Monte (in Brazil) and Inambari, Sumabeni, Paquitzapango and Urubamba (in Peru),



and highways like the controversial Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos in Bolivia, which cuts right through indigenous peoples' lands in the Isiboro Sécure National Park. These large scale works were carried out by Brazilian firms and financed with public money from the country's National Economic and Social Development Bank.

The Government is also providing more tax and credit incentives to attract the private sector to the region, in particular with projects to generate and distribute electrical energy. This has opened up the Brazilian Amazon even more to public and private enterprise involving international as well as domestic firms, which is making this predatory model of natural resource exploitation even stronger.

Climate change and agriculture

Deforestation in the Amazon and the rearing of livestock are the two main causes of CO_2 and CH_4 gas emissions in Brazil (67% and 70% of total emissions, respectively).⁴ There is a strong connection between logging (and burning off vegetation) and the fact that land in the area is concentrated in very few hands, and this is clearly connected to the dynamics of the expansion of agricultural land. This concentration of land ownership increases the risk that the country's climate change policies will mainly benefit the big landowners because it is them that will receive the various kinds of subsidies, and rural communities and the indigenous population will find themselves more excluded than ever.

See: <www2.camara.gov.br/agencia/noticias/MEIO-AMBIENTE/197556-INFOGRAFICO:-VEJA-AS-MUDANCAS-NO-CODIGO-FLORESTAL-APROVADAS-NA-CAMARA.html>.

² The administrative area in Brazil made up of nine states in the Amazon basin.

³ Source: Ministry of Industry and Trade. Nominal values, in dollars.

⁴ Ecoportal.net. "Cultivando el desastre. Agricultura, ganadería intensiva y cambio climático". <www.ecoportal.net/Temas_ Especiales/Cambio_Climático/Cultivando_el_desastre._ Agricultura_ganaderia_intensiva_y_cambio_climático>.

However, the Government has not taken any effective action that goes to the heart of the problem. What is needed is agrarian reform whereby a new model for the use of land and its resources can be implanted in the Amazon, based on the sustainable use of natural resources and respect for the traditional communities' and indigenous people's different ways of life. Bear in mind that these people have been living in harmony with their jungle environment for many centuries.

In a recent Social Watch study⁵ a Basic Capabilities Index rating was calculated for the various states and municipalities in the Amazon taken separately, like the analysis for the country as a whole. This report confirmed that there is a vast gulf between the prosperous regions of Brazil and the poor ones, and the poorest of all are in the north of the country. At the bottom of the list for satisfying the population's basic necessities we find the states of Pará, Acre and Amazonas. When we consider each indicator in isolation it emerges that inequality between the different regions is even worse in the sphere of education and Pará is in the worst situation of all.

Changes in the legal framework

There have been many attempts to make the prevailing legislation about the environment more flexible. The outstanding example of this campaign to relax environmental controls was when the Forest Code was weakened as a result of pressure from powerful interest groups representing the agriculture sector, whose overall strategy is to expand the agricultural frontier further and further into the Amazon. Rural landowners are pressing for a range of measures and one of these, which is contained in a bill currently before the Chamber of Deputies (the lower house in Parliament) is to reduce from 80% to 50% the proportion of land that all rural holdings in the Amazon must maintain as native forest.

The Government regards the Rio Madeira hydroelectric complex as a crucial component in its plans to meet the country's energy needs as of 2010 - 2012, and it considers the generation and transmission of electric power as the cutting edge of the "advance of the electric frontier". But in fact the increase of 6,600 MW of installed power (3,150 MW in Santo Antônio and 3,450 MW in Jirau) will be used to satisfy a demand the Government and the electric energy sector have themselves created artificially. The power generated at the Madeira complex will be supplied to the





economic centre of the country, which is the south west, and a lot of investment will be required to build the 2,375 km of power lines and stations needed.

It has been estimated that USD 21 billion⁶ will have to be invested in the group of projects connected to the Madeira complex, but up to now only USD 9,3 billion⁷ has been approved. Of this total some 8,6 billion is from the BNDES, including direct and indirect operations, and another 700 million is from the Amazon Bank (BASA) using public finance from the Constitutional Fund of the North and the Amazon Development Fund.

Data from investment reports on the Amazon show that, because of the risks involved in the project, the construction work and the process of obtaining environmental authorization, there is strong pressure from the public as well as the private sector (which includes banks, public bodies, companies, lobbyists, managers and agents) that nothing should be allowed to interfere with the timetable of the projected works, and nothing should delay the start. It is being argued that the economic feasibility of the Madeira complex depends on the hydroelectric system going into operation as soon as possible, and therefore the process to obtain authorization is being rushed through without due consideration of the social and environmental impacts the mega-project will have in the area.

Workers on these projects are being exploited (the Ministry of Labour has detected more than 2,000 infractions), the murder rate in the area has gone up by 44%, the sexual exploitation of childs and adolescents increased 18% in the period 2008 to 2010, and the number of rapes went up by 208% in 2007 to 2010. These are the effects of the development model financed by public funds, and Brazil is exporting this same model to other South American countries and to African nations like Angola and Mozambique. It is a model that serves the elite but destroys the environment and violates human rights on a large scale.

573AD003673C7?OpenDocument>.

⁶ Bank Information Center "The Madeira River Hydroelectric Complex" <www.bicusa.org/es/Project.Financing.10138.aspx>.

⁷ See: <wnotes.furnas.com.br/Administracao/fonline_ Internet2.nsf/viewTodosDestagues/BC1A3E8903174A58832

BULGARIA

The environment is back on the agenda



Environmental issues were extremely important in the country's struggle for democracy. Now, after years of increasing apathy, more and more people are becoming involved in environmental issues. The introduction of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in the market and several flaws in the implementation of the NATURA 2000 program for conservation of natural areas have become two of the biggest challenges facing the country. Implementing sustainable development will require that the Government safeguard the environment while meeting the country's energy and infrastructure needs.

Ecoforum for Sustainable Development Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation Vladimir Gorbunov

The process of democratic transition in Bulgaria could begin with the words "in the beginning there was Ecology." The environment was the issue that energized Bulgarians more than any other in the 1980s. Its key role in the country's civil struggle began with what first appeared to be a relatively localized issue: rampant gas pollution in the border city of Rousse, caused by effluent from a chemical factory in the Romanian town of Giurgiu.

The "Civil Committee for Environment Protection of Rousse" was the country's first major dissident organization since the establishment of Communist rule. For the first time in four decades, ordinary citizens, joined with intellectuals and leadership members of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) in an independent mobilization.

This campaign infused the Bulgarian transition with a strong environmentalist sensibility; the main topic of the so-called "Big Change" was precisely the air we breathe. Environmentalism also became a catalyst for a proliferation of Green parties and movements.

Unfortunately, soon after the 1989 democratic changes, the "old" dissidents were marginalized. The public became more concerned with the price of bread than a clean environment. This shift in popular attention quickly became evident in election results.

Environment back on the agenda

Only now, years later, has environmentalism enjoyed a resurgence in public consciousness. This time the initial focus was legislation on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO). As in Rousse, parents are taking a leading role, this time to ensure their children do not grow up on genetically modified food.

A bill liberalizing the production and release of GMOs on the market passed a first reading in Parliament in January 2010. This bill replaced a general prohibition of GMO products with a general authorization, although it made their release into the environment and the marketplace contingent on approval by the Minister of Environment and Water who then consulted with a panel of 15 scientists.



Less than a week later, on 28 February 2010, thousands of Bulgarians gathered for a rally and concert in front of the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia under the slogan "For a GMO-free Bulgaria! Let's Keep Our Land Clean and Protect Our Children's Health!" The parents who were the driving force behind this initiative were joined by organic and other farmers, beekeepers, scientists and environmentalists. Nevertheless the GMO Act was adopted, along with several harmful amendments in early March.

On 13 March 2010, scores of women, from the "Big-mama" web forum demanded the resignation of the Minister and Deputy Minister of Environment and Water and the Chair of Parliament. Four days later, activists mobilized in a "Nation-wide Protest against GMOs" in Sofia, Varna, Plovdiv, Pleven, Rousse and other cities. Two petitions were circulated throughout the country, one to ban the maize hybrid MON810, produced by the Monsanto Corporation, in Bulgaria, ¹ and another against several amendments to the GMO Act.² Activists also created several anti-GMO groups on Facebook. These actions culminated in protests in front of Parliament, which won official promises that the GMO Act would be amended.

Within three months, the strongest, most successful civil campaign in Bulgaria's most recent history won over public opinion. Instead of the originally planned legislation opening the country to GMOs, on 2 February 2011, the Government enacted a total ban on the cultivation of genetically modified maize MON810. This law, passed at the



initiative of Agriculture Minister Miroslav Naydenov, made Bulgaria the seventh European Union (EU) member state – after Austria (1999), Greece (2005), Hungary (2006), France (2008), Luxembourg (2009) and Germany (2009) – to impose a total ban.³

Protected areas and Natura 2000

NATURA 2000 is the most significant EU initiative for conservation of the environment and sustainable development of regions with nature preserves. Each member State is obliged to establish its own network of protected nature zones that will protect land, plants and animals of European importance.

The criteria for inclusion in the network are laid out in the EU's two fundamental directives for the protection of environment: Council Directive 92/43/ EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora ("the Habitats Directive") and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds ("the Birds Directive").

Unfortunately, in many cases the zones are only protected on paper. In more than 300 instances, departments of the Ministry of Environment and Water have failed to implement required environmental assessment procedures for projects in Natura 2000 zones, both along the coast and in the mountains.

¹ See:<forthenature.org/petitions/12/>.

² See:<grazhdani.eu/peticija.php?c=gmo>.

³ Derechos Humanos del Campesinado Nekazarien Eskubideak, Bulgaria bans MON810 and will not support GM contamination of feed, (tebrurary 2011), <www.derechoshumanosdelcampesinado.org/en/ medioambiente/397-bulgaria-bans-mon810-and-will-notsupport-om-contamination-of-feed.html>.

One egregious example is the official response to the project for extension of the ski zone above Bansko in the Pirin Mountains. If completed, ski runs and facilities will occupy 11% of Pirin National Park, up from the 0.2% that it currently occupies. In addition to the new ski runs, the project, which was commissioned by the Municipality of Bansko, envisages more hotels, including some on the mountain, as well as an airport, spa complexes and roads.⁴

When the project was presented in February 2011, it was lauded by Tseko Minev, President of the Bulgarian Ski Federation, head of the First Investment Bank and a relative of the concessionaire of the Yulen Ski Zone. "Promoting Bulgaria as a ski destination is more important than the populist environmental arguments against winter resorts," he declared. "Any criticism of the ski zone pales next to the publicity for Bulgaria that we can make in two hours, two days in a row all over the world [in broadcasting the Men's World Cup for skiing]. And we have already heard all the threats of calling for infringement procedures by Brussels".⁵

Skiing their way out of responsibilities

In October 2009, the European Commission initiated proceedings against Bulgaria for allowing a ski road on the mountain, built by Yulen. The new project, far more ambitious and intrusive, includes two more ski runs and a second cable car lift. The Ministers of Regional Development and Economy have generally supported the development of the region and these investments, but "within sustainable parameters, respecting both regulations and the mountain."⁶ Given the scale of this project, the Government response is ambiguous at best, if not disingenuous.

The State is clearly supporting the initiatives of Mr. Minev, providing him with generous state subsidies in a period of economic crisis and massive cuts in welfare budgets. Support for the project among local citizens, backed by the local administration and corporate interests, also helps drown out the protests of environmental organizations.

Turbines vs. birds

In the Kaliakra region, wind turbines and vacation properties are proliferating within the boundaries of the approved NATURA zone, despite warnings from environmentalists that this construction is irreversibly destroying the last remnants of the Dobrudja steppe and its bird habitats, as well as threatening bird migration routes. Once again, the Government, in particular the Ministry of Environment and Water, as well as local municipalities, have chosen to sacrifice nature to investor interests.

So far, investors have proposed 340 projects in this zone; several have already been built in the protected zone. One of these is a wind farm, a joint project of the Bulgarian firm Inos 1 and Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries. Its value is about EUR 250 million, according to the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB). The 35 wind turbines disrupt the migration of birds and threaten their lives. The farm has also destroyed the steppe in the area, resulting in a EUR 5,000 fine imposed by the Ministry of Environment and Water. More than 200 other wind farm projects are planned in Kaliakra; the Government's rationale for giving them the green light in a protected zone is a desire to adhere to the Kyoto Protocol and commitments to the EU to generate at least 16 percent of the country's energy from renewable sources by 2020.⁷

Environmentalists, in contrast, have for years demanded the adoption of a national strategy for the development of renewable energy sources, which would include a mandatory environmental assessment for all wind farm projects. So far, no such strategy has been proposed.

It is likely that the EU will launch two more infringement procedures against Bulgaria, one for the Kaliakra projects, and the other for failure to protect wild bird habitats. In fact, the Bern Convention has already opened a Kaliakra case file. Kaliakra is one of six designated NATURA zones (out of 114) which have suffered major damage. The others are Tsenralen Balkan, the Lom River Valley, Rila, Pirin and the Western Rhodopes.

At a "Sector Strategy to Attract Investments in Bulgaria" conference held in May 2011, the Government announced its priority sectors for economic development. Along with agriculture, the food and drinks industry, healthcare and the water sector, they included construction of roads and ski runs. The key question for the environment is whether the Government can successfully develop these sectors while promoting sustainable development.

5 Quoted in M. Enchev, Dnevnik, (28 February 2011).

6 Ibid.

⁴ Radio Bulgaria, Pirin National Park is again at the crossroads, (17 March 2011),
bnr.bg/sites/en/Lifestyle/MapOfBulgaria/ Pages/1703PirinNationalParkisagainatacrossroads.aspx>.

⁷ Osródek Studiów Wschidnich (OSW), Bulgaria: the role of nuclear energy and renewable sources of energy emphasided in the country's energy strategy. (2011). <www.osw.waw.pl/ en/publikacje/ceweekly/2011-06-08/bulgaria-role-nuclearenergy-and-renewable-sources-energy-emphasised->.

BURMA / MYANMAR

Militarized development is always untenable



Decades of military rule have fostered a repressive political environment in which democratic principles are flouted, public resources are exploited for the benefit of the military elite and human rights and the rule of law enjoy little respect. Without basic rights, the voiceless people of the country suffer the consequences of economic mismanagement that undermines the environment and retards sustainable development. Burma urgently needs strong democratic institutions that promote sustainable development, public participation and accountability.

Burma Lawyers' Council Leslie Choi

Despite the country's abundance of natural resources, a majority of the Burmese people face challenging life conditions as a result of governmental economic mismanagement. More than 32% of the population lives below the poverty line.¹ Burma ranked 132 out of 169 countries in the 2010 UNDP Human Development Index.² The lack of public participation in developing economic policies is reflected in the Government's allocation of only 0.5% of the gross domestic product (GDP) for health, and 0.9% for education.³ Meanwhile, the Government pours more than 60% of its spending into State-owned businesses.⁴

The lack of democratic institutions effectively bars the public from participating in decision-making on economic, social and environmental policies. Abuse of power is rampant. Development projects are used to line the pockets of military officials at the expense of citizens.

The military regime, known as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), organized a national election in November 2010 – the first in 20 years – but it was characterized by flawed election laws and repressive practices. The SPDC continues to hold the reins of Government in Burma and officials regularly abuse their power to further their own interests. They have little fear of the consequences since no means currently exist to hold such people accountable, they often face little to no repercussions for these abuses.

- 2 UNDP, The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways in Human Development, (New York: 2010), <hdr.undp.org/en/statistics>.
- 3 UN Human Rights Council. Progress report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, (Geneva: 10 March 2010).
- 4 Index mundi, *Burma Economy Profile*, (2010), <www. indexmundi.com/burma/economy_profile.html>.



2008 Constitution and 2010 elections

The 2008 Constitution entrenched military rule by reserving a quarter of national parliamentary seats and a third of state and regional parliamentary seats for military representatives appointed by the Commander-in-Chief.⁶ The military appoints all of the members of the Union Election Commission (UEC), the government body responsible for ensuring that elections are free and fair.⁶ Election laws bar political prisoners from joining parties and place restrictions on campaigning activities of political parties. In response to the restrictive laws, the National League for Democracy (NLD), and other key opposition groups boycotted the elections, further delegitimizing the results.⁷

The elections were also marred by voter intimidation, electoral fraud and corruption.⁸ One of the most common complaints concerned the manipulation of voting results through the collection of votes in advance and vote-rigging.⁹ In some areas, villagers were threatened with land confiscation and the discontinuation of public services if they did not vote for the regime-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP).¹⁰

- 5 Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, (September 2008), arts 74, 109, and 141.
- 6 UN General Assembly. *Situation of human rights in Myanmar*, (15 September 2010).
- 7 M. Maung, "Ethnic leaders join NLD vote-boycott roadshow," in *Mizzima News*, (13 October 2010), <www.mizzima.com/ news/election-2010-/4442-ethnic-leaders-join-nld-voteboycott-roadshow.html>.
- 8 J. Davies, and H. Siddique, "Burma election observers report voter intimidation," *The Guardian*, (8 November 2010), <www.guardian. co.uk/world/2010/nov/08/burma-election-voter-intimidation>.
- 9 Burma Fund UN Office, *Burma's 2010 Elections: A comprehensive report*, (January 2011).



The military regime has further entrenched its position through laws that obstruct judicial independence.¹¹ The President has the power to appoint and dismiss Supreme Court Justices at his discretion.¹² The Supreme Court does not exercise jurisdiction over military or constitutional issues. Additionally, the Constitution guarantees impunity to members of the ruling military regime, thereby preventing the judiciary from enforcing the law in cases in which they are involved.¹³ Pervasive corruption further undermines the legitimacy of the judiciary, as well as its ability to protect the rights of individuals and hold government officials accountable.¹⁴

In most countries, civil society organizations play a fundamental role in the promotion of democratic principles and help ensure transparency, accountability, defense of human rights, and public participation. In Burma, these organizations are stifled by repressive restrictions or outright bans on civil society activities.¹⁵ In the absence of a vibrant civil society, military junta rule is unchecked, unmonitored, and unaccountable.

- 11 A.U. Htoo, "Analysis of the SPDC's Constitution from the Perspective of Human Rights," in *Legal Issues on Burma Journal*, No. 30 (2008).
- 12 Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, (September 2008), arts 299, 302, 308, 311, 327, and 334.

13 Ibid., art. 445

- 14 US Department of State, 2008 Country Report on Burma, (Washington DC: 25 February 2009), <www.state.gov/g/drl/ rls/hrrpt/2008/eap/119035.htm>.
- 15 Human Rights Watch, I Want to Help My Own People, (28 April 2010), <www.hrw.org/en/reports/2010/04/29/i-wanthelp-my-own-people-0>.

Economy Watch, Myanmar (Burma) Poverty Line, Gini Index, Household Income and Consumption, (May 2011), <www. economywatch.com/economic-statistics/Myanmar/Poverty_ Lines.

¹⁰ Ibid.

The grim face of militarized development

The SPDC has sold rights to exploit domestic resources to neighbouring countries, generating billions of dollars, yet the Burmese people have not seen the economic benefits.¹⁶ Instead, in pursuing its own interests and militarizing development projects, the Government has exploited local villagers and exposed them to human rights abuses.

Villagers are systematically subjected to forced labour by Burmese army troops.¹⁷ For example, during the construction of the Yadana gas pipeline in Eastern Burma, a joint venture of the Frenchowned Total and the US-owned Unocal (now owned by Chevron), Government soldiers and proxy military groups providing security forced civilians to cut down trees, serve as porters, and build military infrastructure.¹⁸ Those who refused were beaten, raped, tortured and killed.¹⁹

Large-scale land confiscation is another prevalent development-related government abuse. Villagers receive nominal or no compensation for the farmland seized. In 2010, approximately 2,500 acres of land in Southern Burma were confiscated and distributed to logging companies.²⁰ Villagers who live by the China-sponsored development of the Shwe gas pipelines in Western Burma also report that authorities have been confiscating land without compensation.²¹

Many Burmese rely primarily on farming for their livelihoods. Forced labour leaves them much less time to cultivate their land, while confiscation completely deprives them of their source of food and income. Additionally, militarization of areas with development projects, which is common, is often

- 17 EarthRights International, The Human Cost of Energy: Chevron's Continuing Role in Financing Oppression and Profiting From Human Rights Abuses in Military-Rule Burma, (April 2008), <www.earthrights.org/publication/ human-cost-energy-chevron-s-continuing-role-financingoppression-and-profiting-human-rig>; UN Human Rights Council, Progress report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, (10 March 2010).
- 18 R. Sisodia and A. Buncombe, "Burmese villagers 'forced to work on Total pipeline," *The Independent*, (14 August 2009), <www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/burmesevillagers-forced-to-work-on-total-pipeline-1771876.html>.
- 19 EarthRights International, The Human Cost of Energy, op cit, <www.earthrights.org/publication/human-cost-energychevron-s-continuing-role-financing-oppression-andprofiting-human-rights>.
- 20 S.Y. Naing, "Land Confiscation Reported in Dawei Project," *The Irawaddy*, (15 December 2010), <www.irrawaddy.org/ article.php?art_id=20326>.
- 21 Mizzima News Group. "Land confiscation begins with pipeline project," *Mizzima News*, (9 November 2009), <www. mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/3023-land-confiscationbegins-with-pipeline-project.html>.

accompanied by an increase in unofficial taxes, imposed on local villagers by soldiers.²² These corrupt practices not only heighten food insecurity, they also close off educational opportunities: farmers can no longer afford to send their children to school.

Environmental impact

The severe environmental degradation that frequently results from these projects further exacerbates their negative social and economic impact. Unsustainable logging, shrimp farming and hydroelectric projects, as well as extractive industries have seriously damaged the environment. For example, air and water pollution created by a 2010 coal mining partnership agreement between Chinese and Burmese companies in Shan State have contaminated water supplies and caused approximately 2,000 cases of skin disease.²³ This venture is the largest cooperative mining project between China and Burma, located in the Sagaing Division, and it continues to release toxic chemicals during the refining process.²⁴

The environmental risks associated with development projects are not disclosed to affected communities,²⁵ and in the absence of the rule of law the victims of development-related government actions have no viable legal recourse. Order 1/99, which outlaws forced labour, it is hardly enforced.²⁶ When individuals subjected to forced labour and land confiscation have filed complaints, the SPDC has retaliated against them and their lawyers through criminal charges and arbitrary sentences to hard labour camps.²⁷

- 22 All Arakan Students' & Youths' Congress, Overview of Land Confiscation in Arakan State, (June 2010). Available from: <www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/Land_%20Confiscation_ in_Arakan-Overview.pdf>; Karen Human Rights Group, Pa'an District: Land confiscation, forced labour and extortion undermining villagers' livelihoods, 11 February 2006. Available from: <<www.khrg.org/khrg2006/khrg06f1.html>.
- 23 Pa-O Youth Organization, Poison Clouds: Lessons from Burma's largest coal project at Tigyit, (2011), pyo-org.blogspot.com>.
- 24 J. Allchin, "China seals biggest Burma mining deal," Democratic Voice of Burma, (July 30 2010), <www.dvb.no/ news/china-seals-biggest-burma-mining-deal/11015>.
- 25 EarthRights International, China in Burma: The Increasing Investment of Chinese Multinational Corporations in Burma's Hydropower, Oil, and Natural Gas, and Mining Sectors, (September 2007), www.earthrights.org/sites/default/files/ publications/China-in-Burma-2007-backgrounder.pdf>.
- 26 The Government of the Union of Myanmar, "Order supplementing Order No. 1/99," in *The Ministry of Home Affairs*, (27 October 2000).
- 27 International Trade Union Confederation, 2010 Annual Survey of violations of trade union rights – Burma, (9 June 2010); M. Maung, "Lawyer arrested for defending labour activist freed," Mizzima News, (6 March 2010), -«www. mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/3621-lawyer-arrestedfor-defending-labour-activist-freed.html»; Kaew, N.K, "Army seizes 30,000 acres of farmland," Democratic Voice of Burma, (22 February 2011), -«www.dvb.no/news/armyseizes-30000-acres-of-farmland/14351>.

The country's environmental laws are not enforced. Although the Forest Law emphasizes the importance of conserving and protecting Burma's forests,²⁸ between 1990 and 2005, the country lost almost 20% of its forests,²⁹ and in recent years the rate of deforestation has increased. Similarly, although the Myanmar Mines Law of 1994 requires permission from land users before a mining permit is issued, in practice villagers are not consulted and their lands are typically confiscated.³⁰

Additionally, no law requires that companies seeking to invest in development projects in Burma consult with affected communities. Even when companies have taken the initiative to do so, the environmental impact assessments that were commissioned have been fundamentally flawed, leading to inaccurate conclusions.³¹ For example, the third-party environmental impact assessment commissioned by the French oil company Total on the Yadana gas pipeline project relied on the testimony of Burmese villagers procured through interviews conducted in the presence of military intelligence officials.

Conclusions

Strong democratic institutions that promote good governance are an essential prerequisite for sustainable development. This entails respect for the rule of law and human rights, effective public participation, access to knowledge, and accountability in the management of public resources.

Democratic principles must be strengthened in Burma through free and fair elections, an independent judiciary that upholds the rule of law, and a constitutional review that involves all stakeholders. Public participation should also be incorporated into all stages of development so that the people can shape economic policies, become fully aware of the social and environmental impact of all development initiatives, and have the power to hold government actors and companies accountable for any rights violations.

- 29 The National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB), "Burma Human Rights Yearbook 2008-2009," in *Human Rights Documentation Unit*, (November 2009), <www.ncgub.net/NCGUB/mediagallery/albumd4c6. html?aid=90&page=1>.
- 30 Pa-O Youth Organization, Poison Clouds, op cit, <pyo-org. blogspot.com>; The State Law and Order Restoration Council, The Myanmar Mines Law (No 8/94), (6 September 1994).
- 31 EarthRights International, Getting it Wrong: Flawed Corporate Social Responsibility and Misrepresentations Surrounding Total and Chevron's Yadana Gas Pipeline in Military-Ruled Burma, (September 2009), <www.earthrights. org/sites/default/files/publications/getting-it-wrong.pdf>.

¹⁶ EarthRights International, Energy Insecurity, (July 2010), <www.earthrights.org/publication/energy-insecurity-how-totalchevron-and-pttep-contribute-human-rights-violations-financis.

²⁸ The State Law and Order Restoration Council, The Forest Law (The State Law and Order Restoration Council Law No 8/92), (3 November 1992).

CAMBODIA

Human and social capacities should be the priority



After 18 years of economic liberalization, the country faces pressing economic, social and environmental challenges, such as increasing vulnerability to natural disasters and lack of an appropiate irrigation system. The Government fails to protect the rights of the country's indigenous peoples, who are facing corporate takeover in the name of development. In order to sustain rapid economic growth, to provide jobs and to reduce poverty levels, Cambodia needs to diversify its economy but, prior to that, it must invest in human capital. Promoting economic development without taking basic steps to strengthen internal social and human capacity will condemn the country to a widening gap between rich and poor.

SILAKA Thida Khus

After two decades of civil war and following the 1993 election sponsored by the United Nations, Cambodia has joined the world economy. Since then, the country has joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2000 and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2009. The country has also embraced a structural adjustment process which encompasses the privatization of State businesses and services; after 18 years of economic liberalization, Cambodia has seen some prosperity mostly due to the adoption of new and modern infrastructure. However, questions remain to be asked whether the development models applied are in fact sustainable and if they could lead to narrowing the gap between rich and poor Cambodians.

The country's GDP growth reached peaked at 13.4% in 2007, and then dropped to 7.2% in 2008, climbed to 10.1% in 2009 and reached its nadir in 2010, with -1.5%.¹ The key growing industries have been tourism, garmet manufacturing, and construction, but all these sectors have been heavily hit during the recent economic and financial crisis.

Also, the benefits of growth do not extend to all. For instance, in 2010 nearly 4,000 tourists visited Angkor Wat per day, bringing about USD 4.5 million per month in revenue.² However, this benefit has not reached the poor; even though Cambodia's tourism industry has created 10,000 jobs, a large portion of its profits do not filter down to local communities. Six to 10% of Siemreap City's population of 173,000, for example, earn no more than USD 2.5 a day, according to 2010 statistics from the Ministry of Planning.³ Last year, 289,702 tourists came from South Korea and 177,000 from China, but that was of little help to the local economy.⁴ According to the *Cambodia Daily* newspaper, "they (South Korean and

3 Ibid

4 English People Daily Online, "Cambodia sees Chinese visitors as potential boost to tourism," (15 January 2011), <english. peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90851/7261729.html>.



Chinese tourists) fly on their own carriers, sleep in pre-booked hotels and eat in restaurants that serve their own national dishes." 5

Environmental and economic vulnerability

Cambodia is especially vulnerable to extreme weather and economic downturns, since it lacks a proper social safety net. A study conducted by the Cambodian Economic Association on several poor communities in targeted villages made apparent that there has been an increased vulnerability to food insecurity among the rural poor.⁶

The strategies adopted by poor communities to cope with their decreasing income are tremendously harmful to their human dignity and well-being. For example, 55% of Cambodians in this situation tend to reduce the amount of food consumed; this is more common among the female population, since 64% of mothers and girls are reducing their food intake in order to leave more to the other members of the family.⁷ If we also consider the quality, as well as the amount of food consumed per family member, then 75% of the people of the targeted villages are seriously jeopardizing their nutrition, health and quality of life.

Mining

Management of the mining industry has also been a matter of concern recently, not only because it has a heavy impact on the environment but also because it exemplifies the Government's economic

6 "The Impact of Economic Downturn on Households and Communities in Cambodia," CEA, (May 2010).



Gender Equity Index (GEI)

and social mismanagement. A copper mine in the Kvav Commune (Siemreap province), for example, was almost fully operative while little was known about it by the neighbouring villagers. According to an article in *The Cambodia Daily*, "An official said the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) and Chinese business are behind the mining. It is kept under a blanket of secrecy. The agreement was signed by the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Energy and the Chinese building corporation Nim Meng Group, stating that the data of the exploration, the feasibility study and the mining operation were all confidential."⁸

The agreement granted 80 km² for both extraction (6 yrs) and exploration (up to 30 yrs). A patronage system has existed between RCAF and the business community since 2008, and this has become the official policy. The militarization of the Cambodian mines is now emerging, and reporters were escorted out of the compound of the mining site in Siemreap. The company said that they will build an irrigation system for the rice field and roads for the village, but six neighbouring villages have already filed claims that the company has encroached on their land.

Challenges in agriculture

In order to support the agricultural sector, the Government has to improve public services to support farmers. The irrigation scheme – that serves about a third of the country's farmland – is mostly falling apart as local management fails to address its maintenance.⁹ Furthermore, Japan's International

Index Mundi, Cambodia GDP – real growth rate, (2011), <www.indexmundi.com/cambodia/gdp_real_growth_rate. html>.

² Khmer News, "Angkor Wat revenues rise on Chinese flights," (2010), <khmerweekly.com/2011/02/18/angkor-watrevenues-rise-on-chinese-flights>.

⁵ The Cambodia Daily, (24 Februrary, 2011).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The Cambodia Daily, (1 March 2011).

⁹ The Cambodia Daily, 26, (27 February 2011).

Cooperation Agency study stated during a recent seminar in Phnom Penh that only 1 million hectares of farm land were served by irrigation in 2009 now, plans are underway to increase the irrigation area by 25,000 hectares annually.

Budget allocations to agriculture have been minimal, even though it is considered a priority. Between 2005 and 2009, allocations to the sector have been 1.5% to 2.5% of the total budget.¹⁰

Plundering sacred land

The Suy people are one of the country's smallest indigenous groups. Almost 900 Suy live in five vi-Ilages in Treapang Chor commune, O Ral District, settled around the Mount O Ral Wildlife Sanctuary, established in 1997. This sanctuary includes their agricultural lands and customary-use forest and is traditionally considered the home of the Suy goddess Yeay Te.11 In 2009 the Government awarded several concessions over 10,000 hectares¹² on the slope of Mount O Ral for corn plantations and tourism, without seeking permission from the local population, including the Suy, who immediately protested, asserting their right over their lands and resources.¹³ Corn planting began nevertheless in June 2009. Nine months later the Government handed back 6,000 hectares to the Suy, but as the non-indigenous population did not get any of their lands back, it was feared that they might try and settle the matter violently in the Suy people's area 14

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case. Almost all indigenous communities in Cambodia are facing serious land problems largely associated with corporate takeover in the name of development. The Government continues to ignore its own laws on the legal recognition of communal land and reserves, and fails to protect the rights of the country's indigenous peoples. It also violates international human rights obligations under the International Convention against Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.¹⁵

Economic development and diversification

Cambodia's economy is dependent on a narrow range of sectors, such as rice-based agriculture, garments, tourism and construction. ¹⁶ The 2008 global crisis made apparent the vulnerability of Cambodia's limited economy, and many experts agreed on the need to diversify it. Rice remains the leading crop, and although pepper, palm sugar, cashew nuts and rubber are offering interesting prospects, the majority of farmers still depend almost solely on rice production. The garment sector has experienced steady growth, and is now a major industrial employer, especially for women. Yet it is keenly sensitive to international demand; in fact, it was very hard hit by falling demand from the US and the European Union during the crisis.¹⁷

It is clear that in order to sustain rapid economic growth, provide jobs and reduce poverty, Cambodia needs to diversify its economy, but this is not an easy task. To do so, the country needs to increase its competitiveness in the region, as well as acquire greater technology and know-how. This implies major efforts in terms of human resources, natural resource management and structural reforms. The search for diversification should also take into account the potential of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises across the country. These enterprises, along with farming could be the true engines of economic growth, and should be included in any diversification strategy that aims to achieve sustainable development, better food security and decreased poverty.

Civil society organizations (CSOs)

Cambodian civil society has faced many challenges in the past few years, among them laws specifically designed to jeopardize their freedom of operation. The first is the Anti- Corruption Law, which requires reports of corruption cases to supply extensive evidence and sources. The other piece of legislation that will hit organizations directly is one regarding CSO registration, which demands that all members of a CSO register before starting any activity and requires all CSOs to file annual activities and financial reports to the Government. This will greatly restrict citizen initiatives and will mostly hit community organizations. Villagers and indigenous groups (such as the Suy and Pnong people) will not be able to act until they are registered.

This legislation has been seen as a threat to human rights and democracy, as it gives the Government carte blanche to close down organizations without any legislative proceedings.

The promising aspect of decentralization is that the Government has begun to introduce the second phase, giving local authorities responsibility for assessing democratic development.

Conclusions

Cambodia needs to take control of its own resources and improve their management in order to foster sustainable development. Promoting economic development without taking basic steps to strengthen internal social and human capacity will only condemn the country to a widening gap between the rich and the poor.

11 OMCT Action File, Cambodia: Suy Indigenous Peoples at Risk of Extinction, (2010), <www.omct.org/files/2010/03/6139/ cambodia_action_file_.pdf>.

- 12 Ethnocide: Cambodia's indigenous peoples under attack. See: <indigenouspeoplesissues.com/index. php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4146: ethnocide-cambodias-indigenous-peoples-under-attackaipp-public-statement&catid=62:southeast-asia-indigenouspeoples&Itemid=84>.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

¹⁰ Ngo Sothath and Chan Sophal, Agriculture Sector Financing and Services for Smallholder Farmers, (Cambodia, NGO Forum, Action Aid Cambodia, September 2010), <www. ngoforum.org.kh/eng/dip/olddipdocs/AEP_Report_ Agriculture_Sector_Financing.pdf>.

¹⁶ V. Salze-Lozac'h, "Diversifying Cambodia's Economy, Easier Said than Done," *In Asia*, (The Asia Foundation, 15 September 2010), <asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2010/09/15/ diversifying-cambodias-economy-easier-said-than-done>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

CAMEROON

While the Government silences protests, the environmental alarm gets louder



In a country where more than half the population is unemployed and 51% of the people are living on less than two dollars a day it is more important than ever for natural resources to be managed in an intelligent and sustainable way. But the Government's development model is not sustainable. Desertification and the loss of biodiversity are serious problems and if not tackled immediately the population's well-being will be even more at risk. The Lom and Pangar dam project will displace thousands of people and ruin one of the richest ecosystems in the territory.

CRADEC (Centre Régional Africain pour le Développement Endogène et Communautaire) Dynamique Citoyenne Jean Mhalla Mhalla

Cameroon benefited from an increase in international oil and cocoa prices in the middle of the 2000s, but rising inflation¹ and the fact that wealth is very unequally distributed (the country's GINI rating in 2005 was 44.6²) mean the economy is even more vulnerable than before. According to the latest data, 51% of the people are living on less than two dollars a day and 17% on less than one dollar.³ The Government has announced measures to strengthen the economy, however it has commited itself to an unsustainable development model.

One upcoming project, for example, is a dam on the Lom and Pangar Rivers that the Government claims will alleviate Cameroon's energy shortage and stimulate economic growth. However it seems that the main beneficiary of this project will be the mining enterprise Alucam, which consumes around a third of the electrical power generated in the country.⁴

This dam will displace whole communities and cause a serious loss of biodiversity. The habitats of many animal species, including gorillas and chimpanzees will be submerged under the reservoir or destroyed when large swathes of trees in surrounding areas are cut down to make way for roads to link the dam to nearby cities. Yet official policy is to strengthen the country's energy generation capabilities at the expense of the environment and the Government is offering more facilities for companies engaged in unsustainable extractive activities.

In 2009 the stated number of people potentially displaced by the dam project increased to 28,000; this includes minorities such as the Baka, who have a history of discrimination.⁵

5 Ibid

The Government's tendency to brush aside the rights of communities has been seen before, in 2000, when work started on the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline, a project that involved Petronas Malaysia, ExxonMobil and Chevron. According to a 2005 Amnesty International report, the project could "freeze the protection of the human rights of thousands of people who have lived in the area for decades."⁶ The pipeline project also caused large numbers of people to be displaced. Farmers in the area complained that they were barred access to their land and that ExxonMobil refused to return it or pay compensation. In some cases this meant communities were denied access to their only source of potable water.⁷

In the project contracts signed by the Government the enterprises in question had no human rights or environmental protection obligations and the agreements leading up to the commencement of the work were shielded by business confidentiality and were therefore not available for public scrutiny.⁸ The Government line was that the project was an opportunity for development that would make it possible to build new schools and provide better health service coverage. Not only were these promises broken, but the Government intimidated and detained many people who spoke out against the pipeline.⁹



The imposition of silence

In 2008 President Biya launched an initiative to make changes to the nation's Constitution and people took to the streets in the main cities to protest. These demonstrations were violently repressed and around 100 demonstrators and members of the security forces were killed. The civil society organizations involved in the protest movement have repeatedly claimed that the Biya regime, which has ruled Cameroon since 1982, is autocratic and has retained its hold on power only by rigging elections.¹⁰ In February 2011 Biya's security forces violently broke up a protest demonstration in which two of the participants were major opposition figures. Louis Tobie Mbida and Kah Walla, both of whom plan to turn as candidates in the forthcoming elections of October 2011. Mbida and Walla said they were mistreated by the forces of repression,¹¹ which had been tipped off about the possibility of the demonstration some time before and were able to quickly disperse protesters.

The Government has gone to great lengths to silence the opposition. For example, in March 2011 it blocked an SMS service that provided access to the social network Twitter, which was widely used by members of civil society organizations to organize protest activities.¹²

- 11 African News, "Brutal Suppression of Peaceful Protests in Cameroon by Biya Thugs," (24 February 2011), <africandictator.blogspot.com/2011/02/brutal-suppressionof-peaceful-protests.html>.
- 12 Afrol News, "Cameroon limits social media services," (9 March 2011). <a frol.com/articles/37542>.

¹ Economy Watch, "Cameroon Economy."; <www. economywatch.com/world_economy/Cameroon>.

² Institute of International Education, "Atlas of Student Mobility: Cameroon; <www.atlas.iienetwork.org/ page/48146/>.

³ Earthtrends, "Cameroon."; <earthtrends.wri.org/povlinks/ country/cameroon.php>.

⁴ N. Chimton, "El miedo fluye ante nueva represa," IPS, (2009), <ipsnoticias.net/nota.asp?idnews=93679>.

⁶ Amnesty International, Oleoducto Chad-Camerún: un nuevo informe acusa a las empresas petroleras y los gobiernos de evadirse en secreto de sus obligaciones para con los derechos humanos, (September 2005), «www.amnesty.org/es/library/ asset/POL30/028/2005/es/b9a7ba6b-d4b1-11dd-8a23d58a49c0d652/pol300282005es.html>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Amnesty International, op. cit.

¹⁰ David Wallechinsky, *Tyrants: The World's 20 Worst Living Dictators*, Regan Press, (New York: 2006)..

Unemployment

According to a 2009 study by the National Statistics Institute there were 12 million people unemployed in that year. This number is absolutely shocking given that the population of the country is only around 18.2 million.¹³

The Government announced plans to tackle the problem, including a scheme to create jobs for young people who drop out of secondary school, but in April 2011 there were no fewer than 350,000 applicants for the 25,000 jobs meant to be created in the public service.¹⁴ Opposition groups have claimed that the programme is a "big fraud," created to get votes in the upcoming presidential elections, and applicants also have expressed doubts about the scheme's transparency and reliability.¹⁵ As a mission from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank pointed out, it would be very difficult for the State to find the money to pay for new jobs created in the public sector.¹⁶

The initial commitment to recruit at least 25,000 workers has already been postponed. In May, Emmanuel Bonde, Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms, said the original programme would be replaced by one of "gradual recruitment."¹⁷

Desertification

One of the most pressing ecological problems in Cameroon is desertification. By the early 21st century the north of the country had been severely affected by this process and deserts were threatening to encroach on the jungles in the central region.¹⁸ In recent years desertification has intensified and brought with it soil degradation, food insecurity, rising poverty and massive migrations out of the arid northern areas.¹⁹

One of the causes of deforestation in the country is the cultivation of cocoa. The way this resource is exploited has traditionally involved clearing forest areas, and there is no doubt that the alarming condition of much of the land in Cameroon today can be traced to the 1980s when the Government promoted cocoa as an export crop. When cocoa prices on world markets went down, the Government's response was to increase production; even more of the tropical forests were cut down and today the country's ecosystem is suffering the consequences of that development model, which was completely unsustainable.²⁰

- 14 Ibid
- 15 Ibid.

16 Theodore M. Ndze, "After Review Mission to Cameroon: IMF, World Bank, ADB Dissatisfied – Worried over 25,000 jobs creations," *The Star*, (4 April 2011), <thestaronline. info/?p=507>.

- 17 Cameroon Today, op. cit.
- 18 J.N. Ndih, "Cameroon under threat." Le Monde diplomathique, (2002), <mondediplo. com/2002/12/11cameroon>.
- 19 W. Van Cottem, "Cameroon: Stemming the Tide of Desertification and Land Degradation," Desertification, (18 March 2010), <desertification.wordpress.com/2010/03/18/ cameroon-stemming-the-tide-of-desertification-and-landdegradation>.
- 20 Ndih, op cit.

DSCE: LITTLE PROGRESS

The Strategic Document for Growth and Employment, designed to reduce poverty to a "socially acceptable" level, was launched in 2007.¹ The stated long-term objectives were to raise Cameroon to the status of a middle-income country, to industrialize and to strengthen the democratic process and thus bring about national unity. The plan was to tackle this task in successive 10-year phases with the overall targets to be reached by 2035. The goals the Government set for the initial phase were to raise annual average growth to 5% in the 2010–20 period, to reduce the informal sector by at least 50% by 2020 by creating thousands of jobs in the formal sector, and to reduce monetary poverty from 39.9% in 2007 to 28.7% in 2020.²

A 2011 review of progress towards the DSCE goals showed that 41% of the short-term targets had made a little progress, while 23% showed no advance at all. Only 5% of the goals set for 2010 were fully achieved.³ Similarly, some 45% of the immediate human development objectives registered slight progress and 6% made reasonable progress, but 34% of the indicators showed no change at all.⁴As regards human development, the most encouraging areas were the fight against HIV and AIDS and the initiative to reduce maternal and infant mortality.

Regarding employment 14% of the indicators were stagnant and there was slight progress towards 72% of the objectives including promoting employment in the private sector, self-employment and formal employment. However, no progress was made in the effort to move workers from the informal to the formal sector.⁵ It was the same with regard to the means of production: there was hardly any progress towards most of the goals (60%).

- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Dynamique Citoyenne, op cit.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.

In any case, the wealth generated at the cost of devastating the nation's tropical forests did not improve the situation of the population; all it did was drive people who were especially dependent on forest resources deeper into poverty.

The main problems that desertification is causing today are that sources of potable water in several cities including Mbouda, Kumbo and Nkambe are drying up; there is generalized soil erosion and a loss of fertility, which increases the risk of landslides and floods (as happened in the city of Bamenda, for example); there are floods and sand and dust storms in the north; vegetation cover is being lost; water reserves are being polluted; and soils are showing higher levels of salinity and alkalinity throughout the country including the tropical green areas.²¹

Desertification is being aggravated not only by the Government's unsustainable development model but also by informal logging by the poorest sectors of the population, which is happening even in the nature reserves.

Loss of biodiversity

Desertification is not the only environmental challenge the country is confronting as there is also a serious loss of biodiversity due to a number of different factors including overgrazing, pollution, poaching and over-fishing.²² Some 40% of the mangrove swamp ecosystem has been destroyed, 32 of the 409 mammal species of mammals in the country are in danger of extinction and 14 of the 690 bird species will soon disappear along with 3 species of reptiles, 1 amphibians species, 26 species of fresh water fish and 67 plants species.²³

Conclusion

While the Government has launched an Action Plan for the Fight against Desertification – which includes various studies to analyse the causes and impact of the problem and sets out strategies to tackle it – and has attempted to follow the guidelines in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), neither of these efforts has made any appreciable difference, and desertification and soil erosion have been spreading and getting worse.²⁴

It is doubtful that the objectives of the Strategic Document for Growth and Employment (DSCE) (see box) can be reached, and it follows that the Government should make a more realistic action plan. The lack of information about the DSCE's objectives and achievements should be resolved with an effective campaign to keep the public informed.²⁵ A serious obstacle is that monitoring progress towards the DSCE targets is hampered by a lack of data. Civil society organizations should be allowed greater access to indicators that are important for examining how the Government's plans are progressing. Overall there is a need for greater transparency.

¹³ Cameroon Today, "Cameroon Government News: Rampant unemployment in Cameroon," (May 2011),

¹ Christine Andela, Jean Mballa Mballa and Samuel Biroki, "Cameroon: Aid must be more efficiently managed," in Social Watch Report 2010. After the Fall, Instituto del Tercer Mundo, Montevideo, 2010, p. 80.

²¹ Van Cottem, op. cit.

²² Encyclopaedia of the Nations, "Cameroon – Environment.", <www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Cameroon-ENVIRONMENT.html>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Van Cottem, op. cit.

²⁵ Dynamique Citoyenne, *DSCE: Un an après, Quel niveau d'appropriation?*, (Yaoundé, 2011).

Growth: a question of means, not ends



The Government has put short-term economic growth at the centre of its policy priorities. Sustainable growth, however, requires public investments in human capital to ensure that short-term growth doesn't come at the cost of long-term environmental devastation. The environment is already suffering degradation due to lack of policies, and currently, women's and minorities' rights are being eroded – violence against women varies across different groups and regions, and Aboriginal women are disproportionately subject to violence. Civil society organizations have presented a broad range of public policy alternatives that provide practical, sustainable means for achieving well-being for everyone living in the country.

Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action Kate McInturff North-South Institute John Foster Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Armine Yalnizyan

As Canada takes unsteady steps out of recession, President Stephen Harper's Government continues to institute neo-liberal economic policies, including lowering tax rates, decreasing the deficit, and investing in physical infrastructure projects. Even within a neo-liberal framework, the results have been mixed. Job creation has not kept pace with the growth in the working population, nor has there been significant growth in permanent employment.1 Personal income tax cuts and credits have disproportionately been extended to high-income earners, delivering the most financial support to those who need it least. The decline in corporate tax rates has not yielded increased investments in equipment and infrastructure.² As spending on social programmes falls behind the rate of inflation, spending on the military and the prison system is set to increase significantly, in spite of a largely static crime rate and the scheduled drawdown of Canada's major military engagement in Afghanistan.

The Harper Government has put short-term economic growth at the centre of its public policy priorities. Any growth is deemed good growth. However, sustainable growth requires public investments in human capital development - from childcare to life-long-learning; it requires investments in research and policy development; it requires proactive public measures to ensure that short-term growth doesn't come at the cost of long-term environmental devastation. Civil society organizations in Canada have come together to present a broad range of public policy alternatives, recognizing the constraints of the economic crisis and offering practical, sustainable means for achieving well-being for everyone living in Canada. Examples include: the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternative's annual Alternative Federal Budget project, which draws on a wide body of expertise in order to provide cost-effective policy alternatives for



public expenditure; the formation of a broad coalition of organizations called Voices, to document the diminished space for democratic debate in Canada and to provide new forums for that debate; the Canadian Council for International Development's call for a "new deal" between the Government and civil society organizations;³ and the collaboration of scholars and women's organizations to provide a gendered analysis of public spending priorities.⁴ In spite of evidence that organizations with a strong public policy advocacy agenda risk losing their federal funding, Canadian civil society continues to produce critical and innovative public policy that puts human and environmental well-being at the centre of their models of progress.

Inequality

As a result of tax cuts, the Government will have lost CAD 96.6 billion (USD 97.9 billion) in revenue between 2008 and 2011.⁵ As the economic stimulus spending programme wraps up, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives projects a USD 3.8 billion decline in federal programme spending in 2011-2012, "the second biggest spending decline (in US dollars) since the 1950s."⁶ This will likely continue a pattern of federal spending cuts on social programmes that began in the mid 1990s.⁷ The Government's economic policy has had a significant impact on people's



well-being. Social assistance rates have remained virtually unchanged across most of Canada. Most social assistance incomes in the country remain well below the low income cut-off rate. While the overall poverty rate is 9%, poverty still disproportionately affects women, Aboriginal peoples, and people with disabilities. For example, one in three Aboriginal and racialized people in Canada live in poverty. One in four people with disabilities, immigrants, and female single-parents in Canada live in poverty. Across all categories rates of poverty are higher for women than for men.

Access to services is highly uneven – with those most affected by the economic crisis often receiving the least benefit from national economic policies. For example, in the education sector, access to primary education is counted among Canada's achievements, yet many children on First Nations reserves do not have access to safe schools.⁸ First Nations children are over-represented within the child welfare system and are far more likely to be affected by poverty and inadequate housing. However, First Nations students attending federally-funded schools on reserves receive USD 2,000 less per student per year than do students in the rest of Canada.⁹

Women's eroding rights

Economists have demonstrated that women are typically the shock absorbers in situations of economic crisis, as they take on greater burdens of unpaid work

¹ Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, *Alternative Federal Budget: 2011*, (Ottawa: 2011), p. 11.

² K.Howlett, "Corporate Tax Cuts Don't Spur Growth, Analysis Reveals as Election Pledges Fly," *The Globe and Mail*, (6 April 2011).

^{3 &}lt;www.ccic.ca>.

^{4 &}lt;www.fafia-afai.org>.

⁵ Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, *op cit.*, p.16, "Figure 9: Cost of Tax Cuts Since 2006."

⁶ Ibid, p. 15.

⁷ See Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action, Canada's Commitment to Equality: A Gender Analysis of the Last Ten Federal Budgets (1995-2004), (Ottawa: 2005).

⁸ A. Rajekar and R. Mathilakath, *The Funding Requirement for First Nations Schools in Canada*, Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, (2009).

⁹ M. Mendelson, *Why We Need a First Nations Education Act,* Caledon Institute of Social Policy, (Ottawa: 2009).

and experience their status in the formal sector become more precarious.¹⁰ Women in Canada have been among the first to return to a post-recession labour force, but this early re-entry does not translate into increased well-being or increased economic stability, since returning women workers are more likely to be engaged in part-time and unpaid work.¹¹ Moreover, they continue to suffer from one of the largest gender wage gaps amongst OECD countries.¹²

Low wages and temporary employment result in fewer women than men qualifying for employment insurance or tax credits. Working mothers face additional challenges. Two-thirds of all mothers with children under the age of six do paid work.¹³ However, the Government cancelled a national childcare plan that would provide increased access for all working parents to safe, affordable childcare. For women who are not part of the paid workforce, the erosion of rights has been particularly acute, especially for those most likely to rely on welfare, including single mothers and Aboriginal women. Welfare incomes are so low that the Chair of the National Council of Welfare recently called them "shameful and morally unsustainable in a rich country."¹⁴

Violence against women in Canada varies significantly across different groups and regions, with Aboriginal women being disproportionately subject to violence. More than 500 Aboriginal women in Canada have gone missing or been murdered over the last 40 years.¹⁵ Women living in remote communities in the North also experience higher rates of violence than their counterparts in urban and southern regions of Canada and have far less access to support services.¹⁶ With such high levels of gender-based violence, it is not surprising that there is increased support amongst women for policies that address violent crime. However the current Government's "Truth in Sentencing Act" appears to address a problem that isn't there, since sentencing rates have changed little over the past decade.17 The legislation will impact the economy more than sentencing practices. The Parliamentary Budget Office estimates that the Truth in Sentencing Act will double the cost of the penal system over five years - to USD 9.5 billionand will require an additional USD 1.8 billion for the cost of constructing new prisons.18

- 11 Statistics Canada, *Women in Canada: Work Chapter Update*, (Ottawa: 2007).
- 12 OECD, Gender Pay Gaps For Full-Time Workers And Earnings Differentials By Educational Attainment, (2010).
- 13 Statistics Canada, "Paid Work," in Women in Canada, op cit.
- 14 National Council of Welfare, *Staggering Losses in Welfare Incomes*, (Ottawa: 2006).
- 15 Native Women's Association of Canada, Voices of Our Sisters In Spirit: A Report to Families and Communities, (Ottawa: 2009).
- 16 Statistics Canada, *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006*, (Ottawa: 2006).
- 17 K. MacQueen, "Is Canada Tough On Crime Or Doing Just Fine?" *Macleans Magazine, 7* (September 2010).
- 18 Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, "The Funding Requirement and Impact of the "Truth in Sentencing Act" on the Correctional System in Canada," (Ottawa: 2010).

In comparison to spending on social programmes, spending on the security sector is set to increase significantly. The Government's own estimates indicate military spending will total USD 22 billion in 2010-2011.¹⁹ However, the estimates attached to spending on military equipment and new 'tough on crime' legislation has been highly contested. For example, estimates for the cost of the recently purchased F-35 fighter jets range from USD 9 billion, according to the Department of National Defence,²⁰ to USD 29 billion, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer.²¹

Although Canada has committed to doubling its spending on development assistance in absolute dollars, Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a percentage of GNI has remained static since 2005 at 0.3%.22 The Canadian Official Development Assistance Accountability Act (2008) requires that Canadian development assistance "contribut[e] to poverty reduction, tak[e] into account the perspectives of the poor and [be] consistent with international human rights standards."23 Many civil society organizations see the Act as a very promising mechanism for integrating human rights concerns into international development policy and programming. However, a report from the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, a civil society coalition, suggests that there has been little or no Government implementation of the Act.24

"Equality between women and men" and "environmental sustainability" remain cross-cutting themes for the Canadian International Development Agency; however, political, human and financial resources are being withdrawn from those objectives. The term "gender equality" has largely disappeared from official Government statements and policy documents.²⁵ Funding committed to gender equality-specific programming remains less than 2% of Canadian ODA.²⁶ At the 2010 meeting of the G8, the Harper Government committed 1.1 billion Can-

- 20 Ibid.; Arriving at Canada's Costs for the F-35A Conventional Takeoff and Landing Variant Joint Strike Fighter, (Ottawa: 2011).
- 21 K. Page, An Estimate of the Fiscal Impact of Canada's Proposed Acquisition of the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter, Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, (March 2011).
- 22 Canadian International Development Agency, Statistical Report on International Assistance: Fiscal Year 2009–2010, (Ottawa: 2011).
- 23 Ministry of Justice, Official Development Assistance Accountability Act, (Ottawa: 2008).
- 24 Canadian Council for International Co-operation, A Time to Act – Implementing the ODA Accountability Act: A Canadian CSO Agenda for Aid Reform, (Ottawa: 2010).
- 25 Canadian Labour Congress and FAFIA, Reality Check: Women in Canada and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Fifteen Years On: A Canadian Civil Society Response, (Ottawa: 2010); M.Collins, "Gender Equality", "Child Soldiers" and "Humanitarian Law" are Axed from Foreign Policy Language," Embassy Magazine, (29 July 2009).
- 26 CSO Working Group on Women's Rights, Strengthening Canada's International Leadership in the Promotion of Gender Equality: A Civil Society Response to the Evaluation of the Implementation of CIDA's 1999 Policy on Gender Equality, (Ottawa, 2009), Chart 1: Gender Equality Trends, Percentage of CIDA ODA.

adian dollars in new spending for maternal and child health programmes in poor countries. Civil society organizations welcomed this commitment, but many criticized the decision not to fund abortion services under the initiative, even where such services are already legal in the country where the project would be implemented.

Environmental degradation

Canada's record on environmental sustainability brought criticism from other countries during the 2009 UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. Since then, Canada has actually lowered its emissions targets for 2020,27 while its own greenhouse gas emissions are rising. Those living in northern Canada have seen a significant impact on their environment and their well-being. According to a 2011 report by the Penumbra Institute: "Canada's Arctic has already experienced a warming of more than 1.7°C and an increase of 4 or 5°C is projected.²⁸ Inuit communities report the decline in access to their traditional sources of food and an overall degradation of their environment and well-being.29 This degradation is further exacerbated in northern and rural regions by the mining and extractive industries. For example, residents of Baker Lake have documented the negative effects of expanding uranium mining activities on their community. Although water quality remains good across Canada, over 100 First Nations communities continue to live with inadequate access to safe drinking water.

Canada's mining industry has a strong presence internationally as well as domestically. Canadianbased companies make up over 40% of the world's extractive industry. Although Canadian civil society is playing a leading role in monitoring the industry through initiatives such as Publish What You Pay, the Kimberly Process and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Regional Certification Mechanism for conflict minerals, Canada has not yet agreed to adopt consumer protection regulations or to comply with the guidelines set by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

Economic stability, a question of means

The economic crisis has pushed civil society to renew its engagement with economic policy debates. Governmental and non-governmental actors alike are grappling with the question of how to achieve their goals within a constrained fiscal environment. But the question of how best to stimulate economic growth and ensure economic stability is a question of means, not ends. Ultimately, the focus must remain on the society being built by that growth.

29 S. Nickels, et al., Unikkaaqatigiit – Putting the Human Face on Climate Change: Perspectives from Inuit in Canada, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Nasivvik Centre for Inuit Health and Changing Environments at Université Laval and the Ajunnginiq Centre at the National Aboriginal Health Organization, (Ottawa: 2005).

¹⁰ C. Sweetman and R. King, *Gender Perspectives on the Global Economic Crisis*, (Oxfam International Discussion Paper, 2010).

¹⁹ Department of National Defence, National Defence 2010–2011 Report on Plans and Priorities: Part III Estimates, (Ottawa: 2010).

²⁷ Environment Canada, "Canada Lists Emissions Target Under the Copenhagen Accord," (Calgary, Alberta: 1 February 2010).

²⁸ A. Morgan, *Canadian Index of Well-being Environment Report*, (Waterloo, Ontario: 2011).

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Ominous trends



All forecasts agree that the outlook for the country is grim. The people are facing a wide range of threats, including desert encroachment, the loss of forests, increasing poverty and under-employment. No one is taking action to improve the situation. The country has no policy for sustainable development. Government bodies do not coordinate their policies and it is not hard to see that the worst is still to come.

Action Group for Peace and Education for Change (GAPAFOT) Pastor Clotaire Rodonne Siribi

The economy of the Central African Republic depends primarily on the agriculture sector, which employs around 68% of the active population and in 2005-06 generated 54% of the gross domestic product (GDP).¹ The country has about 15 million hectares of arable land, but less than two million hectares – 3.2% of the surface area – are actually cultivated.² Its 16 million hectares of grassland are also underexploited; it has 2.9 million head of cattle while the potential is five million.³ Some agricultural production is exported (cotton, coffee and tobacco) but most of the sector is used for subsistence farming.

The traditional cultivation methods commonly applied use burning techniques, which contributes to soil erosion and deforestation.⁴ The most widespread system is semi-itinerant poly-cultivation, a method that involves rotating cotton, mandioc and cereals in the savannah; coffee and mandioc in the forests; and cereals in the Sahel region. In spite of favourable agro-ecological conditions, agricultural yields are extremely low.

Energy from firewood

An analysis of the urbanization process and the situation in large cities reveals several serious problems with current exploitation of the country's environmental and human resources. Reliance on wood for nearly 90% of cooking fuel is causing deforestation. Urbanization and the concentration of the population in and around the cities has brought environmental problems such as anarchic housing construction on what was agricultural land, the concentration of pollutants, soil degradation, alteration of the hydro-geological system, expansion of the savannah and pre-desertification

- World Bank, Agriculture, <datos.bancomundial.org/ indicador/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS>.
- ITeM World Guide, Central African Republic: Indicators, <www.guiadelmundo.org.uy/cd/countries/caf/Indicators. html>.
- 3 J.J. Ndewana, General Panorama of the CAR, <www.mijarc. org/uploads/media/MIJARCNoticias2-06.pdf>.
- 4 Mongbay.com, *Central African Republic*, <rainforests. mongabay.com/20car.htm>.



conditions. Wood is the main fuel for heating in 91.7% of households in the capital, Bangui, where it is used in nearly all poor homes (96%); the rich use a combination of firewood (84.5%), coal (10.5%) and gas (2.5%). Between 750 and 1400 tonnes of firewood are consumed every day in Bangui alone, which comes to 280,000 to 500,000 tonnes per year.



Environmental problems

The country's most pressing environmental problems are water pollution, desertification and the loss of biodiversity. Droughts are now frequent in the north, northeast and eastern regions, which in the past were known for their agricultural production. It is increasingly evident that underground water reserves are being exhausted, causing a se-

		Imption and	<u> </u>						
Socio-economic category									
Energy for cooking	Very poor	Poor	Middle	Rich	Very rich	Total			
Wood	96.4	94.0	93.0	90.8	84.5	91.7			
Coal	2.7	4.1	4.5	5.9	10.5	5.5			
Oil	0.5	1.4	1.7	2.2	1.3	1.4			
Gas	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5	2.5	0.7			
Electricity	0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.8	0.2			
Others	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0			
Socio-economic cate	gory								
Energy for lighting	Very poor	Poor	Middle	Rich	Very rich	Total			
Oil	97	89.9	76.2	53.3	14.7	65.5			
Gas	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3			
Electricity	2.0	9.3	23.0	45.9	84.5	33.7			
Wood	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3			
Others	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.3			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0			

vere reduction in productivity in these areas.⁵ To make matters worse, the Central African Republic ranks alongside Zaire and Nigeria as countries with the most severely eroded soil in Africa.⁶ The ravaging of the jungles and forests by farmers and others cutting wood for fuel leads directly to desertification and deforestation. The country has now lost around 29,600 hectares of tropical forest.

Biodiversity has become another critical problem. The elephant population, for example, has long been under threat. In the middle of the 1990s it was estimated that over the previous 30 years 90% of the country's elephants had been exterminated, with 85% of the massacre after 1985. Hunting of elephants is now banned but illegal poachers are still killing them, along with black and white rhinos.

Urbanization and poverty

The myth that moving to a city brings higher income and greater security became widespread in the Central African Republic only recently. The predicted annual urbanization rate for the period 2010-15 is 2.5% and the new city dwellers are overwhelmingly poor.⁷ Analysts attribute this population shift to a variety of factors, including high birth rates, a drastic drift off the land, and an influx of refugees caused by armed conflicts and instability not only in the Central African Republic itself but in neighbouring countries (Congo, Sudan and Chad). Living conditions are far from good. For example, in some districts of Bangui inhabitants have electricity only four days a week. Access to potable water is extremely limited.⁸

According to the 2003 General Population and Housing Census, 2.6 million people, 62.7% of the population, live below the poverty line. The overall poverty rate is 60% in cities and 72% in rural areas.⁹

Since Bangui's population growth is due to migration from rural areas, the structure of the urban landscape and the use of space are key questions in the future development of the city. Reliance on poorly remunerated, precarious methods of earning a living, such as collecting firewood aggravates urban poverty.

- 5 "Central African Republic Environment", in Nations Encyclopaedia. Available from: <www.nationsencyclopedia. com/Africa/Central-African-Republic-ENVIRONMENT.html>.
- 6 FAO, Land and environmental degradation and desertification in Africa, <www.fao.org/docrep/X5318E/x5318e02.htm>.
- 7 <en.worldstat.info/Africa/List_of_countries_by_Rate_ of_urbanization>; Indexmundi, *Central African Republic Urbanization*, <www.indexmundi.com/central_african_ republic/urbanization.html>.
- 8 Social Watch, "Central African Republic. The Reduction of Poverty: a very distant objective," in *People First, Social Watch Report 2009*, (Montevideo: 2009), p. 146.
- 9 Social Watch, "Many obstacles and slow progress," in After the Fall, Social Watch Report 2010, (Montevideo: 2010), p.154.

FIGURE 1





Although the unemployment rate is calculated at only 2%, 64% of new labour opportunities are in activities that are very poorly paid, such as extensive small agriculture and the informal sector; only 10% of jobs are in the formal sector.¹⁰ Urban poverty is particularly severe among people working in agriculture and fishing.

The worst is still to come

The State is offering no solutions to these problems and appears to have no will to take action. It does not engage in any long term planning, has no development policy and has taken no measures to tackle the most urgent problems. Individual ministries, including Agriculture and Environment, intervene without any kind of coordination. If current trends continue the forests will continue to shrink, even more land will become savannah and soil erosion will increase, gradually depriving people who cultivate crops or cut wood of their main source of income and increasing the risk of flooding. Conflicts over whether urban and semiurban plots of land should be used for building or for agricultural production will become acute.

In the long term we can expect the prices of firewood and agricultural products to increase, and poverty in cities and their periphery to intensify. Even more worrying, climate models predict that average temperatures will rise and droughts will become more frequent. This will lead to a marked increase in desertification, which will exacerbate the other catastrophes gradually degrading the country.

10 Ibid.

Many promises, little commitment



The country's development model is tied to resource extraction and the Government is still prioritizing energy sources such as coal that have serious negative ecological effects. Chile has made a series of international commitments to adopt environmental-protection policies, but very little has actually been done in terms of effective legislation or concrete action. The country urgently needs to develop or strengthen institutions to handle environmental threats, a new energy policy, regulations to govern biodiversity, to change its electricity generating profile and also to bring civil society organizations into the debate about sustainable development.

Fundación Terram Luz M. Fariña Flavia Liberona

In the 20 years since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (Rio 92) Chile has undergone big political, economic, environmental and social changes. Its extractive economic model, however, has remained virtually unchanged. The mainstay of the economy is still the export of natural resources with low levels of processing, and the environment is still being intensively exploited, particularly by the mining, fishing, agriculture and forestry sectors.

Rio 92 produced a series of commitments to pursue sustainable development policies, agreed to by more than 100 countries. Chile subscribed to all of these but has made almost no progress in the areas in question. For example, it has not promulgated a biodiversity protection law, it does not have a regulatory framework to protect its philogenetic patrimony and traditional techniques and systems, and it does not have a register of endangered species or plans to restore stocks of these fauna. Weaknesses in regulations that involve authorization and permits have allowed the introduction and cultivation of transgenic organisms that, according to Greenpeace,¹ negatively affect food security, and that many believe constitute an environmental and health risk.²

The successive administrations of Patricio Aylwin, Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet (1990 to 2010) adhered to a neoliberal export-oriented growth model that benefits the big groups of enterprises but has widened social and economic differences. According to the IMF, in 2008 Chile had the highest per capita income in South America (about USD 14,600³), but the effec-



tive distribution of this income - as measured by the GINI index – makes Chile one of the most unequal countries in the world, with a coefficient of 0.55.⁴

In the first decade of the 21st century Chile's image was "made greener" in response to international requirements, but this has not been translated into better democracy or greater respect for the environment. With the adoption of the 1994 General Law of Bases of the Environment, which became operational in 1997, the environment management system should have been improved by developing control and monitoring instruments like quality standards and limits on emissions into water, soil and the atmosphere. However, more than a decade later only a fraction of these measures have been implemented.

Moreover, according to a 2005 OECD report⁵, systems for the protection and conservation of natural resources and to manage nature in line with international parameters have not been developed. In practice the environment law only generated a single window system to obtain environmental authorization for Chilean and foreign investment projects.

We might even question whether sustainability is possible at all in a country that is being pillaged, where water is provided free and in perpetuity to big foreign business consortiums, where copper is mined with no environmental safeguards and where the predominant forestry model is based on plantations of exotic species.



In Chile water is legally classed as a public good but it is supplied for private sector use. This makes it a tradable good even though these enterprises are awarded rights to consumption free of charge and with no time limit. The forestry model in Chile was implemented during the dictatorship period through Decree-Law No. 701, whereby forestation was subsidized and the planting of exotic species of pine and eucalyptus promoted with State disbursements covering up to 90% of the cost.

Regulations governing copper mining are either deficient or not yet in place and the sector is fraught with problems: the State levies a specific tax rather than receiving royalties, mining operations have only been obliged to close works since the environment law came into force in 1997, there are projects currently in operation whose environmental impacts have never been evaluated, there is no public register of places that have been polluted by mining and there is no plan to deal with mining sites that have been closed down or abandoned.

New institutions for the environment

Chile urgently needs to consolidate its new environmental institutions, including the Ministry of the Environment, the Environment Evaluation Service and the Superintendent of the Environment, which were set up at the beginning of 2010 in line with Law 20.417. This new system of institutions promotes policy dialogue and cooperation in environmental matters, separates environment evaluation policies and regulations from investment project influence, sets up an autonomous body to monitor compliance with environment regulations, and implements new environment management instruments like the evaluation strategy.

Greenpeace, Transgénicos, (2010), <www.greenpeace.org/ espana/es/Trabajamos-en/Transgenicos/>.

² EcoPortal, Tema especial: transgénicos, (2010), <transgenicos.ecoportal.net>; G. Persley and J. Siedow, Aplicaciones de la biotecnología a los cultivos: beneficios y riesgos, (December 1999), <www.agbioworld.org/biotechinfo/articles/spanish/ensayo.html>; GreenFacts, Consenso científico sobre los cultivos transgénicos y OMG, (2005), <www.greenfacts.org/es/org/index.htm>.

³ IMF, World Economic Outlook (WEO), Crisis and Recovery, (April 2009), <www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2009/01>

⁴ Government of Chile, Mideplan, CASEN 2009, <vvvv. mideplan.gob.cl/casen2009/distribucion_ingreso_ casen_2009.pdf>.

⁵ OECD, Environmental Performance Reviews: Chile, (2005).

However, discussions about reform did not tackle the basic issues but merely led to political agreements between the Socialist members of Parliament, the right-wing interests and the Government. These excluded subjects and proposals from civil society organizations and demands for crucial measures to strengthen democracy and safeguard the environment, arguing that this was necessary in order to move the process along. But the resulting legislation does not contain instruments to protect Chile's environmental heritage and does not promote full civil society participation and thus fails to remedy the serious defects in the way the country's democracy works.

Energy going the wrong way

Between 1999 and 2008 the electricity generating sector grew by 32% and installed generating capacity increased by 428%. In 1993 the sector's potential output was 2,162 megawatts (MW), which amounted to around 40% of total electric capacity, but by December 2008 this had risen to 9,251 MW and accounted for 64.7% of the total. This shows how dependent the country has become on fossil fuels, and it is precisely these that have severe negative impacts on the environment. In the period 2004 to 2008, the use of coal to generate energy went up by 72% while the use of natural gas - which is less damaging to the environment than other fossil energy sources - fell by 31%.6

In the electricity sector there is no framework through which to govern or monitor such aspects as water emissions, the useful life of power stations. fuel quality, the introduction of up-to-date technologies or consideration of the environmental costs of generation. This means that the State cannot plan or make projections about power output for the middle and long term; this depends entirely on the plans of the private enterprises that run Chile's electricity sector

Vulnerability, climate change and desertification

Chile has seven of the nine vulnerability categories established in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): low-lying coastal areas, mountain ecosystems, arid and semi-arid land vulnerable to drought and desertification, areas at risk of natural disasters, areas prone to forest deterioration, highly polluted urban areas and fragile ecosystems.7

Greenhouse gas emissions in the country make up only 0.23% of the world total, but per capita emissions are increasing at a faster rate than anywhere else in the continent (1.2 tonnes per year in 14 years).8 According to the International Energy Agency, in 2008 Chile had the second highest percentage increase in CO, emissions in the world;9 only China was in a worse situation. And when the inevitable consequences of the decision to use coal as a main energy source are considered the outlook is even more discouraging.

Chile made an early commitment to combating climate change when it subscribed to (1992) and ratified (1994) the provisions of the UNFCCC, and signed (1997) and ratified (2002) the Kyoto Protocol. The 2006 National Climate Change Strategy and the Climate Change Action Plan 2008-2012 are also in force. But despite these national and international commitments, climate change is not high on the Government's agenda.

One of the most alarming consequences of climate change is desertification, which is among Chile's most serious socio-environmental problems. According to official data, this phenomenon is affecting some 62.3% of the country (47.3 million hectares), mainly in the north (Region 1 to Region 8) and in the south (Regions 11 and 12).¹⁰. Chile signed the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 1997, but the main causes of this phenomenon in the country-drought, deforestation, forest fires, soil erosion and changes in land use - are still operating, so this problem is nowhere near being resolved.

Proposals

As regards the environment, the main tasks the country faces are as follows:

- To consolidate and implement a new national environment institutional structure:
- To implement biodiversity regulations and adopt a new law to safeguard the country's native biodiversity and its philogenetic patrimony;
- To design and implement a middle and long term energy policy and to revise current regulations to enable the State to plan electricity generation and lay down standards to control the sources and types of fuels used in this sector;
- To improve people's access to information about the environment and to engage the population more effectively in these processes;
- To move forward in implementing the National Plan to Adapt to Climate Change;
- To establish and/or implement pollution prevention and clean up plans. Air pollution has got worse in both the north and the south of the country and this has serious consequences for people's health in those regions.

8 UNDP, Informe de Desarrollo Humano 2007-2008. La lucha contra el Cambio Climático: solidaridad frente a un mundo dividido. (New York: 2007).

2008), <www.worldenergyoutlook.org>.

Government of Chile, Conama: "Plan de Acción Nacional de 7 Cambio Climático 2008-2012, (Santiago: 2008), p. 13.

⁶ Fundación TERRAM. Evaluación. Actualidad v Provección del Sistema Termoeléctrico Chileno, (Santiago: November 2009), <www.cambioclimaticochile.cl/documentos_terram.php>.

¹⁰ University of Chile. Instituto de Asuntos Públicos. Centro de Análisis de Políticas Públicas. Informe País: Estado del 9 World Energy Outlook 2008, (International Energy Agency, Medio Ambiente en Chile 2008, (Santiago: March 2010), n 251
COLOMBIA

Extraction-led growth versus people's well-being



The recently elected Government of Juan Manuel Santos has given priority to environmental sustainability and risk management and has issued a National Development Plan aimed at generating income and increasing production while still preserving and protecting bio-diversity and the nation's ecosystems. Nonetheless people's well-being and the environment are still under threat. A recent example is the production of biofuels, which has damaged the peasant economy, displaced entire populations and destroyed natural ecosystems. Despite its rhetoric of sustainability, the Santos Government continues the same economic model of its predecessor.

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Following his election in 2010, President Juan Manuel Santos, Minister of Defence in the previous Government of Álvaro Uribe (2002-10), established "environmental sustainability and risk management" and a National Development Plan (NDP) as core policies of his new administration. The official text of the NDP recognizes a direct relation between rising poverty levels and environmental deterioration. Two connected strategies are proposed to overcome these problems: an economic policy geared to generating income and increasing production, and an environmental policy of preservation and protection of bio-diversity and ecosystem services that contribute to the people's well-being.¹

The strategy of raising income and production assumes that in the immediate future the country will grow by 1.7 percentage points per year, thereby reducing poverty by 1.2% and indigence by 1.0%. At the same time, the Government estimates that the mining and the energy production and transmission sectors will expand by 588%. Permanent hydrocarbon reserves will increase by 335%; oil and gas production, by 79%; the construction of oil and multi-purpose pipelines, by 78%; coal output, by 70% and gold production, by 51%.²

The Plan does not address the distribution of wealth, however. Latin America is the region with the most unequal distribution of wealth in the world, and Colombia has the most unequal distribution in the region.³ The poorest 50% of the population receive only 13.8% of total income while the richest 10% enjoy no less than 46.5% of the income.⁴ It is unclear how the contemplated development will create a more equitable distribution of income.



Preservation and protection of bio-diversity, as set forth in the NDP, reflects the need to incorporate environmental considerations into land planning and sector policy management processes. The Government's stated goal is to reduce the impact of the country's ecological footprint of 1.9 global hectares (gha) per person. This unit captures the demand humans make on resources measured against the ecosystem's capacity to regenerate itself. An ecological footprint of 1.9 gha per person means that Colombia is exploiting its ecosystems 1.9 times more rapidly than they can renew themselves. The standard for sustainable human development is 1.8 gha.5 One aspect of the new environmental policy is a proposal to stimulate economic growth through increased production of biofuels and the alternative use of coal.6

The foundations have not changed

The recent change of government has left many in the country confused. President Santos has moved away from his predecessor's stance in relation to the judiciary and the opposition, but in political economy and environmental development policy - in spite of public pronouncements - the main policy thrust of the new administration seems to be the same as that of its predecessor.

During President Uribe's two terms in office, inequality in Colombia – measured by the Gini coefficient – held steady at 0.59,⁷ which was the 2002



level when Uribe took office. That inequality did not change over his eight years shows how ineffective the government programmes in that period were. Yet the current administration is continuing those same programmes.⁸

One of the mainstays of economic growth during President Uribe's tenure, which continues today, is a steady expansion of mining. Over the last ten years, the mineral extraction sector has greatly expanded, causing a corresponding shrinkage of investment in the agriculture sector. Before 2001, between 80 and 100 mining authorizations were issued per year. Since then, they have been issued at an average rate of more than 400 per year.⁹ The severe negative effects that mining has on the soil and the reduced financial support for small peasant farmers have undermined small-scale agriculture throughout Colombia.

Biofuel production

A worrying aspect of the Government's environmental policy is the link it proposes between environmental protection and the expansion of biofuels, an alternative energy source favoured by international capital and the Santos Government. The Inter-American Development Bank has proposed biofuels as the best production and clean energy option for developing countries since they are presumed not to have a

¹ Government of Colombia, *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2010-2014, Prosperidad para Todos*, (Bogota: 2010).

² Ibid., p. 423

³ Colombia Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Informe sobre Colombia*, (A/HRC/16/22), (February 2011), paragraph 99.

⁴ R. Bonilla and J. I. González (coordinators), *Bienestar y macroeconomía 2002-2006: el crecimiento ineguitativo no es sostenible*, (Bogotá: CID, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Contraloría General de la República, 2006), p. 23.

⁵ Ibid., p. 424.

⁶ Ibid., p. 463.

⁷ Departamento Nacional de Planeación, Misión para el Empalme de las Series de Empleo, Pobreza y Desigualdad (MESEP) entrega series actualizadas al Gobierno Nacional, (24 August 2009), «www.dnp.gov.co».

^{8 &}quot;Familias en Acción va a seguir y se va a fortalecer," *El Universal*, (Popayán: 5 March 2011), <www.eluniversal.com. co/cartagena/politica/familias-en-accion-va-seguir-y-se-va-fortalecer-12786>.

⁹ J. Houghton (ed.), La tierra contra la muerte. Conflictos territoriales en los pueblos indígenas, (Bogotá: Centro de Cooperación al Indígena, 2008).

harmful impact on the environment.¹⁰ Washington has implemented a series of commercial strategies to encourage biofuel expansion in the hemisphere as a low-cost way to solve US energy problems without diverting part of its own agriculture resources from food production to biofuels.¹¹ Concomitantly, in recent years the Colombian Government has increased its support for agro-industrial mono-cultivation, which is the mode of production of biofuels. The diversion of resources from small scale peasant farming to biofuels has caused the displacement of entire populations.¹²

In the period from October 2005 to March 2006, five ethanol plants went into operation (Ingenio del Cauca, Providencia and Risaralda, Ardila Lulle, and Mayagüez and Manuelita). These plants produce 1,050,000 litres of ethanol per day, which represents 60% of the Colombian market's needs. The negative consequences were evident from the start.

Biofuel production requires large-scale monocultivation of sugar, maize, palm oil or soybean. First, this production system erodes the soil and exhausts its nutrients.¹³ Second, water resources are compromised because the extraction and refining processes cause pollution. Third, less land is available for producing food, so food prices rise and food shortages among the poorest stratum of society are aggravated.¹⁴

The use of soybean and maize to produce biofuels is pushing up the prices of these products on the food market. Since the US started promoting ethanol as a fuel, the price of maize has soared to an all-time high. In 2007, the International Food Policy Research Institute issued a report that estimated international repercussions of this rising demand for biofuels: by 2020 the price of maize is expected to have risen by 41%; the prices of soya and sunflowers could increase by as much as 76%, and wheat could be 30% more expensive.¹⁵

Further, biofuels emit CO₂ and produce greenhouse gases - though less, of course, than methane and those fuels which contain nitrogen and sulphur (NOx and SOx).¹⁶ Moreover, the financial yield of such biofuels as palm oil is very delayed, with the return on the initial investment coming as long as five years after planting. Consequently, biofuels often are profitable only for agricultural units of more than 50 hectares, which means that only medium and large landowners benefit from their production.

Discrimination against people of African descent

The expansion of biofuel production has also had a negative impact on people of African descent in Colombia. In proven cases, bio-fuel entrepreneurs with links to paramilitary groups have illegally expropriated the lands of these communities. In places like Curbaradó, where people of African descent are a large majority of the population, some 29,000 hectares of their land have been annexed through paramilitary action, and today 7,000 of these stolen hectares are being used for palm oil production.¹⁷

Racial discrimination against people of African descent has been a problem in Colombia for a very long time. These communities, which account for 26% of the total population, are living under markedly worse conditions than the rest of the country. For example, an estimated 72% of all people of African descent are in the lowest socioeconomic stratum.¹⁸ The infant mortality rate is twice that of Colombia as a whole. As high as 79% of the municipalities in which Afro-Colombian people represent a majority are at the lowest economic and social development level with 85% of the population living in poverty. This shocking percentage contrasts sharply with the other municipalities where at most 38% live in poverty.

People of African descent have less access to basic education, health services or good jobs and a lower level of participation in public life.¹⁹ In May 2009 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) reported that although the Government has made an effort to combat violence in areas of Afro-Colombian settlement, law enforcement authorities have failed to solve most violent crimes, a situation that has led to the displacement of entire communities.²⁰

Recently some progress has been made towards rectifying this state of affairs. In March 2011, more than 25,000 hectares of land were returned to communities in the Curvaradó and Jiguamiandó River basins in the northeast of the country. That land had been expropriated for biofuel production by a paramilitary organization called Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia, which was dissolved in 2006. It was restored to its rightful owners as part of a Santos administration programme to return some 2.5 million hectares that had been taken over by paramilitary groups.²¹

- 11 M. A. Valencia, Los agrocombustibles en Colombia: El modelo de Robin Hood al revés y los precios de los alimentos , (2008), <mavalencia.blogspot.com/2008/03/losagrocombustibles-en-colombia-el.html>.
- 12 "Ley para sufrir menos por el dólar," *El tiempo*, (24 July 2009), pp. 1-8.
- 13 Ecoclimático, El monocultivo y sus consecuencias, (November 2008), <vww.ecoclimatico.com/archives/elmonocultivo-y-sus-consecuencias-822>.
- 14 Movimiento Mundial por los Bosques Tropicales, Biocombustibles, un desastre en potencia, <vvvv.vrm.org. uy/actores/CCC/Nairobi/Biocombustibles.html>.
- 15 Greenpeace, Biocombustibles, <www.greenpeace.org.ar/ biocombustibles/argentina/informacion.html>.

- 17 Revista Semana, *Los usurpados del Choco*," (no. 1402, 16 to 23 March 2009), p. 49.
- 18 G. Romaña, Afrocolombianos en busca de leyes contra el racismo y la desigualdad, (November 2005),
 vww. revistafuturos.info/futuros14/afrocolombianos.htm>.
- 19 Globedia, Padece población afrodescendiente de Colombia marginación, (15 May 2009), <uy.globedia.com/padecepoblacion-afrodescendiente-colombia-marginacion>.

20 IACHR, (May 2009).

21 Vanguardia.com, Restituyen más de 25 mil hectáreas a colombianos afrodescendientes, (19 March 2009), < www.vanguardia.com/actualidad/colombia/97218restituyen-mas-de-25-mil-hectareas-a-colombianosafrodescendientes>.

¹⁰ P. Álvarez Roa, "La política del Gobierno colombiano en la promoción de agrocombustibles", (2008), <confraternizarhoy.blogspot.com/2010/08/estado-terroristaen-colombia-para.html>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

CROATIA

Civil society: the sole defender of the public interest



The global crisis has hit Croatia's economy hard. The country is experiencing increased poverty and unemployment rates yet the Government is still favouring non-sustainable approaches to development. The authorities seem to serve only the private sector while the people's well-being often has to be defended by civil society organizations, as shown by a successful campaign against the extension of an oil pipeline to the Adriatic Sea. The Government's Strategy for Sustainable Development is inadequate and the current land, water and forest legislation is not only flawed but also lacks transparency. The country must embrace the cause of sustainable development immediately.

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The 2008 global economic crisis had a profound and negative impact on the Croatian economy. Growth dropped from 2.4% in 2008 to -5.8% in 2009 and -1.4% in 2010.¹ At the same time and aggravating the crisis, foreign debt service had reached almost 100% of GDP by 2010, severely limiting continued access to foreign credit.²

One of the main negative impacts of the crisis has been increasing unemployment. Between 2005 and 2008 economic growth allowed some job creation but the crisis reversed this situation: in 2010 the unemployment level (measured as a percentage of the total population) was approximately 17.6%.³

Poverty rates have also increased. Between 2005 and 2008 poverty was primarily linked to longterm unemployment and inactivity, mostly concentrated among low-skilled workers, but this changed with the crisis. Reduced employment, decreased real income and a salaries' freeze in the public sector have pushed many people below the poverty line. As a result the "emerging" poor are better educated, younger and economically active.

Defending the environment

Public and private interests continually collide in Croatia. The public interest is being defended solely by civil society while the political elites often serve only private interests. In 2009 the Parliament approved the "Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia," which established a series of guidelines and policies regarding sustainable development and also commented on the country's environmental situation.⁴ However, it has been heavily criticized by several civil society organizations, which have pointed out that it does not establish priority goals and lacks benchmarks and indicators of progress.

- 1 Countries of the World, *Croatia Economy 2011*, <www. theodora.com/wfbcurrent/croatia_economy.html>.
- 2 US Department of State, "Background Note: Croatia," (6 April 2011), <www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3166.htm>.
- 3 Index Mundi, Croatia unemployment rate, <www. indexmundi.com/croatia/unemployment_rate.html>.
- 4 See: <www.mzopu.hr/doc/Strategy_for_Sustainable_ Development.pdf>.



The crisis has led to so-called "investment hunger" in which the Government aligns with private and foreign investors at the expense of the community as a whole. The capital that is attracted as a result is not a viable source of development since it depends on minimal labour and environmental regulations and typically both reduces and degrades the country's natural resources.

In this context the problems tend to accumulate. The tendency towards unsustainable use (and abuse) of non-renewable resources is made worse by the Government's mismanagement.⁵ There is a dire need for a national consensus on the issue of resource management, particularly regarding which resources should or should not be used more intensively at this moment without endangering the environment or compromising the needs of future generations.

Land issues

Land is one of the country's best natural resources, especially on the Adriatic coast. National strategies on the use of land are adopted by Parliament and enforced through the urban planning departments of local and regional governments. Control over the creation of these plans and verification of their acceptability rests with the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction, which has no overall guidelines. This means that there are no good estimates of taxes or regulatory mechanisms to prevent misguided or harmful use of this resource.

An independent analysis of plans for urban developments along the Adriatic coast has established



that the current projects enable the settling of 17 million inhabitants. The area is currently inhabited by less than 2 million people so the impact of housing such a large number of newcomers will be enormous. Other research has shown that 750 km (out of 6,000 km) of the Adriatic Sea's east coast have been urbanized in the last 2,500 years, while current plans for towns and cities will urbanize another 600 km., meaning that the same level of development that took place over two and a half millennia could be almost doubled in a single decade. Agricultural land is also being used for construction as part of urban planning by regional and local governments.

Forests, water and biodiversity

One of the main issues regarding forest management is the absence of official biomass estimates. The numbers vary dramatically: from 700,000 tonnes per year according to the public enterprise Hrvatske Šume (Croatian Forests) to 2 million tonnes per year according to the academic community. Meanwhile Hrvatske Šume keeps the price of wood high and the delivery quantities insufficient, thereby destroying the local wood-processing industry and ultimately causing unemployment and pauperization. The pursuit of the common good, which should be the Government's main concern, is being neglected for the pursuit of private interests.

This murky picture gets even darker when we consider the issue of water management. The 2009 Strategy for Sustainable Development, for example, lacks a clear definition of the much-invoked "right to water."⁶ Also there has been a series of privati-

⁵ The costs and benefits of resource extraction in terms of sustainable development and citizen well-being have not been measured.

⁶ The right to sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.



zation proposals; the first one failed but the fear of widespread privatization of water resources remains. Some water resources are already being placed in private hands through concessionary contracts that are anything but transparent.

Croatian biodiversity is unprotected, as can be seen for example, in the introduction of foreign species in local ecosystems. This situation is particularly pressing in Cres island where 30 wild boars introduced by hunters multiplied within 10 years to 1,000. The boars not only damage the habitat but attack sheep and lambs, destroying farmers' livelihoods.⁷

One of the main issues regarding the country's biodiversity is the lack of reliable information. Croatia is one of the few countries in Europe lacking updated checklists of species or country-specific field guides. Existing species' inventories (as well as knowledge regarding the local fauna and flora) are inadequate for many purposes, including environmental impact assessments. The nature of subterranean fauna is also very poorly known. This lack of proper inventories and knowledge inevitably limits the scope of any land use or ecosystem management planning that is needed for development projects.

Another case of endangered biodiversity stems from monoculture production, both in agriculture and in forestry. Many endemic species have been lost as they are progressively replaced with foreign ones seen by agro-enterprises as more attractive in the short term.

Environmental controls are not properly enforced

The procedures by which environmental impact assessments are made for new constructions, as well as the requirements for securing permits for expanding or even continuing to operate existing facilities, are both supposed to be strictly regulated by law. Unfortunately all facilities easily avoid the state control system. Moreover since the facilities already in place do not conform to European pollution norms, their owners are granted extensions for adjustment that include transitional periods of up to 12 years.

Such transitional periods are negotiated with the EU as part of the measures needed to grant Croatia's membership; nevertheless some of the facilities' are allowed to continue operating the end of their lifecycle. An additional problem stems from the use of substandard raw materials, especially in oil refineries, which causes substantial air pollution in the refineries' surrounding areas. In 2004 the Ministry issued an order for oil refineries to use better quality raw materials. Although the order was backed by a Court decision, the refineries frequently disobey.

Examples of good practice

Since most of the time the public interest is not protected by the Government, civil society has assumed this task. Although its influence is not strong enough yet, examples of successful interventions should be mentioned.

The Eko Kvarner organization, for example, strongly opposed the proposal to extend the Družba Adria pipeline, which is already the longest in the world and carries oil from Eastern Russia to Belarus, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine, through Croatia and Hungary to reach the Adriatic Sea.⁸ The projected transfer of oil would have threatened the northern part of the Adriatic Sea and the well-being of people living in this region. Eko Kvarner cast enough doubt on the validity of the environmental impact assessment⁹ to ensure that the authorities rejected the proposal.

The latest success concerns a proposed golf course in Istria. Two organizations, Green Action and Green Istria, sued the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction for extending permits to a build a golf course despite a problematic environmental impact assessment. As a result the Administrative Court annulled the permits.

Conclusion

Croatia urgently needs to adopt a sustainable development paradigm. More and better investment in renewable energy sources and energy efficiency policy could be a good start. Protection of the most vital resources (agricultural land, water and forests) is of the outmost interest to croatian sustainable development. It is important to build environmentally friendly tourism facilities since tourism plays an important role in Croatia's economy and at the same time is not viable without a preserved and protected environment. The official policy is supposed to promote protection of the environment but in reality economic interests are favoured over environmental and sustainable ones. Local governments should be encouraged to develop their own projects in order to promote sustainability and environment protection within their jurisdiction.10 =

⁸ Wikipedia, *Druzhba pipeline*, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Druzhba_pipeline>.

⁹ OneWorldSEE, Eko Kvaner Announces Public Debate of the 'Družba Adria' Project, (16 April 2004), <oneworldsee.org/ sq/node/2901>.

¹⁰ Jelena Lon ar and Mladen Maradin, Environmental challenges for sustainable development in the Croatian north Adriatic littoral region, (Croatia: 2009), <www.ff.uni-Ij.si/ oddelki/geo/publikacije/dela/files/dela_31/10_loncar.pdf>.

⁷ P. Ettinger, "The birds are on the money in Croatia," Wildlife Extra, <www.wildlifeextra.com/go/world/cres-vultures. html#cr>.

CYPRUS

Needed: sustainable schools



Educational systems are key factors in sustainable development. Despite the country's efforts in promoting "environmental education" in the last decade of the 20th century, the absence of adequate planning and implementation has relegated these ideas to the margins of the educational system. In fact, many advances achieved in this area over the last few years have been initiated by the country's non-governmental organizations. If it wishes to engage fully in sustainable development, Cyprus must accelerate the expansion of "sustainable schools" and broaden civil society participation in the process.

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In recent years the concept of sustainable development has generated debate in both scientific and public discourses around the world.¹ In this context, educational systems have been called upon to respond with educational frameworks and curricula that constructively engage the notion of sustainable development and its potential consequences.²

Sustainable development in education is not limited to the creation of curricular units on the environment. It is, rather, an all-inclusive, multi-dimensional process for reconsidering and reversing ideologies and practices concerning our relationship with the environment.3 It must be viewed as a discourse and practice that establishes a balance between sound economic development and social justice, equality and environmental protection. An educational philosophy grounded in this framework would develop in a different direction from one focused exclusively on economic development.⁴ Education for sustainable development attempts to transmit knowledge, skills, and practices that will inspire students to become engaged citizens who actively promote a better quality of life for all people, and for the natural environment as well.5

Sustainable schools

A widely used term for educational institutions adopting this framework is "sustainable schools." Their primary goal is to educate and guide students to work for a better quality of life, applying the principles of

- Hopwood, B. and O'Brien, G., "Sustainable development: mapping different approaches" in *Sustainable Development*, (London: 2005), p. 38.
- 2 Tillbury, D. et al., Education and Sustainability: Responding to the Global Challenge, IUCN – The World Conservation Union (2002).
- Network for Ecological Education and Practice, Sustainable is more than able: viewpoints on education for sustainability, (2002), <www.sustainabledevelopment.dk>.
- 4 Vrasidas, C. et al., *ICT for Educational Development and Social Justice*, (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2009).
- 5 Saul, D., "Expanding environmental education: Thinking critically, thinking culturally", in *Journal of Environmental Education* 31, (London: 2000), pp. 5-8.



sustainable development to improve the living conditions of all beings.⁶ A critical factor in their success is the establishment of links to local communities that serve as partners in promoting the sustainable development framework.⁷ Using this strategy, "sustainable schools" combine the educational achievements of their students with quality of life within the school and the wider community in accordance with the values of environmental awareness and critical citizenship.⁸

Environmental education

Cyprus introduced the first elements of sustainable development education with particular focus on "environmental education" in the 1990s. However, the absence of a structured educational plan related to environmental education and education for sustainable development has relegated these ideas to the margins of the educational system for almost a decade. During this time environmental education and sustainable development have had a more limited presence in formal and informal education than in many other countries.⁹ Education stakeholders in Cyprus have only recently begun to integrate ideas of sustainable development into a more holistic framework linked to



goals for a better society in a healthier environment. A major advance in this direction took place in 2005, with the ratification of the Strategy for Education and Sustainable Development in Europe.

However, despite this ratification and the subsequent establishment of the National Action Plan for Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development in 2007, the country's educational system pursues a narrow vision on the issue. Its "fragmentary" approach focuses mainly on the provision of knowledge and information *about* the environment, neglecting action-oriented perspectives based on social development.¹⁰

A research study on "Transformative leaders for sustainable schools," conducted between 2005 and 2007 (the time period when the two aforementioned plans were introduced), showed that 89% of primary school principals had never been informed on issues related to sustainable development.¹¹ One of the major weaknesses found in the study was that school principals were unable to define sustainable development in terms of a holistic framework that included the economy, society and the environment.¹² A majority of their definitions focused on "environmental protection." Vigorous efforts to apply the 2007 National Action Plan began only in 2009, when

12 Ibid

⁶ Dimopoulou, M., and Mpampila, E., "The role of the principal in the operation of an eco-school – the challenge to the leadership of a sustainable school," <www.aeiforosxoleio.gr>

⁷ Department of Education and Skills, Sustainable schools for pupils, communities and the environment: Securing the future in delivering a UK sustainable development strategy, (London: 2005).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, Revised National Strategy for Sustainable Development, (Nicosia: 2010), <www.moa.gov.cy>.

¹⁰ Mavroudi, E., "Insuficient Environmental Education, interview with Dr. Zachariou Aravella," in *Simerini*, (Nicosia: 2009), <www.sigmalive.com>.

¹¹ Zachariou, A. and Kadji-Beltran, C., "Cypriot primary school principals" understanding of education for sustainable development key terms and their opinions about factors affecting its implementation", in *Environmental Education Research*, (Abingdon, UK: 2009), pp 315-334.

the Ministry of Education and Culture published a new Study Programme for Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development.¹³ As the document itself declares, this is the most comprehensive effort the Government has made to introduce sustainable development into the educational system, focusing especially on the transformation of school units into "sustainable schools."

The new curriculum indicates that the Ministry of Education and Culture now understands the importance of sustainable development not just as another school subject but as a "philosophy" that should be applied at all levels of education.¹⁴ One important aspect of this programme is its strong emphasis on the social elements of development, including concepts such as participation, inclusion and multiculturalism, along with respect for the environment. Underlying this approach is the assumption that, beyond any interdisciplinary strategy for imparting knowledge that may be required, sustainable development has to become embedded in the values of society. One consequence is that the curriculum places strong emphasis on the establishment of close relations between "sustainable schools" and the local community.

However, the heavily centralized educational system and its decision-making mechanisms continue to pose a systemic obstacle to effective transformations thereby limiting the possibility of major reform. For example, the transformation of school units into "sustainable schools" becomes very difficult without greater school autonomy. Also, decision-making mechanisms have to include the peripheral stakeholders in the education system. such as school boards, parent associations, civil society organizations and local community authorities.15 Such actors, being closer to the local community and environment, could provide more effective solutions based on the needs of each school unit and its extended social economic and natural environment.¹⁶ The Ministry of Education and Culture can still provide overall national objectives and goals, but should also put in place a network of local actors who could develop valid and efficient practices that

- 13 Ministry of Education and Culture, Study Programme for Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development, (2009), <www.paideia.org.cy/upload/ analytika_programmata_2010/12.perivallontiki.pdf>.
- 14 Mavroudi, E., "interview with Dr. Zachariou Aravella", op cit., (2009).
- 15 Mpakas, T., "Organization and Management of the Educational System: The peripheral level of Education Leadership - Weaknesses, Challenges and Potentials", in *Primary Education and the Challenges of our Era*, seminar conducted at Loannina, Greece, May 2007.
- 16 Bass, S., Dalal-Clayton, B. et al., "Participation in Strategies for Sustainable Development", *Environmental Planning Issues*, (London: International Institute for Environment and Development, 2005).

incorporate the needs of communities within a more holistic sustainable development framework.

Designing on strategies

Following a year of national debate among Government actors, the Board of Ministers recently ratified the Revised National Strategy for Sustainable Development (2011-2015). The new Strategy is presented as an advance on the previous one, which covered the period from 2006-2010. Despite new elements have been introduced in sections such as natural resources, energy, sustainable transportations and sustainable tourism, the strategy for education remains essentially the same as the one laid out in the 2007 Strategy for Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development. Weaknesses in the document, such as an over-emphasis on the environment to the detriment of other aspects of sustainable development and the absence of any reference to the role of nongovernmental-actors, have been incorporated into the Revised National Strategy for Sustainable Development,¹⁷ leading to inefficiency and confusion that hinders promotion of sustainable development. These inadequacies appear to be related to Government decision-making and policy implementation processes. Ministries and public services involved in different sectors set their own priorities and follow their own strategies. often failing to forge a common national framework that encompasses all relevant actors.¹⁸ Future policy making would be more effective if the Government established mechanisms to align all stakeholders in a common strategy that has a real impact on all levels of society.

Integrating civil society: a key factor

The potential advantages of the involvement of local non-governmental organizations for sustainable development became evident through the evolution of the centres for environmental education of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (Ministry of Education and Culture). The first centre was a private venture in a small village in southwest Cyprus, established in the 1990s. It proved to be extremely successful in researching and developing practices and tools for environmental education. Even so, it wasn't until 2004 that State authorities established the first public Centre for Environmental Education.¹⁹ Today these centres are already considered to be pioneers in the promotion of research and development in the field of environmental education. The progress achieved so far demonstrates the potential and opportunities presented by the integration of local civil society actors in formal and informal education for sustainable development.

Although the Revised National Strategy for Sustainable Development provides guidance for the integration of civil society in the overall decision-making process and the drafting process for Strategies and Plans on Sustainable Development has been quite efficient, implementation and the impact on citizens has been less successful.²⁰ To promote and implement a more holistic sustainable development framework, the Government should make greater efforts to tap the great reserves of knowledge, experience, expertise and mechanisms of civil society organizations.

Perspectives

Since 2005, when the Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development was ratified, Cyprus has come a long way in its efforts to shift the focus of education in a more holistic direction. The country has transformed several school units into "sustainable schools," applied relevant good practices, and provided training for teachers and other public servants. That said, full adoption of the sustainable development framework requires the Government to enlist active involvement of local actors in the decisionmaking process, as well as in the implementation of education strategies. To be successful in practice. "sustainable development" must be closely linked to the local community and social actors. ²¹ These local non-governmental actors have a unique capacity to propose, develop and apply effective educational practices for sustainable development that correspond to the needs of their community. Moreover. citizens are more willing to adopt sustainable development policies and practices that emerge from their own community actors, including local sustainable schools.22 In addition, the integration of non-governmental actors into the decision-making processes would provide the multidimensional approach to sustainable development that is still absent from the overall educational system.

- 18 Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation, Linking Science and Policy in Sustainable Development Research, (Limassol, Cyprus: 2009), <www.research.org.cy/EL/user_info/scie.html>.
- 19 Zachariou, A. "Centres of Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development: A Report on the Network of the Centres of Environmental Education in Cyprus", 4th KEEPE, Nafplio, (Greece: December 2008).
- 20 Mavroudi, E., "Interview with Dr. Zachariou Aravella", op cit., (2009).
- 21 Uphoff, N., Local Institutions and Participation for Sustainable Development, IIED, Gatekeeper Series, no. 3, (London: 1992).

22 Ibid

¹⁷ Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, *Revised National Strategy for Sustainable Development*, (2010), <www.moa.gov.cy>.

The need for a change



The country is more and more dependent on exports to neighbouring countries while its current account deficit does not seem to be curtailed. The Government is sticking to the implementation of a neo-liberal non-sustainable model, which undermines social well-being, and is refusing to consider policy on a long-term basis. Currently, the country faces threats such as the impoverishment of middle-class and low-income groups, increasing unemployment and rampant gender inequality. Loss of biodiversity and radioactive pollution are among the environmental challenges that need to be assessed immediately. Increasing involvement in these issues by civic society gives some hope that the demand for change will be heeded.

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The Czech Republic is becoming more and more dependent on the economic health of its neighbours, especially Germany. Industrial exports, which increased by 10.5% in 2010, have resulted in GDP growth of 2.3% according to preliminary data from the Czech Statistical Office (SÚ), but as in previous years deficits appear in trade with non-EU countries, and the large deficit with China highly exceeds the surplus with Germany. Motor vehicles continue to be the most important export commodity and to generate the highest surplus; on the other hand, the deficit is created mainly by the import of oil and natural gas, but also of pharmaceuticals.¹

This unbalanced economy seems almost at the brink of disaster, especially for the more vulnerable sectors of the population. A recent Government policy statement suggests that it is set to continue with its neo-liberal reforms without paving attention to social issues.² The Government fails to see obvious risks of this strategy, as it doesn't acknowledge that one of the factors that threw the economy into disarray is the decrease in tax revenues from the highest income sectors of the population. Threatened with the Greek example and possible bankruptcy, the Government succeeded in making debt restriction the main topic and is focusing mainly on cuts in social spending. As a result, important issues such as unemployment (7.0% in the 4th guarter of 2010 according to ILO estimates and 8.9 % according to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs), gender inequality and environmental threats (such as radioactive poisoning and the loss of biodiversity) are left aside.



Budget cuts and unremitting corruption

The Government's strategy since the onset of the global crisis in 2008-09 has been to cut social expenditures. The cuts have been presented as reforms, but the expenditure cuts are not accompanied by a new conception of the Czech Republic's social system. Furthermore, these cuts were not supported by impact analyses, although most of these measures will have an impact, especially on low-income groups and the middle class. This is a sign of a continuing trend not to view social expenditures as investment in the development of society.

The cuts include such things as parental allowances³ and disability benefits. In addition, it appears that subsidies for the provision of social services such as for example, the so-called "early care" subsidies intended to help families with physically handicapped children, are being decreased. This will have a strong negative impact on single parents, of whom women are a vast majority. Even before these changes, statistics showed that 40% of single-parent families with children are threatened by poverty and poor living conditions; approximately half of these families are below the income level of 1.5 times the subsistence minimum. In the future it is therefore to be expected that the number of people threatened by poverty will increase.

Another step within the "reforms" framework is plummeting wages and layoffs in the public/State sector, which represents a large number of women. Besides enlarging the ranks of the unemployed, this measure will strongly affect the level of pensions



Gender Equity Index (GEI)

and childcare financial aid for women working in the State sector.

In addition the corruption that runs throughout the public contracts system burdens the State budget by tens of billions each year, even by the most optimistic estimates.⁴ One Minister had to resign because he was suspected of corruption; another Government member is suspected of unlawful scheming during the Czech presidency of the European Union. Almost no attention is paid to solving the problems of international tax evasion; the focus is mainly on small entrepreneurs dodging taxes, first and foremost those from the Vietnamese community.⁵ On the other hand, and despite being criticized by NGOs for several years, the Government server Businessinfo.cz offers information that facilitates international tax evasion.

Gender: under-represented women

In the May 2010 parliamentary elections, due to preferential votes (which enableds to vote preferentially for four candidates on the party's list and shift them higher) women gained 12 more seats in the Chamber of Deputies than those they would have had according to candidate lists only, which were drawn up by political parties. Women's representation in the Chamber of Deputies rose to 22 % after this vote. However, they are grossly under-represented in the higher ranks of decision-making posts. In the judiciary for example, while taken as a whole, there

Czech Statistical Office, Ekonomické údaje za rok 2010: produkce, obchod, zam stnanost, see:czso.cz/csu/tz.nst/i/ prezentace_ekonomicke_udaje_za_rok_2010/\$File/ ekonomicke_udaje_2010_070211.pps>

² See: <www.vlada.cz/cz/jednani-vlady/programoveprohlaseni/programova-prohlaseni-74856/>.

³ See proposal of so called social reform by Ministry of Labour and Social Affaires.

⁴ Deník Referendum, 2. 1. 2011, sec: <denikreferendum.cz/ clanek/8192-ekonom-pavel-kohout-do-jara-z-vlastni-vuleopusti-nerv>.

⁵ Nasepenize.cz, 20. 6. 2010, see:
www.nasepenize.cz/vietnamstiobchodnici-zpusobuii-miliardove-danove-ztraty-7093>.

have been more women in the judiciary than men (by about 20 % on average over the long-term), but their representation decreases dramatically at the higher levels. Apart from Hungary, the Czech Republic is the only other EU country in which the Cabinet consists strictly of male representatives.

Worsening conditions for immigrants

Dissatisfaction with the response to the crisis and the shift of its costs to the middle and lower classes has increased tensions in society. Maintaining the social contract is becoming ever harder while the growing income differentials leads to an increase in xenophobia, racism and the degradation of social solidarity. Thus, the economic crisis has also led to a more radically negative attitude towards migrants, especially undermining the situation of female migrants.

One example is the complications migrant parents are facing with their children's health insurance. An employed foreigner is included in the public insurance system, but if neither the mother nor the father have permanent residence in the Czech Republic, their child cannot be insured before birth and the medical care provided in the maternity clinic must be paid for in cash. Should the newborn have medical problems, the insurance companies may even refuse to provide insurance.⁶ A woman foreign entrepreneur is limited to the system of commercial insurance from the very beginning; she has the chance to arrange insurance for the birth and immediate postnatal care for an additional fee (about double the average wage).

Environment: down with the trees, up with the malls

Protecting the environment is another crucial issue for the Czech Republic. In the beginning of 2010 a new law on the preservation of nature and the landscape came into force and reduced the protection of trees and other woody species. As it was no longer necessary to get the approval of the local authorities, this led to extensive logging in towns and cities. Throughout 2010, the Ministry of the Environment failed to publish a decree intended to reduce this effect.⁷

The Ministry of Agriculture, on the other hand, has tried – repeatedly and against the protests by ecological organizations and smaller wood-working companies – to push the concept of "forest tenders" on public forests (17% of the area) that favour large timber companies, pushing the public functions of State-administered forests (recreation, protection against erosion, water retention, home for plants and animals) towards wood production and profit generation.

Notwithstanding the enduring economic crisis the construction of large shopping centres has continued in the Czech Republic, which already has the highest per capita number of such centres in all of Central and Eastern Europe.8 In the last seven years, chain store outlets have expanded to an area of 900 football fields and have created 80,000 parking lots; 63% of these have been built on undeveloped areas (arable land, fields, pastures or orchards), and trees were cut down in 62 % of the cases, while 25% have had some impact on protected elements of the environment (both to ensure ecological stability and protect animal biotopes).9 Other consequences of the unrestricted expansion of mainly international chain stores have been the liquidation of local grocerv shops, the spill-over of shopping centres into open land, the depopulation of city centres and the increase in individual car traffic.

A U-turn on renewable energy sources

The importance of renewable energy sources is not properly addressed in the Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development ratified by the Government in 2010, although its importance is obvious when we consider that it links the principles of climate measures with the decrease in energy import and the decrease in external costs to the current energy system.

In 2010 the State declared a halt to the development of photovoltaic power plants. It seems likely that in the future only installations of up to 30 kW will be admitted, which means a substantial restriction in the development of photovoltaic energy generation. On the other hand, new steps have been taken to finish construction of the Temelín nuclear power plant.² This is now scheduled to finish in 2025 and the plant should be operative until 2070.

The last uranium mine in Central Europe, located in Rožná, still remains operative and thus will last until at least 2013. The mine was supposed to be closed several times already, but the Government has always decided to keep it operative. The situation of radon-infested houses in the areas of former uranium mines (e.g., Jáchymov), remains an unresolved problem.

Citizens' reaction

In response to the anti-social politics of the Government, the ProAlt movement has emerged, a civic initiative criticizing the proposed reforms and suporting alternatives. This brings together people from every profession, generation and walk of life who are opposed to insensitive, across-the board cuts. The "Alternativa zdola" movement supports the participation of citizens in the political as well as economic life of their communities through consultations, education, networking and political actions.

The "esko proti chudob" (Czech Republic against poverty) campaign constantly points out the necessity to increase the effectiveness of development cooperation and to criticize the country's failure to make good on its pledge to increase Official Development Assistance (ODA) resources. A positive feature of the Czech Republic's development cooperation is its gradual standardization and increasing transparency. One contribution of Czech ODA is its focus on renewable energy sources for poor regions.

Increasing political activity in civic society does give at least some hope that people will demand redressing policies and will not turn their anger against the poorest, whom the political elite already accusses of being the reason for State prodigality and of indebtedeness. People's involvement, focused on the corrupt political sphere financed by Mafiosi capital, is one of the last remaining possibilities to ensure formal democracy and a minimum of social standards.

6 One particular case is being handled with assistance from Inbáze Berkat, o. s. See: <www.inbaze.cz/index. php?option=com_content&view=article&id=185&catid=52>.

⁷ See: <ekolist.cz/cz/zpravodajstvi/zpravy/zacina-obdobitemer-volneho-kaceni-stromu-chybi-novela-vyhlasky>.

⁸ See: <hn.ihned.cz/c1-42048630-diskontum-ahypermarketum-se-dari-i-v-krizi>.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Inequality is the biggest obstacle



The Dominican Republic is fraught with numerous problems including violence against women and against immigrants from Haiti, the degradation of the environment, and principally inequalities in the education system, all of which make it most unlikely that the Government will be able to bring about sustainable human or economic development in the middle term. There has been progress in some areas, but the country urgently needs more far-reaching social policies that are genuinely geared to the changes needed to ensure a decent future. The country will almost certainly not be able to achieve sustainable development unless the education system is drastically changed to make it more democratic.

FEI Mesa Nacional para las Migraciones Red Nacional de Emergencia ADIMJO FEDOCOMIN MOSCTHA William Charpantier Ruth Paniagua Luisa María José Fernando Valdez

The Government of the Dominican Republic has made a commitment to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but the obstacles to doing so are that its policies in crucial areas like social investment, the redistribution of wealth, restoring the environment and in particular improving education are not effective. As explained below, official and also independent studies show the country is a very long way from MDG 1 (the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger), Goal 2 (universal education) and Goal 3 (equality between men and women). In addition to these problems, there has been little progress in environmental sustainability in a land that is severely degraded after decades of over-exploitation, and this raises the question of whether the Government is actually capable of creating a sustainable economy.

In 2006 the Government set up the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development (MEPYD), charged with monitoring State policies for social development and reform. The Ministry drew up the Basic Document for a National Development Strategy 2010-2030, entitled "A journey to change into a better country".¹ This was an attempt to create a consensus that would clarify the steps to be taken to transform the Dominican Republic into a fairer and more equitable nation.

In 2010 UNDP described the Dominican Republic as "A middle income developing country that depends mainly on the services sector and remittances from abroad. Today the level of economic activity is 12 times greater than it was in 1960, and the average growth rate over the last 48 years has been 5.4% per year. Foreign currency income from exports, tourism and remittances is now 15 times greater



than it was 40 years ago."² However, in spite of these positive indicators and institutional changes, social investment is at a low level and there has hardly been any improvement at all in education, which means the country is still a long way short of the goals the Government claims it is pursuing.

Persistent inequality

The Dominican Republic has made good progress towards some other MDGs, including infant and maternal mortality and life expectancy at birth, indicators for which have improved significantly in recent years. But, data from the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development shows that in a country of nearly 10 million, the current levels of poverty (34%) and indigence (10%) are very high, ³ although they have fallen considerable since the economic crisis of 2003 when these indicators reached their peak: 43% and 16% respectively.

The UNDP 2010 Human Development Report concludes that the biggest obstacle to the country's development is inequality.⁴ The report also says that education and health service levels have not increased in the same proportion as per capita wealth. The UNDP Human Development Index ranks the Dominican Republic 88th out of 169 countries, with a mean human development rating of 0.663.⁵

The 2006 UNICEF report on the State of the World's Children stated that "social progress in the



Dominican Republic, measured by life expectancy at birth, infant mortality, babies underweight at birth and the adult literacy rate, is very low compared to other countries in the region with the same levels of economic growth."⁶

ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) reports that since 2004 the Dominican Republic has been third from last among the countries of the Americas in terms of relative investment in social policies, and this is reflected mostly in the population's poor access to health and education services and social assistance.7

Violence and discrimination

In its 2010 report, Amnesty International denounced the Dominican Republic for persistent discrimination against Haitian immigrants and their descendants. These people are the victims of numerous hate crimes that even include lynching, and as illegal immigrants they are exploited in the labour market. Unofficial estimates put the number of Haitians in the country at 800,000 and nearly all of them live in the poorest areas.⁸

In 2007, following a directive by the Central Electoral Council, thousands of citizens, mostly descendants of Haitian immigrants, those becoming Stateless had their identity documents rescinded. This severely restricted their access to health services, education and jobs, and also took away their right to vote. People without the correct documents are

7 See: <www.unicef.org/republicadominicana/grafico__ODMs.pdf>.

Basic document of the proposed National Development Strategy 2010 – 2030, (Santo Domingo, 2010), <vww. end.gov.do/download/Documento_base_propuesta_ END_2010_2030.pdf>.

² See: <www.pnud.org.do/content/acerca-del-pais>.

³ See: <www.economia.gov.do/eWeb/ShowContent. aspx?idc=452>.

⁴ UNDP. *Human Development Report 2010*, <undp.org/es/ informes/mundial/idh2010/capitulos/>.

⁵ See: <hdr.undp.org/es/estadisticas/>

⁶ See: <www.unicef.org/spanish/sowc06/index.php>.

⁸ IPS, "Aumenta la violencia contra haitianos," <ipsnoticias. net/nota.asp?idnews=90376>.

liable to arbitrary detention and can be expelled from the country. These regulations are still in force today.

Gender violence is another endemic problem, above all with regard to people under the legal age. In May 2009 the Santo Domingo Prosecutor's Office said that in 90% of reported cases of sexual violence the victims were girls under 18 years old.⁹

Environmental degradation

In the second half of the 20th century the country's natural resources were so heavily exploited that most of the forests and coral reefs were devastated, and today some 80% of its river basins are severely degraded.¹⁰ Moreover in many areas there is no adequate sewage system and there are big problems with the distribution of potable water, which together create a widespread health risk. The fact that poverty is so widespread means that a large proportion of the people have to depend on the natural food resources of their own areas, and this inevitably places great strain on these stocks and makes for further degradation of the ecosystem.

Poor education and Government inaction

A discouraging aspect of the current situation is that the State is paying scant attention to education, even though an educated population must be the cornerstone of any future plan to improve social, economic and environmental conditions. Education is the main means whereby a society constructs its values, and it is a key factor in sustainable human development because it will enable future generations to properly manage the country's social and natural resources.

As well as failing to increase investment in education, the State is even failing to comply with the requirements of the Education Law of 1997 (Law 66-97, which states in Article 197 that starting in 1999 annual public spending on the sector should be at least 16% of total public expenditure or 4% of the estimated GDP for the current year, whichever is higher. ¹¹ Public expenditure on education, which increased from 1.9% to 2.9% of GDP in the period 1996 to 2002, dropped as a consequence of the economic crisis to a paltry 1.5% in 2004. In 2005 it recovered somewhat to 1.9%, but it is still far too low and it has never reached 3% of GDP.

The Ministry of Education has calculated that in the 2000 to 2005 period the proportion of the education system financed by the State decreased to 52% and the proportion contributed by students' families

10 Instituto del Tercer Mundo, República Dominicana , in *Guía del mundo 2010*, (Montevideo: ITeM, 2010), p. 468.

fell to 39%, while the OECD reports that the shortfall was made up with foreign loans and donations and contributions from private enterprises.¹² Some 24% of the student population attend private educational institutions, which do better than the State system in terms of this basic human right.

In the face of this, the Government is sending confused signals. President Leonel Fernández sowed doubts about the degree to which he was committed to the provisions of Law 66-97 when he claimed there was no correlation between the amounts invested in education and the academic results achieved. According to Fernández, increasing the proportion of GDP allocated to the sector would not guarantee good quality equitable education.¹³

In response, civil society organizations have come together to form the Decent Education Coalition to demand the Government comply with its legal obligations. They have even received support from the business sector; for example the Federation of Industrial Associations (FAI) has backed the Coalition's campaign. According to the FAI and other similar institutions, "industry in the Dominican Republic cannot become competitive with a workforce that is poorly trained. We believe, as the President says, that the pedagogic style and the curriculum are in need of reform, but this cannot be done without resources."¹⁴

Inequality in the classroom

According to a 2008 report from the Latin American Laboratory for Education Quality Evaluation (LLECE), the Dominican Republic has "a dual-quality education model in which the best goes to the richer groups and the worst to the poorer groups, and this has become so ingrained in the culture that many people see it as the natural order of things."¹⁵ There have been many independent as well as official surveys and studies that lay bare the reality of the situation but nothing has changed, and this is making inequality endemic.

In 2007 the country's Demographic and Health Survey (ENDESA) found educational disparities that were attributable to differences in income. For example, in the richest quintile of the population the

- 13 "Iberoamérica alcanza logros en educación," Listín Diario, (5 December 2010), <www.listindiario.com.do/larepublica/2010/12/4/168999/Iberoamerica-alcanza-logrosen-la-educacion>.
- 14 DiarioDigitalRD, Industriales piden reforzar campaña a favor del 4% para la Educación, <www.diariodigital.com.do/ articulo,59550,html>.
- 15 UNDP- Dominican Republic, Política social: capacidades y derechos-Análisis y propuestas de políticas sociales en República Dominicana, Vol. 1, (Santo Domingo: 2010).

illiteracy rate is only 2% but in the poorest quintile it is extremely high at 26%.¹⁶

Another evaluation that confirms these findings is the 2008 Second Comparative Regional Study and Explanation of Student Learning in Latin America and the Caribbean (SERCE), which concluded that "in mathematics and language pupils from third to sixth grade in the Dominican Republic are far below the average for Latin America and the Caribbean."¹⁷

One of the factors behind this poor showing in education is the poor quality of teaching. The teachers in the State system are not well trained, they are overloaded with work and badly paid, and in order for them to earn a minimum acceptable salary they have to do so many classroom hours they have little time to prepare the courses. This makes it impossible for them to keep to the set programmes or to effectively transmit the required educational content to their pupils. Another negative factor is that in the 2005-06 academic year only 43.1% of active teachers had a teaching diploma. The rest were not qualified to teach classes.

It is clear that the country's education system is not providing good quality education. In the last ten years overall pupil coverage has increased but academic performance is still very poor and consequently most young people finish their studies without the basic knowledge needed to compete in the labour market, which limits their access to decent work.

Conclusion

Overall, in spite of some encouraging progress in achieving national development goals, particularly regarding greater life expectancy and reduced maternal and child mortality, the Dominican Republic urgently needs to adopt a far=reaching strategy for sustainable development if it is to overcome serious obstacles, most of which relate to high, and increasing, inequality. This is especially evident in terms of access to health and education, both of which affect the productivity of the labour force, as does continued violence and discrimination against women and Haitian immigrants. In particular, if the quality of education does not improve dramatically, and if the population's access to it is not extended, it is most unlikely the Government will be able to lead the country along the path to sustainable development.

⁹ Amnesty International, "Human Rights in the Dominican Republic," Amnesty International Report 2010.

¹¹ Organic Education Law of the Dominican Republic, <www. educando.edu.do/files/2413/1783/9636/ley_general_ educacion_66-97.pdf>.

¹² Ediciones OCDE, Report of national education policies: the Dominican Republic, (Paris: 2008).

¹⁶ Centre for Social and Demographic Studies (CESDEM) and International Framework Inc., *Demography and Health Survey 2007*, (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: CESDEM and Macro International Inc).

¹⁷ UNDP-Dominican Republic, op cit.

ECUADOR

Large scale mining: unsustainable development on and on



In Ecuador's new constitution, which came into force in October 2008, the State's most important duty is to respect and enforce the population's human rights on the collective as well as the individual level. Besides this, the constitution also recognizes the rights of nature itself, or Pachamama. However, in spite of this most encouraging gesture, nothing has changed and the country is still wedded to an economic model based on mining and oil extraction.

Centro de Derechos Económicos y Sociales Francisco Hurtado

Article 71 of the Ecuador's new constitution recognizes the right of nature "to have its existence and the maintenance and regeneration of its life cycles, structure, functions and evolutionary processes holistically respected," ¹ and individuals, communities, peoples and national groups have a legitimate right to demand that the political authorities comply with this disposition. This translates into a State obligation to care for and protect the natural environment and to restore degraded ecosystems, and it is quite apart from the established rights of individuals or groups to receive compensation when their human rights are violated.

The human right to live in a healthy and ecologically balanced environment, and to manage that environment in a way that is based on the principles of sustainable development, to some extent conflicts with the rights of nature itself, as recognized in the constitution, because nature is acknowledged as having intrinsic value over and above the goods and services that mankind may extract from it.

Sustainable development

The ever-accelerating exploitation of nature in 19th and 20th centuries has led to some resources, above all non-renewable ones, being over-exploited, and it is clear that in many areas the planet's physical capacity to serve mankind's rapacious production and consumption needs is now exhausted. This means ecosystems all over the world are becoming increasingly degraded because people are extracting natural resources more and more intensively to take maximum advantage of them. This is having a whole range of negative effects all over the world like soil degradation, the disappearance of entire species of flora and fauna, water pollution, high levels of air pollution, deforestation and desertification. Besides these impacts on nature, communities and people in all parts of the world are suffering social and cultural devastation, and the most extreme example of this is the actual extinction of some original indigenous peoples

In the 1970s and 1980s there was growing concern with protecting the environment from the



effects of unrestrained human activity and this went beyond policy discussions in international organizations and led some States to gradually start enacting environmental protection measures. These were linked to the recognition of people's right to live in a healthy and ecologically balanced environment, and to the development of environmental management. We shall now analyse how concern about the environment interconnects with the concept of development.

The right to live in a healthy and ecologically balanced environment

The concept of sustainable development is not in itself a criticism of the logic of capitalist accumulation as a structural cause of negative effects on the environment. However, one of the implications of the notion of sustainability is that people have the right to live in a healthy environment, and this has led to the emergence of environmental management, which takes different forms in different places and necessarily includes environmental impact evaluation processes as part of the mechanisms to reduce or eliminate unsustainable production and consumption systems. In some cases local people play a role in managing the environment, and this means they must be provided with adequate information about the problems involved and have the opportunity to take part in decision-making processes. In Ecuador today this is known as the right to environment consultation

However, in practice, environmental management is not geared to protecting nature as such, it is not aimed at preserving ecosystems or the people who live in them because these spaces and communities have intrinsic value, rather it is a mechanism



to perpetuate the exploitation of these resources for the purposes of economic development. The focus is to implant systems that will allow these natural resources to be used more efficiently over time and will involve technical and scientific development so that more economic gain can be extracted per unit of the natural resource.

Large scale mining in Ecuador

In Ecuador large scale extraction, mainly the oil industry, is the paradigm case of how the exploitation of natural resources can cause the accelerated deterioration of ecosystems and of the conditions of life of the people who live in them. According to data from the Ecuador System of Social Indicators (SIISE),² most of the people in settlements near the oilfields are above the national average for poverty and their local environments are now being very seriously polluted.

One of most controversial issues in Ecuador today is the exploitation phase of the large scale mining of metals, which is due to start in the near future. Since the 1990s successive governments have been laying the foundations for this expansion of mining, and claiming it will generate large revenues for the State and enable the country to develop.

The Technical Assistance Project for Mining Development and Environmental Control (PRODE-MINCA) and the 1991 Mining Law, both of which were carried through under the auspices of the World Bank, signalled the start of a State policy to gradually develop large scale mining. The main aim of this legal framework was to generate conditions favourable for private investment, and various transnational

2 SIISE data can be downloaded from: <www.siise.gov.ec>.

¹ Political Constitution of Ecuador, Article 71.

companies acquired State concessions and began exploring and prospecting. By 2007 these activities had spread to some 2.8 million hectares of land, and nearly half of this activity involved the mining of metals.³

This has had serious negative social and environmental impacts including the pollution of land and water resources, and it has also led to land speculation, monopolies and outside control of the concession areas. However, in some cases local peasant and indigenous populations are fighting back, and the best-known example is the Íntag in the province of Imbabura. In 1997 the people of this community stopped the Japanese firm Bishimetals from going about their work, and in 2006 they did the same to the Canadian enterprise Ascendant Copper. In 2007⁴ direct action by this resistance movement, and by other groups in the provinces of Zamora Chinchipe and Morona Santiago, caused several transnational firms to suspend their activities.

The start of large scale mining and the resistance process

Several years ago the National Assembly enacted Constitutional Mandate No. 6 whereby under certain circumstances mining concessions would revert to the State, but in spite of this, when the country's new constitution came into force the Government submitted a new mining bill and identified five large scale mining projects as being strategically important for Ecuador's development plan, and this was passed by the National Assembly.

Ecuador now has a National Mining Development Plan 2011–2015 in which some 21 extensive mineral deposits in various provinces are earmarked for exploitation. The State's share in the revenues from mining is stipulated in a system of royalties and taxes the private companies have to pay, and environmental and social management policies for these activities have been established. The State has also consolidated the legal framework for these projects to go into operation⁵ and is currently negotiating five mining contracts with transnational companies, one of which has already been awarded its environmental licence for the exploitation phase.⁶

The indigenous and peasant communities that will suffer the direct impacts of these projects have mobilized resistance on a permanent basis, and the

THE EVIDENCE SOME WANT TO IGNORE

The Government of Ecuador and some social actors insist that the large scale mining model in place today is sustainable, but the evidence that is plain to see in the country's mining and oil producing regions tells quite a different story. According to a report on the sustainability of mining in Ecuador, the exploitation of the copper deposits at Mirador in the Cóndor mountain range by CCRC-Tongguan, a Chinese enterprise, will generate at least 326 million tons of waste, which is equivalent to four hills like El Panecillo in Quito or the volume of all the rubbish collected in Guayaquil for the next 405 years. Another example is at Fruta del Norte, where the extraction of 11.8 million ounces of gold will leave behind 384 million tons of waste. But the Government claims this policy is justified as the extractive sector's contribution the country's economy will grow to an estimated USD 37,000 million in the next twenty years.¹ This is the reality, and any official talk of alternative development is just rhetoric and hot air.

 William Sacher and Alberto Acosta, ¿Puede ser sustentable la minería?, Report on mining conflicts in Latin America, (August 2011), <www.conflictosmineros.net/contenidos/12-ecuador/8199-ipuede-ser-sustentable-la-mineria>.

Government has kept them under constant pressure with arguments about the need for development and has accused them of political primitivism and of wanting to prevent the State from generating the financial resources needed for the country to grow economically.⁷ The authorities have also taken more direct action like using legal machinery to persecute these communities, and in the courts resistance efforts are being treated as terrorism and sabotage.⁸

An alternative view of development

The arrival of large scale projects to mine metals in Ecuador has provoked and is still provoking social mobilisation and resistance against the current and potential social and environmental impacts these kinds of operations cause. This tension and conflict between the Government and indigenous and peasant communities is being played out against a background of political debate about the development model the State is implementing.

The 2008 Political Constitution of Ecuador has dispositions that govern these matters, and this legislation should be analysed in a way that is holistic and goes beyond strictly legal interpretations and applications. Not only is it the State's inescapable duty to defend the rights of nature as well as human rights, both individual and collective, but the State should also design and construct an alternative policy that is radically different from today's development model in which the economic growth of society is tied almost exclusively to exploiting non-renewable natural resources.

The sustainable development philosophy cannot be considered an alternative or even a criticism of the current model unless it questions the very ideology of economic progress. Without this dimension it can do no more than cover the prevailing capitalist model with a cloak of concern about the environment, because in this model nature is still regarded primarily as a source of resources. However, the defenders of the current sustainable development stance would say it is an attempt to use science and technology to preserve the environment for future generations.

To sum up, the start of large scale mining in Ecuador reawakened debate about sustainable development, but the only change from the previous raw neo-liberal approach is that now the State is taking a greater share of the profits. There has been no change whatsoever in the way these projects are carried out and private transnational companies are still operating without restraint. It is these firms that are causing devastating impacts on a whole range of ecosystems and on the lives of the people who live in them. These communities are demanding new alternatives to protect their ecosystems in a holistic way so that natural areas and the animal and plant species that live in them can be saved, and the human beings who have their homes there can lead decent lives.

The Government is projecting a false image on the international stage. It makes pronouncements about how it is planning to move beyond the extraction model, it has recognized in the country's constitution that nature itself has rights, it considers sumak kawsay and alternative development proposals, and there is even talk of not extracting the country's oil in exchange for economic compensation from the international community (as expressed in the Yasuní-ITT plan⁹), but in actual fact it is pushing the frontiers of extractive enterprises, especially mining, ever deeper into natural areas. This is making Ecuador even more dependent on the exploitation of nonrenewable resources and perpetuating the violation of the human rights of the populations involved. But the Government justifies this on the grounds that it needs the revenues from these projects in order for the whole country to develop.

³ CEDHU - FIDH, Intervención minera a gran escala en Ecuador y vulneración de derechos humanos, (Ecuador: Ecumenical Commission for Human Rights and the International Human Rights Federation, 2010) 13-15.

^{4 &}quot;Brief history of resistance to mining in Intag, Ecuador" <www.sloth.gr.jp/S-chapter/MINING%20RESISTANCE%20 IN%20JUNIN-SUMMARY_esp.pdf>; "Anti-mining resistance in Morona Santiago" <www.olca.cl/oca/ecuador/mineras54. htm>; "Mining cannot operate in Zamora" *Diario La Hora*, (29 May 2007), <www.lahora.com.ec/index.php/noticias/ show/575172/-1/Minera_no_puede_operar_en_Zamora. html>.

⁵ National Mining Sector Plan for Mining Development 2011-2015

kit.ly/PlanMinero2011-2015>.

^{6 &}quot;Ecuacorrientes cerca de obtener permisos ambientales" Newspaper El Hoy, (6 October 2011), <www.hoy.com. ec/noticias-ecuador/ecuacorrientes-cerca-de-obtenerpermisos-ambientales-505288.html>.

⁸ Francisco Hurtado, "Análisis sobre la criminalización actual en Ecuador" (Ecuador: Report on Collective Rights of the Centre for Economic and Social Rights - CDES and Oxfam, 2011) - cobservatorio.cdes.org.ec/analisis/documentos-deanalisis.html>,

⁹ See: <www.yasuni-itt.gob.ec; www.amazoniaporlavida.org>.

EL SALVADOR

Now is the time for environmental strategies



The country faces big environmental problems, and the Government – although moving in the right direction - is not paying enough attention to them. To ensure environmental sustainability, the Government should continue to enact and implement environmental laws, many of which have been debated in recent years, and decide once and for all to make a firm commitment to international environmental protection agreements. The Durban talks on climate change may be an excellent opportunity to develop a national, long-term strategy and work towards ensuring the well-being of future generations.

Social Watch El Salvador Susana Barrera Magdalena Cortez Scarlett Cortez Ana María Galdámez Omar García Mario Paniagua

El Salvador is rich in biodiversity. Were these diverse biological resources well-managed, they could provide the basis on which to support the entire population and lift many out of poverty. At the present time, however, they are not being properly administered, and the country's great potential is being wasted. In 2009, an estimated 37% of the Salvadoran population was living in poverty.¹

A sizeable proportion of the rural population live below the poverty line, and their subsistence strategies depend on and exploit natural resources. The Government lacks a clear policy to guide and provide technical and financial support to existing and new rural settlements whose struggle for existence has accelerated the destruction of forests, soil and water resources. Historically, the lack of a national environmental policy has led to unplanned and indiscriminate dumping of rubbish, the pollution of water with human and industrial waste, and increasing air pollution caused by more and more motor vehicles.² Big industries and agricultural exploitation have caused pollution in nature areas, and there has been no suitable treatment for liquid or solid waste

The environment and the Millennium Development Goals

Despite these problems, according to the UNDP, the prospects of El Salvador achieving its targets under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are encouraging. The poverty reduction target and the target for access to sanitation have already been reached, and indicators show the country is very near its target for access to potable water. Less progress has been made towards the other MDG



goals, but El Salvador seems to be on the right path and doing reasonably well.³

Measured against the MDGs, El Salvador has incorporated the principles of sustainable development into national policies and programmes and reversed the loss of environmental resources. It has reduced the loss of biodiversity and by 2010 had brought the rate of loss down considerably. The country is on track to cut by half the percentage of the population without access to potable water and basic sewage services by 2015 and to improve the lives of at least one million inhabitants of shanty towns by 2020.⁴ According to UNDP, the goal of reversing the rate of loss of environment resources and the target of cutting in half the number of people without access to potable water or sewage services have already been reached.⁵

El Salvador has also reduced consumption of substances that damage the ozone layer, specifically chlorofluorocarbons (CFC gases).⁶ It has made good on its commitment to the Montreal Protocol to reduce emissions of CFC gases 50% by 2005, 85% by 2007, and by 2010 was on course for a 100% reduction.⁷

4 UNDP, Segundo Informe Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio, El Salvador, (2009), p. 39; also see: <www.unhabitat.org/ stats/Default.aspx>.

- 6 UNDP, Objetivos de Desarollo del Milenio, <www.pnud.org. sv/2007/odm/content/view/1/82/>.
- 7 UNDP, Segundo Informe Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio, op cit.



The question of access to potable water and sewage services is less easy to assess, depending on the criteria used to evaluate progress. The traditional evaluation system considers the supply of improved water by pipes, public access points, perforated wells or pumps, protected wells, protected sources and rain water. If these criteria are used, the proportion of the population with access to sources of improved water increased from 63.3% in 1991 to 83.9% in 2000 and 86.9% in 2007. However, if a more rigorous standard is applied that considers only access to water in households, the figures are less encouraging, showing an improvement from 42.2% of households in 1991 to 67.5% in 2007.⁸

An important step forward

One important step forward came in March 2011 with the enactment of the Law of Land Reclamation.⁹ This lays down regulations that impose order on the unrestricted spread of large urban areas, establishes standards for how soils are used and sets up a legal framework to govern human activity in river valleys and the forests that still remain.

The country also has an Environment Law and a battery of specific laws to support it, including the Law of Protected Nature Areas, the Forestry Law and the Law of Forest Wildlife Preservation. In addition, El Salvador has subscribed to the Montreal Protocol and is committed to applying international standards to the management of dangerous materials.

¹ The World Bank, *El Salvador*, (San Salvador: 2011), <data. worldbank.org/country/el-salvador>.

² M. A. Alvarado, Diagnóstico de la situación medioambiental de El Salvador, (3 October 2006), <vww.ecoportal.net/ Temas_Especiales/Desarrollo_Sustentable/Diagnostico_de_ la_situacion_medio_ambiental_de_El_Salvador>.

³ UNDP, "Avance hacia los ODM en El Salvador," in Millennium Development Goals 2007, <www.pnud.org.sv/2007/odm/ content/view/15/101>

⁵ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ El Salvador Noticias, El Salvador con nueva ley de ordenamiento territorial, (12 March 2011), <vvvv. elsalvadornoticias.net/2011/03/12/el-salvador-con-nuevaley-de-ordenamiento-territorial/>.

Taking a broad view, even though in practice not enough resources are being allocated to make it possible for these laws to yield significant concrete results, the very fact that a regulatory framework has been put in place must be regarded as a big step in the right direction.

The impact of climate change

Climate change is another dimension of sustainable development in which El Salvador must undertake serious long-term planning. The country, and indeed the whole region, will have to consider how to prepare for and cope with the effects of climate change.

Climate change is creating a whole range of problems for the countries in Central America, arising from the adverse impacts of weather-related phenomena on production, infrastructure, and people's means of support, health and safety. Increasingly, the environment is less and less able to provide resources or play a key role in sustaining life.

As an example, Central America has been blessed with a rich endowment of water resources, but these are unequally distributed among the various countries and regions and between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. There are great variations in water availability from year to year and even within the same year. According to climate change forecasts, the use of and demand for fresh water could rise by as much as 20% in a scenario based on the premise that in the near future there will be a proliferation of local solutions to the problems of managing economic, social and environmental sustainability. But in some scenarios that are less careful about protecting ecosystems, demand could even go up by 24%.¹⁰

El Salvador is particularly vulnerable to climate change. Of all the Central American countries, El Salvador could be hit the hardest, followed by Honduras and Nicaragua.¹¹ Demand for water currently exceeds the 20% threshold that is accepted internationally as the critical level for pressure on water resources. Thus, El Salvador falls into the same category of water dependence as Egypt and some countries in the Arabian Peninsula.¹²

The outlook for agriculture is equally uncertain and worrying. According to some studies, the principal effects of climate change will be greater CO_2 concentrations, higher temperatures, changing rainfall patterns and increasing pressure on water resources --though the tolerance of higher limits and endurance of the country's crops may have a mitigating effect.

Conclusion

To achieve environmental sustainability, El Salvador must make a commitment to international environmental agreements that will enable it to put a brake on activities that harm the environment. In addition, it should design and implement national policies that include guidelines that promote full respect for human life and for living things.

El Salvador has a unique opportunity to tackle these problems. It should assume leadership of the Central American countries at the climate change discussions in 2011. It has already taken a firm step in this direction with the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources currently engaged in consultations to design and coordinate a national climate change strategy that should enable El Salvador to take firm positions at international forum.

Confidence and support are also needed when it comes to adopting new strategies like the "National Policy on Water Resources in El Salvador," a Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources initiative aimed at ensuring that the country's present and future generations will have enough water for all their needs.

¹⁰ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), La economía del cambio climático en Centro América (2010).

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid.

Engineering a failed State



Once praised as one of the most promising countries in Africa, the country has become the victim of an authoritarian and militarized regime. The country has rapidly descended into intolerable levels of political repression, leading to abject poverty and "social anomie," an environment that precludes fulfilment of its international commitment to sustainable development, economic growth and progress. The fundamental obstacle of political repression can only be removed with the help of outside pressure on the Eritrean Government.

Eritrean Movement for Democracy and Human Rights (EMDHR) Daniel R Mekonnen

Speaking at an academic conference in November 2010, French scholar Gerard Prunier, a specialist in the Horn of Africa and East Africa, described Eritrea as one of "the hardest and worst dictatorships anywhere" and "a hell on Earth."¹ This was not hyperbole. The Government has declared war against its own people. The worst manifestation of this war situation is the pervasive practice of forced labour under the guise of the national military service programme (NMSP), which has kept hundreds of thousands of Eritreans under an unbearable yoke of dictatorship.

Despite the looming economic, social and political crises, which have been amply detailed, the Government obstinately refuses to acknowledge the reality on the ground. On the contrary, President Isaias Afwerki, has proclaimed the country the best in Africa. Asked by AI Jazeera TV about his aspirations for Eritrea, he declared: "We are focused on doing the right things in this country ... At least we will not be like Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan; we are better off. We are number one in this continent."2 But the 2010 Global Hunger Index has a different view. It ranks Eritrea, together with Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo as one of the three African countries with alarming levels of hunger.3 In the context of this and other credible reports, the Afwerki comment must be viewed as an affront to the suffering Eritrean people.

A laboratory for botched experiments

As noted above, the abusive Government policy of forced military service is the major cause of vulnerability in Eritrea. Although the country has never conducted a census, the proportion of the population forced into military service appears to be exceedingly high. One recent study estimated the country's



population at 3.6 million. ⁴ In 2010 the Eritrean army had an estimated 600,000 troops,⁵ which would be an extraordinary 16.6% of the total population. This forced military service makes it extremely difficult for ordinary citizens to realize their personal aspirations in life, even if they are not personally affected by the Government's abhorrent human rights violations, such as torture and imprisonment.

Since the outbreak of a border conflict with Ethiopia in 1998, the Government has arbitrarily extended its statutory NMSP of 18 months to an indefinite period. Under this abusive policy, all adults, male and female, up to the age of 45 are subject to what amounts to slavery or forced labour, either in military camps and trenches bordering Ethiopia or working under strict military rule for corporations owned by the State and army generals.

The actual situation may be even worse. More than 1 million Eritreans are believed to be living outside of the country- one of largest diaspora communities in the world. Thus, the domestic population may be less than 2.6 million. This would make the proportion of the population in the military closer to 23%. According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), a leading think tank on human security issues, the maximum limit of military mobilization is normally considered to be 10% of the total population. Beyond that, society ceases to function normally.⁶

- 5 Bertelsmann Stiftung, *Bertelsmann Transformation Index* 2010: Eritrea Country Report, 2 and 13.
- 6 International Crisis Group (ICG), *Eritrea: The Siege State*, (Africa Report No. 163, 21 September 2010), 13.



Scholar Nicole Hirt defines "social anomie" as a state of large scale disturbed order and societal disintegration resulting from the inability of a large proportion of the society to realize personal aspirations.⁷ Along the same lines, Tricia Redeker Hepner and David O'Kane have investigated the bizarre state of affairs in Eritrea using the concept of biopolitics, which they define as "a state-led deployment of disciplinary technologies on individuals and population groups."⁸ As their study indicates, Eritrea has become the latest laboratory for experimentation in economic, social and political policies which have previously proven disastrous in a number of archaic repressive regimes.

Given the high level of military mobilization it comes as no surprise that the Eritrean Government is accused of supporting armed groups ranging from AI Shabab in Somalia to the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. The former allegation is supported by UN experts,⁹ and resulted in a severe sanction adopted by the UN Security Council in December 2009 (Resolution 1907). The latter has been validated in a report by the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It is also important to note that Eritrea is currently ruled by

Prunier, G., *Eritrea and its Discontents*, speech delivered at the Conference of the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA), (5 November 2010), <vimeo. com/18716003 >.

² Dutton, Jane, "Interview with Isaias Afwerki", AI Jazeera TV, (19 February 2010), <www.youtube.com/ watch?v=00uQwODNkTA>.

³ International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), 2010 Global Hunger Index, (2010), <www.ifpri.org/sites/default/ files/publications/ghi10.pdf >.

⁴ Russell, George, "Eritrea to UN: Take This Aid and Shove It", Fox News, (30 March 2011), <www.foxnews.com/ world/2011/03/30/eritrea-aid-shove/?test=latestnews>.

⁷ Hirt, Nicole, "Dreams Don't Come True in Eritrea': Anomie and Family Disintegration due to the Structural Militarization of Society", GIGA Working Papers, 119/2010, (January 2010), 7-9. Merton, Robert K., Social Theory and Social Structure (New York: The Free Press, 1995) 131–132, 163.

⁸ Redeker, Tricia, and O'Kane, David, "Introduction" in O'Kane, David, and Redeker, Tricia (eds) *Biopolitics, Militarism and Development: Eritrea in the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford & New York: Berghan Books, 2009).

⁹ See the periodic reports of the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, <www.un.org/sc/committees/751/ mongroup.shtml>.

a government which does not hesitate to establish links with individuals or groups which are globally condemned for their involvement in a number of illicit activities. One such individual is the notorious Russian arms dealer, Viktor Bout, known as "The Merchant of Death." In short, Eritrea is ruled by a small cohort of ex-freedom fighters who do not constitute a "government" in the conventional sense.

The recipe for a failed State

The country is on the brink of becoming another failed state in the Horn of Africa, a region described as the most-conflicted corner of the world since the end of WWII.¹⁰ For the past six decades, war, displacement, abject poverty and repression have been the hallmarks of this region. It has already produced one failed state, Somalia, in the last 20 years; the likelihood of Eritrea becoming another is not far-fetched. ICG raised this possibility in a September 2010 report, which called this a real danger in the absence of effective and timely international intervention. Two of the major factors it cited are "the widespread lack of support for the Government within the country and the deteriorating state of the army, whose ability to either sustain Isaias Afwerki's regime or to successfully manage regime transition is increasingly questionable."11

By refusing to accept humanitarian assistance, under the guise of self-reliance, the Government has condemned the population to prolonged suffering. Most recently it rejected an offer of humanitarian assistance under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The decision was formally announced in a letter from the Minister of Finance on 25 January 2011.¹² Eritrea ranks third in the world in aid dependency;¹³ the Government's decision to discontinue or at least to curtail the activities of the UNDAF comes at a time when such assistance is urgently needed by the Eritrean people.

Mass exodus

Throughout its brief history, Eritrea has been one of the leading refugee-producing countries in the world. During the armed struggle for liberation, the main cause of mass exodus was the brutality of the occupying Ethiopian army. After the country achieved its independence in 1991, emigration declined precipitously. However, this trend dramatically shifted in the aftermath of the 1998-2000 border conflict with Ethiopia. Since September 2001 the main cause of mass exodus remains the brutality of the Eritrean go-

- 11 ICG, op cit., note 6 above, ii.
- 12 Fox News, Eritrea to UN: Take This Aid and Shove It, (30 March 2011), <www.foxnews.com/world/2011/03/30/eritrea-aid-shove>
- 13 NationMaster, *Aid as per cent of GDP*, <www.nationmaster. com/graph/eco_aid_as_of_gdp-economy-aid-as-of-gdp>.

vernment. Nathaniel Meyers, who travelled to Eritrea in mid-2010, crystalized the situation with his observation that *Prison Break*¹⁴ has become one of the most popular television series in Eritrea.¹⁵ This metaphor depicts the tragedy of Eritrea becoming a giant openair prison where every Eritrean considers himself or herself an inmate while relatives outside of the country are regarded as potential rescuers.

Similarly, Gaim Kibreab describes Eritrea as a society severely affected by a "powerful obsession to migrate".16 The mass exodus typically begins with flight across the border to Sudan or Ethiopia, and continuing to Libya and then the Italian coast, the initial European destination of many asylum seekers. This journey is extremely hazardous. The suffering that Eritreans endure in crossing the Sahara Desert (including the Sinai Desert) and the Mediterranean Sea is comparable only to the extreme hardships depicted in bestseller novels or Hollywood adventure movies. The resulting trauma and psychological harm is difficult to imagine. Perhaps the most heart-breaking recent incident occurred in March 2011, when a boat carrying 335 refugees fleeing the conflict in Libya, including 325 Eritreans, capsized due to unknown reasons. Everyone on board, including pregnant women and children, perished.¹⁷ For Eritreans, this was one of the most horrendous disasters of recent times.

No room for popular uprisings

From the end of 2010 and through the beginning of 2011 an unprecedented wave of popular uprisings has removed repressive regimes in a number of North Africa and Middle East countries. Some observers have predicted that this upsurge may expand to other countries still governed by repressive regimes. In the case of Eritrea, Will Cobbett notes, this is very unlikely to happen in the near future for several reasons:¹⁸

First, Eritrea's entire able-bodied population is strictly regimented by absolute military discipline as a result of the never-ending NMSP programme.

- 15 Meyers, Nathaniel, "Africa's North Korea: Inside Eritrea's Open-Air Prison," *Foreign Policy*, (New York: August 2010), <www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/21/africas_north_ korea?page=0,0>.
- 16 Kibreab, G., "The Eritrean Diaspora, the War of Independence, Post-Conflict (Re)-construction and Democratisation" in Johansson Dahre, Ulf, (ed) The Role of Diasporas in Peace, Democracy and Development in the Horn of Africa (Lund: Lund University, 2007), p. 99.
- 17 Assena.com, 335 Refugees Perished in the Mediterranean Sea, April 11 2007, <news.assenna.com/index. php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3671:breakingnews-330-&catid=1&Itemid=44>.
- 18 Cobbet, W., Tunisia, Egypt, Libya ... Why Eritrea Won't be Next, (2011), <www.bigbrotherwatch.org.uk/home/2011/02/ tunisia-egypt-libya-why-eritrea-wont-be-next.html>.

Second, Eritrea has no official opposition in any form that could possibly generate the kind of popular uprising seen in Tunisia, Egypt and other countries. In September 2001 the Government mercilessly crushed the first post-independence reform movement; ever since, no internal opposition or dissent has emerged.

Third, one of the major catalysts of change in other countries, the Internet, is tightly controlled by the Government and Eritrea has one of the lowest Internet penetrations in the world, far below that of countries in North Africa and the Middle East. Just 4% of Eritreans have access to the Internet, and the Government could quickly cut this off: "there's no need for Isaias [Afwerki] to close down Twitter or Facebook – but he could if he wanted to, because he controls the monopoly telecoms provider."¹⁹

Fourth, with the control of the only TV channel, radio station and newspaper (broadcasting and printing in each national language) the Government holds a complete monopoly of information. According to Reporters Without Borders and The Committee to Protect Journalists, Eritrea ranks last country in the world in press freedom and has imprisoned more journalists than any other country in Africa.²⁰ It is also the only country in Africa without a single private newspaper or any other form of media outlet. Nonetheless, the possibility of popular rebellion cannot be completely ruled out.

The way forward

Along with the compression of political space, eliminating any possibility of an official opposition or any form of dissent. Eritrea is also suffering increasing levels of international isolation. In this environment, which the ICG has described as "the siege state," the country can hardly fulfill its international commitment to sustainable development. Sustainable economic growth and advancement can only occur if the fundamental problem of political repression is resolved immediately. This would require sufficient pressure to compel the Government to open up political space. As the country's leading development partner, the European Union (EU) possesses ample diplomatic and political leverage. One way in which it could use this is by making future development assistance contingent upon the abolition of the indefinite NMSP, the holding of long-promised national elections, the implementation of the long-delayed constitution and the release of political and other prisoners. These are among the most important measures that must precede long-term planning on sustainable development.

¹⁰ Shinn, D.H., Challenges to Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa, (California: World Affairs Council of Northern California, 12 March 2011).

¹⁴ Prison Break is a prominent American TV serial drama telling the story of a man wrongly convicted of murder and sentenced to death, and the efforts of his brother to help the prisoner escape.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Committee to Protect Journalists, Iran, China Drive Prison Tally to 14-Year High. (2010), <cpi.org/reports/2010/12/cpjjournalist-prison-census-iran-china-highest-14-years.php>; Reporters Without Borders, 2010 Press Freedom Index, (Paris: 2010), <en.rst.org/press-freedom-index-2010, 1034.html>.

FINLAND Politics of sustainability



The country needs to recognize that there are no easy and sustainable technological fixes. Reducing energy consumption and the ecological footprint can be started by passing a climate act for cutting emissions annually by 5%. It is time to redefine the sustainable development agenda beyond narrowly interpreted State and business interests. The sustainability agenda can be used by social movements to pressure governments and companies successfully. It is time for an open discussion on the fundamental issues of well-being, equality and development, including forsaking the unending quest for material growth.

KEPA - Service Centre for Development Cooperation Finland Otto Bruun

In 2002 then Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen defined the Finnish approach to sustainability as follows: "Whereas the Brundtland report was focusing on needs of present and future generations, Finland is focusing on possibilities".¹ Social and environmental movements, however, argue that this "possibilities" approach has led to a narrow understanding of sustainability. While Finland wants to see itself as a global sustainability problem solver, the country's track record in this regard is far from convincing.

Finland is showing growing interest in understanding well-being in new ways and to supplement Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with other statistics in the national accounting system. Social movements and scholars have proposed the introduction of the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), and the Government has agreed that something of this sort is needed. ² While GDP measures only economic growth, the GPI distinguishes good growth from undesirable growth. As the costs of negative issues are subtracted, resource depletion and the costs of criminality and pollution are counted as negative.³ This indicator emphasizes equal possibilities for everyone to fulfill their needs and the money spent on education.

Setbacks in sustainable development

In the case of Finland, the GPI brings in an unpleasant surprise: aggregate GPI-measured well-being rose up to the late 1980s, but has decreased drastically since 1990 in spite of strong economic growth in the period 1995-2008.⁴ The explanation for this is that economic growth was resource intensive and benefits were more unequally distributed than previously. The GPI therefore suggests that Finland has actually regressed during the period in which the sustainable development agenda was established.

- 2 Government of Finland, Programme 2010, (Helsinki: 2010).
- 3 J. Talberth, C. Cobb and N.Slattery, "A Tool for Sustainable Development. Redefining Progress", in *The Genuine Progress Indicator 2006*, (Oakland, California: 2006).
- 4 V. Ylikahri (ed), Onnellisuustalous (Helsinki :Visio, 2010).



Another useful sustainability indicator is the ecological footprint which highlights the human impacts on the global ecosystem. Based on a combination of CO₂ emissions and land use indicators, the footprint is compared to the planet's renewal capacity. Finland has been consistently among or near the top-10 countries with the highest footprint per person, and as of 2007, the most recent data available, ranks 12th out of 199 countries. If everyone on earth consumed like an average Finn, with a footprint area of 6 hectares per capita, we would need three planets to live on instead of one. Some environmental and social movements are therefore seeking to place the political target of planned de-growth or negative material growth in the global North at the core of the sustainable development agenda and the Rio+20 conference.

Energy policies in the quest for sustainability

Energy policies are a key area of sustainable development. In Finland the energy use per capita is comparatively high. This is somewhat mitigated by a positive record in utilizing biomass waste from the pulp and paper industry for energy production. In 2010 renewable energies (mostly biomass) accounted for 25% of all primary energy consumption.⁵

Recently Finnish energy policy has refocused on nuclear energy. The country is considered a forerunner in a worldwide nuclear renaissance since the Parliament made core decisions for building two new nuclear power plants in 2010.⁶ If built, these plants will lead to energy production exceeding many estimates of consumption needs. Finland will thus either export nuclear energy or further strengthen its posi-



tion as a European base for energy-intensive industry. It is important to stress that, although the nuclear accidents following the tsunami in Japan have now somewhat altered the tone of political parties, until then, safety concerns and social and environmental problems with uranium mining in countries of the global South have been largely ignored.

As part of the nuclear power decision the Government announced a renewable energy "package." However, close reading reveals that with this Finland is only able to fulfill the legally binding targets within the European Union. Environmentalists have criticized the country for trying to get Finnish peat accepted as a slowly renewable energy source, a position rejected by the European Union. From a climate perspective peat is even worse than burning coal and its renewal lasts for hundreds of years, while peat-land mining is environmentally problematic.

The Government argues that its energy policies are sustainable, with "renewable" peat and "lowcarbon" nuclear. There is little emphasis on energy saving and efficiency in Finland's energy policies, which serve short term economic interests. Also, environmental researchers and activists argue that a decentralized renewable energy solution would reduce environmental impacts and risks, while also increasing local well-being if employment is considered.⁷ A recent report commissioned by Friends of the Earth argues the country could realistically phase out coal and nuclear power without drastic effects, thus fulfilling its share of the global climate challenge.

¹ Speech of PM Paavo Lipponen, chair of the Finnish Commission for Sustainable Development, (2002). The Report of the Brundtland Commission, *Our Common Future*, published in 1987 focuses on the change of politics needed to achieve sustainable development.

⁵ Finnish energy statistics, <www.motiva.fi/en>

⁶ See <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_renaissance>.

⁷ P. Lund, The link between political decision-making and energy options: Assessing future role of renewable energy and energy efficiency in Finland (2007.

Indigenous peoples' rights

A conflict over sustainability in relation to indigenous peoples' rights has surfaced in the form of an ongoing dispute in Northern Finland over land use and forests between the State and indigenous Sámi.⁸ Finland has failed to ratify the ILO-169 convention which would guarantee land rights to the Sámi who claim a historical right to nomadic reindeer herding. From a global perspective, this is a regrettable shortcoming for the realization of indigenous peoples' rights.

Conflicts over Lapland or Sámi forests began in the 1990s as Finnish multinational pulp and paper companies such as Stora Enso bought wood from the State logging company, including from the few remaining intact natural forests. Sámi livelihoods were jeopardized because of threats to reindeer winter grazing, which relies on ground and tree lichen only present in old forests.⁹

After Sámi reindeer herders and Greenpeace International directed an international campaign against Stora Enso and its paper buyers, as the company was about to lose its reputation and its position as an investment target for several ethical investment funds, logging in the Sámi forests stopped and negotiations began. In 2009 and 2010, over 80% of the disputed areas were protected or exempted from logging. However, increasing disruptive tourism flows and mining concessions, supported by the State, are now threatening reindeer herding. Legal recognition of Sámi rights by Finland has not proceeded.

Shifts in development policy

Finnish Official Development Assistance (ODA) has risen gradually in the past few years and in 2010 reached 0.55% of GDP (projected to be 0.58 in 2011). Most political parties have committed themselves to reaching the UN target of 0.7% of GDP by 2015.¹⁰ However, the current practice of counting climate funding for developing countries as ODA undermines the integrity of ODA commitments and reduces trust in the multilateral climate negotiations.

Finnish development policy made a marked shift in 2007 by emphasizing sustainable development.¹¹ However, it also introduced guidelines such as: "Finland has know-how and technology that meets the needs of developing countries."¹² The Ministry for Employment and the Economy wants ODA to promote Finnish competitiveness and create employment and new markets for Finnish companies. This implies a renewed push in knowledge services and technology from Finnish companies with ODA funds.

This line of thinking has led to a significant shift in Finnish development cooperation towards water, forestry and energy related projects, where Finland

- 8 See K.Mustonen and T. Mustonen, *Drowning Reindeer, Drowning Homes* (Helsinki: Snowchange, 2010).
- 9 See documentary movie Last Yoik in Sami Forests.
- 10 Ministry of Environment, *Facts on Environment Protection, November*, (2010).
- 11 Ministry for Foreign Affairs, *Finland's Development Policy Programme*, (2010).
- 12 Ibid., Development Policy Forestry Guidelines, (Helsinki: 2009).

is thought to have a competitive advantage. But the question remains whether Finnish forest knowledge is useful to export to the tropics. The self-interested emphasis also raises questions about the ownership of the partner countries. Poverty reduction targets are being pushed to the background, and the shifts imply unpredictability in development cooperation, making it less sustainable.¹³

Finnish companies in the Global South

In addition to ODA, the Government officially measures its global sustainability by the total amount of foreign direct investments by Finnish multinational corporations.¹⁴ Currently there are several examples of key Finnish companies claiming to be world leaders in sustainability establishing large scale eucalyptus monocultures (Stora Enso, UPM) and palm oil plantations (Neste Oil) in the global South, contributing to displacement and large scale land grabbing.

Although it has received several awards for its business ethics and sustainability worldwide, Neste Oil, a Finnish oil company, was voted the most unsustainable company in the world at the 2011 Public Eye Awards. The company is majority State-owned and has the strategic target of becoming world leader in what it calls "green, second-generation sustainable bio-fuels".15 It recently announced the opening of two of the world's biggest palm oil based bio-fuel refineries, with a total capacity of 2 million tons annually,16 whose main sources of palm oil are from Malaysia and Indonesia.¹⁷ The demand for palm oil is driving land conversion and deforestation in peat-land rain forest, arguably the world's most concentrated carbon stock. These forests are also socially important as home of forest peoples and important biodiversity hotspots.18

Neste Oil claims it will buy raw material solely from certified palm oil plantations by 2015. The total land area needed for plantations to supply its refineries is reported to be 700,000 hectares. Research has established that even the indirect effects of rising palm oil demand is driving tropical deforestation.¹⁹ Although Neste Oil has argued that its raw material for palm oil can be traced, it has not disclosed the sources of its supplies, a worrying tendency in the corrupt-ridden context of Indonesia. Neste Oil's only named source of palm oil in Malaysia was convicted in 2010 for not respecting indigenous land rights and converting tropical forest.

- 14 Finnish Commission for Sustainability Web Page, Criteria for sustainability, <www.environment.fi/download. asp?contentid=120039&lan=en>.
- 15 Neste Oil, Neste Oil Annual Report 2009.
- 16 Ibid., Neste Oil celebrates the grand opening of its ISCCcertified renewable diesel plant in Singapore, (Neste Oil Press, 8 March 2011).
- 17 Neste Oil, op cit..
- 18 United Nations Environmental Programme, The Last Stand of the Orangutan, (2010).
- 19 C.Bowyer, Anticipated Indirect Land Use Change Associated with Expanded Use of Biofuels and Bioliquids in the EU. Institute of European Environmental Policy, (2010), <www.ieep.eu>.

This example shows that the drive to produce "low-carbon fuels" in the name of sustainable development is not only ecologically and socially problematic but can also undermine efforts to create sustainable ways of life in many parts of the developing world. Total greenhouse gas emissions for palm oil bio-fuel from Indonesia is probably higher than for fossil fuels.

Conclusion

The concept of sustainable development harbours great potential for change, but narrowly understood it is at best unhelpful and at worst destructive. Talk of synergies and win-win opportunities is hiding ongoing conflicts. The social, ecological and economic spheres cannot be meaningfully separated when talking about marginalized groups who depend on the environment for their livelihood. Moreover, in the Finnish debate the ecological dimension of sustainable development is normally not understood to include biodiversity or the livelihood-sustaining capacity of an ecosystem, and instead the focus is crudely on measurable carbon emissions.

The Brundtland report of 1987 emphasized respecting ecological limits and meeting human needs. These questions, contrary to the present sustainability debates, involve inherently political issues of burden sharing and justice. Who is allowed to produce emissions, use what natural resources, and on what terms? The sustainability agenda and its focus on synergies sometimes inhibit us from seeing these political questions.²⁰

Finland needs to accept that there are no easy and sustainable technological fixes in sight: we cannot offset our climate emissions or our responsibilities elsewhere. It must start by fulfilling its global commitments to ODA without misleading figures. Reducing its ecological footprint can start by passing an act to cut emissions annually by 5% as demanded by social movements.

As the case of the Northern Finland forests shows, the sustainability agenda can be used by social movements to pressure governments and companies successfully. Currently Neste Oil and its palm oil plantations are at the centre of attention. By highlighting individual cases, social movements can work towards the goal of enforcing stricter rules on companies.

In the lead up to the Rio+20 conference, social movements all over the world are placing their hopes on the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability, cochaired by the president of Finland, Tarja Halonen. The worldwide challenge is to create trust among the peoples and political will to build pathways to genuinely sustainable futures. From the Northern countries, including Finland, this calls for an open discussion on the fundamental issues of well-being, equality and development, including forsaking the unending quest for material growth.

¹³ Finnish Development Committee, The State of Finland's Development Policy 2009, (Helsinki: 2009).

²⁰ J.Pasanen, and U.Marko, Sustainable Futures, Ministry for Foreign Affairs Publication series, <vwww.sustainablefutures.fi>

FRANCE

We need less inequality and a little more fraternity



The world economic crisis hit France's society quite hard. The economy has recovered somewhat, but unemployment and inequality have worsened and society has become more competitive to the detriment of values like fraternity and solidarity. The country also has pressing environmental problems including air and water pollution and a loss of ecosystems. The State has made commitments to pursue sustainable development, and these should now be re-examined not just from the national or European perspective but in terms of their impact in the world. The country's presidential elections are looming and this is an opportunity for civil society organizations to make their voices heard in the debate.

Secours-Catholique / Catholic AID Grégoire Niaudet

France has been seriously hurt by the world economic crisis. Its social protection system has to some extent attenuated the negative effects but unemployment, which is what the French are most concerned about, has increased considerably and now stands at 10% of the economically active population. Public debt has also risen to unhealthy levels as a result of the country's long-running imbalance in foreign trade and the fact that its production is rather uncompetitive. The social consequences are that the most fragile sectors of the population are sliding towards poverty, and inequality is becoming more marked because the richer sectors have been relatively less affected.

In the preamble to the 1946 Constitution, social rights are established as the prerogatives of all citizens. The State's social security apparatus, which has a welfare mechanism and a system to finance it through taxation, was designed to provide uniform benefits for all members of society. At the heart of this redistribution model, the main means of access to rights was work. However, since the 1970s, when large scale unemployment first emerged, the welfare state has been in an ongoing crisis that is not only financial but also to do with its legitimacy and efficiency. The horizontal redistribution system is less effective when an increasing portion of the population is unable to contribute to the social insurance system. People today are uncertain about the future and this is putting more pressure not only on workers as a class but also on individuals. Work is no longer synonymous with well-being. In addition, people are under added pressure and stress because they have to be more productive and efficient, and this is making the world of work very hard, exclusive and demanding.

Increasing inequality

There was an economic upturn in 2011 but the benefits of this new growth have gone only to the richer strata of society and inequality is getting worse. A report by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) that came out in April 2011 showed that in the period 2004 to 2007 higher incomes increased more quickly than those of the



population as a whole. For 90% of the people, income increased by a little under 10%, but the 1% of the population whose income is above 84,500 euros (USD 115,798) enjoyed a rise of from 20 to 40%. If wealth is to be redistributed more fairly there will have to be tax reform, and this will have to include taxing capital and reducing or suppressing certain fiscal niches.

The reasons why inequality is increasing in the developed countries are clear: taxation systems have been changed and the burden on the very rich has been lightened, incomes in the world of finance have expanded enormously and production has been reorganized. The current crisis is accentuating these trends because, in order to maintain the financial



sector's prerogatives, States have absorbed most of the costs by making huge loans to the banks. The other side of the coin is that governments in many countries are now implementing austerity policies, and these weigh heavily on the most vulnerable sectors of society and exacerbate inequality.

The solutions that have been put forward such as social development –since 30 years ago– and sustainable development –for the last 15 years– are not sufficiently strong to solve these problems in the current context. The social vision of sustainable development must be based on a series of priorities including reaffirming basic rights, asking just what our needs really are, cooperation on the part of the actors involved, and

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Some of the most degraded ecosystems in France are the coastal regions. Pollution in general, and that caused by heavy metals and hydrocarbons in particular, has damaged flora and fauna in coastal waters, especially seabirds, molluscs and algae. More than half of France's coastal areas have been urbanized, which makes for an even greater loss of biodiversity, and in fact there are nearly no coasts left that have not been affected by human beings.

Another serious problem that cannot be ignored is the fact that water is becoming increasingly scarce and that its quality is deteriorating. Large scale agriculture consumes some 44% of the water available, and the massive amounts of fertilizer this sector uses is seriously polluting the country's underground water stocks. In the future more plants to produce potable water and more waste-processing facilities will have to be built.

One quarter of France is forest. It is the biggest wooded area in the European Union, but this biosphere is under threat from various kinds of environmental degradation most of which stem from air pollution.

WORLD LEVEL COMMITMENTS

The world has changed completely since the Rio Conference of 1992. Economics and finance have become totally globalized and two parallel trends have emerged, the economic take-off of emerging countries and a crisis in the system that mainly affects industrialised countries and has economic, social, ecological and political aspects. In this context it is becoming increasingly clear that we need a common system for managing the planet so as to defend ourselves against climate change, protect biodiversity and establish more equitable access to natural resources.

- The first priorities are to reduce inequality and eradicate poverty. It is evident that even while countries may achieve economic growth, they have been unable to make good on their commitments to pursue the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Inequality is getting worse and a billion people on the planet are going hungry.
- There will have to be a new system of social protection that benefits all the people in the world. The problem is that industry has to

be competitive but economic globalisation is making for competitive selection between workers in different countries and eroding social protection systems, where such systems exist.

Another priority is the international fight against the health crisis because chronic illnesses are on the increase everywhere. They are taking the place of the infectious diseases of the last century, a phenomenon known as "epidemiological transition". This crisis is hitting not only society but also countries' economies and it is putting great pressure on health a health insurance systems, where such systems exist.

Economic globalization in a context of deregulated competition translates into increasing inequality. This takes a variety of forms including competitive selection among farmers in unequal conditions, the economic collapse of regions and States that have lost their industries, income gaps that in most cases are widening between different population sectors, inequality in access to health and care services, the marginalization of some population groups, and the weakening of social protection systems everywhere. This widespread trend towards the degradation of some social groups raises political and ethical questions, but it also constitutes a considerable burden for countries' economies because they have to provide support to counterbalance inequalities and help people in crisis situations to return to active life, and this is increasingly difficult. Unfortunately the costs of these social ills are indirect, which means they can be passed on to future generations or left for other actors to deal with, but these other actors are the community, and at the end of the day those who bear the burden are the taxpayers.

The notions of sustainable development and social development agree in that they seek a similar balance, they are both concerned with the same social issues and they share common objectives. If we are to make the transition to a better future for all we will have to negotiate a new social contract that involves sharing responsibilities, affirming human rights, and renewing solidarity with others and with future generations.

that everyone should make a contribution so as to enrich local projects and in a broader sense to help renew local public policies.

In the context of the crisis these ideas should be the basis for defining sustainable social development priorities. The way forward has to be to adopt a holistic vision of social, environmental and economic problems, to redistribute wealth and to give everyone a reasonable share. Today's problems in society and democracy should evoke responses built around new collective perspectives and a plan for a shared future that will make sense for every individual. In the sustainable development model each person will have a role in helping to construct the future and will be provided with the means to develop his or her own talents in a society that has a strong relational dimension.

The worsening of inequality, the degradation of social protection systems, and the individualisation of risks and uncertainty about the future are combining to make everyone into a rugged individualist because there is no clear strategy as to how we can act collectively. The response needed to meet the challenges of climate change is a collective commitment, and this involves completely re-thinking our patterns of consumption and our ways of life so that society as a whole can move towards sustainable development. France will have presidential elections in the first half of 2012 and it currently occupies the presidency of the G20, and this means civil society organizations have an opportunity to make a contribution to the debate. This is a chance to open up new perspectives, to reformulate the aims and strategies of economic development and social progress, and to change course in society towards a new model geared to seeing social and ecological matters in a different way. Social justice and social cohesion will have to be rebuilt, not as a luxury that we may or may not pursue but as the way to overcome the world crisis.

GERMANY

Great expectations, limited outcome



Sustainable development in general seems to be widely accepted in the country. A more detailed look however shows that there is still some resistance. Climate change is not properly addressed, and renewable energy sources are still reliant on subsidies from the Government and consumers. Moreover, these subsidies are being reduced, particularly for solar power, while the operating life of nuclear plants is being extended. In addition, the budget item for economic compensation to countries affected by climate change has been deleted from the 2011 draft budget. Meanwhile, the gap between rich and poor is growing and social policies are not fully implemented.

Social Watch Germany Uwe Kerkow

The concept of sustainability is now firmly embedded in German politics, science and research. The German Council for Sustainable Development's primary tasks,¹ for example, are to contribute to the advancement of the National Sustainability Strategy,² to propose projects and fields of action, and to position sustainable development as a key issue of public concern. Also, a National Sustainability Strategy, adopted in 2002, contains numerous references to the social dimensions and implications of sustainability, but it has not been updated since it was adopted.

In 2009, the German Council for Sustainable Development conducted a Peer Review which arrived at a somewhat ambivalent conclusion about the implementation of the sustainability concept: "At the level of ideas the concept of sustainable development has been widely accepted in general terms. But when broken down to specific issues and at sectoral levels there appears to be much more reluctance, resistance and mistrust."³ It adds: "The biggest single potential mismatch between objectives for 2050 and the state we are in now lies in the field of climate change."⁴

In the Coalition Agreement between the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CSU) and the Free Democratic Party (FDP) a section on "Climate protection, energy and the environment" notes that policy is shaped by the principle of sustainability. It includes a target to "limit global warming to a maximum of two degrees centigrade" and "continuously expand the role of renewable energy," while increasing "assistance to developing countries for combating climate change and coping with its consequences."⁵

- 3 German Council for Sustainable Development, Peer Review on Sustainable Development Policies in Germany, (Berlin: 2009), p.15, <awww.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/dokumente/ studien/studien/peer-review-report-nov-2009>.
- 4 Ibid., p. 21.
- 5 Growth. Education. Unity. The coalition agreement between the CDU, CSU and FDP for the 17th legislative period, p. 17, <www.cdu. de/en/doc/091215-koalitionsvertrag-2009-2013-englisch.pdf>.



Sustainability in practice: the energy sector

The status of Germany's sustainable development policy is most apparent in the field of energy policy. On one hand, German industry is a formidable player in the energy sector, notably in system design and construction; on the other, renewable energy sources are still reliant on subsidies from government and consumers.

The Parliament's decision in late October 2010 to extend the operating life of nuclear power plants marked a radical break with previous energy policy.⁶ In 2002, Parliament had voted to phase out the use of nuclear power over the long term, to limit the remaining operating life of existing plants to a maximum of 32 years, and to build no new plants. The 2010 decision extended the plants' operating life by an average of 12 years,⁷ and was implemented even though a solution for the final storage of nuclear waste is not in sight⁸ and the majority of Germans have consistently opposed nuclear power for decades.⁹

At the same time, subsidies for renewable energy sources are being reduced, particularly for solar power,¹⁰ despite firm evidence that their use reduces power generation costs.¹¹ The German Advisory

- 6 Federal Government, "Energy policy legislation," (Berlin: 2010), <www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/ Artikel/2010/10/2010-10-01-energiekonzept-bt.html>.
- 7 Ibid, <www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/StatischeSeiten/ Breg/Energiekonzept/energiekonzept-final.html>, p.18.

- 9 Zeit Online, Schon wieder Ärger mit dem Volk, (2011), <www. zeit.de/2010/30/Atomausstieg>.
- 10 Tagesschau.de, Solarförderung wird weiter gekürzt, (2011), <www.tagesschau.de/inland/solarkuerzung100.html>.
- Energie und Klima-News, Erneuerbare verbilligen den Strom, (2011), <www.heise.de/tp/blogs/2/149246>.



Council on the Environment has concluded that a 100% renewable electricity supply is possible by 2050.¹² In response to the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan in early 2011, the Government shut down seven nuclear reactors and announced that it intends to speed up the nuclear phase-out.¹³ But whether this will result in a genuine change of policy remains to be seen.

Sustainability in practice: the social dimension

A holistic sustainability strategy must also take into account the social dimension. The most significant social policy debate in Germany in 2010 followed a decision by the Federal Constitutional Court on 9 February 2010, which said that welfare benefits must be calculated "in a transparent and appropriate manner according to actual need, that is, in line with reality" and that "the assessment of benefits must be justifiable on the basis of reliable figures and plausible methods of calculation." The judgement forced policymakers to review the welfare benefits system.¹⁴

- 13 Federal Government, Energiewende beschelunigen, (2011), <www.bundesregierung.de/nn_1021804/Content/DE/ StatischeSeiten/Breg/Energiekonzept/07-energiewendebeschleunigen.html>.
- 14 Diakonie, Sachgerechte Ermittlung des Existenzminimums, p.1, <www.diakonie-portal.de/presse/zum-herunterladen/ Kurzuebersicht%20Diakonie-Studie.pdf/at_download/file>.

¹ See: <www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de>

² Federal Government, Perspectives for Germany: Our Strategy for Sustainable Development, (2002), <www. nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/fileadmin/user_upload/English/pdf/ Perspectives_for_Germany.pdf>.

⁸ Ibid

¹² German Advisory Council on the Environment, Wege zur 100 % erneuerbaren Stromversorgung Kurzfassung für Entscheidungsträger, (2011), <www. umweltrat.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/02_ Sondergutachten/2011_Sondergutachten_100Prozent_ Erneuerbare KurzfassungEntscheid.pdf>.

A study by Diakonie, the Protestant Church welfare organization, calculates that a 10-30% increase in welfare benefits is needed in order to comply with the Court's ruling.¹⁵ Instead, a decision was taken in February 2011 to increase benefits by around 1.5%, with a further increase of less than 1% planned for 2012.¹⁶

At the same time, the gap between rich and poor has widened. A 2010 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report¹⁷ states: "the distribution of gross wages widened significantly after 1995" and "the share of jobless households has increased [...] to 19%, the highest level across the OECD area." It adds that social transfers "are less targeted to lower income groups than in other countries."

Sustainability in practice: development policy

According to figures published by the OECD in early April 2011, German Official Development Assistance (ODA) increased slightly in 2010 – but not enough to bring it into line with the European Union's timetable to raise ODA to 0.56% of gross national income (GNI). In 2010, the country spent 0.38% of GNI on development assistance – and has therefore stalled at the 2008 level. What's more, in 2009 it actually decreased to 0.35%. In absolute terms, the country has fallen from second (2008) to fourth place in the international ranking of donor countries and is trailing behind the United States, France and the United Kingdom, while its ODA spending of just 0.38% of GNI ranks it 13th out of 23 Western donor countries.¹⁸ The Government is not expected to substantially increase development spending. In fact, according to its medium-term financial planning, ODA spending will be cut by more than half a billion euros by 2015.¹⁹

Moreover, a change of strategy will change the allocation of funds, with bilateral development cooperation taking precedence over multilateral cooperation. There are also plans to cut budget support and reduce the number of partner countries from 58 to 50. However, the centrepiece of this conservative-liberal policy restructuring is the forging of closer links with the private sector. To that end, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development's (BMZ) budget for "development partnerships with the private sector" has already been increased by 25% in 2010 to the present figure of 60 million euros.²⁰

There are shortfalls in Germany's climate change financing as well. According to non governmental organizations *Terre des hommes* and *Welthungerhilfe*, Germany should provide around 7.6 billion euros to the costs of climate change mitigation and adaptation in the global South.²¹ This would represent a more than threefold increase in official spending on global climate protection. In advance of the Climate Conference in Copenhagen, the Government pledged to contribute EUR 420 million a year to the EU's fast-start climate funding for developing countries of 2.4 billion euros a year for 2010-2012. Under the Copenhagen Accord, this should constitute "new and additional" funding. Germany has failed to honour this however, earmarking just 70 million euros in the 2010 budget. Moreover, this item has been deleted from the 2011 draft budget entirely.²²

The unwillingness to make a substantive contribution to climate protection is epitomized by the Government's refusal to contribute to Ecuador's 2010 Yasuní Initiative²³ to "leave the oil in the soil" – that is, to refrain from tapping the oil reserves in the Yasuní National Park in the Amazon basin. In exchange, Ecuador is seeking compensation from the international community amounting to some USD 1.5 billion, equivalent to around 50% of the revenues forfeited as a result of the decision not to drill.²⁴

Outlook

In response to the global economic and financial crisis and in advance of the Rio+20 Conference in 2012, Germany's sustainable development debate is steadily gaining momentum. In November 2010, Parliament established a Study Commission on Growth, Well-being and Quality of Life - Paths to Sustainable Economic Activity and Social Progress in the Social Market Economy. Its purpose is to "consider the role of growth in the economy and society, develop a holistic measure of wellbeing and progress, and explore the opportunities and limits for decoupling growth, resource consumption and technological progress."25 It remains to be seen whether this group of experts will provide significant impetus for the progress towards more sustainability that is so urgently required.

15 Ibid., p. 3.

- 16 See Federal Government, *Bildungspaket für Kinder*, (2011), <www.bundesregierung.de/nn_774/Content/DE/Magazine/0 1MagazinSozialesFamilie/03/s-c-bildungspaket-fuer-kinder. html>.
- 17 OECD, Growing Unequal?, (2008), <www.oecd. org/dataoecd/45/42/41527936.pdf; OECD, Country note Germany, (2008), <www.oecd.org/ dataoecd/45/27/41525386.pdf>.
- 18 Terre des hommes, Trotz leichten Anstiegs verfehlt Deutschland erneut Entwicklungshilfeziel, (2011), <www.tdh. de/content/presse/pressemeldungen/detail.htm?&view=deta ii&id=343&year=2011>.
- 19 Finance Ministry, Eckwertebeschluss zum Regierungsentwurf des Bundeshaushalts 2012 und zum Finanzplan 2011 bis 2015, (2011), <vww. bundesfinanzministerium.de/nn_124500/DE/Wirtschaft_ und_Verwaltung/Finanz_und_Wirtschaftspolitik/ Bundeshaushalt/Bundeshaushalt_2012/16032011-Eckwert ebeschluss,templateId=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf>.
- 20 Terre des hommes, welt hunger hilfe, The Reality of Development Aid, (2010), p. 6, <www.tdh.de/content/ materialien/download/download_wrapper.php?id=319>.
- 21 21. Ibid., (2009), p. 34, <www.tdh.de/content/materialien/ download/download_wrapper.php?id=305>.

22 Ibid., (2010), p. 23.

- 23 Federal Government, Regierungspressekonferenz vom 17 September, (2010), <www.bundesregierung.de/n_774/ Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2010/09/2010-09-17-regpk.html>; see: <www.klimaretter.info/umwelt/ hintergrund/6848-deutschland-kein-geld-fuer-yasuni>.
- 24 See Amerika 21, (August 2010), <amerika21.de/ meldung/2010/08/7430/itt-yasuni-vertrag>.
- 25 Deutscher Bundestag, Enquete-Kommission "Wachstum, Wohlstand, Lebensqualität - Wege zu nachhaltigem Wirtschaften und gesellschaftlichem Fortschritt in der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft", (2011), <www.bundestag.de/ bundestag/ausschuesse17/gremien/enquete/wachstum/ index.jsp>.

GHANA

Climate change policies and citizen's rights



Addressing climate change is critical for sustainable development in the country. At the national level, efforts have been made to comply with the decisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), but bilateral and multilateral funding opportunities affect the extent to which the real concerns of citizens are addressed. Donor consultations on adaptation and mitigation of climate change are constrained by a neo-liberal economic framework that limits the space for a citizen-led process. Civil society organizations must intensify efforts to ensure that efforts to address climate change promote social justice, human security, gender equality, and sustainable development.

NETRIGHT

Like other African states, Ghana is already experiencing the impact of climate change: hotter weather, reduced or increased seasonal rainfall, changes in rainfall patterns, flooding, sea surges, tidal waves and a rise in sea-level causing inundation and coastal erosion. The result is a reduction in food security, increased transmission of vector and water-borne diseases, significant economic losses through weather crises and the displacement of the population.

However, since the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Conference on Sustainable Development, after which Ghana adopted the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and in 1997, the Kyoto Protocol, the Government has engaged with the issue of climate change at all levels, from global to local.

Institutional and policy initiatives

Having ratified all the Rio Conventions on the environment--the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Ghana established several national institutions as policy focal points, including the Ministry of Environment Science and Technology (MEST), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Ghana Environment and Climate Change Authority (GECCA).

However, the uncritical stance of these institutions towards the UNFCCC and KP decisions is problematic. Ghana was among the first 23 countries in Africa that associated itself with the Copenhagen Accord in 2009 in spite of the fact that African countries had developed a collective position at Copenhagen against the Accord. The Government took that position ostensibly to access the various funding windows available for adaptation and mitigation measures on climate change. Nonetheless, since then, Ghana has developed a National Adaptation Strategy, set up a National Climate Change Committee and developed a discussion paper on a National Climate Change Policy Framework (NCCPF).

In its National Communication Assessments (NCA), the Government's Environmental Protection Agency has provided useful information about the effect of various climate change scenarios on different economic sectors and the implications for



people's livelihoods. The analysis, however, of the implications for women is premised on women's vulnerability rather than women's human rights or human development.¹ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its assessment of countries developing National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs) has said:

"In general NAPAs portray women as victims without the skills that would allow them to become involved in negotiations of strategic planning. Most of these plans do not even recognize that women with the knowledge they have can make a contribution to adaptation processes and that they should be a focal group for adaptation programmes".²

The NCCPF discussion paper is another concern. Its three objectives – promoting low carbon growth; effective adaptation to climate change; and social development – seem laudable, but their articulation and the policy implications leave much to be desired. Similar to earlier proposals, the NCCPF is located in a framework of market-oriented options, such as carbon-trading schemes including Reducing Emis-



sions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). It focuses on financial schemes available to developing countries that demonstrate compliance with laid down market-driven criteria on adaptation and mitigation.

Civil society engagement

Whereas the NCCPF has been based on broad consultation with a range of actors in Ghana including civil society groups such as Friends of the Earth and ABANTU for Development, the issues of concern to these groups have not been sufficiently articulated in the discussion paper. A case in point is the gender issue which is discussed under the 'social development' objective of the NCCPF. While the document acknowledges the contribution of women and the need to address the risks they could face as a result of climate change, the policy prescription merely refers to the need for "measures such as social protection to smooth out inequities."³

Climate change

Data from 1960 to 2000 indicates a progressive rise in temperature and a decrease in mean annual rainfall in all agro-ecological zones.⁴ Estimates show that temperature will continue to rise on average "about 0.6 degrees C., 2.0 degrees C. and 3.9 degrees C. by the year 2020, 2050 and 2080

¹ I. Dankelman, "Climate Change: Learning from Gender Analysis and Women's Experiences of Organising for Sustainable Development", in *Gender & Development*, Vol. 10 (2002):21-29; Dankelman, et al., "Gender, Climate Change and Human Security Lessons from Bangladesh, Ghana and Senegal," prepared by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) with ABANTU for Development in Ghana, ActionAid Bangladesh and ENDA in Senegal, (2008), <vww.wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/hsnstudy-final-may-20-2008.pdfs.

² UNDP, *Resource Guide on Gender and Climate*, (New York: 2009).

³ Ministry of Energy Science and Technology (MEST), Ghana Goes for Green Growth: National Engagement on Climate Change, (Accra: 2010), p. 13.

⁴ Modern Ghana, Climate Change Ghana's Threat to Coca Production, (22 August 2008), <www.modernghana.com/ news/179906/1/climate-change-ghanas-threat-to-cocoaproduction.html>.

TABLE 1		
Trends in Forest Cover in Ghana 1990-2005		
Year	Forest Cover (Hectares)	Rate of Defo- restation
1990	7,448,000	-
2000	6,094,000	-18.2%
2005	5,517,000	-9.5%
Annual Average		-1.8%
Source : Rainforest Alliance, 2006/FAO		

respectively" in all agro-ecological zones except for the rainforest zone where rainfall may increase. Available data also shows a sea-level rise of 2.1mm per year over the last 30 years, indicating a rise of 5.8cm, 16.5cm and 34.5cm by 2020, 2050 and 2080 respectively.⁵

While 23% of the urban population and 51.6% of the rural population still live below the poverty line,6 it should be noted that data from the 2008 Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) shows that the number of extremely poor declined by 8.6 percentage points from 26.8% in 1998-99 to 18.2% in 2005-06.7 However, given the country's high dependence on agriculture and forestry, changing climate conditions have serious implications for the standard of living of women and men in those communities and could reverse that trend. There is already evidence that vital economic resources - the coastal zone, agriculture, and water - have been affected by climate change with adverse implications for women's rights, poverty, health and livelihoods. Those who live in communities with high poverty levels will be most negatively affected.

In the northern parts of the country, flooding in 2007 showed that the impact of climate change on development efforts is overwhelming. An estimated 317,000 persons were affected; 1,000 kilometres of roads were destroyed; 210 schools and health facilities were damaged; and 630 drinking water facilities were damaged or contaminated.

Since then, weather variability has continued to affect different societal groups and geographical locations, inhibiting efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs were incorporated into Ghana's Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS 1-2003-2005 and GPRS 11-2006-2009), but the impact of climate change already makes clear that Millennium Development Goal 7 (MDG-7) – en-

7 UNDP, Human Development Report, (Accra: 2007).

TABLE 2



suring environmental sustainability – will not be met. Further, given the market-driven nature of Government policy to guide action on climate change, it is difficult to see how current trends can be reversed to achieve MDG-7.

The four agreed targets for MDG-7 are:

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015;
- Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving a significant reduction in the rate of loss by 2010;
- Halve the proportion of persons without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015;
- Achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

Regarding the indicator for the biodiversity target, the proportion of land area covered by forest, it is estimated that Ghana's forests declined by 8.5 percentage points between 1990 and 2005, from 32.7% to 24.2% (see Table 1). Forested area was estimated at 7,448,000 ha and has declined steadily each year to 5,517,000 ha in 2005.⁸ The continuous depletion of the country's forests has negative consequences for people's livelihoods, especially those of women and contributes to global warming. Another indicator measuring progress towards the tainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation", is unlikely to be met by 2015. Available data from the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) shows that the national coverage for improved sanitation has increased 8.4 percentage points from 4% in 1993 to 12.4% in 2008.9 But there are wide regional variations in access to improved sanitation. The proportion of the population with access to improved sanitation in the Greater Accra and Eastern regions is above the national average of 12.4% with those in the Western and Central regions also close to the national average (see Figure 1). However, other regions including Ashanti and the Western regions were lower than the national average, while the three northern regions (Northern, Upper West and Upper East) with the worst experience of poverty are less likely to have access to improved sanitation facilities.¹⁰

achievement of MDG-7, "populations without sus-

Already faced with significant effects of climate change, the Government has established national institutions to meet the challenge. Its policy solutions, however, are not keeping pace with ecological deterioration and are compounded by a preference for market-driven solutions that do not articulate with sufficient sensitivity and specificity the issues of concern to civil society.

⁵ LWF Youth Blog, Youth challenge leaders on climate change at UN, (September 2007), <wfyouth.org/2007/09/25/youthchallenge-leaders-on-climate-change-at-un

⁶ Ghana's poverty line was set in 2006 based on calorie requirements for nutrition based poverty lines.

⁸ Ministry of Energy Science and Technology (MEST), Ghana Goes for Green Growth: National Engagement on Climate Change, (Accra: 2010).

⁹ The Ghana Statistical Service and The Ghana Health Service, The 2008 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey. (Accra: 2008), < www.measuredhs.com/pubs/pdf/GF14/GF14.pdf>.

¹⁰ The rural areas in the three northern regions in Ghana are far behind the target for access to basic sanitation. See: National Development Planning Commission, *Ghana Millennium* Development Goals 2007, (UNDP, 2007).

GUATEMALA

Knocking on environmental death's doors



Historically, the Guatemalan economy has been structured around an extraction-led growth model. The result has been the impoverishment of the rural population and the degradation of the environment. The sugar cane industry, for example, has deepened deforestation which has led to the displacement of entire communities whose rights have been simply brushed aside by businesses in pursuit of profit and a State to timid to regulate them. Successive governments have evaded their responsibility to create institutions that protect the environment and meet people's needs. Civil society organizations must demand a greater share in decision-making and must urge the Government to abandon this exploitative and destructive economic model in favour of sustainable development.

Coordinación de ONG Y Cooperativas de Guatemala CONECOOP Norayda Ponce Sosa Helmer Velásouez

Since the early 16th century, when it was conquered by Spain, Guatemala's economy has been based in agriculture and the intensive exploitation of the land by large estates through mono-cultivation for export and by small farms where peasants engage in subsistence and infra-subsistence production. In the last decade a new threat to the country's resources and biodiversity has emerged with the granting of licenses by the State to enterprises that prospect for minerals in most of the country. The exploitation of iron and gold deposits has spread chemicals such as cyanide, used in the gold industry, that cause irreparable damage to the country's water sources. These industries also consume large quantities of water. putting local communities' access to this resource in peril.

The power that these large enterprises have acquired stands in sharp contrast to shaky public institutions unable to control the industry's activities and promote an alternative model of sustainability. Present development models in Guatemala involve no long- term planning, have put the environment at risk and have plunged approximately half the country's population into poverty. In rural areas, 72% of the people live in poverty and 40%, in extreme poverty, while in indigenous communities 55% suffer extreme poverty.¹

The Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food, responsible for regulating and managing the environment, natural resources and agriculture, lack adequate financing and have little political weight in State decisions. In fact, the Government has almost no capacity to plan or control the agricultural or environmental sectors though these are the sectors on which Guatemala's economic, social and environmental sustainability largely depends. According to a Government report, Guatemala is "damaged socially and environmentally, and the main evidence of this is an increasingly serious breakdown of social



structures caused by the marginalization of large sectors of the population. This grim panorama makes the direct connection between the environment and poverty all too clear. The rural population is poorer now than in the past, when it had access to the fruits of nature."²

Unsustainability and the environment

The sugar cane industry, which devastates and flattens forests so the land can be planted with sugar cane, is just one example of how unsustainable the current model is. Based on the economic and political power of the big landowners, this industry has even managed to change the course of rivers so the water will be diverted to nourish their crops. The environmental result has been more frequent flooding in the winter and more droughts in the summer. Extensive sugar cane cultivation also causes higher levels of greenhouse gas emissions. "As part of the industrial process around 90-95% of the cane grown on more than 200,000 hectares is burned. Each hectare put to the torch releases 50 kilos of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which adds up to around 9,000 tonnes of this gas per year."3

Agriculture and the more recent extractive industries have exploited the forests without any serious effort at re-forestation, using the wood not only for construction but also as a fuel resource. As a result, the country's native forests have been all but annihilated. The deforestation rate is around 82,000 ha per year. If exploitation continues at this level, all



the country's native forests will have been wiped out by 2040. $^{\scriptscriptstyle 4}$

A very vulnerable land

The country is prone to earthquakes and violent storms owing to seismic activity along the Pacific Rim and its location on the Atlantic Ocean hurricane route. Moreover, a dry corridor runs across the central part of the country which is subject to drought and desertification. Climate change has intensified and worsened the effects of storms and drought.⁵

In 2010, Tropical Storm Agatha and the eruption of the Pacaya Volcano caused hundreds of deaths and approximately USD 950 million in material damage. Rural populations proved to be particularly vulnerable. The Government's lack of planning and long term vision and the unregulated exploitation of the environment creates a vicious circle in which each disaster leaves the country with serious problems which the next disaster only aggravates.

Sustainable development and rural development

The Guatemalan peasantry - often victims of government repression during the country's 36-year-long armed inner conflict and its aftermath – have more recently been negatively affected by structural adjustment measures and a newly implemented free trade regime.

On 30 April 2008 after a consultation process, the Alliance for Integrated Rural Development, made up of indigenous, peasant, environmentalist, trade

Plataforma Agraria, Propuestas políticas, (Guatemala: July 2008), <www.plataformaagraria.org/guatemala/index. php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=55>

² Informe Ambiental Gobierno MARN.

³ Ibid.

⁴ G. Palma, A. Taracena, E. Baumaister, *Cambios en la tenencia de la tierra: tendencias históricas*, (Guatemala: UNDP, 2004).

⁵ Informe Ambiental Gobierno MARN, op cit.

union and research groups and other non governmental organizations (NGOs), signed an agreement with the Government on a framework for a national dialogue on holistic rural development and the resolution of the country's agricultural, labour and environmental conflicts. In November of that year, the participants - in collaboration with Government officials and even political advisers from the Office of the Presidency - submitted to the President himself proposals for a National Integrated Rural Development Law, designed to protect "the rural population living in poverty and extreme poverty, with priority to indigenous and peasant communities with insufficient or unproductive land or with no land; indigenous and peasant women; permanent and temporary paid workers, artisans, small rural producers; and micro and small rural entrepreneurs."6 Today, three years after it was drafted, the proposed law is still bogged down in the Congress, a telling example of the lack of political will to pursue real solutions to the problems of agriculture and the use of natural resources in the country.

Meanwhile local people continue to resist megaprojects that move into an area, but these are largely ignored by enterprises and the State both. In frustration, entire populations leave what are often ancestral lands and wander in search of some other way of staying alive. For example, in April 2011 some 800 families living on land claimed by a sugar mill enterprise were forcibly evicted by enforcers hired by the putative proprietors and helped by public security forces. The peasant leader, Antonio Beb Ac, was killed, and men, women and children were driven off their land and their crops burned with total impunity

Mining and resistance

The development model which the Government and the World Bank are promoting in Guatemala does not respond to the needs of the local population. Investment in the country is geared exclusively to consolidating that model although it is exploitative, oppressive, discriminatory, unsustainable and promotes inequality.

The World Bank regarded a credit that its International Finance Corporation (IFC) granted to the Canadian enterprise Glamis Gold Corporation as a contribution to Guatemala's "national development," despite the fact that it went to finance the opening of the Marlin gold mine in the department of San Marcos, a project that affects the municipalities of San Miguel Ixtahuacán and Sipacapa. Neither the IFC nor the Government analysed the possibility of using the profits from this venture to set up a sustainable cultural and environmental development plan for the region. Nor did they weigh the social, environmental and economic costs and benefits of the project to determine to what extent and in what time frame the mine should be worked.

INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE

For the Mayan population, non-violent opposition to development projects that affect them and their lands is a matter of principle. According to Leonor Hurtado, an activist in the National Resistance Front against Mining in Guatemala, "This is directly connected to freedom and dignity. This kind of resistance, whereby indigenous people defend themselves against aggression in a peaceful and active way, fosters unity in the community as they band together in pursuit of a common goal and stimulates them to organize and mobilize in ways that are based on their own values and their own cultural identity."

In an interview with Hurtado, the "Principales" (indigenous leaders) explained in San Juan Sacatepéquez that the peaceful resistance means "respect for Mother Earth and faith that her strength will tell us what to do". We can never meet a threat with weapons because weapons mean the end, they lead to killing, they turn a person into the weakest and most despicable thing there is. Indigenous people come from nature and we resist silently, without showing anger, and we know that we have dignity and we are in the right. These values have enabled us to survive and resist for centuries, and they also give us the ability and the knowledge to defend ourselves and make a contribution."

A Principal from Sipacapa also told her that "gold is like the mountain's weapon, it supports it, it gives it form, it gives the mountain its energy and its balance so there can be life. If you take away the gold you destroy the mountain, and even if afterwards you put the earth back it will not be the same."

A geologist told Hurtado that the indigenous leader at Sipacapa "is absolutely right ... The gold is part of the structure of the mountain and this structure is essential if there is to be life.

1 Hurtado, Leonor, Explotación minera: Una herida en la tierra y en la sociedad, Revista Pueblos, (Madrid: junio de 2006).

A community movement against this mining venture has accused the Government of imposing the project as if it had been fully authorized while in fact there was no consultation whatsoever with the population, which is a prior step laid down in international law. According to International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169, a State is required to "...consult the interested peoples through appropriate procedures and in particular through their representative institutions, whenever legislative or administrative measures that may affect them directly are being considered."⁷

Though the Government ratified the Convention, it lacks mechanisms to implement it. The mining law is also at odds with the country's Municipal Code and the Law of Urban and Rural Development Councils.

Looking to the Future

To reverse the ongoing pollution of the environment and the erosion of the population's quality of life, the Government must adopt a sustainable development model as soon as possible. It is urgent and imperative to impose a system that safeguards the use of and democratic access to the land in a healthy coexistence with nature.

The country must preserve the great wealth of biodiversity which it currently enjoys. It needs land recuperation plans that protect and sustain natural and food-producing areas. It must bring society as a whole, and especially impacted local populations, into a broad and active national planning process. Local communities should be making the key decisions about how the natural environment in their areas should be changed and what means should be employed to do so. Decisions of this importance should be based on the values, world vision and development aspirations of the local populations. National development plans should be built around the country's ecosystems and the interests of the people who live in them.

Sustainability must be based on a rural development model that is geared to the land itself and to the equitable distribution of its wealth. Current development models are always based on private enterprises pillaging the land. If rural development is to succeed, it has to be rooted in small-scale, peasant family agriculture. Only this way can peasant families get access to credits, technical assistance, education, technology and necessary infrastructure. Agroecological research programmes that seek ways to reduce to an absolute minimum the use of chemical products that damage the soil must be established and supported. Steps must be taken to safeguard ecosystems. The community and the State must seriously pursue the use and protection of native seeds, particularly of grain.

People's participation must extend to the field of sustainable development. Special attention must be paid to the re-settlement of populations that have been uprooted by the armed conflict. Criteria to govern production and the sustainable development of resources, the selection of suitable land, the recuperation of polluted land, and the management of water, infrastructure and sewage will have to be defined. An agreement on the identity and rights of indigenous peoples will also strengthen environmental protection, the rational use of natural resources, the use of science and technology to preserve the environment and the sustainable administration of natural resources.

⁶ CNOC, CNP-T, CNAIC, CONGCOOP/IDEAR, Comunicado de Prensa: El Gobierno debe cumplir sus compromisos en relación a la Política y la Ley de Desarrollo Rural Integral, (Guatemala: February 2009).

⁷ ILO, Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169, (1989) <www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C169>.

HONDURAS

Unbearable levels of violence



The main obstacle to sustainable development in Honduras is violence, which affects almost every stratum of society, in both urban and rural areas. People in general, and women in particular, are overwhelmed by a seemingly unstoppable wave of violent crime that has given the country the highest murder rate in the world. Despite other urgent issues, including environmental degradation, economic inequality, poor school performance and limited access to health services, priority must go to reducing the staggering levels of violence. Since the majority of victims are women, a gender-sensitive approach is imperative.

Centro de Estudios de la Mujer-Honduras Mercedes Elena Flores Cristina Urbina

Before 2009, Honduras was making steady, if rather slow, progress in reducing poverty levels. In 2005, 63.7% of households were living in poverty, and by May 2009 this had been brought down to 58.8%. A major factor in the economy is remittances from migrant workers, and for many households this is the main source of income. In 2009 remittances amounted to 21% of the country's GDP, contributing more than exports, maquiladoras (export, processing enterprises in tax free areas) and tourism combined. Further progress on poverty reduction, therefore, depends on sustaining foreign remittances, which may not be possible if the US economy remains stalled.

In addition to this economic uncertainty, the biggest problem Honduras is facing is the high level of violence. The 2009-2010 Human Development Report shows that in Central America as a whole, the murder rate is 44 per 100,000 people, 11 times higher than the world average of only 4 per 100,000.¹ But in Honduras the murder rate in 2010 was 77.5 per 100,000 inhabitants. While the World Health Organization has said that 9 murders per 100,000 people can be considered normal, a rate of 10 or more is considered an epidemic.²

If there is to be any hope of sustainable development in the future, in 30 years or however long it takes, the first step must be for the people of Honduras to stop the hatred and murders that take place daily.

The political coup that took place in June 2009 has exacerbated the country's endemic violence. After President Manuel Zelaya was forcibly removed from office gender activists from six countries in the Americas united in the Feminist Observation Group (Observatorio Feminista) reported "massive women's participation in demonstrations" against the de facto government in Tegucigalpa. They reported that many women who were arrested during these protests were "sexually abused" by army personnel



and that demonstrators were "hit with truncheons on various parts of the body, particularly the breasts and the buttocks" and "verbally abused" with insults like, "Go on home, you whores." ³

Some women who were subjected to repeated intimidation even went so far as to move away from their families "to protect their children and to save their homes from being ransacked." This was especially true in the departments of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. Another aspect of this cruel scenario is that "femicide got much worse": 51 women were murdered in one month after the coup, and this was in a country where the horrifying average was already one woman killed per day.⁴

The current president, Porfirio Lobo Sosa, came to power in widely discredited elections on 29 November 2009, after which the situation of women continued to deteriorate. On 16 May 2010 a coalition of organizations called Feminist Resistance (Feministas en Resistencia) reported that "there has been an increase in violence against people's full enjoyment of rights established by [both] international institutions and our own Constitution".⁶ One year after the coup, the Honduras human rights organization Centro de Estudios de la Mujer (Women Studies



Center_CEM-H) confirmed seven specific cases of women murdered while demonstrating against the dictatorship.⁶

A bloodstained country

In January 2010 a Government committee submitted to the National Congress its *Vision of the Country* 2010-2038 and National Plan 2010-2022,⁷ highlighting a series of problems that the Government will have to tackle in order to move towards sustainable development. Among these are high levels of extreme poverty, poor school performance, high unemployment, increasing informality in the labour market and serious vulnerability to natural disasters. The report is a brave effort: it presents facts and figures and sets realistic middle and long term targets to reach its vision of long-term change. Yet it also reflects a great deal of wishful thinking, declaring for example:

"By 2022, the security policy will have completely changed the public safety situation in Honduras and will have brought the murder rate per 100,000 inhabitants, the murder rate in robberies, the rate of drug traffic crimes, the rate of sexual offences and the rate of deaths in traffic accidents down to average international levels. In addition, social conflicts will be reduced by 75% as a result of ongoing citizen participation processes and a general improvement in the country's economic and social situation, which will have a positive impact on the

UNDP. Central America Human Development Report 2009-2010, <www.pnud.org.gt/data/publicacion/IDHAC%202009-2010.pdf>.

² WHO. World report on violence and health: summary, (2002), <www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/ world_report/en/summary_es.pdf>.

³ Observatorio Feminista, "Semana de los Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres en Honduras," (Tegucigalpa: 20 August 2009), «www.cemh.org.hn/images/stories/COMUNICADOS_2010/ comunicados_2009/Comunicado_20_AGOSTO______ Observatorio_Feminista_de_DDHH.pdf>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Feministas en Resistencia, "Ante el agravamiento de la represión en Honduras," (16 May 2010), «www. cemh.org.hn/index.php?option=com_content&vie w=article&id=91:comunicado-de-las-feministas-enresistencia&catid=40:noticias-cem-h&Itemid=55>.

⁶ CEM-H, Pronunciamiento público: A un año del golpe de Estado las mujeres seguimos resistiendo, (Tegucigalpa: 28 June 2010), «www.cemh.org.hn/images/stories/ COMUNICADOS_2010/Prununciamiento_2_CEMH-MMM-28_de_Junio.pdf>.

⁷ See: <www.enlaceacademico.org/uploads/media/VISION_ DE_PAIS.pdf>.

underlying factors that generate lawlessness. Honduras will have attained good levels of citizen security that will translate into peace and healthy coexistence and that will generate a favourable situation for domestic and foreign investment."8

As well as taking many victims, violence in Honduras also has many causes. There is frequent fighting between rival gangs (*maras*) and their battles are absolutely savage. According to Human Rights Commissioner Ramón Custodio, the *maras* even go so far to cut people's heads off, and "this is now very common whereas before it hardly ever happened. This shows that every day we are getting more and more used to acts of aggression against the human body."⁹ Between 2005 and 2010, 24,674 people died violent deaths, and 19,640 (80%) of these were caused by firearms."¹⁰

Violence against peasants and femicide

Another disturbing trend is an alarming increase in violence against peasant communities in recent years. From January 2010 to the beginning of October 2011, a total of 40 people with links to peasant organizations in the Bajo Aguán valley region were murdered.¹¹

There is also a worrying increase in attacks on transsexuals, as has been reported by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights¹² and by Human Rights Watch.¹³

Even worse, femicide is also increasing. In the period 2003 to 2010 some 1,464 women were killed, 44% of them aged 15 to 29. In 2010 alone 300 women died violent deaths but in only 22 of these cases (7.3%) were the perpetrators brought to justice.¹⁴ From 2008 to 2010 there were 944 murders of women but the legal system only managed to punish 61 of the murderers (6.4%).¹⁵

8 Ibid.

- 9 El Informador, "Violencia en Honduras ha alcanzado niveles de epidemia. Derechos Humanos," <vww.informador.com. mx/internacional/2011/309257/6/violencia-en-honduras-haalcanzado-niveles-de-epidemia-derechos-humanos.htm>
- 10 See: <www.conadeh.hn/Joomla/index.php/component/ content/article/463-derecho-a-I-a-vida-y-la-seguridad>.
- 11 La vía campesina, "Honduras: Violencia extrema contra comunidades campesinas en el Bajo Aguán," vviacampesina. org/sp/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1266: honduras-violencia-extrema-contra-comunidades-campesinasen-el-bajo-aguan&catid=19.derectos-humanos&Itemid=40>.
- 12 "CIDH observa con profunda preocupación asesinatos de integrantes de la comunidad transgénero en Honduras," <www.cidh.org/Comunicados/Spanish/2011/4-11sp.htm>
- 13 Human Rights Watch, "Se Exhorta al Presidente Porfirio Lobo Sosa Investigar Muertes Recientes de Mujeres Trangénero en Honduras." Available at: <www.hrw.org/es/news/2011/01/31/ se-exhorta-al-presidente-porfirio-lobo-sosa-investigarmuertes-recientes-de-mujeres->.
- 14 CEM-H, "Día de la Mujer Hondureña: Más que una celebración exigimos una patria libre," (Tegucigalpa, 25 January 2011).
- 15 Estadísticas de las Unidades de Delitos contra la Vida de las Mujeres, de la Fiscalía Especial de la Mujer, (Tegucigalpa: 2010).

The only way to reduce or contain this violence is to adopt a gender approach, not just because women are the main victims but also because they are subjected to other more oblique forms of violence. Women make up 51.7% of the population and 41% of the economically active population, and in addition they do 91.1% of family domestic work. For various reasons, official unemployment among women (3.7%) is less than that among men (4%).¹⁶ Unemployment is highest among the young: of the country's 101,296 unemployed some 52.6% are under 24 years old.17 However, people between 20 and 59 are more likely to be poor, especially in rural areas, where 68.5% of women are living in poverty. 40% of households are headed by women, 40% of which live in extreme poverty, compared to only 35% of maleheaded households.18

Gender discrimination in the labour force

Women in the labour force are more likely than men to be clustered in part time and temporary jobs which are viewed as 'women's work' and less well paid than 'men's work.' Most women are working in the informal economy, where they lack all social benefits. They also make up the great majority in sectors like social, personal and domestic services, but these kinds of jobs usually involve more than the regulation eight hours per day and very often involve health and safety risks, low pay and temporary employment periods.

Most of the workers in the maquiladoras are young women aged 17 to 25, working long hours in precarious conditions. Since the start of the global financial crisis in 2008, which resulted in a 10% drop in textile and clothing exports, the maquiladoras have been systematically cutting their workforce. To make matters worse, a large amount of planned investment was cancelled due to the political crisis, which has also had a negative impact on women in the labour force.¹⁹

- 17 Encuesta Permanente de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples. EPHPM, INE, (May 2009),
- 18 Programa de Cooperación Internacional de la Junta de Andalucía, op cit.
- 19 Honduran Private Enterprise Council (COHEP) and Tegucigalpa Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIT), report that from 2008 to September 2009 nearly 120,000 jobs were lost due to the global financial crisis, a minimum wage increase and the country's 2009 political crisis. They estimate that the political upheaval caused losses of 439 million lempiras per day due to marches and roads blocked by demonstrators, and 32 curfews that were imposed. Honduran economy 2009 and prospects for 2010 Data and perceptions. UPE/UNDP.

Problems in education, justice and health services

Some 15.6% of the population over 15 years old is illiterate, with little difference between the rates among men (15.8%) and among women (15.5%). In recent years the educational situation has improved but there are still huge problems like the very high cost of transport, uniforms and school materials. Girls do better in the system, they spend an average of 7.1 years in education as against 6.8 years for boys, and the girls' repetition rate is 8.8%, considerably lower than the boys' rate of 12.3%.

The Supreme Court estimates that an average of around 20,000 cases of domestic violence are reported per year, and women aged 19 to 30 account for 41.5% of the total. This aggression against women is very often unreported because in it is seen as "an internal problem in the relationship."

Morbidity rates among women are high, which reflects serious deficiencies in sexual and reproductive health services. The maternal mortality rate is currently 110 per 100,000 live births, and in 2006 only 66.9% of births were attended by skilled health personnel.²⁰ This is a crisis and it should be tackled as such, especially in view of the fact that (in 2001) some 38% of adolescent girls became mothers at or before the age of 19.

Access to resources

Yet another area of gender discrimination is in access to land. From February to August 2010 the authorities issued 1,487 independent land ownership deeds, but less than a third of these (482) were awarded to women peasants. At the same time there were 150 cases of women receiving ownership rights for agricultural land, 28.40% of the total issued, while 528 deeds (71.60%) went to men. Because women are denied access to and control of these productive resources, in most cases they are unable to obtain credit.

The situation with regard to housing is similar. According to the National Conditions of Life Survey (ENCOVI), in 2004 some 86.2% of housing in urban areas was rented.²¹ Increasing migration from the countryside to the cities has led to an enormous growth in places like San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa, where according to the National Statistics Institute, the shanty town population increased from 900,000 in 1990 to 1,283,843 in 2010. Most of these buildings do not meet minimum standards and are vulnerable to landslides, floods and collapse caused by severe weather.

¹⁶ Programa de Cooperación Internacional de la Junta de Andalucía, Programa Operativo País Prioritario Honduras 2010-2011, (Tegucigalpa: 2010).

²⁰ ECLAC Data Base and Statistical Publications, <www.eclac. cl.>

²¹ Millennium Development Goals, (Honduras: 2010), Third report on the country.

HUNGARY

Growing social inequalities



Over the past 20 years the country has seen significant changes in the areas of education, employment and social inequality. Poverty and social exclusion have caused the greatest tensions, but demographic trends, health issues and food security have also created challenges. The structure of poverty remains unchanged. Child poverty is severe; families with several children and, most notably, single parents tend to live in poverty. Among the Roma, who are particularly subject to discrimination and social exclusion, the risk of poverty has significantly increased as it has among the unemployed, the unskilled, and those living in rural areas.

ATTAC Hungary Matyas Benyik¹

In 2008, while 17% of the European Union (EU) population were at risk of poverty, Hungary's official poverty rate was only 12.4%.² Among certain groups, however, this figure has been much higher. For example, between 2005 and 2009 the poverty rate for the under-18 age group was 20%. One in five children, one in three families with more than three children and nearly one in two unemployed people now live in poverty, as does every second Roma.³ Also, poor people in Hungary are much poorer than those in other member states of the EU. Most national experts agree that about 14% of the country's population lives below the subsistence level.⁴

Measured by living standards, income levels, health, education and access to public services, social inequalities have increased substantially. Most critically, the territorial concentration of poverty and segregation has also increased. Almost 12% of the population live below the poverty line.⁵ And among the Roma, – perhaps as much as 10% of Hungary's population – living standards, housing conditions, health status, employment, and schooling are far below the national average.⁶ Their unemployment rate is three to five times higher while the number of people sustained by one wage earner is three times that in the non-Roma population.⁷

- 2 Eurostat, Living conditions in 2008: 17% of EU27 population at risk of poverty, Eurostat News Release, (18 January 2010), <epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-18012010-AP/EN/3-18012010-AP-EN.PDF>.
- 3 RT, Poverty pushes Roma into crime in Hungary, (12 July 2010), <rt.com/news/hungary-roma-crime-poverty>.
- 4 IndexMundi, Hungary population below poverty line, (2011), <www.indexmundi.com/hungary/population_below_ poverty_line.html>.
- 5 Global Edge, "Hungary statistics," in *Global Edge*, Michigan State University, (2009), <globaledge.msu.edu/countries/ hungary/statistics>.
- 6 BBC News, Amnesty accuses Hungary of failing to protect Roma, (10 November 2010), <www.bbc.co.uk/news/worldeurope-11725531>. France 24, Making Room for Romas in Hungary's Schools, (Agence France Presse, 6 April 201), <www.france24.com/en/20110406-making-room-romahungarys-schools#>
- 7 Hungarian Central Statistical Office, Labour market stuation, 2009. Statistical reflection, Vol.4, no.9 (2 June 2010), cportal. ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/eng/xftp/stattukor/munkerohelyz/ emunkerohelyz09.pdf>.



But even discounting the particular situation of the Roma, the Hungarian labour market's main feature is the low rate of employment and workforce participation. For example, low employment in the 15-64 year old age group (55.4% in 2009) is accompanied by growing unemployment (10.1% in 2009) with an outstandingly high – though declining – ratio of economically inactive people (38.5% in 2009).⁸ The highest inactivity ratio is among young and elderly people. Population ageing, coupled with declining fertility rates, has led to an alarming drop in the economically active population, changing the shape of the country's labour market.

Further, the structure of poverty has remained unchanged: families with several children and single parents tend to live in poverty, and child poverty is still very grave. The poorest economically active social groups are characterized by larger than average family sizes, disadvantages in terms of place of residence, family problems, difficulties in cohabiting and health and ethnic tensions.⁹

Economy and environment

In the first half of the 1990s, the country's Gross Domestic Product declined almost 20%.¹⁰ The GDP share of agriculture, industry, and construction decreased while that of the service sector increased dynamically. The decline in the productive sector and the expansion of services contributed to less utilization of natural resources and reduced air and water pollution. In areas where mining and metallurgy were downsized or closed



down, such as the Northeast, environmental pollution decreased as a result of less energy consumption. In farming areas, the excessive use of environmentally dangerous chemicals slowed dramatically. At the same time, energy efficiency improved, and environmental management systems and environmentally friendly products have been spreading steadily.¹¹

In this back-handed way, the goal of separating economic growth from increasing environmental loads was seemingly accomplished. This result, however, was not owing to any environmental or economic policy. Rather, it came about as a by-product of spontaneous processes which followed the systemic change triggered by the collapse of the Soviet Union.

During recent decades, structures of production and patterns of consumption in Hungary have changed greatly. Inequalities between social groups have increased rapidly and, on the whole, several damaging environmental and lifestyle trends have been amplified.

Hungary's consumption structure is becoming more similar to that of Western European countries. Yet growing household consumption hides contradictions. A steady expansion of per capita household consumption has been financed increasingly from bank loans denominated mainly in Swiss francs, leading to a growing indebtedness. While households have contributed to reducing the consumption of energy and water, they also contribute to motor vehicle traffic growth and to increasing waste output rates. Meanwhile the production and consumption of products and services meeting sustainability requirements, which began in the mid-1990s, have shown little progress to date.

11 Ibid

¹ President ot ATTAC Hungary.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Wikipedia, "Hungary's economy since 1990", in *Economy of Hungary*, (2011), <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_ Hungary#Hungary.27s_economy_since_1990>.

Energy consumption declining

In the past 20 years, structural changes in the economy together with a rise in energy prices has resulted in energy consumption dropping by one fifth.¹² The economy has shown an overall decrease in energy demand with energy consumption per unit of GDP declining significantly.¹³ The proportion of consumption by productive sectors specifically has decreased but there has been a concurrent increase in the proportion of household and communal consumers.¹⁴

Compared to 1989, the domestic output of energy sources has decreased by 35% with a modest increase in energy imports. Energy imports historically have represented 50% of energy consumption. By 2009, consumption of energy imports, however, had increased to 62% though electricity imports haddeclined significantly. ¹⁵ The proportion of domestic natural gas output showed a significant increase while coal experienced a sharp decrease. ¹⁶

The past 20 years also have seen more use of solar and wind energy along with that of traditional renewables such as firewood and geothermal energy. The use of renewable energy sources both in extraction and use has increased though they represented only 3.6% of energy use in 2003 and 5.2% in 2005.¹⁷

Despite these positive trends, predatory privatization in certain sectors has increased the risk of environmental catastrophe. Such a calamity took place in October 2010 when a rupture in a wall of a privately owned waste sludge resevoir resulted in three settlements in Veszprém County being flooded by about 1 million cubic meters of toxic red sludge, burying 500 houses, killing nine people and injuring 150.¹⁸ The health consequences of the catastrophe were serious and still have not been made fully public.

Food security is a challenge

Hungary only completed its National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) in 2007.¹⁹ Integrating all

- 12 The Titi Tudorancea Bulletin, Hungary: total primary energy consumption, (2010), <www.tititudorancea.com/z/ ies_hungary_total_primary_energy_consumption.htm>.
- 13 The Titi Tudorance Bulletin, Hungary: Energy intensity Total primary energy consumption per dollar GDP, (2010), www.tititudorancea.com/z/ies_hungary_energy_intensity_consumption_per_gdp.htm.
- 14 Hungarian Central Statistical Office, Hungary 1989-2009, (Budapest: 2010), p. 49, <portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/eng/ xftp/idoszaki/mo/hungary1989_2009.pdf>.
- 15 Trading Economics, Energy Imports; (% of energy use) in Hungary, (2009), <www.tradingeconomics.com/hungary/ energy-imports-net-percent-of-energy-use-wb-data.html>
- 16 Index Mundi, Hungary Dry Natural Gas Production by Year, (2009), <vww.indexmundi.com/energy.aspx?country=hu&p roduct=gas&graph=production>.
- 17 Hungarian Central Statistical Office, Hungary 1989-2009, (Budapest: 2010), p. 49, <portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/eng/ xftp/idoszaki/mo/hungary1989_2009.pdf>.
- 18 Ministry of Rural Development, Current Status Report about the Red Sludge Catastrophe, (Budapest: 9 November 2010), <www.vm.gov.hu/main.php?folderID=2535&articleID=1666 0&ctag=articlelist&iid=1>.
- 19 Government of the Hungarian Republic, National Sustainable Developmen Strategy, (Budapest: June 2007), <vvvvv.ff3.hu/ upload/NFFS_20070629_en1.doc-; see also: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, Sustainable Developmen Indicators in Hungary, (Budapest: 2008), <mek.oszk.hu/07000/07002/07002.pdf>.

THE ROMA, STILL AT THE VERY BOTTOM

Modern genetic studies state that the origin of the Romanis traces back to the Indian subcontinent, possibly to the present territory of Rajasthan and that they migrated later to the Punjab region. A 2004 study concluded that all Romani share descendants of a group of people living approximately 40 generations ago.¹Romani people were reported in Europe in the 14th century, living in Crete. They were called *atsiganoi* in Greek, which means "untouchable." Within the next two centuries they had reached Germany, Sweden and the Iberian Peninsula.

Among the diverse subgroups of the Romani people in Europe are the Roma, concentrated in central and eastern Europe and central Italy; the Iberian Kale; the Finnish Kale; the Romanichal in the United Kingdom; the German Sinti and the French Manush.

During World War II, the Nazis and the Croatian *Ustaše* fascist group embarked on a systematic attempt to eliminate the Romanis, in a genocidal process called *Porajmos* in the Romani language. Romani people were defined as "enemies of the race-based state" by the Nuremberg Laws.² The total number of victims has been estimated as between 220,000 and 1,500,000.³ Some people were killed on sight and others sentenced to forced labour and imprisonment in concentration camps; in Hungary 28,000 Romanies were killed.⁴

According to the 2001 Census, 190,000 people identify as Roma in Hungary, although some estimates give much higher numbers, near 10% of the total population.⁵ The Hungarian Romani face multiple challenges compared to the rest of the population, including poverty, discrimination, lack of access to the educational system and higher unemployment rates. Currently, out of the 22 members of the European Parliament, only one is a Romani. However, there are a number of Roma organizations in Hungary, including the Roma Social Coalition and the Independent Interest Association of Roma.

- D.Angelicheva et al., Mutation History of theRoma/Gypsies (Perth, Australia: University of Western Australia, 2004), <lib.bioinfo.pl/pmid:15322984>.
- 2 J.Barsony, "Facts and Debates: The Roma Holocaust," in J.Barsony and A.Daroczi (eds), *Pharrajimos: The Fate of the Roma During the Holocaust* (New York: International Debate Education Association, 2008), p.1.
- 3 I.Hancock, "Romanies and the Holocaust: A Reevaluation and an Overview", in D. Stone (ed), The historiography of the Holocaust, (New York: Palgrave-Macmilan, 2004), <www.radoc.net/radoc.php?doc=art_e_holocaust_porrajmos&lan g=en&articles=true>
- 4 M.Verdofer, Unbekanntes Volk Sinti und Roma (Südtirol: Kennenlernen Informationsheft für Jugendische Gesellschaft für bedrohte1 Völker, 1995),
- 5 Romani World, *Economics*, (European Committee on Romani Emancipatio [ECRE], 2003), <vww.romaniworld.com/ ecoprt-1.htm>.

domestic sectors, the NSDS is a coherent plan with sector strategies and programmes. Despite its coherence, however, the implementation of the social goals of sustainability raises serious concerns about its agriculture planning and food security.

Since 1990, Hungarian agriculture has experienced enormous changes as a result of fundamental alterations in the structure of ownership and production, the conditions of livestock production and the structure of food consumption and foreign trade. Consequently, a substantial part of farmed land (about 300,000 has.) has been taken out of production.²⁰Multinational food processors and retailers now dominate the Hungarian market while small-scale, traditional family farmers are struggling with fragmented land ownership, lack of capital and few marketing skills. The price squeeze of food processors and big supermarket chains have provoked farmer mobilizations all over the country and have raised serious concerns about the origins and security of food.

Hungarians' poor health

By international standards, Hungarians' health is extremely poor, the result of historical, social, economic, and cultural factors, including people's habits and general way of life. Alcoholism is widespread, and the number of drug users is growing fast. Life expectancy at birth is low though it has increased both among men and women. In 1990, it was 65.1 years for men and 73.1 for women. In 2008, it was 69.8 years among men and 77.8 years among women.²¹

The Hungarian population has had the third highest mortality rate in the EU, averaging 13.1 per thousand between 2005 and 2009. Hungary is second after the Baltic States with the highest rate of mortality caused by heart and cerebral blood-vessel diseases, malignant tumours and diseases of the digestive system. The lung cancer mortality rate is almost twice the EU average.

21 Hungarian Central Statistical Office, Hungary 1989-2009,

xftp/idoszaki/mo/hungary1989_2009.pdf>

(Budapest: 2010), p.94, <portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/eng/

²⁰ G. Nagy, Country /Pasture Resource Profile-Hungary, (Rome: FA0 Website 2001 & 2006), <www.fao.org/ag/AGP/AGPC/ doc/Counprof/Hungary/hungary.htm>.

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INDIA

Ill-founded growth leads to environmental disaster



The lack of long-term planning that has characterized India's governments is seen clearly in its demographic growth and increasing CO_2 emissions. The recently proposed "missions" (or sustainable development initiatives) are not only insufficient but their effectiveness, however minimal, remains uncertain. Recent amendments to the heavily criticized 1894 Land Acquisition Act are unclear and fail to address the problems in the legislation. The Government must fully support renewable energy sources and integrate climate risk management in development planning. If it does not, all future scenarios for the country will be murky.

Social Watch India Himanshu Jha

The country faces several social challenges, such as inequitable economic growth, poor natural resource management, the exclusion of the majority of the population from decision making and from access to basic services, unabated environmental degradation and failure of institutions to sufficiently integrate environmental and social development considerations into economic policy objectives. Over the last decade it has been hit by a series of natural disasters that have severely damaged the economy and depleted natural resources, threatening the livelihoods of millions. Currently, 77% of the population lives below the poverty line.

The country is especially vulnerable to natural disasters, including cyclones and annual monsoon floods. If we add poor resource management, inad-equate infrastructure and unsustainable practices, the country's future looks bleak. Global warming has already had an impact: increasing cyclonic activity, rising sea levels and ambient temperature and precipitation changes are being reported and will worsen in the near future. Rising temperatures in particular will change the ice and snow patterns of the Himalayas, which will have a huge impact on the region's ecosystems and biodiversity, as well as on the livelihoods of millions of people.

It is estimated that the country's population will increase to about 1.2 billion by 2016,¹ putting enormous pressure on natural resources, so water shortages, soil exhaustion and erosion, deforestation and water and air pollution are expected.

The missions

Climate change is due largely to the unsustainable consumption patterns of rich industrialized nations, which are responsible for more than 70% of total global CO_2 emissions and consume 75-80% of the world's resources, while containing only 25% of the global population. Whereas an Indian citizen emits an equivalent of less than 2 tons of carbon per year, a citizen of the USA emits



an equivalent of more than 20 tons.² Yet despite its relative poverty, India's economy is already affecting the climate. In 2008 India was the world's fourth-largest emitter of CO_{o} .³

The Government has proposed a National Action Plan to curb CO_2 emissions, and is also outlining the 'Missions' programme, a set of sustainable development strategies to serve as the country's domestic climate legislation in the immediate future. Yet, these policies are driven more by adaptation imperatives and unsustainable development models than by a realistic and appropriate approach to environmental sustainability. In fact, India, along with the G77 and China, expects the developed world to agree to a 40% reduction in CO_2 emissions for 2020, so that developing countries get the appropriate "atmospheric space" required to develop.⁴

The projected missions include a National Solar Mission (to generate 20,000 MW of solar power in 2020), a National Mission for Sustainable Habitat (focused on energy efficiency in residential and commercial buildings, and on improved solid waste management), a National Water Mission (to improve water management and river conservation), a National Mission for a Green India (focused on reforestation), and a National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture.



The first to be launched was the solar mission; the others have been approved but not yet implemented, and draft mission documents are prepared for all of them. However, it is still not clear if the Government will propose these as its main strategy for reducing the country's CO, emissions. The Minister of Environment and Forests has already claimed that India will enact a mandatory fuel efficiency standard by 2011 and aspires to have 20% of its electricity supplied by renewable energy by 2020. The Government also aims to reduce the country's energy intensity by 15-20% within the next 20 years and increase the area under forest or tree cover by 15%, for carbon sequestration. This will result in more than a 9% deviation compare to the business-as-usual scenario. as calculated by local NGOs.5

The impact of large-scale infrastructure projects

There is dire need to reconceptualize large-scale infrastructure projects within a sustainable development framework, and to look at the existing policy and regulatory framework for such projects. "From the standpoint of defining a sustainable low carbon trajectory of economic development, it is important not to see large scale infrastructure projects restrictively as something to be contained for the benefit of the environment and the society."⁶ Among the current policy initiatives are the National Action Plan on Climate Change and National Appropria-

Wikipedia, Environmental issues in india <en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/Environmental_issues_in_India>.

² See: Citizens Report on Governance and Development 2010, (Sage Publications, 2010), <socialwatchindia.net/ publications/citizens-report/citizens-report-on-governanceand-development-2010-executive-summary>.

³ Wikipedia, List of countries by carbon dioxide emissions, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_carbon_ dioxide_emissions>.

⁴ Citizens Report on Governance and Development, op.cit.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ V. Upadhyay, Infrastructure Regulation For the Low Carbon Economy: Survey of Key Issues and Concerns, India Infrastructure Report, <www.idfc.com/pdf/report/Chapter-1. pdf>.

te Mitigation Action Plan for low carbon energy, the 2003 Electricity Act, the Environmental Impact Assessment Notification, the 1981 Air Act for emission regulation and the National Green Tribunal Act, to name a few.

Despite the existing regulatory framework legal challenges to pollution issues have been weak. As a 2002 Planning Commission evaluation of the State's Pollution Control Boards stated: "Non installation of abatement mechanisms by the polluting units is a direct consequence of the absence of any effective punitive and deterrent mechanism in case of noncompliance."

Another study notes that most of India's Environmental Acts and Rules are procedural and lack clear policy guidelines. Their approach to pollution focuses on prevention rather than enforcement of existing legislation.⁷ Moreover, in most cases infrastructure projects are handled through non-judicial processes and are increasingly resolved by contracts and legislative or executive means. A review of India's National Highway Authority projects found that contractors do not integrate environment management into their plans, and also that there is almost no voluntary adoption of good environmental management practices.⁸

Water supply and sanitation

Despite the efforts made by the Government, water supply and sanitation remains inadequate. In 2008, only 54% of the urban population had access to sanitation services including connection to a public sewer and to a septic system, and pour-flush latrines and ventilated pit latrines, while in rural areas the number dropes to an alarming 21%.⁹

Institutions in charge of operating and maintaining the water supply and sanitation infrastructure are often seen as inefficient, and in most cases lack needed financial resources. Even so, the situation is gradually improving: in 1980, the rural population's rate of access to sanitation services was estimated at 1%, and grew to the above-mentioned 21% in 2008.

THE ISSUE OF LAND ACQUISITION

Land acquisition by the State has become a major issue. The Government has taken some 147 million ha of agricultural land for urban development, and 2.81 million ha are no longer fertile due to industrialization and urbanization. The Ministry of Commerce has taken over 200,000 acres for development projects, while development projects have displaced up to 21 million people.

The 1894 Land Acquisition Act, enacted during the colonial period, remains the primary legislation in operation. It allows the Government to acquire private land for public purposes, including residential facilities for poor people and those affected by natural disasters, but economic compensation was based on estimated agricultural land values, and has gradually depreciated, making it extremely difficult for the former owners to acquire new land.

The Land Acquisition Act has been criticized by scores of activists, politicians and economists. An amendment was introduced in 2007, accompanied by a Rehabitation and Resettlement Bill, but both had failed to be implemented by 2009, so they were reframed and finally reintroduced – by the Government's National Advisory Council – in May 2011. This amendment redefined the concept of "public purpose" as being either for defensive purposes or for any project which is "useful for the general public"; however, the definition of "public purpose" remains unclear.

Pollution in the Ganges and illegal mining

The River Ganges, considered holy by Hindus, is heavily polluted, filled with chemical wastes, sewage waters and human and animal remains. One of the causes of this is illegal mining, specially in the Haridwar district, where most of the illegal stone crushing and mining operations are located, plundering the river bed and polluting its waters with debris and chemical waste. Mining for sand and stone (mostly for construction purposes) has increased the risk of flooding and caused severe deforestation.¹⁰ Illegal mining has generated controversy throughout the country. Some of these cases (e.g., the mining concession in Andhra Pradesh) involve members of the Government.¹¹

Recommendations

The threats to sustainable development make it urgent that the Government take the following steps:

 Make a detailed assessment of state-level energy efficiency potential to support the efforts of Central Government;

- Support renewable energy through tax holidays, subsidies, better market conditions, soft loans from financial institutions, etc.;
- Integrate climate risk management into existing national development plans;
- Establish a multi-donor coordinating committee in order to facilitate climate actions on mitigation and adaptation;
- Make scientific climate information available and accessible to communities, in order to inform their analysis, and support the identification of sustainable solutions, while ensuring that Effective Disaster Risk Reduction remains based on local knowledge, and built upon local level participatory analysis of vulnerabilities and capacities.

K. Priyadarshini and G. K. Omprakash, "Compliance to Environmental regulations: The Indian Context," *International Journal of Business and Economics*, Vol.2, No.1 (2003): 9-26

⁸ Videh, op.cit.

⁹ Wikipedia, Water supply and sanitation in India, <en. wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_supply_and_sanitation_in_ India#cite_note-JMP-0>.

NDTV, Exposing the illegal mining in Haridwar, (16 June 2011), <www.ndtv.com/article/india/exposing-the-illegalmining-in-haridwar-112580>.

¹¹ Wikipedia, Illegal mining in India,<en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Illegal_mining_in_India>.

IRAQ

The growing role of civil society



After decades of war, neglect and mismanagement, the country's social and environmental situation is critical. Iraq continues to struggle with an unstable government, corruption, and vast human rights abuses, including attacks on minority groups. Until greater levels of peace and security are achieved, progress in terms of creating and utilizing a successful sustainable development model will prove difficult. While there is increasing civil society participation and democratic involvement, repression and human rights abuses demand persistent attention in order to guarantee a democratic future.

Masarat for Culture & Media Development (MCMD) Sa'ad Salloum

Iraq continues to struggle with the formidable challenges brought on from years of social unrest and war. The demonstrations that shook the country in February 2011, calling for the elimination of poverty, unemployment and corruption illustrate the new role that Iraqi citizens are beginning to play in a society where democratic participation was formerly violently repressed or silenced altogether. Although still amidst a backdrop of insecurity and highly deficient civil liberties, civil society organizations are growing and playing an ever- increasing role in the nation's democratic development.

Civil society's vital role

Iragi citizens went to the ballot boxes on 7 March 2010 and voted for 325 new Members of Parliament to represent them in the Council of Representatives. Unfortunately, the first session of Parliament on 14 June 2010, in a constitutional breach, was left open without electing a Speaker or deputies. This political and constitutional paralysis prompted civil society organizations to launch the Civic Initiative to Preserve the Constitution (CIPC), filing a lawsuit before the Federal Supreme Court. The Federal Court ordered the Chairman of Age to call on MPs to resume the session and to elect a Speaker and two deputies.1 Civil society observers hailed the decision as a sign of the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, but it also showed that a separation of powers is the cornerstone of a successful democracy.

The most important conclusion that can be drawn from the court decision, however, is the vital role that can be played by Iraqi civil society in the process of building a modern civil State. The lawsuit was followed by another CIPC campaign to collect signatures and put pressure on political blocs to fulfil their election commitments to their constituents. According to CIPC figures, more than 800 NGOs, associations and unions, in addition to prominent figures of different cultural, academic and social backgrounds from various parts of Iraq, participated in the campaign.²



The CIPC has crystallized as a civic framework to achieve multiple objectives including: accelerating the formation of a national partnership government on the basis of sincerity, competence and integrity: drafting a programme to consolidate security and political stability; reforming institutional infrastructure; strengthening the political process through the political parties law; amending the election law; respecting the independence of the iudiciary, as well as increasing its efficiency; providing public services; improving the performance of government agencies; ensuring the protection of human rights and public freedoms through constitutional and legal guarantees, including freedom of expression, association, the press and access to information; addressing poverty, unemployment, displacement and discrimination against minority aroups.³

Minorities at risk

Despite the fact that levels of displacement have stabilized in recent years, a major terrorist attack on a Catholic church in Baghdad on October 31st 2010 forced some minority communities to reconsider the option of resettling elsewhere. By November 2009 about 350,000 internally displaced people had returned to their districts – 60% of which returned Baghdad – although most of the returnees were Arabs (Sunni and Shia), and therefore not considered part of a minority group. Reports from the International Organization for Migration (IOM)



have shown that only 52% of all internally displaced persons wish to return, with 20% wanting to resettle elsewhere.⁴ According to figures from the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MODM) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), the number of displaced people within Iraq is about 2.8 million people, mostly Arabs (Shia and Sunni), and with nearly 250,000 people from Chaldean, Assyrian, Armenian, Sabean Mandaean, Faili Kurd, Yezidi and Shabak minority groups.⁵

The lack of effective Government action to address the problems of the country's minorities has prompted civil society organizations to push for greater action against discrimination and attacks on minorities. The CIPC, for example, has organized Parliamentary roundtables on minority concerns, illustrating how civil society can and should participate in issues of national importance. The CIPC discussions highlighted the need to increase minority participation in the political sphere, and to eliminate racist educational policies and other forms of misinformation which contribute to ignorance-based discrimination. They also underlined the fact that since 2003 many minorities have left Iraq, and it is expected that more will continue to leave, owing to the lack of security; lack of constitutional protection or non-discrimination laws; weak representation in Government and Parliament; as well as the domi-

3 Ibid

⁴ L. Mumtaz, Still Targeted: Continued Persecution of Iraq's Minorities, Minority Rights Group International, p.19.

⁵ IDMC, Little new displacement but in the region of 2.8 million Iraqis remain internally displaced, (4 March 2010), <www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/ (http:nfofiles)/80DB25F7122F4390C12 576DC003B49AF/\$tile/Iraq_Overview_Mar10.pdf>.

¹ Federal Supreme Court, Nº55 Federal 0.2010.

² See: <cipciraq.wordpress.com>.

nance of an exclusionary culture in a society based on discrimination and ignorance.

Mass protests and Government repression

Iraq was not isolated from the mass demonstrations known as the "Arab Spring" in 2011. The slow pace of formation of the Iraqi Government (over 7 months of arduous negotiations), the deterioration in public service delivery, in addition to increasing levels of poverty and unemployment, all fuelled the first sparks of protest which started in poor and neglected neighbourhoods north of Baghdad. Throughout the month of February demonstrations were held in the cities of Kut, Diwaniyah, Basra and Anbar, and in a number of others. In the oil-rich city of Basra, in southern Iraq, voices began to be heard demanding an end to corruption, with demonstrators carrying yellow cards (like those used by football referees) to express public dissatisfaction with the Governor and some local officials. Similar resentment was also rising in the rest of the provinces due to a growing lack of services. Criticism regarding restrictions on public freedoms, corruption, and the high salaries of parliamentarians turned into popular slogans and protest banners. Most importantly, the demonstrations brought an end to the law requiring a legal license to protest, which had thwarted hundreds of demonstrations in previous years.

As a result of the vast popular protests, Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki issued a directive in February 2011 to cut his monthly salary by half. This represented a recognition of the unreasonable gap between the salaries of senior officials and those of junior staff and the average Iragi, and inspired proposals to review the salaries of all senior Government officials and reduce the budget for all three Presidencies - of the Republic, the Council of Ministers, and the Parliament - which add up to a large proportion of the State budget. As in other Arab countries, major demonstrations were called for Friday, 25 February, 24 hours before which the Prime Minister requested a meeting with civil society leaders. The CIPC gave the Prime Minister a strong message, demanding the elimination of poverty, unemployment and government corruption.⁶ In light of the looming protests, the Government put security services on full alert and, in addition to using force to disperse the demonstrations, arrested and tortured four journalists involved in the protests.7

The February uprisings launched an unprecedented movement to establish civil society

WAR AND THE ENVIRONMENT

After the First Gulf War, the Saddam Hussein administration started a series of works aimed to dry the Mesopotamian Marshes region, a wetland zone located in the southern areas of the territory which provided habitat for peoples such as the Marsh Arabs and also for a great diversity of wildlife. The draining of the marshes, in fact, started in the 1950s and continued to the 1970s to reclaim land for agriculture and oil exploration, but, during Hussein's presidency, the works were expanded and accelerated, mostly as retaliation for the 1991 failed Shia uprising, since the dissidents were thought to be looking for shelter in the marsh region. The drying operations consisted mainly in the opening of three canals (the Third River, the Glory Canal and the Prosperity Canal, as they were called) built as a manner of redirecting waters from the Tigris to the Euphrates. By the late nineties, the Central Marshes became completely desiccated; in 2000 the United Nations Environment Programme estimated that 90% of the marshlands had disappeared.¹

The environmental damage was regarded as catastrophic.² Bird migration areas were lost, and several plants and animals species endemic to the region became extinct. The salinity of the soil increased, resulting in loss of dairy production, fishing and rice cultivation, and over 19,000 km2 of the region became a desert. The majority of the Marsh Arabs were displaced to nearby areas, and an estimated 80,000 to 120,000 fled to refugee camps in Iran.³ After the 2003 US invasion, embankments and drainage works were broken open, and the marshes began to reflood, but the recovery – and the corresponding regrowth of natural marsh vegetation – was slow, and the most severely damaged sections of the marshes have yet to show any signs of regeneration.⁴

But the loss of the marsh ecosystem was not the only negative environmental consequence after two decades of war. For instance, the country presently faces severe soil, water and air pollution from toxic substances released by the destruction of military hardware and factories, according to the UNEP.⁵ (Also, the Tigris and the Euphrates – which provide most of the irrigation and drinking water) are now essentially open sewers plagued by industrial and hospital waste, fertilizer run-off from farming, and oil spills. The restoration of water and sanitation systems, the cleaning up of main pollution hotspots and waste sites, as well as the prevention of further soil erosion and desertification, are some of the most pressing environmental concerns in Iraq.⁶

- 1 Wikipedia, Draining of the Mesopotamian Marshes, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draining_of_the_Mesopotamian_ Marshes>; Mesopotamian Marshes, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesopotamian_Marshes>; and Glory Canal, <en. wikipedia.org/wiki/Glory_Canal>.
- 2 The Mesopotamian Marshes of Southern Iraq, (March 2003), <www.public.iastate.edu/~mariposa/marshes.htm>.
- 3 Wikipedia, Draining of the Mesopotamian Marshes, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draining_of_the_Mesopotamian_ Marshes>.
- 4 See: <ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=37031>.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.

organizations and networks to monitor Government activities and human rights situations, and established the important role that Iraqi citizens can play in securing democratic national development.

Recommendations

To realize the vision of the February uprisings, several things need to be done:

- Pave the way for women participation in governance and implement adequate measures to eliminate family and societal gender-based violence.
- Address impunity in financial corruption and forgery, prosecute perpetrators of terrorism and organized crime, and investigate cases of criminals who repeatedly escape prison.
- Implement a national strategy for poverty alleviation. The overwhelming majority of citizens suffer from poverty and unemployment, and the worsening economic, social and services crises, especially in water supplies, food, energy, housing, low levels of health care.
- Accelerate legislation related to political, civic, economic and cultural issues, particularly regulating political parties, elections, oil and gas.

⁶ Interview with Hanaa Edgar, Secretary of IAA, (February 25 2011).

⁷ Interview with tour journalists who were arrested (Baghdad: March 4 2011)

ITALY

Sustainable development: not the Government's priority



Commitments on combating poverty and social exclusion, as well as on increasing gender equality, have not been met, while policies undermine the availability and delivery of essential services. Although sustainable development is not part of the Government's priorities, four successful referenda promoted by civil society (against nuclear power, forced privatization of water and other public services and against the exemption of the Prime Minister from the rule of law) that brought almost 27 million Italians to vote, have pushed the country in the right direction. It is essential to review all public policies and establish a new model of development centred on the enforcement of fundamental human rights, environmental sustainability and the reduction of social inequality.

Italian Social Watch Coalition

The public debate in Italy on a sustainable development model, which introduces social and environmental indicators of well-being in addition to economic variables, has not yet managed to influence policy-making. It was not fed into a national indicators system, although the National Statistics Institute (Istat) and the National Council for Economy and Labour announced the creation of a "discussion table" towards a shared set of indicators, and in 2009 Parliament approved a bill to reform the public accounting system (Law 196/2009), which provides that the Government should review the indicators taking into account environmental sustainability.

For their part, traditional economic indicators are far from encouraging: an increase in GDP in 2010 of only 1.1% compared to 2009;¹ and a debt that continued to grow by 4.5% to EUR 18,432 trillion, against EUR 17,639 trillion in 2009 (USD 26,563 trillion from USD 25,425 trillion), bringing the debt ratio to 118.6%.² An employment rate of 56.7%, highly unbalanced between women (45.8%) and men (67.6%), represented a further decline (-0.8% or 176,000 fewer employees than in 2009).³ The unemployment rate is 7.6% but rises to 24.7% for young people aged 15 to 24.

In 2010 Italy reached a record in the redundancy funds required by enterprises, which amounted to EUR 1.2 billion (USD 1.7 billion).⁴ In the last two decades, families' gross savings rates have fallen steadily from more than 30% in the first half of the 1980s to 14% in 2009. In parallel, purchasing power has fallen more than 5% since 2006. The latest figures available show a decrease in savings capacity of 0.9% for the third quarter of 2010 over the previous year.⁵



Government inaction

The investigations involving the Prime Minister's alleged offences of extortion and child prostitution, coupled with parliamentary paralysis, have left the main problems of the country unaddressed. Thus the city of L'Aquila, hit by an earthquake in 2009, is still a ghost town. A conflict between the management of Fiat, the largest Italian car manufacturer, and FIOM, the main metalworkers' union, saw the Government largely absent and unable to come up with an effective industrial policy. Moreover, the continued use of "extraordinary powers" to meet emergency needs that are often chronic becomes a replacement for legality and for environmental and health protection.

The weakness of the State is particularly problematic in sensitive areas such as environmental standards for waste management, where there are strong organized crime interests. In 2005 about 107.5 million tonnes of hazardous waste (including 5.9 million highly dangerous) were produced in Italy, but only 87.8 million tonnes were disposed of properly.⁶ The remaining 19.7 million tonnes, therefore, were most probably disposed of illegally.

In October 2010 the European Commission warned Italy that it would face economic sanctions if it did not handle the garbage crisis in Campania, the second most populous region in the country and one of the poorest. The crisis is the result of decades of mismanagement of both industrial and municipal waste.



Labour and welfare policies

In 2010 the Government issued a budget package of EUR 24 billion (USD 34.6 billion) centred on the contraction of public spending. Welfare, social policies, education, research, official development assistance (ODA) and transfers to local authorities are the sectors most affected by the cuts, which in some cases were lower than budgeted only as a result of pressure by civil society groups and local authorities. Almost nothing has been done to reduce social inequalities.

The austerity budget (called the 'stability law') adopted in 2011 takes the same track. The freezing of public employees' contracts until 2013 and the blocking of seniority have particularly affected a school system already constrained by cuts to the workforce introduced by the Education Minister: 67,000 workers were eliminated in the 2009/2010 school year and 40,000 in the 2010/2011 school year.

Overall, the 10 social funds financed in 2008 with EUR 2.5 billion (USD 3.6 billion) could count on only EUR 349 million (USD 507 million) in 2010.⁷ In support of low-income families there remains the "social card" (EUR 40/USD 58 a month), a charity measure established in 2008 and refinanced in 2011 with a strong discriminatory addition: resident foreign citizens, young workers and retired people whose income even slightly exceeds the minimum pension limit cannot request it. The Federal reform currently under discussion in Parliament, if passed, would jeopardize the guarantee of minimum standards for social welfare throughout the nation.

¹ Istat, *Preliminary Estimate of GDP, IV Quarter of 2010*, press release, (11 February 2011).

² Bank of Italy, "Supplement to the Statistical Bulletin," *Public Finance and Debt Requirements*, No. 8, 14 (February 2011).

³ Istat, Employment and Unemployment, III Quarter of 2010, press release, (21 December 2010).

⁴ National Social Security Institute (INPS) data base, <www. inps.it>.

⁵ Istat, *Income and Household Savings, III Quarter of 2010*, press release, (January 2011).

⁶ National Environment Protection Agency and National Waster Observatory, Waste Report 2007, (Rome: 2007).

⁷ See the proceedings of the Conference on Universal and Local Levels: Institutions and Third Sector Together for a New Welfare System, (Bologna: 25–26 November 2010), <vww.idirittialzanolavoce.org/>.

In terms of development cooperation, in order for Italy to reach the internationally agreed goal of 0.7% of GDP in ODA by 2015,⁸ more and better aid must go to international cooperation (including through innovative financing mechanisms) and resources must be provided in a more predictable, transparent way.

Italy continues to have a high – but largely overlooked – degree of discrimination against women at work, in politics and in the household, including domestic violence.⁹ The Italian campaign around the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) provides evidence on the "continuation of degrading and sexist representation of women in the media as well as in the political arena," without the proper tools to combat it.¹⁰

Environment and sustainability

Italy is one of the few countries in Europe that does not have a strategy to reduce carbon dioxide emissions or to meet the European 2020 reduction targets. The only existing plan dates back to 2002, is highly inadequate and does not meet the Kyoto commitments for the period 2008-2012. A national strategy for reducing carbon dioxide emissions in the long term (2050) should be adopted quickly, involving intermediate steps in line with the European objectives and the need to enhance and accelerate the transformation of the economy into a Zero Carbon one.

Since a referendum in 1987 agreed on the country's exit from nuclear power, there are no active plants in Italy. However, a programme for the revival of nuclear power started in 2009, providing for the construction of 8-10 new power plants, 1000 to 1500 MW in size, for a total cost of EUR 40-50 billion (USD 58-73 billion) at the expense of investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy savings.

Although Italy is Europe's richest country in terms of biodiversity, with 57,468 species of animals - 8.6% endemic, that is, found only in Italy - and 12,000 species of flora - 13.5% endemic, much of this heritage is being lost: currently at risk are 68% of its terrestrial vertebrates, 66% of its birds, 64% of its mammals and 88% of its freshwater fish. A National Biodiversity Strategy, finally approved on 7 October 2010, must be fully implemented by providing national governance (with the contribution of the Regions) along with adequate funding.

Civil society initiatives

There has been widespread mobilization by Italian citizens, including the following:

- 1,400 million signatures were delivered to the Supreme Court on 19 July 2010 calling for a referendum on the public management of water after the "Ronchi decree" in 2009 stated that the water service – as well as other public services such as waste management, public transportation, etc. – was to be entrusted to private companies or have at least 40% private ownership, and on 12 and 13 June 2011, Italian citizens voted against it.
- The issue of nuclear power saw much of civil society coming together in defense of renewable, safe and clean energy. Italians were also called to vote on a referendum and repealed the rule that reintroduced nuclear power plants after they had been banned in 1987 by popular vote. The issue of nuclear power has seen much of civil society mobilize together for the defense of renewable, safe and clean energy. These referenda (together with another one to cancel the "legitimate impediment" law introduced by the Berlusconi Government, which allowed top Government officials to avoid appearing in court when citing their work commitments) resulted in the unambiguous response (95% of those who voted) of Italians voting in favour of abolishing those laws. Furthermore, the results of the referenda have forced the Government to produce a national energy strategy for 2011 that should include specific funding for energy efficiency and renewable resources.
- A large movement of students, teachers and researchers from high schools and universities protested in the second half of 2010 against the cuts in education and research, with hundreds of schools and universities occupied throughout the country.
- The citizens of L'Aquila, voluntary associations and social movements have been working to free the town's historic centre from the rubble of the earthquake, as well as organizing cultural and solidarity activities to address the social reconstruction of the city.
- The charges of extortion and child prostitution initiated against Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi brought out a million women and men to demonstrate in the streets in February 2011, not only to vindicate the dignity and rights of women but also to challenge the political, cultural and social practices that tend to reduce women to – or represent them as – sexual objects.

Conclusion

An overall review of public policies is as urgent as it is essential. The priority should be the establishment of a new model of development centred on the enforcement of fundamental human rights, the reduction of social inequality and a real commitment to environmental sustainability.

In the economic field, public policies should be adopted to boost employment, particularly for youth, including incentives for businesses that hire new workers; to stimulate the development of green consumption and production and the ecological conversion of industrial production that has a high environmental impact; and to support companies that invest in areas of high production, skills, research and the knowledge economy. There should also be greater tax equity – for example, by introducing a 0.05% fee on financial speculations as well as a wealth tax.

In the social field, it is urgent to work on the expansion of resources allocated to social assistance, the fight against poverty, services for children and other dependants, public education, social security benefits and contributions for the social inclusion of foreign citizens. Action must be taken to address the situation of the 5.2% of Italian households reported by Istat in 2009 to be living in absolute poverty.¹¹ In addition, the definition of basic levels of social benefits (provided for in Article 22 of Law 328/2000) must be reaffirmed. If this is not the case, the Federal reform currently under discussion in Parliament might jeopardize the guarantee of minimum standards of social welfare at the national level.

In terms of the environment, an accounting system should be adopted to provide essential information and ensure transparency and accountability of government actions on sustainable development. Priority should be given to small-scale infrastructure, for which the Government set aside EUR 800 million (USD 1,164 million) in November 2009; these funds should be targeted at urban areas and used for repairing and upgrading existing strategic infrastructures (primarily railways) rather than building major new ones. In order to implement the "Directive 2008 / 99/CE)", the Italian criminal code should include the definition of "environmental crimes," with increased sanctions. ■

⁸ See United Nations, "Resolution 2626," Twenty-fifth Session of the UN General Assembly, para. 43, (24 October 1970); and "Report of the UN Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development," A/CONF.198/11, para. 42, (2002).

⁹ Work in Progress - 30 years of CEDAW, produced by a group of Italian women's rights and gender equality advocates, <www.womenin.net /web/CEDAW/home>.

¹¹ Economy News, Around 3.8 Million Italians Living in Absolute Poverty, Available from: <www.newseconomy. info/2010/07/around-38-million-italians-living-in.html>.
Reaching a turning point



In 2010, after many years of struggle, Kenyans finally managed to negotiate the groundbreaking 2010 Constitution. Its focus on basic rights, participation, accountability to citizens and public service provides the basis for defining the role of the State as central to constructing an economy that fulfils the promise of equity, participation and basic social and economic rights. By making popular participation and service delivery the core politics of sustainable development, the people will transform themselves into a new revolutionary force. In environmental terms, the new Constitution is also a step forward since it establishes the right of every Kenyan to a clean and healthy environment.

Social Development Network Prof. Edward Oyugi, Philip Thigo, John Kipchumbah, Avoma Matunga United Nations Millennium Campaign (UNMC) **Charles Abuare** Kenya Treatment Access Movement (KETAM) James Kamai SFATINI Oduor Ong KENDREN Wahu Kaara Daraja-Civic Initiatives Forum Esther Nzioka CLAN- Migori William Oloo Janak Reality of Aid Vitalice Meja

In December 2010, following years of struggle for true sovereignty and citizenship, the people of Kenya managed to negotiate a new social contract in the form of a ground-breaking Constitution. The path to the 2010 Constitution has been neither straight nor smooth, with constitutional reform a major issue since the country gained independence. Attempts to amend the 1963 Constitution intensified in the late 1990s and early 2000s, but succeeded only after the outbreak of post-election violence in early 2008 and the intervention of the African Union through a mediation team headed by then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The Constitution was presented to the Attorney General on 7 April 2010, officially published on 6 May 2010 and put to a referendum on 4 August 2010. Approved by 67% of Kenyan voters, it was promulgated on 27 August 2010.

This new Constitution promises a transformative agenda that, if fully realized, will bring about a new political-economic framework in which the country could break from the neo-patrimonial system (in which patrons use State resources to secure the loyalty of clients in the general population) bequeathed to them by neo-colonialism. Its four transformative features are: an expanded Bill of Rights and a promise to address inequality and marginalization;¹ farreaching devolution of public authority; a chapter on leadership and integrity founded on the principles of selfless public service, discipline and accountability;



and a value system based on the sovereignty of the people and a culture of human rights.

If properly implemented, the Constitution will offer Kenyans a unique opportunity to obtain straight answers to two long-standing questions, hitherto the source of intermittent and violent sub-national conflicts: what is the concrete meaning of being a Kenyan citizen and what does the State offer to the majority of the people? The 2010 Constitution's focus on basic rights, participation, accountability to citizens and selfless public service also provides the context for defining the role of the State as central to constructing an economy that fulfils the promise of equity, participation and basic social and economic rights.

This will enable Kenya to break free from the stranglehold of neo-liberal policies imposed through various means including conditions for development aid, political arm-twisting, asymmetric multilateral obligations and the collusion of local interests with foreign agendas. It will also help to address the issue of widespread corruption. For example, recent social audits reveal that the benefits of both the Local Authorities Trust Fund (LATF) and the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) hardly reached their primary stakeholders. Most of the funds earmarked for them have been embezzled by the members of Parliament and their cronies who were supposed to manage these resources on behalf of citizens.

What the new Constitution has to offer

The new Constitution presents a holistic and rightsbased approach that guarantees equitable social development rooted in the productive capacities of the society as an alternative to the current paradigm that is based on rent seeking. It implies a new political economy based on popular participation not only



in the mechanics of politics but also in the shaping of the economy and the sharing of the benefits of value-added production. Such a political economy will seek to rebalance corporate sector interests with the social development objectives of citizens and the State's obligation to provide a social protection floor for all sectors of society. It suggests a new State that is both democratic and developmental.

A democratic developmental State will separate the public and the private domains so that those who provide public services cannot at the same time be in the private sector. This is essential to avoid conflicts of interest and for the State to balance the public good with the profit motive. A democratic developmental State will steer the economy away from unproductive rent seeking into value-added production based on building the productive capacities of its citizens. It will intervene to ensure that profits arise from productive activity and innovation and in this process not only redirect but also reshape them. It will focus on employment creation, not just aggregate growth, and will ensure that the growth process is itself distributive and aimed at enhancing well-being. It will use taxation as its main source of financing development, as a tool for redistribution and redirection of incentives and as a means of enhancing citizen agency.

The new Constitution also seems propitious regarding environmental issues. For example, Section 42 of Part 2 ("Rights and fundamental freedoms") states: "Every person has the right to a clean and healthy environment, which includes the right a) to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations (...), and b) to have obligations relating to the environment...", while article 69 states that "the

The Bill of Rights goes beyond the usual political and civic rights to include economic, social and cultural rights. New Constitution of Kenya, Nairobi, 2010, p. 4.

State shall (...) ensure sustainable exploitation, utilisation, management and conservation of the environmental and natural resources, and ensure the equitable sharing of the accruing benefits."² This is a considerable step forward in a country with so many environmental challenges including desertification, soil erosion, deforestation, water shortage and water pollution.³ For example, up to 16.8 million people (43% of the population) have no access to an improved water source,⁴ while 80% of the arid and semi-arid areas of the country are rapidly becoming deserts, primarily because of the mismanagement of natural resources.⁵

Kenya prior to the Constitution: food, financial and fuel crises

Accusations of irregularities in the 2007 presidential election triggered a wave of political, economical and social unrest that, in combination with the global financial crisis, ravaged the economy during the years that followed. More than USD 500 million were lost in the stock market on just the first day of 2008, and millions of dollars were also reported missing by business leaders.⁶ Targeted violence escalated against ethnic minorities and all around the country people took to the streets protesting against electoral manipulation.

This situation drove gross domestic product (GDP) per capita growth below zero that year, and the impact of the financial crisis was immediately felt on food prices, trade (with imports and exports declining steeply) and investments as gross fixed investment plummeted from an already dismal level. The social consequences of these multiple shocks were even more dire, with rising unemployment (65% in 2010)⁷

- 2 M. McDermott, "Kenya Grants Environmental Rights in New Constitution," *Tree Hugger*, (January 2011), <www. treehugger.com/files/2011/01/kenya-grants-environmentalrights-new-constitution.php>.
- 3 P. Orengo, "Parts of Kenya Slowly Turning into Desert," The Standard, (16 August 2010), <www.standardmedia. co.ke/InsidePage.php?id=2000016338&cid=4>; EcoMerge, Kenya's Soil Erosion Leads to Famine, (31 May 2010), <ecomerge.blogspot.com/2010/05/kenyas-soil-erosionleads-to-famine.html>; Mongabay.com, Kenya Forest information and Data, <rainforests.mongabay.com/ deforestation/2000/Kenya.htm>; Water.org, Kenya, <water. org/projects/kenya>; and AllAfrica.com, Kenya: Rampant Pollution of Rivers Worries Ngilu, (23 March 2011), <allafrica.com/stories/201103240499.html>.
- 4 Water.org, op. cit.
- 5 P. Orengo op cit.; EcoGeneration, Desertification in Kenya, (29 November 2009), <eco-generation.org/activities/news/ view.html?boardno=47&cat1=&cat2=&thread=588&no=588 &page=71&search=&keyword=>.
- 6 CNN World, Civil unrest damaging Kenya's economy, (3 January 2008), carticles.cnn.com/2008-01-03/world/kenya economy_1_kenyan-shillings-nairobi-stock-exchangemwai-kibaki? s=PM:WORLD>.
- 7 M. W. Muthee, Tackling Youth Unemployment in Kenya, (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, September 2010), <www.wilsoncenter.org/index. cfm?fuseaction=news.item&news_id=634085>.

and sharply increasing income poverty, hunger and malnutrition (with at least 100,000 children at risk of extreme malnutrition).⁸ While the poor suffered, owners of real estate, bankers and telecommunications service providers experienced a boom, ⁹ exposing the folly of neo-liberal capitalism as it cushions the rich from the vagaries of its cyclical crises and punishes the poor with its skewed reward structure.

The response to the crisis followed a similar pattern, with immediate and significant capital injection by the State into the financial system, quickly lifting stock prices and boosting high-value real estate businesses while investment in social infrastructure and in the conditions of the poor trickled down slowly if at all.

The "light touch regulation" promoted by the World Bank in Kenya and the accompanying mismanagement of capital account policies have ensured that the domestic financial systems no longer support the productive sector and small and medium-sized enterprises. The destabilizing effect of short-term capital flows and the unpredictable behaviour of the market have held the national economy hostage to the whims of itinerant speculative capital. The crisis has exposed the current neo-liberal development paradigm as being driven by the exclusive interests of big business and its multilateral capacity to promote inequitable growth that leads to increased unemployment.

Resetting participation boundaries

The new Constitution guarantees public participation in governance – the "red meat of politics," as the saying goes, without which democracy is fatally undermined. It is an approach to citizen empowerment that is becoming a vital element of democratic theory and practice. Inspired by the spirit of the African Charter on popular participation in development and transformation and equally, in the Kenyan case, driven by the letter of the newly promulgated Constitution, the basic principles underlying the practice of stakeholder engagement inform the ongoing discourse on the management of sustainable societies.

As a central principle of public policy-making, "public participation" presupposes that all levels of government seek to build citizen and stakeholder involvement into their respective policy-making processes and activities. This means breaking down the artificial boundaries between legal professionals and ordinary citizens. True citizenship is basically a political relationship, requiring respect for the common good and a specific role in society that is based on responsibility to a polity rather than specific interests.

It is time for citizens to reclaim their sovereignty as agents of policy-making that can convert their social development needs away from the hegemonic interests into the popular will.

The State should be forced to remove its mask of a neutral executer of the public will and be made to become an instrument in the service of the productive sectors of society and not as a shield for the parasitic interests of the ruling classes. By making popular participation and service delivery the basis of the politics of sustainable development, people will, at the same time, be bridging the widening gap between the tasks that ordinary citizens have to perform and those that are considered the prerogative of the elites. Through participation and collective action, Kenyans will transform themselves into a new revolutionary force.

⁸ T. McConnell, "Recession Worsens Kenyan Famine," Global Post, (2 April 2009), <www.globalpost.com/ dispatch/kenya/090401/recession-worsens-kenyanfamine?page=full>.

⁹ Kenyan real estate blog, Analyzing the Real Estate Sector in Kenya, <www.kenyaluxuryhomes.com/apps/blog/ entries/show/5890863-analyzing-the-real-estate-sector-inkenya>; Kenya Buzz, Kenya's Very Healthy Banking Sector, <kenyabuzz.com/lifestyle/business/item/567-kenya's-veryhealthy-banking-sector>; C. Mungai, "Is Kenyan African Silicon Valley?", Talk Afrique, (26 February 2011), <www. talkafrique.com/science-and-technology/kenyan-ict-africansilicon-valley>.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The Government's narrow conception of green



The Government's plans for economic growth have no regard for social or environmental issues. Its favouring of a neo-liberal model fails to take into consideration the distribution of wealth, the well-being of natural ecosystems or civil society participation. Meanwhile the economy is more and more dependant on foreign markets and investors. The country is failing to provide a minimum standard of living for the poorer sectors of society, a proper welfare system for senior citizens, adequate childcare facilities or a functioning public health system.

Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice Kyehyun Ko

There are at least two main obstacles to sustainable development in the Republic of Korea: a high dependence on an economic model based on exports and a weak social welfare infrastructure. According to a 2010 report the country had the most highly dependent on exports and imports among the G20, with exports accounting for 43.4% of its gross domestic product (GDP).¹ The same study stated that it is also the most highly dependent on foreign investment among G20 countries (88%). President Lee Myung-bak's administration in particular has no concern for anything other than the economic needs of big company owners.

The Government's obsession with boosting the export sector has caused deep inequality between large and small or medium-sized businesses. The economy is dominated by a few conglomerates such as Samsung and Hyundai, and the gap between them and their suppliers is increasing. While big conglomerates form the backbone of the country's economy (e.g., Samsung alone provides 20% of exports), small- and medium-sized enterprises provide jobs for more than 80% of the labour force so their health is crucial to the economy. Yet the number of small companies is decreasing.² Among them 46% are subcontractors that have neither their own capital nor independent technology and are therefore subordinate to the big companies.

Growing inequalities

This situation has led to social and union unrest and also weak domestic demand due to the increasing numbers of non-regular workers and the unemployed. There is a high prevalence of informal or non-regular workers among the small- and medium-sized companies. The country's unemployment rate for 2011 rose from 3.6% in January to 4% in February, according to figures from the Govern-





ment Statistics Department.³ Unemployment rates are higher among young people (8.5%), with 50% of recent college graduates failing to find a job.

The income gap between informal and formal workers is growing. In 2010 2.1 million workers had earnings below the minimum wage (USD 767 per month).⁴ The quarterly Engel's coefficient (the percentage of food consumption to total spending) posted the highest figure in seven years at

3 BBC News Business, South Korea's unemployment rate rises to year high, (16 March 2011), <www.bbc.co.uk/news/ business-12756028>.

4 Hong Seock-jae, "S. Korea claims highest rate of low-wage employment in OECD," *The Hankyoreh*, (16 February 2011), <vww.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/463674.html>. 13.92%.⁵ Engel found that the lower a family's income, the greater proportion food expenses account for in its household budget. An increasing coefficient suggests greater impoverishment and growing inequality between rich and poor.

Environmental issues

One of the country's main environmental concerns is air pollution in the major cities (83% of the population live in urban areas).⁶ Sewer discharge and indus-

KBS World, Korea's dependence on foreign trade, (14 September 2010), <rki.kbs.co.kr/english/news/news_zoom_ detail.htm?No=5844>.

² L. Williamson, "South Korea's small businesses fight for survival," BBC News: Business, (17 August 2011), <www. bbc.co.uk/news/business-14554015>.

⁵ KBS World, Engel's coefficient highest in seven years, (20 August 2011), <rki.kbs.co.kr/english/news/news_Ec_detail. htm?No=83925&id=Ec>.

⁶ CIA, The World Factbook: Korea, South, (27 September 2011), <www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-worldfactbook/geos/ks.html>.

trial effluents have caused water pollution, including in the form of acid rain.

The Saemangeum estuary - which shelters 25 species of migrating birds, boasts thousands of species of animals and plants and provides a livelihood for several fisher communities - is one of the most severely endangered zones in the country. The Government created a dam in order to provide water to farming operations across the shoreline and now river sediment is significantly changing the ecosystem. Migrating birds are not able to nest in the area, which has a tremendous impact on the local food chain. Although most of the environmental impact studies were not made accessible to the public in the initial stages of the project, from the outset, several environmental groups expressed concern that the Government was not doing enough planning to provide the birds with new areas to nest. The dam was completed in 2006 and the estuary began to fill up with the sediment brought by the nearby rivers. Not only was the water from these rivers so polluted that it could not be used for farming on the shore, but the soil it carried was so saturated with toxic chemicals that rice farming was also impossible. The area will therefore have to be used for other purposes, but the environmental damage has already been done. Most of the local bird species are in danger of extinction.7

Concern has also risen among environmental organizations regarding Government efforts to boost investment in nuclear power. By 2010 the country hopes to be drawing more than 50% of its energy needs from nuclear power with only a small percentage coming from clean and renewable sources.⁸

The Four Major Rivers Project

The Four Major Rivers Project was launched in 2009 as a part of the new "green" set of policies enacted by the Government on Low-Carbon Green Growth (LCGG) (see box). Accounting for 38% of the budget for LCGG, the project has three main components: revitalization of the Han, Nakdong, Geum and Yeongsan (the so-called "four major rivers"); a set of works on 14 tributaries; and restoration of other, smaller-sized streams. The stated objectives are securing water resources, implementing comprehensive flood control measures, improving water quality and creating "eco-friendly" spaces for tourism. In order to accomplish these goals the course of many tributaries and minor streams will be modified and the four main rivers

Since Presteent Lee Mydig-Dak announced LOw-Carbon Green Grown (LCGG) as a national development paradigm in August 2008, every ministry in the country is developing projects related to "green growth." But what does "green" mean here? The Korean legislation defines it as "sustainable growth with less greenhouse gas emissions and environmental degradation," also providing specific definitions for "low-carbon" (which means here reduction of fossil fuel dependency, expansion of clean energy use and consequently reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to acceptable levels) and "green growth" (defined as economic growth that seeks to be "in harmony with the environment" by reducing environmental deterioration). According to the Government, use of efficient low-carbon energy will contribute to energy security and also reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT "GREEN"?

However the meaning of "green" as defined by the Government is different from that understood in the field of political ecology, where it also encompasses social concerns such as gender justice, direct democracy and solidarity. Since the Government interprets it to mean simply the reduction of CO_2 emissions and other environmental pollutants, it can propose nuclear power as a "green" energy source because it generates relatively low CO_2 emissions (without the problem of the disposal of spent fuel being addressed). "Green" is promoted only when it contributes to economic growth, which seems to be the one true goal of the Government.

This is made apparent in major governmental projects such as the Saemangeum estuary dam and the Four Major Rivers Project, the latter a massive piece of engineering that includes the construction of 16 dams in preparation for canals to link the rivers. This is proposed as a "green" strategy in order to cope with climate change; nevertheless, this approach is widely unsustainable.

In this way the sustainable development paradigm is being replaced by "green growth" that is not only unconcerned with social equity and citizen participation but also has a very limited capacity to actually protect the country's ecosystems.

will host dams and reservoirs that will dramatically change the ecosystems involved.⁹

The project has attracted criticism from local and international environmental groups such as Friends of the Earth. There was no proper Environmental Impact Assessment prior to beginning the work or any kind of dialogue with civil society, which was deprived of information about the project.¹⁰ Indeed it is being undertaken without any regard for public opinion, since 70% of Koreans criticize the project for not restoring but killing the ecosystems.¹¹

In addition the four provinces that host the project have significantly fewer water supply problems than other areas of the country. Environmentalists have stated that due to the massive dredging operations involved rare flora and fauna will have to be relocated and the reservoirs will force the displacement of communities and damage cultural heritage sites. Moreover the project is suspected of violating a number of laws including the Korea Water Resources Corporation Act and those relating to environmental policy, impact assessment and cultural asset protection.¹² There are also doubts regarding its economic viability.

Conclusion

The country's economic model has to be changed from the "economic growth first" principle to a sustainable development approach, from big businessoriented to small/medium business-oriented and from policies favouring the rich to ones favouring the poor. In sum, the country should abolish neoliberal policies and focus on social and environmental needs.

The Government must reduce foreign dependence to foster small and medium-sized businesses through tax exemptions and financial benefits. The expansion of the public service could be the key for a job creation process that will play a major role in improving the quality of life in Korea. There should also be more participation from civil society in projects and policies that have an impact on the environment.

12 Ibid.

⁷ Asia Pacific Business & Technology Report, Korea: environmental problems & solutions, (1 February 2010), <www.biztechreport.com/story/417-korea-environmentalproblems-solutions>.

⁹ J. Card, "Korea's Four Rivers Project: Economic boost or boondoggle?," *Environment 360*, (Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, 21 September 2009), <e360.yale. edu/content/feature.msp?id=2188>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Sun-Jin Yun, "Not So Green: A Critique of South Korea's Growth Strategy," *Global Asia* 5(2), (Summer 2010), <www. globalasia.org/V5N2_Summer_2010/Sun-Jin_Yun.html>.

MALAYSIA

Development at the cost of sustainability



In an effort to achieve developed country status by 2020, the current Government is implementing a development model that is highly unsustainable. For example, an entire rainforest is being flooded and at least 15 communities relocated in order to construct a huge dam for hydro-electrical power, an irresponsible move that will result in the loss of endemic species, increasing social discontent and environmental threats. Meanwhile, the people's right to participate in the management of natural resources is almost totally silenced. Only by empowering the people and ensuring access to information will the Government be able to address sustainable development.

Friends of the Earth Malaysia Sahabat Alam Malaysia

In 1991, then Prime Minister Mahatir bin Mohamed introduced the concept of *Wawasan 2020*, or "Vision 2020." This was based on the idea that Malaysia could become a developed country by the year 2020, and established nine strategic challenges it had to overcome, including ensuring an economically just society, a competitive and dynamic economy, and also the inclusion of ethnic minorities and the establishment of a feeling of national unity.¹

This plan was later recalibrated. In 2009, incumbent Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak declared that strategies had to be redefined, mainly because in order to achieve *Wawasan 2020's* economic goals, an economic growth rate of nearly 8%² is needed, while the average from 2000 to 2010 was a meagre 1.20% and in 2009 hit a record low of -7.6%, followed by a peak of 5.9% later that year and an estimated 3.2% for 2011.³ The other reason, according to the Prime Minister, was because"being richer alone does not define a developed nation. There are important social and quality-of-life measurements that must be factored in when considering our objectives and successes."⁴

This idea is shared by former International Trade and Industry Minister and incumbent Member of Parliament Rafidah Aziz, who also felt optimistic regarding the achievement of the developed country status for 2020. "We have targeted ourselves into having a developed society in our own mould which means our society in 2020 would be multiracial, cohesive, tolerant, with respect for each other and with no polarisation," she said.⁵

- 3 TradingEconomics.com, *Malaysia GDP Growth Rate, 2011,* <www.tradingeconomics.com/malaysia/gdp-growth>.
- 4 R. Pakiam and S. Adam, op cit.
- 5 The Malayisian insider, Rafidah says Malaysia can be developed nation by 2020, (18 May 2020), <www. themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/rafidah-saysmalaysia-can-be-developed-nation-by-2020/>.



Despite these good intentions and also the fact that in the 1970s Malaysia was a pioneer in establishing a framework for environmental governance,⁶ very little is being done today to adopt a truly sustainable development model. especially regarding the assessment of environmental issues. Thus, for example, the country's fulfilment of the Rio '92 accords has been generally disappointing. Since that year, it has undergone further industrialization, urbanization and infrastructure development that have resulted in loss of biodiversity and of vital ecosystems, particularly the mangrove and lowland forests. Moreover, despite provisions in various laws, people in the affected areas are hardly consulted and the Government remains secretive when it comes to development projects.

In fact, the development model implemented by the Government, focused on financial and industrial development without regard for the environment, is characterized by unbridled consumption and waste of water and electricity, resulting in environmental degradation and health problems.

Biodiversity loss and lax laws

Malaysia has uniquely rich and diverse flora and fauna, with approximately 25,000 plant species,⁷ 746 birds, 300 mammals, 379 reptiles, 198 amphibians



and 368 species of fish.⁸ Among this flora and fauna, 2,199 species are endemic.⁹

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) 2010 Red List, Malaysia ranked third in the world with the highest number (1,180) of threatened species.¹⁰ Of these numbers, animal species account for 488, with 47 of them in the "critically endangered" category. Also, 188 of 692 plant species are critically endangered, and four of the endemic plant species are now extinct.¹¹

The latest plant to be declared extinct is the *Shorea kuantanensis*, after the only forest it grew in, the Bukit Goh Forest Reserve in Kuantan, was cleared for palm oil cultivation. The others are two fern species and the flowering shrub *Begonia eromischa*.

Malaysia's rainforests are rich in timber, medicinal plants, resins, fertilizers, and also supply freshwater, protect soils against erosion and nutrient loss, and sustain a great biodiversity. Malaysia, in fact, is recognized as one of the world's 12 megadiverse countries.¹² This means that it has a huge responsibility for safeguarding its biological diversity. Although laws to regulate the exploitation of natural resources and protection of the environment exist, implementation and enforcement remain poor.

Many laws are in need of review, but as economic development without a sustainable perspective

M. Mohamad, *The way forward* (Kuala Lumpur: Prime Minister's Office, 2008); See also: <www.wawasan2020 com/vision/index.html>.

R. Pakiam and S. Adam, "Malaysia Must Expand Faster to Be Developed Nation, Najib Says," Bloomberg News, (28 August 2009), <www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive &sid=aAvHYIgq46lg&FORM=ZZNR8>.

⁶ A. A. Hezri and M. Nordin Hasan, *Towards sustainable development? The evolution of environmental policy in Malaysia*, (2006), <www.apimal.org/blogcms/media/13/File/ Sus Development Msia_Hezri n Hasan.pdf>.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Mongabay.com, *Malaysia*, (2006), <rainforests.mongabay. com/20malaysia.htm>.

⁹ See: s

¹⁰ See: <www.iucnredlist.org/documents/ summarystatistics/2010_4RL_Stats_Table_5.pdf>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Hezri and Nordin Hasan, op cit.

has been a high priority, efforts at strengthening the inadequate laws often take a back seat. For example, the proposed amendment of the 1974 Environmental Quality Act has been debated for nearly a decade, and a 1972 wildlife protection law was replaced with the 2010 Wildlife Conservation Act only after nearly 15 years of deliberation. Moreover, new laws fail to address key issues overlooked by the old regulations which have contributed to the country's dubious status as the regional hub for wildlife trafficking.

Another weakness lies in the distinct separation of power between the Federal and State Governments over resources such as land, forest and water. While most biodiversity policies (e.g., the National Biodiversity Policy, the National Forestry Policy and the National Land Policy) were established at the Federal level, the adoption of these policies remained weak at the state level, precisely where effective implementation is most needed.

Resource extraction and deforestation

Until the 1970s, Malaysia's economy relied heavily on the territory's natural resources. For example, largescale rubber plantation was a major mainstay of the country's economy since colonial times. Hence, rapid rainforest loss in the 20th century can clearly be linked to the extractive models implemented by the successive administrations.13 Large areas of arable land were cleared for rubber and palm oil production, and a great number of trees were felled in order to keep up with timber demand for domestic and overseas markets: in 1985, for example, the forestry sector contributed up to 15% of the country's export earnings.14 According to some studies, Malaysia's deforestation rate is growing faster than that of any other tropical country.¹⁵ In fact, its annual deforestation rate jumped nearly 86% between 1990 and 2005, with a total loss of forest coverage of 140.200 hectares per vear since 2000.16

It has been pointed out that while "on paper" Malaysia has one of the best rainforest protection policies in developing Asia, there is a great gap between the law and its full implementation and enforcement, so logging is still threatening the integrity of rainforests. In fact, over the past two decades, sustainable forest management has been non-existent.¹⁷

While a legal and administrative background was formulated in the early 1970s, the environmental impacts of land-based agricultural development and extractive practices have grown in magnitude, including deforestation, which has intensified significantly.¹⁸ The consequences of deforestation and misuse of land are many: soil erosion, hydrological changes, pesticide contamination of surface waters and also loss of local flora and fauna. Also, the risk of flooding and mudslides is increasing,¹⁹ and for indigenous peoples, who have always depended on the rainforest for medicine, shelter and food, the destruction of their prime source of livelihood is also resulting on the loss of their traditional ways of life: as the forest disappears, so does their culture.

Mega projects, mega destruction

In the last two decades Malaysia has witnessed a number of controversial public and private projects their socio-environmental impacts are still being calculated.

The most controversial of them is the 2,400MW Bakun Hydroelectric Project in the state of Sarawak (on the island of Borneo) where an area of about 695 km² (equivalent to the size of Singapore) is to be flooded. Touted as the world's second tallest concrete-faced rockfill dam, the project was criticized for neglecting environmental issues and also for its dubious justification of growing energy demand.

In fact, most of this alleged demand is said to lie in Peninsular Malaysia, and not in East Malaysia, where the dam is located. But some critics of the project have pointed out that in Peninsular Malaysia there is an over-supply of electricity, which makes the hydroelectric project unnecessary.²⁰

After two failed attempts to build the dam, in 1994 the project was privatized to Ekran Berhad, a logging company with no experience in dam construction, and its completion was aimed for 2003. In the ensuing Asian financial crisis in 1997, the Malaysian Government took over the project and paid "compensation" to Ekran, which had completed only 50% of the engineering work.

The flooding process was initiated on 13 October 2010, and besides the drowning of a vast tropical rainforest, which will mean the loss of a great amount of biodiversity (including many endemic species), 15 indigenous communities had to be resettled downstream. This forced relocation had generated much discontent among the population of the area, along with unresolved compensation claims, loss of livelihood and a host of other social problems. Several communities that rejected the relocation plan had jointly filed a lawsuit against the Government for loss of their native customary land. The case is still pending. Also, there have been recent reports about unsafe – and even illegal – building practices that seem to be an everyday matter on the construction site due to poor safety measures.

Dirty industry hub?

There are concerns among civil society groups and some Government officials that the Government's industrialization ambitions (despite the "green" claim) could turn Malaysia into a magnet for polluting industries.

More worrying now is the fact that the country's vast coastline, particularly on the peninsula, is targeted for a petro-chemical hub that will be accompanied by the construction of ports to facilitate the export of end products. Such energy-intensive industries also need the construction of coal-fired power plants such as the one in the Iskandar Development Region in the state of Johor.

Such large scale coastal development is wiping out the country's mangrove forests, which are fishbreeding grounds that had supported inshore fisheries. Local communities' complaints of dwindling catches have largely fallen on deaf ears, with meagre compensation from the project developers and the Government. In some areas, coastal development promoted by the aquaculture industry has also taken away farmland with possible consequences on the nation's food security in years to come.

By and large, resistance to the Government's unsustainable development agenda has been restricted by media blackouts and the use of a variety of laws curtailing press freedom, including the Internal Security Act, Official Secrets Act, Sedition Act and the Police Act.

However, well-organized campaigns led by affected communities have shown that informed citizens could become a significant force in challenging the Government's unsustainable development plans. For example, two successful cases in this regard are the closing down of the Japanese-Malaysian rare earth factory in the state of Perak (late 1990s) and the abandonment of the waste incinerator located just 40 km away from the capital city.

Today, the biggest challenge for sustainable development in Malaysia is empowering the people with knowledge of their rights, ensuring access to information and creating mechanisms for genuine public participation so that national policy making and development project decisions can truly be weighed on the economy, society and the environment, that is, the three pillars of sustainable development.

- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid.

18 Hezri and Nordin Hasan, op cit.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Mongabay.com,op cit.

¹⁹ See: <outskirtoutreach.org>.

²⁰ See: <bakun-dam.co.tv>.

Time to wake up



In order to promote a sustainable future that meets today's needs without compromising those of future generations, the Maltese must begin to think of themselves less as "owners" of the environment and more as its "trustees and stewards." Citizens must realize that environmental degradation and unjust resource sharing are a result of their selfishness, indifference and complacency and become more prudent in using their limited natural resources. The process of caring for the environment should involve subsidiarity – a principle associated with the decentralization of power and the provision of an enabling environment, including material assistance to decentralized units – and translate into more effective integration and co-ordination among responsible entities.

Koperazzjoni Internazzjonali (KOPIN) J.M. Sammut

Malta's commitment to the ideals of the United Nations, particularly regarding environmental issues, is evident in the leading role the country played in 1967 when it introduced the concept of the Common Heritage of Mankind with regard to the international seabed and ocean floor and its subsoil. This led to the adoption of the 1982 United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea and to the 1989 initiative on the protection of the global climate for present and future generations of humankind.

Although Malta was one of the pioneers in recognizing global environment issues, its first national sustainable development strategy was not published until December 2006.1 It is the numerous environmental NGOs in the country that have been regularly covering the different environmental issues. Some have been active since the 1960s and continue to respond to the challenges that growing commercial and domestic demands pose for Malta's land, sea and air. Studies show that, as a small densely populated archipelago, Malta has to be very prudent and ethical in the use of limited natural resources.² Unbridled market forces and highly consumerist lifestyles, with their emphasis on satisfying profit and individual needs, may be working against the social well-being of Maltese society not only in the present but also in the future.

Climate change

The mean annual air temperature in Malta has risen by 0.23°C per decade over the past 50 years.³ Global warming is expected to lead to more extreme and haphazard weather patterns in the country with prolonged Saharan heat-waves, shorter, more intense rainy periods and longer dry spells that will be detrimental to both the inhabitants and the tourist industry. The rise in temperature will be accompanied

3 MEPA, op. cit.



by severe water shortages as rainfall over the central Mediterranean is drastically reduced.

From 1990 to 2008, Malta's greenhouse gas emissions showed an average annual increase of 2.1%. The greatest rise occurred in 1991 when an increase of 8.7% was recorded. The only years which saw a reduction were 1995, 2004 and 2008.⁴ From 2000 to 2008 the energy sector was the major contributor to greenhouse gases, emitting on average 90.4% of the total. Energy production industries. with an average of 73.5% of emissions, dominated this sector. These were followed by transport with 19.8% of the sector's total on average. Malta has 721 licensed road vehicles per 1,000 inhabitants.5 To help reduce emissions and over-dependence on private cars, a new bus system was introduced in July 2011.6 The Government should also establish incentives towards the purchase of low-polluting cars while discouraging demand for cars that pollute more, such as older models.

The National Strategy for Policy and Abatement Measures Relating to the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions⁷ states that, as an EU member state, Malta is committed by 2020 to reduce carbon dioxide



 (CO_2) levels by 20% from the level recorded in 1990 and ensure that 10% of energy is generated from clean alternative sources. In the transport, agriculture and waste management sectors it pledged that, by 2020, gas emissions would be not more that 5% higher than in 2005. The country needs to scrupulously implement the measures laid down by the Climate Change Committee,⁸ look for more efficient use of energy generation and move decisively towards maximum utilization of renewable energy sources such as wind and photovoltaic energy to cut back on CO_2 emissions. Failing to reach such targets would have negative social and economic repercussions.

Land use

With an area of 314km² Malta has approximately 412,970 residents (1,307 persons per km²) and is visited by about 1.2 million tourists annually.⁹ Statistics show that in 2005 27.7% of the island was urbanized.¹⁰ Overdevelopment is Malta's most pressing environmental problem and has been the cause of a great loss of biodiversity and natural resources as well as of much land for agriculture.¹¹ Yet the 2005 Population and Housing Census revealed that there were over 53,000 vacant properties. More than a quarter of Malta's housing lies empty.¹²

The Malta Environment Planning Authority (MEPA) regulates land use and also runs the environ-

11 Ibid

National Commission for Sustainable Development, A Sustainable Development Strategy for the Maltese Islands 2007–2016, (2006).

² Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA), The Environment Report 2008, (2008), <www.mepa.org.mt/ter>; S. Martin, The Environmental Deficit: The Reform of MEPA and Other Environmental Regulatory Authorities, (Valletta: Today Public Policy Institute, 2008).

⁴ Eurostat, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, <epp.eurostat. ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&lan guage=en&pcode=tsdcc100>.

⁵ National Statistics Office, *Malta in Figures 2010*, (Valletta: 2010).

⁶ D.Lindsay, "New Public Transport System Unveiled," The Malta Independent, (7 November 2010), <www.independent. com.mt/news.asp?newsitemid=114978#top>.

⁷ Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs, National Strategy for Policy and Abatement Measures Relating to the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions, (Valletta: September 2009), copm.gov.mt/file.aspx?f=1439>.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ National Statistics Office, Malta in Figures 2010, op. cit.

¹⁰ National Statistics Office, *Sustainable Development* Indicators for Malta 2010, (Valletta: 2010).

¹² National Statistics Office, Census of Population and Housing 2005: Preliminary Report, (Valletta: 2010).

ment protection agency. There have been numerous breaches in land use plans, especially in building outside the Official Development Zone (ODZ),¹³ and the Authority has been criticized for its response to those breaking development regulations, being strong with the weak and weak with the strong.¹⁴ The extension of the building development zones on the eve of a closely fought parliamentary election¹⁵ and a number of other high-profile incidents have led to a perception of political interference in the planning process and undermined MEPA's credibility.

Construction and demolition create around 90% of the country's annual waste.¹⁶ Moreover they are also causing problems due to the generation of fine particles, leading to air pollution.¹⁷ The recycling and reusing of old stones, concrete bricks and ceilings is an issue that has not been addressed. Considering the scarcity of land, careful management of the built environment is urgently needed so as to ensure the best possible quality of life, with minimal risks to human health, while fostering the cultural and social identity of settlements. Maltese environmental NGOs keep reminding politicians and public authorities about the degradation of the natural heritage.¹⁸

MEPA personnel need to abide by the code of conduct¹⁹ presented to MEPA directors and employees in 2008 and design systems and procedures to ensure transparency, effectiveness and accountability for sustainable land use and to eliminate land speculation. It is essential that the members of the MEPA board not be political appointees but include planners, environmentalists and other concerned members of civil society. Only then can MEPA be considered to be safeguarding the environment.

Water

Water is a scarce commodity in the country. The average rainfall is 600 mm per year.²⁰ Both the quantity and quality of ground water are at risk mainly due to over-exploitation by the public water supply and

- 15 Ibid.
- 16 National Statistics Office, Solid Waste Management: 2004–2008, (25 January 2010), <www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/ document_file.aspx?id=2672>.
- 17 Ibid.

18 Nature Trust Malta, "Rape of Natural Heritage Continues," Gozo News, (July 2007), <gozonews.com/986/rape-ofnatural-heritage-continues-nature-trust/s; The Times, 2,500 Outside Development Zone Permits Issued in Two Years, (24 March 2008), <www.timesofmalta.com/articles/ view/20080324/local/2-500-outside-development-zonepermits-issued-in-two-years.201333>; Nature Trust Malta, NTM Amazed on What Grounds MEPA Issued the Permit to a Fish Packing Factory at Imgiebah, (2011), <www. naturetrustmalta.org/news/ntm-amazed-on-what-groundsmepa-issued-the-permit-to-a-fish-packing-factory-atimgiebah/>.

19 MEPA, Good Conduct: A Code of Ethics and Code of Practice for MEPA Staff and Appointees, (2008), <www.mepa.org.mt/ file.aspx?f=256 E>.

20 National Statistics Office, Malta in Figures 2010, op. cit.

private uncontrolled pumping.²¹ This is leading to increased salinity and to contamination by excessive nitrates from agriculture and other pollutants.

More than half the water production is carried out by reverse osmosis in very costly desalination plants that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.²² Lately there have been periodic adjustments to water tariffs that contribute to decreased overall water demand. Malta has three sewage treatment plants that generate a substantial volume of secondclass water. While the oldest sewage treatment plant, which started operating in the 1980s, provides this water to farmers for irrigation, the more recent treatment plants discharge their water into the sea.²³ Instead, it should be used in agriculture or utilized by industries that require extensive use of water.

The Government needs to invest in better water management, such as rainwater catchments that allow water to be siphoned back into underground aquifers. It should regulate private water collection and make it obligatory for all new building applications to include a cistern to harvest rainwater from the roof and encourage other households to invest in such a cistern. It should also run continuous public information campaigns on more efficient use of water.

Positive signs

For three years MEPA published a yearly environment report that shows there are positive signs of environment sustainability. *The Environment Report* 2008²⁴ notes that 99% of bathing sites around Malta and Gozo are in conformity with the EU's bathing water standards (as outlined in the EU Bathing Water Directive).²⁵

The report also stresses that the overall trend since 2000 has been towards a relative decoupling of energy consumption from economic activity, indicating that Malta's economy is becoming more energy efficient. There has also been an increase in material efficiency. Initial estimates show that Malta's domestic material consumption – which measures the quantity of material consumed by the national economy – declined between 2004 and 2006, indicating increased efficiency in the use of materials used for economic activities.

- 22 National Statistics Office, World Water Day 2009, (Valletta: 2009), <www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file. aspx?id=2446>.
- 23 M. Cremona, "Averting a Water Crisis," Malta Today, (7 March 2010), <archive.maltatoday.com.mt/2010/03/07/ cremona.html> ; J. Debono, "Malta Dumps 6,500 Cubio Metres of Water a Day," MaltaToday, (12 October 2008), <archive.maltatoday.com.mt/2008/10/12/t14.html>.
- 24 MEPA, op. cit.
- European Commission, *The 2006 Bathing Water Directive*, (2006), <ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-bathing/ index_en.html#2006>.

Conclusion

There is a need for more integrated resource management to conserve the environment for future generations. Malta should exploit emerging economic opportunities opened up through science and technology and develop sustainable development skills and related job opportunities. The Government must allocate funding to university graduates for research and development and help industry develop innovative products and processes.

Public awareness and education also play a key role in ensuring that the environment is respected and cared for. Environmental studies should have an important place across the National Minimum Curriculum. There is also a need for the creation of lifelong educational programmes that focus on enabling meaningful learning experiences that foster sustainable behaviour in educational institutions, the workplace, families and communities. The Government must create different awareness points so that all sectors of the population can benefit from formal, informal and non-formal education for sustainable development. Education, communication and information dissemination can help communities identify important issues, recognize problems, acknowledge opportunities and devise solutions. Better awareness enables citizens to make responsible and informed choices about their attitudes, behaviour and lifestyle.

Political will plays an important role in the enactment and implementation of sustainable environmental regulations and laws. Environmental standards may not be met unless they are backed up by laws enacted by Parliament. Political involvement has at times hindered enforcement actions by MEPA officials and environmental NGOs.26 The courts must ensure that the administration of justice reflects the seriousness of the offence. The "polluter pays" principle, which has already been introduced in some areas, must be expanded.27 Environmental taxes and eco-contributions should be used to encourage a change in behaviour by penalizing high emitters of pollution, and investing the money in sources of clean renewable energy or research in sustainable development. Malta must reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet its targets as an EU member.

Everyone has a role to play in the promotion of sustainable development. Civil society representation and participation should take place at all levels of decision-making. Representatives of civil society bodies, nominated by their own entities, should sit on the boards of national institutions such as the MEPA, the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD), the Malta Resources Authority (MRA) and the Malta Transport Authority (MTA).

¹³ National Statistics Office, *Sustainable Development Indicators for Malta 2010*, op. cit.

¹⁴ Sciluna, op. cit.

²¹ K. Sansone, "Farmers Extract More Groundwater than WSC," The Times, 23 March 2010. Available from: https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20100323/local/farmersextract-more-groundwater-than-wsc.

²⁶ Sciluna, op. cit.; F. Vella, "Mistra Development: Calls for JPO to Resign, While He Waits for Police Inquiry to End," *Malta Independent*, (19 March 2008); P. Cachia and N. Laviera, "DCC, MEPA Chairman Reacts to Auditor's Report on 'Irregular Supermarket Permit," *Di-ve News*, (28 February 2008), <www.di-ve.com/Default.aspx?ID=72&Action=1&Ne wsID=50003&newscategory=36>.

²⁷ MEPA, Polluter Pays Principle, <www.mepa.org.mt/ tf04_ppp>.

A path to nowhere



In recent years the country has made considerable progress in human rights and sustainable development. These gains are now in peril. The Government is pushing ahead with hydroelectric and highway mega-projects that violate agreements and legal restrictions, cause serious environmental damage and displace thousands of people from their land. These policies are irresponsible and absolutely devoid of any holistic human rights perspective. Nevertheless, the State appears determined to follow a development path that is totally unsustainable, despite the protests of the Mexican people and civil society organizations

DECA Equipo Pueblo Areli Sandoval Terán Instituto Mexicano para el Desarrollo Comunitario - IMDEC María González HIC-AL Silvia Emanuelli With the support of: ESPACIO DESC

The country subscribed to Agenda 21, an action plan that emerged from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. The Agenda calls for a sustainable development strategy based on human needs, affirms the right to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature, and declares that protection of the environment should be an integral part of the development process.

To promote sustainable development, the State must first establish a solid environmental, economic and social foundation, and then design and implement coordinated policies, programmes and projects that guarantee the well-being of present and future generations. The Mexican State, however, is promoting projects that violate human rights, including the right to development and a healthy environment. Its policies contravene Agenda 21 and obligations under international law, as well as the country's own Constitution and environmental protection regulations.

The El Zapotillo dam

The El Zapotillo dam project in the Altos de Jalisco region is one of many projects proceeding in the face of protests from local communities and civil society organizations. The sponsors – the Federal Government through the National Water Commission(CONAGUA), and governments in the states of Jalisco and Guanajuato – assert that the dam will promote local and regional development and supply potable water to the city of León in Guanajuato, 10 municipalities in Altos de Jalisco and the city of Guadalajara.

No strategy that respects people's right to development can assume that the end justifies the means, but this is precisely the State's premise at El Zapotillo. The project involves building a concrete curtain 105 meters high that will store 911 million m³ of water in a reservoir with a surface area of 4,500 ha. It will also include the construction of 145 kilometres of aqueduct. The estimated total cost will be



8,010 million Mexican pesos (approximately USD 680,000,000).

Critics note that the useful life of the dam is only 25 years. They point out that project will destroy the natural valley of the River Verde and flood three communities that date back to the sixth century – Temacapulín, Acasico and Palmarejo. Around 700 people currently live in these communities and a high proportion of the population is women and older adults. If the project is carried out, they will be expelled from their ancestral lands and their culture and history will be irretrievably lost.

These communities declared their opposition to the project when it was announced in 2005 and organized to fight for their human rights by peaceful means. Despite harassment and threats, they have continued to denounce the project as an irreparable violation of their fundamental rights and demand that the project be cancelled. They are also insisting that experts be brought in to make an independent evaluation of the social, cultural and environmental impacts of this mega-project. The pressure from the authorities and the threat that their ancestral homes will disappear have severely damaged their psychosocial health.

The negative impact of the project would extend far beyond these communities. It would promote lead over-exploitation and pollution throughout the region, and aggravate current social conflicts and disputes over water. The dam would devastate the River Verde biological corridor, wipe out large swathes of cultivated land, increase saline levels in the soil, and damage areas rich in flora and fauna.

As in other hydro-infrastructure mega-projects in Mexico, federal and state authorities have violated the people's right to information and communities' Gender Equity Index (GEI) GEI = 64 100 Empowerment 0 37 0 98 Education Economic activity

right to prior consultation. They have not undertaken any evaluation of the social impacts of the project's utter disregard of the affected communities' rights to a healthy environment, adequate housing, water, health, land, work, or any other economic, social and cultural rights.

The residents of Temacapulín have won several legal battles in their bid to stop construction, but the authorities have ignored court rulings and continued construction work. Last March the local community organized further resistance and finally, on 1 April 2011, more than six years after construction began, the Federal Government and the National Water Commission agreed to begin a dialog with the Committee to Save Temacapulín, Acasico and Palmarejo.¹ Two months later, however, authorities confirmed at a so-called resolution committee that the project could go forward and be completed in 2012. Convinced that they had exhausted their options under Mexican law, the residents took the case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The impact of mega-dams

More than a decade ago the World Commission on Dams² warned against the serious impacts on the environment and on communities that big dam projects are causing all over the planet. The United Nations Committee for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Rights (UNESCO), as well as many NGOs worldwide, had expressed concerns to Mexico

¹ See: <noalapresaelzapotillo.wordpress.com>.

² Set up by the World Bank and the International Union for Conservation of Nature in 1998 in response to increasing opposition to big dams. For further information available see: <vwww.internationalrivers.org/files/wcdguide-s.pdf>.

concerning the La Parota dam since 2003. This hydroelectric mega-project has also been criticized by the Latin American Water Tribunal, and three UN Special Rapporteurs have issued reports and recommendations noting its potential deleterious impact on the right to housing, the right to food and the rights of indigenous people.

If completed, La Parota, on the River Papagayo in the state of Guerrero, would flood 17,000 hectares of cultivated land, as well as roads, bridges and communities, and displace 25,000 people in the immediate vicinity, along with 75,000 more downriver. As with the El Zapotillo dam, the State has neither divulged information to or engaged in consultations with threatened communities, or issued an evaluation of the project's potential impact on the environment, development, or the human rights of tens of thousands of people living in the area.

In spite of the international recommendations against pursuing this mega-project, and a long and arduous social and legal struggle by the communities affected and organizations allied with them, the Government of President Felipe Calderón has refused to cancel La Parota. The affected communities have continued the fight and in April 2011, they won their fifth legal battle, a court ruling that overturned an agrarian assembly decision of 2010 that authorized the Federal Government to take possession of the land earmarked for the dam. Since May 2011, a coalition of social organizations and networks has been pressing the recently-elected Governor of Guerrero to make a commitment to the threatened communities and lobby the Federal Government to cancel the project.3

Unsustainable development in the Federal District

Dangers to the environment and human rights are not limited to rural areas. The Federal District of Mexico (DF), which encompasses Mexico City and the surrounding urban areas, is also suffering from policies and projects that conflict with sustainable development. Large cities put enormous pressure on natural resources. In addition to their direct impact as a massive concentration of people, they also create an environment in which public policy decisions at the local level are unlikely to maintain a holistic human rights perspective. This poses an increasingly serious threat to present and future generations. One of the most worrying situations for Mexican civil and social organizations is the development model being pursued by the current Government of the Federal District (GDF – for its initials in Spanish).

First, it must be said that since it was established 14 years ago, the GDF has promoted citizen participation and made great progress in recognizing human rights and introducing public services to support them. The Federal District is the only one of the country's 32 federal entities with a Human Rights Diagnosis Programme(PDHDF). This initiative, promoted by the Mexico Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and set up between 2007 to 2009 with popular participation, has a mandate to review progress toward achieving each of the basic human rights, including the right to a clean environment, the right to water, the right to health services and the right to housing.⁴

In 2010 the GDF became the only public institution in the country with an inter-sector Follow-up and Evaluation Mechanism. This programme created a structure in which different sectors, including civil society organizations, have set up systems to monitor compliance with the PDHDF.The GDF is also the only public body with a PDHDF law, passed in May 2011, which requires all public bodies in the city to pursue policies that respect human rights. In addition, at the instigation of urban popular organizations and with wide popular participation, the GDF drew up a Charter of the City of Mexico that embraces a vision of sustainable, liveable and healthy urban environment, and contains a series of commitments subscribed to by the local executive. legislative and legal branches.5

At last year's World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders, the head of the GDF, Marcelo Ebrard, described a broad range of Mexico City initiatives to mayors from other countries. These included programmes in the areas of security, citizen protection. non-motorized transport, citizenship and the environment, as well as housing and urban development projects, all of which, he noted, are elements in the city's progress "in the seven principles of action of the environment agenda: soil conservation, liveability and public spaces, water, transport, air quality, waste management and climate change measures [...] a work agenda that reflects an environmental situation that makes it essential to start implementing changes that will make the development of the city sustainable again."6

Despite this impressive rhetoric, this "avantgarde city" is full of contradictions and they are getting worse. In February 2011, 3,500 people took to the streets chanting "Marcelo, you must understand, the city is not for sale."⁷ They were expressing their opposition to various mega-projects that would entail destruction of trees and green spaces, irreparably damaging the lungs of the city, as well as land of great ecological value. The building work involved would also have a very negative impact on the subterranean water sources that the city depends on.

One of these large-scale projects is the so-called Western SuperHighway. In January 2011 the PDHDF submitted a report detailing human rights violations in the areas of legal protection, information, citizen participation, healthy environment, and water and adequate housing associated with this mega-project.

The Ombudsman of Mexico City asked the head of the GDF to halt superhighway construction work pending thorough and wide-ranging public consultations to consider the concerns, views and proposals of the people affected. He also urged the authorities to research sustainable transportation alternative for the city's southwest, and change its environmental impact and risk regulations to bring them into line with the Federal District Environment Law provision making a public consultation process mandatory in evaluations of the environmental effects of construction work.⁸Civil society organizations and the people living in the affected areas have gone even further, demanding that the entire project be cancelled.

What these civil society and social organizations are demanding is that the GDF strictly adhere to the commitments it made in the PDHDF and its enabling law, as well as the Mexico City Charter, and cancel all legislative and public policy measures that have a negative impact on human rights. They note that by unilaterally imposing projects like the Western Super Highway, the city authorities are not only exposing the population to serious environmental and social dangers, they are dismantling carefully constructed democratic structures and weakening institutional channels for communication, dialogue, debate and proposals.

Mega-projects promoted by federal and local authorities throughout the country represent gross State irresponsibility. Rather than being based on a holistic human rights approach, the policies these projects represent are leading Mexico down a dangerous path of unsustainable development.

³ The organizations that have signed up for this campaign include Espacio DESC, the Tlachinollan Centre for Human Rights, Fundar, Serapaz, WITNESS, and the Mexican Centre for Environmental Rights. For further information, see: Tlachinollan, Organizaciones refuerzan llamado a Gobernador de Guerrero para un No a la Parota, (2011), <www.tlachinollan.org/Noalaparota>.

⁴ See: <www.derechoshumanosdf.org.mx>.

⁵ See: <derechoalaciudaddf.blogspot.com>.

⁶ See: <ciudaddevanguardia.com/medio-ambiente>

For further information see:
 www.cdhdf.org.mx/index.php/boletines/999-boletin-212011>.

MOROCCO

A thirsty future



Although Morocco is rich in biodiversity, this is now threatened, in large part because water resources are poorly managed; 35% of piped water is lost, and water stocks are being polluted with industrial and urban waste. Cultivable land is also compromised because of water shortages and soil erosion. These factors are seriously aggravating rural poverty, and the gap between the richest and poorest population segments has widened.

Espace Associatif

Because of its strategic location and its historical and geographic context, Morocco has a great diversity of fauna, flora, climates, socio-cultural groups and landscapes. The climate zones, for example, include the Mediterranean area to the north of the Atlas Mountains, the temperate coastal land to the west and the desert to the east. This means there is a wide range of ecosystems including Mediterranean forests, coniferous forests, prairies and deserts,1 and this wealth of fauna and flora makes Morocco the second richest country in the Mediterranean in terms of biodiversity. However, in spite of these natural advantages, the country has not been able to realize the kind of development that benefits the whole population. A new, integrated approach to development is needed, one that takes account of economic requirements, social equality, respect for the environment, cultural diversity, and which promotes the participation of local populations in development.

The Government's development model is built around economic growth and urbanization, but this has aggravated the environmental crisis the country is mired in. Moroccans today are facing a whole array of problems stemming from the exhaustion of resources and the deterioration of natural habitats, and these have an impact on the cost of living.² There is a serious imbalance between the increasing demand for fresh water and dwindling stocks of this resource, and to make matters worse forests and soils have been over-exploited, which means land that could have been used for agriculture is being lost. The economic cost of this environmental deterioration has been estimated at approximately USD 350 million.³

The loss of cultivable land due to water shortages and soil erosion has a direct impact on rural poverty. Three of the 4 million people who are below the poverty line live in rural areas. Some 75% of the

- See: Wikipedia, List of ecoregions in Morocco, <en.wikipedia. org/wiki/List_of_ecoregions_in_Morocco>; Morocco – Climate, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morocco#Climate>.
- 2 IndexMundi, Morocco Environment Current issues, <www. indexmundi.com/morocco/environment_current_issues.html>
- 3 Global Mechanism, Increasing finance for sustainable land management: Morocco, (2008), <global-mechanism.org/ dynamic/documents/document_file/morocco_e-1.pdf>.



rural population depend on agriculture for a living, but the majority only have access to small, non-irrigated plots of land which have limited crop potential.⁴

Another of the country's pressing environmental problems is flooding. In recent years several regions have been hit by abnormally heavy rains and snow, and the resulting floods caused more than 30 deaths and brought suffering and poverty to thousands.⁵

A land of thirst

Morocco's renewable water resources are limited for technical and economic reasons, and the amount that can actually be used has been estimated at not more than 22,000 million m³/year, or a little over 730 m³ per inhabitant per year.⁶ The activity that consumes the most water is agriculture, which accounts for 80% of the country's total consumption. Together, the industrial sector and households use only 20%.

However, the water supply is compromised by extreme variations in the climate. There are cycles of severe drought that have serious consequences, both for the economy as a whole and especially for agriculture, the worst effect being a fall in the production of cereals.

- 5 See: <af.reuters.com/article/topNews/ idAFJOE6AT0I820101130>.
- 6 Wikipedia, Water supply and sanitation in Morocco, <wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_supply_and_sanitation_in_ Morocco#Conventional_water_resources>.



These pressures on water resources go hand in hand with the increasing deterioration in water quality. The connection rate for potable water in urban areas is 83% (1998), but in rural areas access to water improved from 14% in 1994 to around 40% in 2001 thanks to the PAGER programme to supply water to rural communities, which was implemented in 1996.⁷

Water resources are not being used or managed in a rational way, which has made for even greater scarcity. For example, the potable water pipes in cities are in such bad repair that 35% of the water in the system is simply lost.

Another complication is that the country's dams are silting up, which is seriously affecting the water supply. At the Al Wahda dam and reservoir, for example, more than 60 million m³ of supply capacity per year is lost. But in addition to problems of quantity there are also problems of deteriorating quality caused by various kinds of pollution including the dumping of untreated industrial and household waste into water courses and the sea. Another kind of pollution stems from the intensive use of phytosanitary products and fertilizers, which have a negative impact on underground water stocks. So too does mineralization as sea water comes in, due to the overexploitation of fresh water resources.⁸

The pollution caused by the concentration of activities in some areas is exceeding the water system's capacity to purify and renew itself. Water resources have already been severely damaged by repeated

⁴ Rural Poverty Portal, Rural poverty in the Kingdom of Morocco, <www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/ home/tags/morocco>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Wikipedia, Al Wahda Dam (Morocco), <en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/Al_Wahda_Dam_(Morocco)>.

droughts and by modifications to natural water systems.⁹ In fact, water stocks are being consumed faster than they are being replaced, but demand from agriculture, industry and the population is increasing. A serious crisis is expected by 2020.¹⁰

Environmental problems

Throughout the country the land is becoming less fertile, arable layers are being lost due to water and wind erosion, dams and reservoirs are silting up because of erosion, there is salinization and desertification, urban areas are being developed to the detriment of agricultural land, there are great accumulations of sand in arid areas and the oases, and mining and quarrying are causing the natural environment to deteriorate.

Air pollution is also getting worse, due largely to the use of bad quality fuels, to very old vehicles continuing in use and to the emission of untreated industrial gases.

As ecosystems are degraded the country's biodiversity has come under threat, and the excessive exploitation of flora has put the very existence of several species at risk.¹¹ The coastal environment especially has suffered owing to the concentration of human activity in these areas. Untreated industrial and household waste is simply dumped, greatly depleting fishing resources. In the desert the oases are under threat and may disappear. In all parts of the country salinity levels are rising and land erosion is increasing, aggravated by the over-exploitation of resources, the natural and artificial desiccation of wetlands and a lack of infrastructure in mountain regions.¹²

Cities have been growing with little or no urban planning, resulting in the spread of huge uncontrolled rubbish tips. Forests are also in danger, as trees are cut indiscriminately to obtain wood for fuel. This situation is aggravated by the fact that household waste collection services provide inadequate coverage, special waste (toxic, hospital, pesticides) is not treated, and urban sewage systems are getting old.

The Garb-Chrada Beni Hsen region

In terms of natural resources the Garb-Chrarda Beni Hsen region is among the richest in the country. It has considerable water stocks, an extensive plain of 4,200 km² and some 124,614 hectares of forest land. However, all these resources are under threat and ecosystems are deteriorating due to inefficient government management of development projects.

One of the main environmental problems in this region is pollution from industrial activities. The worst culprits are the sugar mills (Dar Gueddari, Mechraa BI Kseri and Sidi Allal Tazi), oil drilling, the Sidi Kacem oil refinery, and the Sidi Yahya pulp mill, which is responsible for 50% of the organic industrial pollution in the region. Another serious problem is how to manage the 80 million m³ of domestic liquid waste that is generated in the region each year.

Agriculture too is quite intensive, particularly on the plain of Garb, and is another big source of pollution, particularly of under soil water stocks. The most serious consequence is that water nitrate levels are rising, creating a health risk for the people who consume it.

This region is one of the worst hit by water erosion, above all in the Uarga valley where, because of its rugged topography, average deterioration is 2,070 t/km²/year. In contrast, the loss in the Sebú valley is 600 t/km²/year. Severe soil erosion has also left the region particularly vulnerable to flooding, a threat made more serious by the fact that the AI Wahda dam is functioning badly. Inaugurated in 1997, the dam is the biggest in the country and the second biggest in Africa, but because of sedimentation the reservoir is losing around 60 million m³ of storage capacity per year.¹³

Conditions in Morocco's towns and cities are also rapidly deteriorating. In most cases the systems to handle liquid waste are inadequate, and urban centres either have no sanitary systems or have ancient systems that lack the necessary capacity, resulting in flooding, pollution and nauseating smells. Most of the waste is simply fed into surface water courses.

The collection and dumping of solid waste is another serious challenge. There are no guidelines for managing such operations, which are selective as well as inadequate, and the current practice of mixing medical and industrial waste with household waste involves serious health risks.

Degradation of the wetlands of the littoral zone

The wetlands of the littoral zone stretch for 140 km. Presently, this region is facing pressing environmental issues as a result of tourism, population growth and lack of long-term planning and viable development strategies.¹⁴

The wetlands, which are extremely sensitive to changes from outside, are being polluted with industrial, urban and agricultural waste, thereby raising air, water and soil toxicity levels. The region's lakes are also being polluted. One, Sidi Boughaba lake, is protected thanks to its status as a forest area, but there are no clear regulations about how other lakes should be managed or preserved. Tourism in the wetlands is also being developed, which is yet another negative factor.

The Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are still the main reference framework for the country's concerned citizens and civil society organizations. The High Commissioner for Planning claims that with only four years until the 2015 deadline, Morocco's performance makes it one of the countries that can reach its goals in time.¹⁵ Unfortunately there is little justification for this optimism. The main obstacles are as follows:

- The passage and implementation of environmental protection laws is very slow.
- The impacts of climate change are likely to be serious, and are as yet unpredictable.
- The great pressure on the country's natural resources.
- Lack of public awareness of these problems and lack of political will to solve them.

Conclusions

Morocco has been very lax about managing its resources, a situation which must change. The country is heading for an ecological crisis and nobody knows how severe it will be.

The development models implemented by the Government, and the lack of long-term planning, has led to increased inequality among segments of the population. Morocco's GINI index rating, which measures differences in the distribution of wealth, has risen in the last 20 years: at the start of the 1990s it stood at 39 points but the estimate for 2011 is just under 41 points.¹⁶ The gap between rich and poor is shocking, especially when we bear in mind the extremely tough conditions that the most deprived sectors have to cope with.

14 See: <www.estrechando.es/?p=794>.

⁹ See: Index Mundi, Morocco – Water pollution, <www. indexmundi.com/facts/morocco/water-pollution>.

¹⁰ See: <www.socialwatch.org/es/node/13110>.

¹¹ See: <www.earthsendangered.com/search-regions3.asp?se arch=1&sgroup=allgroups&ID=227>.

¹² See the video ¿Están los oasis marroquíes en vías de extinción?, on YouTube, <www.youtube.com/watch?v=WE_ ALD7CXps>.

¹³ Wikipedia, Al Wahda Dam (Morocco), <en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/Al_Wahda_Dam_(Morocco)>.

¹⁵ Morocco Business News, Morocco to achieve MDGs by 2015, HCP, (April 14 2010), <www.moroccobusinessnews. com/Content/Article.asp?idr=18&id=1479>.

¹⁶ Trading Economics, GINI index in Morocco, (2011), <www. tradingeconomics.com/morocco/gini-index-wb-data.html>.

MOZAMBIQUE An irresponsible administration



The Government has shown it is not only unable to combat poverty and social inequalities but also incapable of formulating a convincing plan to improve the population's quality of life. The benefits of economic growth have not reached the people who need them most and the poor are getting poorer. The current economic model is clearly unsustainable and the Government is failing to administer the country's natural resources or manage exploitation concessions so that these benefit the population as a whole. Some progress has been made in the fight against corruption but this is still one of the main obstacles to increasing people's well-being.

Human Rights League Public Integrity Centre Informal Justice Support Centre Custódio Duma, Coordinator

Mozambique has considerable natural resources in the form of natural gas, vegetal coal, aluminium, silver, more than 2,500 kilometres of coastline, rivers, forests, wood and a great potential for tourism.¹ However there is little chance of this wealth being used to help reduce poverty, first and foremost because the country is pursuing an irresponsible and unsustainable policy of promoting mega-projects.

Some studies go so far as to suggest the Government is incapable of administering these natural resources or of managing exploitation concessions in a way that benefits the country's economy or the population at large, and this means it is missing opportunities to promote national development.² Since the end of last year economists, civil society organizations, and even the Commission of Catholic Bishops of Mozambique have been trying to persuade the Government to reverse its policy of granting tax exemptions to mega-projects while the tax pressure on the general public is increasing.

A November 2009 review by the African Peer Review Mechanism³ reported that Mozambique's public administration is very politicized and that it is difficult to distinguish between the State and Frelimo, the party in power since independence in 1975. Not only is this combination of party and State a discriminatory way to manage the public sector, but it also undermines public policy planning and means that all socio-economic development processes are tied to politics.

Moreover, with its vacuous pronouncements and failed measures, the Government has shown that it is incapable not only of combating poverty and social inequalities but also of formulating a convincing plan to improve people's lives.

3 African Peer Review Mechanism, Country Review Report: Mozambique, APRM Country Review Report No. 11, June 2009, <www.aprm-international.org/index.htm>.



False growth

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported in April that Mozambique's economic growth in 2010 was among the highest in the region⁴ and predicted a real GDP rise of 7.25% in 2011 and 8% in the medium term. The problem is that the economic benefits of this expansion do not help the poor, who continue to get poorer. The minimum monthly wage is MZN 2,700 (USD 90), which according to trade unions and workers' organizations is only enough to satisfy 35% of a family's basic needs.⁵ A study by PricewaterhouseCoopers showed that in 2011 pay increased by only 9.8% while inflation was 15%, so in fact wages have fallen by 5.2%.

When we consider that more than half of Mozambique's general budget is financed by donor countries and 80% of its investment is from foreign sources, it is no surprise that many economists believe the country's economic growth is false.⁶ None of the main factors in the economy – such as the balance of payments, the State budget, investments or control of inflation – are determined by the country's wealth or are functions of internal equilibrium, the domestic market or national production. They are all based on foreign resources.

- 5 Empresas e Negócios, "Salários mínimos são marca da pobreza em Moçambique," 26 March 2011, <empresasenegocios.org/2011/03/26/salarios-minimossao-marca-da-pobreza-em-mocambique>.
- 6 Canalmoz, "Estabilidade económica de Moçambique é falsa", interview with João Mosca, 12 April 2011, <www.canalmoz. co.mz/hoje/19205-estabilidade-economica-de-mocambiquee-falsa.html>.



The high inflation rate may be a direct consequence of the rise in international prices for food and crude oil, but it is clear that Mozambique is unable to exploit its potential and produce foodstuffs and other products that could be exported and help reduce dependence on foreign aid. The country's economic ills can be traced above all to its growth models, which are unsustainable or unrealistic.

The fight against corruption

Transparency International reports that Mozambique has made some progress against corruption, moving from 130th out of 178 countries in 2009 to 116th in 2010.⁷ Corruption is still one of the main obstacles to development however, compounded by a combination of other related factors including weaknesses in management procedures, lack of transparency in public administration, impunity for wrongdoers and obsolete legislation in this area.

Mozambique's ranking on the corruption scale has improved because two important cases involving the embezzlement of public funds have come before the courts. These involved two ex-ministers (one of the Interior and the other of Transport and Communications) and also a president of the Council for the Administration of Airports, with the total loss amounting to around USD 10 million. But even so, the final ruling in these cases⁸ demonstrated how much the judiciary is manipulated by the political arm of government.

Maps of the World, "Mozambique Natural Resources," <vwww.mapsofworld.com/mozambique/economy/naturalresources.html>.

² C. N. Castel-Branco, "O que é que a ITIE faz bem e o que é que não faz? Uma proposta de agenda de trabalho sobre os recursos naturais em Moçambique," 25 February 2011, <www.iese.ac.mz/lib/noticias/2011/CNCB_PGMM_Fev2011. pdf>.

⁴ MacauHub, "IMF says Mozambican economy post growth of 6.5 pct in 2010," 11 April 2011, <www.macauhub.com. mo/en/2011/04/11/imf-says-mozambican-economy-postsgrowth-of-6-5-pct-in-2010/>.

⁷ Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2010 Results," <www.transparency.org/policy_research/ surveys_indices/cpi/2010/results>.

⁸ The Boston Globe, "Sentence Reduced in Mozambican Corruption Case," (24 May 2011), <vvvv.boston.com/ business/articles/2011/05/24/sentence_reduced_in_ mozambican_corruption_case/>.

The question of transparency was high on the national agenda in 2010–11, especially as regards the extractive sector. In the first quarter of 2011 Mozambique took an initial step towards complying with the requirements of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) when it published its first annual report with a declaration of the payments made by companies in the sector and the sums received by the State.⁹ The civil society organizations that took part in this process agreed unanimously that the contribution of the six firms selected for the report (FY 2008) came to less than 1% of the State budget.¹⁰

Specialists in the field say the report shows Mozambique is losing out in this process of awarding concessions in two ways: first because it grants the multinationals unnecessary tax incentives; and second because it is undervaluing the country's natural wealth.¹¹

Poverty and unrest

The official Government line is optimistic but recent studies show that the cost of living in the country is rising. As there are no mechanisms for ongoing constructive dialogue there may come a point where people express their discontent by taking to the streets with popular revolts as they did in 2008 and 2010.

The "disturbances" of 5 February 2008 and 1 and 2 September 2010 paralyzed the capital, Maputo, and the city of Matola 20 kilometres away, and violence also broke out in the provinces of Gaza, Manica and Nampula. The end result was around 20 people dead and more than 200 injured. The Government only managed to quell the unrest by promising on both occasions to subsidize fuel, semi-collective passenger transport – known as the "chapa 100"– and more recently some foodstuffs, with the promise of a quaranteed "basic basket."

Since 2007 the President has repeatedly stated that the problem of poverty is basically psychological and that the people should be more optimistic and fight against "mental poverty."¹² The previous poverty-reduction strategy, which was called the Action Plan to Reduce Absolute Poverty (PARPA), was

9 Iniciative de Transparência na Indústria Extractiva, "Primeiro Relatório da Iniciativa de Transparência na Indústria Extractiva em Moçambique sobre a Reconciliação de Pagamentos e Recebimentos na Indústria Extractiva," «vww.itie-mozambique.org/relatorio.pdf>.

- 10 T. Selemane and D. Nombora, "Implementação da ITIE, gestão de recursos naturais e urgência da renegociação e publicação dos contratos com mega projectos: O caso de Moçambique," (Maputo: Centro de Integridade Pública, May 2011, www.cip.org.mz/cipdo/84_ANALISE%20ITIE%20 MOÇAMBIQUE%202011.pdf>.
- 11 Castel-Branco, op. cit.
- 12 Government of Mozambique, "A luta continua pela independência completa," (25 June 2010), <www. portaldogoverno.gov.mz/noticias/news_folder_politica/junho-2010/a-luta-continua-pela-independencia-completa>.

changed in May 2011 to the Action Plan to Reduce Poverty (PARP), the logic being that poverty among the people was no longer "absolute."

However, the Third Evaluation of Poverty did not reflect this conclusion. It showed that some 52% of the population is living in absolute poverty,¹³ with the worst levels in the central part of the country. This means Mozambique will be unable to reach one of its Millennium Development Goals, which was to reduce poverty from 80% in 1990 to 40% by 2015. The unemployment rate is around 21% of the active population.¹⁴

Independent evaluations in 2009, after PARPA II had been in operation for five years, showed that less than 50% of the objectives had been reached. Delays in formulating the new plan, PARP, compromised the subsequent phase (also for five years) which should have started in 2010. The Government only finalized and passed the PARP in May 2011 and therefore the 2010–11 budget was based on generic plans and improvised measures.

The 2010 UNDP Human Development Index, which considers life expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling and per capita income, ranks Mozambique 165th out of 169 countries, and the 2010 Social Watch Basic Capabilities Index (based on infant mortality, percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel and percentage of children who reach fifth grade) gives it a value of 71, which places it in the low level development group.¹⁵

Poor health indicators

Infant mortality in Mozambique is 79 per 1,000 live births.¹⁶ Access to healthcare services is limited and an estimated 50% of the people live more than 20 kilometres from the nearest health centre, which in practice means they do not actually have access to the services. The country is negatively affected by a series of epidemics that up to now have not been adequately tackled:

 HIV and AIDS. Some 16% of the population is HIV-positive.

- Malaria is responsible for around 30% of all deaths in Mozambique. In different parts of the country from 40% to 80% of children aged two to nine have malaria, and in some areas up to 90% of children under five are infected. Malaria is also the most serious problem among pregnant women in rural areas. Some 20% of pregnant women suffer from it, with the incidence greatest (at 31%) during first pregnancies.¹⁷
- Tuberculosis is one of the main causes of sickness and mortality and affects the most vulnerable groups, in particular young adults, children and people living with HIV and AIDS. Mozambique, with its high morbidity indicators, has been since 1993 among the 22 countries in the world considered "very affected" and is currently in 18th position in the World Health Organization (WHO) classification.
- With a *leprosy* rate of 1.4 cases per 10,000 people, Mozambique has the highest incidence of this disease in Africa and is one of the six worst affected in the world.¹⁸
- Another problem is *cholera*. According to the Ministry of Health, last year alone there were 36 deaths from this disease out of a total of 1,968 registered cases.¹⁹

Conclusion

It will not be possible to tackle poverty effectively unless the Government changes its attitude to the problem. As long as indicators such as GDP growth are seen as the only valid way to measure the country's development, the Government will be unable to respond adequately to the population's pressing problems and the national development model will not be sustainable. Economic growth alone is not enough; this is why projects like PARPA and its offspring PARP have not brought about an improvement in people's well-being and discontent is on the increase.

- 14 Index Mundi, "Economia: Taxa de desemprego," <www. indexmundi.com/map/?v=74&I=pt>.
- 15 UNDP, Human Development Report 2010; Social Watch, *The 2010 Basic Capabilities Index: Slowing Down*, (Montevideo: 2010).
- 16 Index Mundi, "População: Taxa de mortalidade infantil," <www.indexmundi.com/map/?t=0&v=29&r=xx&l=pt>.
- 17 Ministério da Saúde, "Programa Nacional de Controlo de Malária," <www.misau.gov.mz/pt/programas/malaria/ programa_nacional_de_controlo_da_malaria>.
- 18 Ministério da Saúde, "Lepra," <www.misau.gov.mz/pt/ epidemias_endemias/lepra>.
- 19 Ministério da Saúde, "Cólera," <www.misau.gov.mz/pt/ epidemias_endemias/colera>.

¹³ Ministério da Planificação e Desenvolvimento, "Pobreza e Bem-Estar em Moçambique: Terceria Avaliação National," (October 2010), <www.ine.gov.mz/publicacoes/TERCEIRA_ AVALIACAO_NACIONAL_DA_POBREZA1.pdf>.

NEPAL

Unsustainability: causes and consequences



Political instability, human rights violations and corruption are among the main challenges to sustainable development in the country. The Government also needs to address the loss of biodiversity and the mismanagement of agricultural resources, alongside the protection and fulfilment of human rights, the promotion of people's participation in all aspects of State governance and the ending of corruption in politics at all levels. However discrimination based on class, caste, ethnicity, religion and gender is fuelling the creation and perpetuation of poverty, hunger, environmental destruction/degradation and conflict. Unless these underlying issues are effectively addressed, sustainable development will remain a dream.

Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN) Sarba Raj Khadka

After the decade-long armed conflict (1996–2006) and the removal of the 240 year monarchy, Nepal was declared a Federal Democratic Republic in 2008. Efforts are now underway to institutionalize a republican form of governance by introducing a new Constitution, restructuring the State and bringing closure to the peace process.

Over the years the Government has introduced a number of policies, plans and legal frameworks regarding biodiversity conservation, environmental protection and sustainable development, all focused on benefitting and empowering local people. The key instruments are the 1988 National Conservation Strategy, the 1988 Master Plan for the Forestry Sector, the 1993 and 1996 Environmental Policy and Action Plan, the 1995 Agriculture Perspective Plan, the 1996 Environment Protection Act, the 2002 Nepal Biodiversity Strategy and the 2003 Sustainable Development Agenda.¹ However their implementation has been limited.

In addition Nepal has ratified several related international human rights instruments and agreements, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention on Biodiversity, Agenda 21, and the UN Millennium Declaration. It has also prepared a National Adaptation Programme of Action to address the problems arising from climate change. However, the implementation of these international agreements has also been weak.

Sustainable development challenges

There are several obstacles to achieving sustainable development in Nepal. Most serious is the lack of political stability, particularly due to shifts in the political system first in the 1990s and then in 2008, and the political transition that the country is currently undergoing. Both the drafting of a new Constitution and the conclusion of the peace process are moving at a sluggish pace, and the process of sustainable socioeconomic transformation is still on hold.



In the past almost all political changes and socioeconomic development efforts were dominated by elite groups who favoured their own interests rather than helping those most in need. Class, caste, ethnicity, religion and gender-based discrimination have fuelled poverty, hunger, environmental destruction/degradation and conflict. Unless human rights violations and socioeconomic exclusion are effectively addressed as part of a time-bound and realistic plan, sustainable development will not be possible.

The process of globalization and adherence to a neo-liberal economic development model constantly challenge people-centred, environmentally friendly and economically viable development in Nepal. Unfair trade conditions – including the imposition of tariff and non-tariff barriers and sanitary and phytosanitary measures without considering preferential trade arrangements – are also counterproductive for sustainable development in countries such as Nepal. Thus it is slowly being guided towards profitoriented and market-led approaches to development including the controversial public-private partnership model.

Sustainable development and environmental issues

Although Nepal's contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions is trifling (1,977.1 kg per capita compared to the global average of 3.9 tonnes per capita),² it is in the forefront in terms of experiencing the disastrous effects of global warming and climate change.



Erratic, inadequate or excessive precipitation due to climate change has affected livelihoods in a negative way. The river systems that originate in the snow-clad Himalayan range supply water for drinking, cleaning and irrigation throughout the subcontinent of South Asia. The faster melting snow is expected to cause water scarcity in the entire region. There is also a looming danger of glacial lake outbursts. Another threat of climate change is the gradual desertification of the agricultural area. The policies and programmes in response to the impact of climate change are scant in coverage and ineffective in implementation. Rather, these are focused more on dealing with the symptoms than with the root causes.

Nepal is one of the lowest energy consumers in the world, hence its contribution to environmental degradation due to energy consumption is also minimal. Its energy consumption level was 7.16 tonnes of oil equivalent per annum in 2007, which was mainly based on traditional sources of energy such as wood 72%, agricultural residues 5% and dung 7%.³ The remaining 16% was met from commercial sources (coal 2.4%, petroleum 9.9% and electricity 2.7%) and renewable energy was less than 1%.⁴ The poor and vulnerable people mainly living in the rural areas have limited or no access to alternative energy as the technologies required for harnessing it are capitalintensive.

Decreasing biodiversity and increasing genetic destruction and degradation are also threats to

S.R. Khadka, *Biodiversity Conservation in Nepal: Policies* and Ground Realities, (Saarbrücken, Germany: Lambart Academic Publishing, 2011).

² Government of Nepal and United Nations Country Team of Nepal, *Nepal Millennium Development Goals, Progress Report*, (Kathmandu: 2010).

Ministry of Finance, Survey Monitoring the Paris Declaration, Nepal Country Report, (Kathmandu, 2011).

⁴ Ibid.

sustainable development. Realizing the importance of protecting the environment, the United Nations convened the Second International Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, which also adopted the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD). According to Article 1, the objectives of the CBD are: conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components, and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. The CBD entered into force in Nepal on 21 February 1994.

As a party to the Convention, the country has prepared biodiversity conservation policies, strategies and plans, including the Nepal Biodiversity Strategy in 2002. The goal of this strategy is to provide a strategic planning framework for the conservation of biodiversity, the maintenance of ecological processes and systems and the equitable sharing of the benefits accrued. The country harbours 118 ecosystems, 75 vegetation types and 35 forest types with significant presence of species and genetic diversity.⁵However biodiversity is threatened at several levels: ecosystems, species and genetic resources.⁶

Loss of ecosystems is due to conversion of the natural environment (forests, grasslands and wetlands) to other human uses. For example, the forest habitat is reported to be decreasing at an annual rate of 1.7%: if this trend continues, there are high chances of forest ecosystem degradation at an accelerated rate.7 Genetic resources are being depleted due to the destruction of natural habitats, overgrazing, land fragmentation, commercialization of agriculture, extension of high-vield varieties and indiscriminate use of pesticides.8 Pollution, fire, the introduction of alien species and illegal trade and hunting - as well as the high incidence of poverty among ever-growing populations - are also major causes of biodiversity depletion. Other problems such as soil erosion. landslides and land degradation, which are most pronounced in the mid-hills and high mountain ecological zones during the summer monsoons, are due to lack of public awareness and improper land use by farmers.

Agriculture and mismanagement

Unscrupulous and haphazard use of green revolution technology9 is another problem in a country whose economy is based on agriculture: more than 65% of Nepal's economically active population is engaged in land-based agriculture, though land holdings are small. While the use of green revolution technology improved the situation of food insecurity and poverty in some parts of the country - even if temporarily - it has destroyed long-used indigenous systems. Most of the research focused on short-term results and not on the sustainable and stable solutions that were the basis of indigenous knowledge and skills. In addition agriculture is now almost completely based on imported inputs that frequently need to be replaced. The regulatory mechanisms are so ineffective that multinational companies now have direct access to Nepal's peasantry where they can sell seeds and other unsustainable products.

The Nepalese are highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, and extreme levels of poverty have been forcing people to use marginal resources in unsustainable ways. For example, they may have no other option than to cultivate unstable slopes or encroach on areas for agriculture that are meant for other uses, and they have low levels of investment for increasing production.

Corruption and lack of appropriate education

A culture of impunity coupled with escalating corruption is also a challenge to sustainable development in Nepal. According to Transparency International's 2010 report, the country ranks 148th with a 2.2 score on the Corruption Perception Index.¹⁰The authorities are obviously more concerned about their personal fortunes than about the quality and sustainability of development work. The dwindling political commitment to country ownership and local systems is a further challenge. Development assistance is channelled without any consideration of the specific needs and interests of the people and hence the most suitable mechanisms are not put in place. Lack of appropriate education and awareness are also posing a threat to sustainable development, while the education system promotes consumerism and an unsustainable lifestyle, emphasizing markets and profits.

Conclusion and recommendations

Gross human rights violations, socioeconomic exclusion, the lack of social justice and lack of effective management of natural resources are among the main challenges to achieving sustainable development in Nepal. The following steps are therefore recommended in order to remedy this situation and make sustainability a reality rather than a dream:

- Promote democracy, peace and justice;
- Protect, respect and fulfil human rights;
- Address the underlying causes of poverty and conflicts;
- Promote people's meaningful participation in all aspects of State governance;
- Stop corruption in politics at all levels;
- Promote a culture of addressing needs not greed;
- Implement effective measures for addressing the impact of climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- Ensure adequate investment in research, development and extension in order to promote sustainable development based on the needs and priorities of the country;
- Engage local people in planning, implementation and monitoring for the management of natural resources; and
- Invest in harnessing alternative energy sources.

⁵ His Majesty's Government of Nepal, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Second National Report on the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nepal, (Kathmandu: 2002).

⁶ T.M. Maskey, "State of Biodiversity in Nepal" in Pie Shengji (ed.), Banking on Biodiversity: Report of the Regional Consultation on Biodiversity Assessment in the Hindu Kush Himalayas, (Karhmandu: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), 1996).

⁷ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nepal: State of the Environment, Ministry of Population and Environment of His Majesty's Government of Nepal, South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme, ICIMOD, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation and UNEP, (Bangkok, 2001).

⁸ Khadka, op. cit.

⁹ Research and technology initiatives from the late 1960s aimed to increase agriculture production through the development of high-yield cereal grain varieties, expansion of irrigation infrastructure, modernization of management techniques and distribution of hybridized seeds, synthetic fertilizers and pesticides to farmers.

¹⁰ Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index Report 2010, (Washington DC: 2010), <www.transparency. org/policy_research/survey_indices/cpi/2020/in_detail#6>.

Taxes for a better future



The country will not be able to adopt a sustainable development model unless it can overcome its current lack of resources. The country has serious environmental problems including over-exploitation of the soil, the near-exhaustion of fishing resources, increasing deforestation due to indiscriminate tree cutting and unsustainable practices in agriculture, and overdependence on coffee as a cash crop, which depletes soil fertility and pollutes water resources. Yet the State's coffers are empty. The way forward is to completely reform the taxation system to make it fairer, and to invest the extra funds in education and in promoting methods of production that cause less damage to the environment.

Coordinadora Civil Dr. Adolfo José Acevedo Vogl

If Nicaragua is to implement policies to promote sustainable development it needs far more resources than are currently available, so the tax system will have to be changed to increase revenue. Development assistance is also decreasing in absolute terms and as a percentage of GDP, and the only way to cover the shortfall is to raise more income from taxes.

For the State to maintain adequate investment in human capital, basic infrastructure, social protection, and to pursue its equity goals, a greater portion of the burden of financing this expenditure will have to be borne by the higher income strata of society rather than the middle and lower strata (see box on Coordinadora Civil proposal).

Furthermore, this need for added finance responds to a basic principle of a sustainable economy, which is inter-generational fairness, a concept defined in 1974 by James Tobin: "The trustees of endowed institutions are guardians of the future against the claims of the present. Their task in managing the endowment is to preserve equity among generations."¹

Environmental challenges

Nicaragua does not have a sustainable development model, which is all too evident when we consider how poorly successive governments have performed in terms of administering the country's natural resources. For example, water reserves are being depleted due to pollution and deforestation, and this has not only increased the cost of the investment needed to provide the population with drinking water but has also reduced the amount of water available for agriculture and for the generation of hydroelectric energy.²

Moreover, the country is losing 75,000 hectares of forest a year because of illegal tree cutting and slash-and-burn agricultural practices which often cause huge forest fires. Another factor is that currently 76% of the fuel used for cooking is wood.³



This deterioration of the forests also contributes to soil erosion, which in turn poses a danger to agriculture.

In June 2011 the Government expressed concern about this bleak scenario and announced that it had managed to reduce the rate of deforestation by 50%.⁴ However, of the country's 12 million hectares of forest more than 8 million are still degraded.

Another aspect of Nicaragua's unsustainable economic growth model is the over-exploitation of fishing resources. For example, lobsters are being extracted at twice the species' natural replacement rate, and this problem is exacerbated by the Government's failure to take adequate measures to combat illegal fishing.⁵

There is also the shrimp farming industry, which has not only inflicted serious damage on the mangrove swamps and wetlands of the Pacific coast but polluted other bodies of water through the dumping of waste and toxic chemicals.

Waste is a problem in urban areas too. The way solid waste is managed in cities is inadequate causing increasing problems as rubbish tips are spreading in densely populated areas. This, added to an overall lack of urban planning, has made the poorest sectors of the population more vulnerable to disease and to the effects of natural and environmental disasters. It goes without saying that their increased vulnerability puts the country in a



delicate situation in the face of the various impacts of climate change.⁶

However, Nicaragua's biggest environmental problem is over-dependence on coffee cultivation. Some 26% of agricultural enterprises produce coffee, accounting for 15% of all cultivated land and 25% of the land devoted to export crops.7 Data from the Centre for Nicaraguan Exports (Cetrex) indicates that "in the first five months of the harvest (from October 2010 to February 2011) coffee earned USD 154 million, which was around USD 85 million more than was generated in the same months in the 2009-10 harvest."8 However, the intensive cultivation of coffee is extremely aggressive in terms of environmental degradation as it leads to deforestation, the loss of biodiversity, pollution with agro-chemicals, soil erosion, and worst of all the exhaustion of water resources, since both growing and processing coffee requires a great deal of water.9 Nicaragua's natural environment was pillaged and devastated for more than a century by

¹ J. Tobin, "What Is Permanent Endowment Income?" American Economic Review, (May 1974), p. 427.

² Clima y ambiente de Nicaragua, Un cambio de actitud en el día de la Tierra, (22 April 2009), <climayambiente.blogspot. com/2009/04/un-cambio-de-actitud-en-el-dia-mundial.html>

⁴ Diario Web Centroamérica, Nicaragua logró reducir la deforestación en 50 por ciento, (7 June 2011), <www. diariowebcentroamerica.com/region/nicaragua-logroreducir-la-deforestacion-en-50-por-ciento>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ L. Castrillo, "El Café Nicaragüense," *Nicabilingüe*, <nicabilingue.com/index.php?option=com_ content&view=article&id=46:el-cafe&catid=43:medioambiente&Itemid=49>.

⁸ Cited in América Economía, Cosecha de café en Nicaragua crece 8,6% y reporta US\$154 millones, (22 March 2011), <www.americaeconomia.com/negocios-industrias/cosechade-cafe-en-nicaragua-crece-86-y-reporta-us154-millones>.

⁹ N. Pérez Díaz, R. M. Castillo Ramos, L. R. Carballo Abreu, J. Á. Veliz Gutiérrez, Impacto ambiental en el cultivo y procesamiento del café y su repercusión social, (Cuba: University of Pinar del Río), <www.monografias.com/ trabajos-pdf/impacto-ambiental-cultivo-procesamiento-cafe/ impacto-ambiental-cultivo-procesamiento-cafe.pdf>.

THE COORDINADORA CIVIL TAXATION PROPOSAL¹

The Coordinadora Civil taxation proposal is based on three basic principles:

- The principle of universal taxation. To be able to finance increased expenditure on investment in human capital, basic infrastructure and social protection, the State will have to expand the country's taxation base as much as possible. This means that, in principle, all persons resident in Nicaragua who have sufficient means must contribute to financing the services the State provides. Moreover, non-residents who obtain rents in the country must also be obliged to contribute. This would mean far-reaching changes to the current generous system of tax exemptions whereby whole sectors of the economy, usually the most dynamic and profitable ones, pay no taxes.
- The principle of vertical equity. People who are able to contribute more
 must make a greater relative contribution than people with lower incomes. This would mean doing away with the preferential treatment
 that rents and income from capital are granted, and obviously income
 of this kind is highly concentrated in the higher-income strata of the
 population.
- The principle of horizontal equity. People at similar economic levels must be treated in a uniform way by the tax system. It is unfair for two people who have the same capacity to contribute to pay different amounts (one paying more than the other) or that one should be taxed and the other not.

To put these principles into practice the basic pillars of the tax system, taxation on rents and value added tax will all have to be completely overhauled.

As regards the first principle, the proposal is that the income tax system should be changed. In the current system, separate and preferential treatment is given to passive income from capital or rents, and this is highly discriminatory to the detriment of people who earn their income in wages and salaries as these are the only sectors that are subject to a scale of progressive marginal rates. This system will have to be replaced by a global scheme in which all income is treated the same. There will also have to be a change from a national criterion of tax jurisdiction to a world jurisdiction principle.

The adoption of a global income tax system means that in principle each contributor would be taxed on all his income regardless of the source of each item. The adoption of a world income tax jurisdiction criterion means that taxpayers resident in the country would have all their sources of income liable to taxation regardless of whether this income is generated in the country or abroad. This would mean each person's full income would be taxed, which would be a genuine application of the principle that each individual should pay in accordance with his capacity to pay. This scheme would not only greatly increase the tax yield, but facilitate the redistribution of resources through taxation and thus make it possible to achieve greater equity in the country, in a horizontal sense as well as vertically.

The income of non-residents would be treated in line with the international trend to use the principle of benefit to justify taxing the income of nonresidents at source, and the principle of ability to contribute for taxes paid in the country. This involves splitting the power to levy taxes between the two principles, which is exactly what is in play in the context of international conventions to avoid double taxation.

In the plan to modernize the income tax system the proposal is to incorporate regulations that are in line with the financial and trade liberalization of the last ten years, which involve regulations governing the prices of transfers between different parties, thin capitalization and transactions with tax havens.

1 See: <www.ccer.org.ni/>.

fruit companies and it cannot sustain the growth and expansion of the coffee industry indefinitely unless the State implements regulations on cultivation techniques so as to give the soil a chance to recover. There can be no sustainable growth if the land itself is barren and exhausted.

Deterioration in education

Sustainable development has to do with the legacy of goods the people of today pass on to future generations. For this model to be successful the population has to be educated so they can exploit the human and natural resources they inherit in the best possible way, but in Nicaragua the outlook in this respect is discouraging. A survey by the consultancy firm M&R that was published in May shows that most people think the country's education system is seriously deteriorating and the quality of teaching is perceived as being very poor and out of date. One factor in this dismal scenario is that teacher's salaries are far below average pay in the country.¹⁰

Of the people interviewed, 78.9% rated school infrastructure as being in bad or very bad condition and 70.8% perceived the quality of the education received as bad or very bad. Some 91.8% of the interviewees thought teachers' pay in State primary schools was bad or very bad, and 89.4% saw teacher salaries in State secondary schools the same way.

There was a general consensus that if the State significantly increased investment in primary and secondary education (to at least 7% of GDP) this would improve the situation and result in greater education access and improved teaching quality. Some 92.8% of the people surveyed thought the Government ought to make a considerable increase in the budget allocation for education.

Similarly 93.5% said the country needs to establish a wide-ranging long-term national agreement so that, regardless of the party politics of the government in power at any given time, any policy geared to improving education would be respected and maintained in operation. However, it will only be possible for the State to reform education and pursue sustainable development if taxation is thoroughly overhauled so that extra funds over and above what the tax system yields today can be generated. The first objectives on the road to sustainable development can be summed up as taxation, preservation and education.

10 See: <www.ccer.org.ni/noticias?idnoticia=769>.

Rethinking development



The Government's development initiatives have not managed to reduce poverty in the country and have also failed to diversify a petroleum-based economy, with a non-sustainable extraction-led growth model still being applied. This has led to severe environmental degradation, with alarming desertification and erosion trends. The Government has to rethink its strategies and adopt environmentally friendly long-term planning policies based on renewable energy sources and adequate environmental management. The poor should be empowered and given a stake in managing the environment and natural resources.

Social Watch Nigeria Ray Onyegu

Although Nigeria is rich in natural resources such as bauxite, gold, tin, coal, petroleum and forests, and earns significant revenues from the oil sector, it is still poorly developed. The 2010 Human Development Index ranks the country in the low human development group, with an index value estimated at 0.423, placing it at 142 out of 169 countries.¹ Nonsustainable attempts to restructure the economy during the last decade have further worsened the situation.

From 2003 to 2007 the Government attempted to implement a programme called the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), designed to raise the country's standard of living through a variety of reforms that included liberalization of the economy and privatization of State assets.² The Government expected that NEEDS would create 7 million new jobs, diversify the economy, boost non-energy exports and improve agricultural productivity. However in 2010, three years after its implementation, about 92% of the population were still living on less than USD 2 a day, while about 71% survived on less than USD 1 a day.³

Reasons for Nigeria's developmental stagnation include inappropriate macroeconomic policies, weak economic growth, the negative effects of globalization, lack of good governance, corruption, the debt burden, low productivity and low wages in the informal sector, deficiencies in the labour market resulting in limited job growth and unemployment, a high population growth rate, poor human resources development, an increase in crime and violence and environmental degradation arising from both climate change and human activities.

This situation is further aggravated by the extraction-led development model being implemented by the Government. Thus despite recent indicators



showing some economic progress (GDP growth rose from 5.6% in 2010 to an estimated 6.8% for 2011),⁴ the country remains highly dependent on the hydrocarbon industry,⁵ clearly a non-renewable resource and therefore unsuitable as a basis for sustainable development. Poverty – the country's biggest challenge – is linked to the country's environmental issues, most of which are derived from extractive practices: desertification, flooding, environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity.

Desertification

Almost 350,000 hectares of arable land are being lost annually to the advancing desert.⁶ Natural causes include the poor physical condition of the soil, vegetation and topography as well as increasingly dry land and the inherent extreme climatic variability as evidenced in periodic droughts. Moreover there is human overexploitation, overgrazing, deforestation and poor irrigation due to diverse factors such as demographic growth, migration and the extremely hard socioeconomic conditions in which the people live.⁷

The demand for wood for housing, fuel, the fishing industry and other uses and the removal of trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants and grass cover continue to accelerate the degradation of the soil to



desert-like conditions. Pastoralists also cut foliage to feed their animals and use branches to build enclosures. Bush burning by villagers during land clearing for agriculture, hunters setting fire to the vegetation in search for animals, cattle herders setting fire to dry grass to stimulate the growth of dormant grass buds and cultivation of marginal areas in periods of higher than normal rainfall are also causes of Nigeria's increasing desertification.

The intensified use of fragile and marginal ecosystems has led to progressive degradation of marginal agricultural land even in years of normal rainfall.⁸ Insufficient water supply in most parts of Nigeria resulting from drought has led to increased contamination of the remaining sources of water and enhances the transmission of water-borne diseases such as typhoid, hepatitis A and cholera. It is feared that the damage caused by drought and population pressure may have already resulted in the genetic loss of a vast array of plant species.⁹

Flooding

At the same time as it suffers widespread drought, Nigeria's topography makes it especially vulnerable to flooding. This phenomenon takes three main forms: coastal, river and urban. The first occurs in the low-lying belt of mangrove and fresh water swamps along the coast, including overflow of the Lagos Bar

UNDP, Human Development Report 2010: The Real Wealth of Nations, (New York: 2010), <hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/ hdr2010/>.

² Library of Congress – Federal Research Division, Country Profile: Nigeria, (2008), p.11, <lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/ profiles/Nigeria.pdf>.

³ AllAfrica.com, UNESCO on Poverty in Nigeria, (27 January 2010), <allafrica.com/stories/201001280540.html>.

⁴ IndexMundi, "Nigeria GDP – real growth rate," <www. indexmundi.com/nigeria/gdp_real_growth_rate.html>.

⁵ EconomyWatch, "Nigeria economy," <www.economywatch. com/world_economy/nigeria/>.

⁶ N. Medugu, "Nigeria: combating desertification and drought," *All/Africa.com*, 2 June 2009, <allafrica.com/ stories/200906030289.html>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Desertification, "Desertification in Nigeria," 9 March 2007, <desertification.wordpress.com/2007/03/30/desertificationin-nigeria-african-agriculture>.

⁹ Government of Nigeria, Country Profile: Implementation of Agenda 21, submitted to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, (New York: April 1997), <www.un.org/esa/ earthsummit/nigeriac.htm>.

Beach of the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁰ River flooding occurs periodically in the flood plains of the larger rivers and in the Niger Delta, and also sudden short-lived flash floods are caused by the overflowing of small rivers in the rainy season. Urban flooding occurs in towns located on flat or low-lying terrain, especially where little or no provision has been made for surface drainage or where existing drains have been blocked with municipal waste. Heavy unpredicted rains and other forms of extreme weather are among the risks of climate change due to global warming, thus increasing the country's vulnerability to natural disasters.

Severe flooding caused the displacement of nearly 2 million people in the northern region of the country in 2010.¹¹ Many other West African countries – including Benin, Ghana and Niger – were also severely affected by the disaster, which followed a large-scale drought and famine in the Sahel region (the transition zone between the Sahara Desert and central Africa) and the Senegal River basin.

The northern states of Challawa and Tiga were among the hardest hit by the floods, which also displaced some 2 million people in Jijawa state. The Governor of Jijawa blamed the flooding on the irresponsible opening of the Challawa and Tiga dam gates with no warning to local villagers. Although the Government admitted that one of the dams had spilled over, it claimed this could not have been enough to cause the flooding and pointed to heavy rains as the cause of the disaster.¹² Entire crops were lost in the floods, which occurred just before the harvest when it was too late for the farmers to replant their fields, increasing the risk of food crisis and famine.

Environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity

Inappropriate agricultural practices along with the destruction of watersheds and the opening up of river banks and other critical areas have led to silting of river beds and loss of water courses. Uncontrolled use of agro-chemicals and the concomitant problems of chemical persistence in the soil in humid areas and soil-crust formation in arid climates have contributed to the destruction of vast agricul-

tural land. In addition petroleum prospecting – with its attendant oil pollution problems including spills, oil well blow-outs, oil blast discharges and improper disposal of drilling mud – has created problems such as: damage to marine wildlife, modification of the ecosystem through species extinction and a delay in the establishment of new flora and fauna, a decrease in fishery resources and the loss of the aesthetic value of natural beaches due to unsightly oil slicks.¹³

Nigeria's wildlife is also rapidly declining due to habitat loss and increased pressure from hunters, poachers and bush burning. The cheetah, pygmy hippopotamus, giraffe and black rhinoceros are no longer found in the country. Rampant bush burning is threatening the growth of trees and wildlife and reducing ecological diversity. Gravel mining for construction is aggravating the problem of erosion and surface run-off, while indiscriminate discharge of particulates from construction sites is leading to pollution and siltation. Areas earmarked as green belts and recreational areas are now being systematically converted into building sites.¹⁴

Industrial pollution and waste¹⁵

Nigeria has about 5,000 registered industrial facilities and some 10,000 small-scale industries operating illegally within residential premises. In places such as Kano, Kaduna and Lagos, coloured, hot and heavy metal-laden effluents – especially from the textile, tannery and paints industries – are discharged directly into open drains and water channels, constituting direct dangers to water users and flora and fauna downstream. Also disturbing is the practice whereby some industrial facilities bury their expired chemicals and hazardous chemical wastes in their backyards, threatening the ground water quality.

Stack fumes from industries emit gases and particulates with grave respiratory and cardiac ailment consequences. They often occlude sunlight for hours in several parts of Lagos, Kano, Enugu and Port-Harcourt. Air inversion with its accompanying foggy dispersion and visibility reduction to less than 20 meters has become an almost permanent feature of the Oko Baba mid-section of the Third Mainland Bridge in Lagos, where saw millers burn sawdust and other wood shavings.

A similar phenomenon is experienced at the tollgate end of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway at Oregun, where smoke from a nearby dumpsite pollutes the air and has a nauseating odour. Municipal solid waste heaps dot several parts of the major cities blocking roads, alleys and pavements. These unsightly dumps are characterised by:

- Various non-biodegradable household petrochemical products such as polythene bags, plastic containers. Styrofoam packages and tyres;
- Crankcase oils from mechanical workshops, industries, power stations and commercial houses discharged carelessly into drains and surface waters thereby contaminating surface and underground waters;
- The placement of public buildings and residential quarters on flood-prone areas as well as unsettled and improperly reclaimed dumps. Such ecologically sensitive areas are often converted into plots for the erection of residential quarters and public buildings such as markets.

Conclusion

Sound environmental management is critical to sustainable development and, as a consequence. to poverty reduction. Nigeria's present economic growth will be short-lived because of the economy's dependence on hydrocarbon industries and also because of inadequate natural environment and resource conservation. Most of the past damage to the environment and natural resources was caused through deforestation, overgrazing and over-fishing. The rural poor are often forced to live on fragile land and near fragile water supplies that require sensitive resource management in the face of increasing degradation, while the urban poor are exposed to diseases and illnesses resulting from overcrowding, inadequate basic services and polluted living conditions. In order to properly address the issue of poverty the Government needs to empower the poor and give them a stake in managing the environment and natural resources.

14 Government of Nigeria, op. cit.

¹⁰ A. Raufu, "Africa underwater: Nigeria's coastline is besieged by global warming," *The Environment Magazine*, (March– April 2002),

¹¹ BBC News Africa, Northern Nigeria flooding displaces two million, (24 September 2010), <www.bbc.co.uk/news/worldafrica-11409167>.

¹² TerraDaily, Agency denies opened dams caused Nigeria floods, (26 September 2010), <vww.terradaily.com/ reports/Agency_denies_opened_dams_caused_Nigeria_ floods_999.html>.

¹³ P. O. Bankole and A. Surajudeen, Major environmental issues and the need for environmental statistics and indicators in Nigeria, paper presented on behalf of the Nigerian Delegation at the ECOWAS Workshop on Environment Statistics, (Abuja: 19–23 May 2008).

¹⁵ Ibid.

PAKISTAN

Squandering the potential for true development



The country's development strategy is almost entirely centred on economic growth with little attention to environmental and social issues. Pakistan has the potential to provide energy for its population, but lacks planning to ensure that those most affected by mega projects are also taken into account. Its water shortage needs to be urgently addressed as eventually the river Indus will dry up. Reliable data on the number of bonded labourers there are in the country is urgently needed so that Government officials can no longer deny the rights of these highly exploited workers while the economy reaps the benefits of their work.

Civil Society Support Programme (CSSP) Hannah Campbell Development Consultant

Massive flooding in Pakistan in 2010 devastated an area of around 160,000 km² and affected about 20 million people, most of whom lived and worked in the agricultural sector. They not only lost their homes, but also their livelihoods. It is estimated that more than 2 million hectares of crops were lost during the floods, resulting in fruit and vegetables now having to travel for hours to reach areas that used to have a plentiful amount of fresh goods available. Together with rising petrol prices, this has caused a significant price increase for fresh produce, which has had a devastating effect on the already poor communities of Pakistan. ¹

The coping mechanisms developed by riverside communities over decades have also been undermined by high population growth and persistent poverty as well as a number of land management factors, including deforestation, water encroachment on land in the river belt, physical infrastructure development and maintenance of river and canal embankments.

Due to inadequate infrastructure plans and policies, the monsoon season in 2011 also caused devastation throughout the country, leaving much of the Sindh region under water.

Emergency response: success and failures

About 2 million flood-affected families have received Government provided 'Watan cards,' each guaranteeing access to PKR.100,000 (approx. USD 1,170). A major flaw in the programme was the decision to allocate cards to male family heads via the system of Computerized National Identity Cards (CNIC), thereby automatically excluding orphans and femaleheaded families, along with hundreds of thousands of men and women who had migrated to affected areas before the floods and were ineligible because their CNICs were from other districts. Levels of fraud were high; those registered in more than one flood camp claimed more than one Watan card. No training on how to use an ATM machine was provided and the number of ATMs available remained low; cases of flood victims selling their Watan cards for cash (never their full value) were common. Free fertilisers



and seeds were distributed to farmers; however the project brought complaints of poor seed quality and lack of access.

The distribution of aid to people affected by the floods was flawed and corrupt, leaving millions without access to basic rights such as healthcare, education, shelter, food and dignity. The situation is aggravated by the existence of bonded labourers; those working in the agricultural sector found themselves not only homeless, but with the land they lived and worked on now under water, their ability to repay their already endless debt became increasingly unlikely.

Civil society organizations issued a Citizen's Charter stating that the country's "social, economic, commerce, foreign, and national security policies all are extremely exclusionary in nature and need to be redeveloped incorporating a pro-people agenda of development and progress."²

Indus delta issues

Tibetan glaciers are retreating at an alarmingly high rate; in the short term, this will cause lakes to expand and bring floods and mudflows; in the long run, once the glaciers vanish, water supplies in Pakistan will be in peril.³

In 1984, the World Bank initiated the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) programme, which included the creation of a 300km outfall drain from eastern Sindh into the sea. Initially, agriculture improved along the north of the drain and many farmers who had previously left to seek employment in urban areas returned.



However in 1999, a monsoon cyclone caused the drain to burst, destroying thousands of acres of land used for farming. Four years later mass flooding caused even more damage, killing at least 50 local villagers and displacing around 50,000 people. Due to a high level of salinity in ground water caused by the floods, drinking water became scarce and damage to a significant amount of farmland caused major economic losses.⁴

A man-made system of irrigation and drains have led to the unchecked disposal of effluents and chemical waste from factories into Manchar Lake, which then flows into the sea. Large canals in the north. such as Chashma and Tausa. are also widely blamed for a shortage of freshwater; designed to be used in times of floods, due to mismanagement and corruption they are now used at all times. This has not only reduced water in the rivers south of the canals, but has left the downstream Kotri Delta conservation area without sufficient water to sustain its wetlands, which are home to a large number of shrimp and fish as well as being crucial in times of natural disasters. The Kotri Delta is also a globally recognized stopping ground for migratory birds from Siberia; however due to a lack of water, only a few gulls remain today.

As these rivers end before they reach the Arabian Sea, the lack of silt from the rivers has caused the sea to seriously intrude on the land. Over 2 million acres of land has already been claimed by the sea, forcing coastal communities to migrate inland and destroying the fishing industry. There is an urgent need to fix river banks and water flow

² See: <www.humanrights.asia/news/forwarded-news/AHRC-FST-098-2010>.

³ See: <www.afp.com>.

⁴ See: <www.devex.com/en/articles/world-bank-water-projectimperils-pakistan-fisherfolk>.

¹ See: <www.bbc.co.uk/news/south-world-asia-11875204>.

direction, implement a system for the de-silting of rivers, and stop the misuse of canals which is ruining wetland areas.

Families who have lived and worked on the banks of the Indus for generations now struggle to catch enough fish to survive. It is estimated that fishing has declined by 70-80% in some villages and many farmers have switched production from rice to sunflowers, which require less water and yield about the same profit, but means there is less food available.⁵ Lack of water in the rivers is also posing a serious threat to the Indus dolphins, who are now in danger of extinction.

Coal: potential threats and opportunities

The district of Tharparkar in the Sindh province is rich in natural resources including vast coal mines (among the world's 5 largest coal reserve) and is home to about 1.5 million people. A proposed project for Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) in the district has the potential to generate 5,000 mw of electricity for at least 800 years.

The majority of Tharparkar's residents are members of indigenous minority groups. These groups are doubly disadvantaged in society as they are not only Hindus but also *Dalits*, also called *Outcastes*. They are asset-less people who rely on rain-fed agriculture and livestock rearing who simply wish for their livelihoods and traditions to be respected. Part of their concern comes from a dramatic rise in Thar's population, leading to an increase in poverty levels and scarcity of resources, while there are plans to outsource labour for the UCG project instead of hiring local residents.

The Government has so far created no solid proposals for the resettlement of Thar's residents or taken their wellbeing into account. Because of this, in 2010 the World Bank pulled out of the project, representing a major blow to the country's sustainable development.

Bonded labour

Despite numerous legal provisions designed to reduce bonded labour, this practice continues, particularly in areas where there are brick kilns, carpet industries, fishing, mining, stone/brick crushing, shoe-making, power looms, refuse sorting and agri-

EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan, like most developing countries, actually contributes very little to overall greenhouse gas emissions; however their effects are substantial. For example:

- Glacier melt in the Himalayas will increase flooding before affecting water resources in Pakistan within the next 2-3 decades;
- Freshwater availability is projected to decrease, leading to biodiversity loss as well as shortage
 of drinking water;
- · Coastal areas bordering the Arabian Sea will be at great risk of rising sea levels;
- Crop yields are expected to decrease causing high risk of hunger and food insecurity.
- Endemic morbidity and mortality due to diseases associated with floods and draughts will rise, while changes in coastal water temperatures will increase incidence of cholera.
- Existing social inequalities regarding resource use will be aggravated, leading to instability, conflicts, displacement of people and changes in migration patterns.¹

culture. They are thus found in all provinces, but are highly prevalent in Sindh and Punjab. There is a serious lack of reliable data concerning their numbers, causing the problem to remain unaddressed.⁵ The ILO reported 20 million bonded labourers in Pakistan in 1993, and only 1.7 million by 2009. However NGOs claimed there are around 1.3 million engaged in bonded labour in Sindh province alone.⁶

Due to the lack of economic opportunities and high levels of illiteracy, bonded labour is often voluntary.⁷ Bonded labourers are left with no escape; the majority of them do not own a national identity card, thus having no right to vote and no access to social services. Feudal landlords, who often take pride in having bonded labourers, especially if they are children, resist initiatives for change as they benefit significantly from the bonded labour system. ⁸

Long term solutions

The Government needs to make a comprehensive plan for the protection of the local fishing and farming communities, as well as the conservation of important environmental areas such as the wetlands. The plan should include the revival of agriculture and provision of improved fishing equipment to those affected by river mismanagement, the promotion of livestock and dairy development, income generation activities, the provision of safe drinking water, and a long term plan for the revival of education and health facilities in the area.⁹

All contaminated water released into the Arabian Sea should be treated and routinely checked to preserve marine life. A plan is needed to ensure that sea water does not enter the wetlands and a comprehensive water recycling / rain harvesting system should be in operation to deal with the water shortage problem. A number of smaller dams on the Indus may prove to be more effective than the large canals in operation at present.

As Pakistan is frequently affected by natural disasters, it is crucial that an effective system of Disaster Risk Reduction and Risk Mapping is in place, involving and educating those who are most likely to be affected by major crises, to ensure that the extent of devastation and destruction is as little as possible. Disaster Management Authorities in each province should step up their efforts and engage local universities in conducting research on climate change.

- 6 See: <www.tbl.com.pk/the-menace-of-bonded-labour-inpakistan-agricultural-sector>.
- 7 District Umerkot Sindh, Rural Support Programmes Network, *Bonded Labour*, (2009).
- 8 See: <www.sparcpk.org>.

9 See: </www.ifiwatchnet.org/?q=en/node/6>

¹ See: <www.lead.org.pk/cc/basicguide_climate_change.html>.

⁵ G. M. Kundi and B. Shah, Bonded Labour and Constrained Role of Pakistan Government in its Eradication, Department of Public Administration, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, (2006).

PALESTINE

No sustainable development under occupation



Israeli occupation undermines Palestine's environment and minimizes any possibility that it can implement sustainable development. Alarming unemployment rates, weak and inefficient institutions and high dependency on customs revenues and financial contributions from donor countries makes apparent the unsustainability of the Palestinian economy. In addition, the disastrous conditions of the water supply facilities – mostly due to laws enforced during the 1967 Israeli occupation – poses an alarming threat to Palestinians' well being.

Palestine represents a very unusual case regarding sustainable development. In order to address this topic, there are a number of issues that need to be considered, the most important being the lack of sovereignty and control over resources, the absence of legislation or policy plans for development of any kind and the growing importance of donor country funding to the economies of both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The lack of legislation and policies, especially with regard to sustainability, is linked to the Israeli occupation, which has ultimate power over the jurisdiction and geographic extension of any possible legislation, and is also a cause of political instability.

The reality of the occupation therefore makes it necessary to take into account the inadequacy of many development indicators when applied to the Palestinian situation. This does not mean that we must exclude Palestine from development statistics, but merely that the indicators that are widely employed are not necessarily valid with regard to this country, and consequently another kind of development measurements must be considered.

Unemployment

The World Bank's 2011 report on the current poverty situation on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip described the Palestinian situation as unique in the world. It noted that the country's unemployment rates are the highest in the world, mostly due to the lack of opportunities, and concluded that the unemployment rates are closely linked to the occupation.

According to this report, 19% of the population was unemployed in 2011, despite the fact that according to official data, 780,000 people were working in Palestinian territory in the first quarter of 2011, an increase of 130,000 compared to the previous year. This means a decrease in unemployment rates of approximately 21.7%. Young men and women are particularly affected, since in 2009, the unemployment rate among young people was 10% higher than the overall unemployment rate.¹

Social and environmental issues

The situation with regard to health services is daunting. There are 25 public hospitals across the territories, and the number of inhabitants per bed reaches 1,349. The poor condition of the medical facilities makes it inevitable that a large number of patients must be transferred to neighbouring countries for treatment. This resulted in an additional expense of almost 1,484,200,000 Israeli shekels (USD 403,702,400) in 2010, largely due to the lack of sound planning and proper management. In fact, if the existing resources were properly managed, the ministry would be able to build facilities equipped with state of the art medical technology, which would make such expensive transfers unnecessary.

Regarding water supply and sanitation, the 2007-11 Gaza Strip blockade had dire consequences, particularly the severe damage inflicted on the infrastructure. Almost all sewage and water pumps were out of operation due to lack of electricity and fuel; this caused a great shortage of water and also sewage overflow in urban areas.² The blockade impeded the provision of spare parts, so the facilities were not repaired.

Agriculture accounts for 70% of Palestine's total usage of water, followed by domestic (27%) and industrial uses. According to a World Bank 2009 report, the residential water supply for the West Bank was estimated at about 50 liters per capita per day.³ In 2009, 60% of the population of the Gaza Strip

3 Wikipedia, Water supply and sanitation in the Palestinian territories. Available from: <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_ supply_and_sanitation_in_Palestine>.

^{*} There are no available data on GEI.

See "Amid Palestinian statehood push, a grim World Bank report," *Christian Science Monitor*, 14 September 2011. Available from: <www.csmonitor.com/World/ Backchannels/2011/0914/Amid-Palestinian-statehood-pusha-grim-World-Bank-report-on-the-West-Bank-Gaza.

² World Bank, Gaza Strip Water and Sanitation Situation, 2009. Available from: www.worldbank.org/WBS/ITE/EXTERNAL/ COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/WESTBANKGAZAEXTN/0,contentM DK:22026701-menuPK:294370-pagePK:2865066-piPK:28 65079-theSitePK:294365,00.htmls.

lacked access to continuous water supply.⁴ In the West Bank, only 13,000 m3 (out of 85,000 m3) of wastewater was treated in 2009, while in the same year the amount was 65,000 m3 (out of 110,000 m3), in the Gaza Strip.⁵

The same year, Amnesty International reported that up to 200,000 Palestinians in rural communities have no access at all to running water, and the Israeli army prevents them from even collecting rain water, while Israeli settlers have irrigated farms and swimming pools. In fact, the 450,000 settlers counted in this report use as much water as the total population of Palestine. In order to cope with water shortages and lack of infrastructure, many Palestinians have to purchase water of dubious quality from mobile water tankers, at very high prices.⁶

In 1993, the World Bank published a report entitled "Developing the Occupied Territories: An investment in Peace," which described the provision of public services in the occupied territories as highly inadequate, since water, solid waste and wastewater facilities were practically non-existent. Poor waste management contributed to environmental degradation, and the causes go back to the Israeli Administration from 1967 to 1993. Progress in rebuilding these facilities has been almost nonexistent, despite investments by many international donors, mostly due to the flaws and ambiguities in the Oslo Agreement, especially as it has been interpreted by the Israeli authorities. Escalating violence has further worsened this situation.⁷

When Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967, it declared all water resources to be property of the State of Israel, and since then several military orders have minimized water development in Palestine, fixing pumping quotas, prohibiting rehabilitation of wells or drilling new ones without a permit and confiscating or even destroying all Palestinian pumping stations on the Jordan River. Israel, at the same time, increased its exploitation of the water resources of the West Bank, drilling 38 wells. As a result of this, by 1993 Palestinians had access only to 20% of the water of the aquifer system underlying the West Bank. The Oslo Agreement did nothing to improve the situation for Palestine. In fact, it was agreed that "existing quantities of utilization" were to be maintained, so Israel's exploitation of 80% of the aquifer was formally endorsed.⁸

It is not yet clear what will be the effect of climate change on Palestinian territories, but some experts predict rising average temperatures and decreasing precipitation, which will endanger even more the precarious state of water supply both in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.⁹

According to a report published by the Research in the Middle East Institute, a number of Palestine and Israeli NGOs believe that "a comprehensive peace process would help in resolving the Israeli violations against the Palestinian environment. The current peace process was not seen as helping the environment."¹⁰ The environment clearly can't wait for serious peace talks.

Legislation issues

Palestinian legislation is extremely complex and contradictory. Some laws, for example, date from the time of the Ottoman Empire and British Mandate, and also from Egyptian and Jordanian dominion via Israeli occupation, which included military orders that were not part of the legislation per se but are still in force. Laws adopted after the establishment of the National Authority in 1994 constitute only 12% of the applicable legislation.

The judicial and legislative situation is clearly linked to the political instability of the country. The separation between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for instance, stopped the debate over 50 proposed laws.

Also, the updated laws did not abolish the old ones, some of which are contrary to the geographical jurisdiction of the Arbitration Act as enforced by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Jerusalem. There is dire need of updated legislation regarding the private sector for example, in order to regulate, promote and strengthen the business environment, as well as with regard to health care.

It could be argued that the occupation is still playing a major role in thwarting effective legislation, weakening its ability to provide a framework for development.

In fact, both the legislative and the judiciary systems suffer from the continuing occupation, but also from the fact that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are split. This is one of the most important obstacles regarding sustainable development, since environmental policies are not available because of the lack of dialogue. Another factor that undermines sustainability is that the institutional weakness makes impossible to measure or improve the effectiveness of funding efforts by donor countries.

Donations, politics and sustainability

Different criteria regarding the allocation and administration of funds from donors are a constant source of conflict. Thus, the projects designated beneficiaries often fail to benefit from the funds from donor countries and enterprises. These conflicts are usually increased by the politicization of the services provided.

It should be noted that donors do seek to ameliorate this situation by promoting accountability and strengthening institutional transparency in Palestine, though the results are now being jeopardized by the increasing politicization of Palestinian society. In fact, many donations have the negative consequence of increasing dependence on this kind of funding, especially regarding donations with political goals such as the fund provided to the activities aiming at normalizing the relations with Israel. This kind of dependency also serves to undermine deep social values such as volunteerism, dignity and altruism. All of this has served to deepen social unrest.

Donors have also sought to enhance the capacity of different institutions in the Palestinian community, which was evident in a situation experienced by both civil society institutions and the Government.

8 Ibid.

⁴ UN News Centre, Gaza water crisis prompts UN call for immediate opening of crossings, 2009. Available from: <www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=31927>.

⁵ World Bank, op.cit.

⁶ Amnesty International, Israel rations Palestinians to trickle of water, 27 October 2009. Available from: <www.amnesty. org/en/news-and-updates/report/israel-rations-palestinianstrickle-water-20091027>.

⁷ A. Gray, Environmental justice for Palestine, 23 March 2007. Available from: <www.countercurrents.org/pa-gray230307. htm>.

⁹ EMWIS, A war on water, 2009. Available from: <www.emwis. org/thematicdirs/news/2009/06/war-water-environmentalproblems-israel-and>.

¹⁰ See: < vispo.com/PRIME/enviro.htm>.

PANAMA

Economic growth is not enough



Panama has enjoyed economic growth in recent years, but this has not led to people being empowered or freed to live decent and fulfilling lives. Nor has it resulted in effective policies to reduce poverty or preserve and protect the environment. Since 2009 the Government has made policy mistakes that have damaged governability, disturbed the populace and generated a climate of tension in the country. To achieve a sustainable development model, the Government will have to design and implement better policies and increase social investment so as to tackle the alarming levels of inequality in the country.

Centro de la Mujer Panameña Cecilia Moreno Rojas

Panama's economy has grown strongly in recent years, and in 2010 this trend reached a peak of 7% annual growth.¹ The driving force has been investment in public works, widening the Panama Canal and expanding services. This progress was duly noted by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations, all of which report that the country has the highest per capita income in Central America. In 2009 Panama's GDP was USD 24,711,000 million, and its per capita GDP was USD 6,570, while the Economic Commission for Latin Amerca and the Caribbean (ECLAC) reported that Panama is the region's largest exporter and importer.²

However, this healthy growth trend contrasts sharply with a social panorama of poverty, unequal income distribution and gender inequity. There are still enormous problems of social inequality to be overcome. Income distribution gaps are very wide, especially when they are analysed by type of region, ethnicity and gender. These disparities can be seen in the country's Gini coefficient, which data from 2005³ show to be approximately 55, a clear indication that inequality is a serious problem.

Panama's growth is based on unsustainable development models that focus on economic indicators and ignore the most pressing social and environmental problems. This is a complex challenge for civil society organizations, above all because the style of government imposed by President Ricardo Martinelli is markedly autocratic and far to the political right.

Further, there is a recurrent pattern that every five years the country has to be reinvented. The slate is wiped clean, and public policies start again from scratch. For example, in 2004 and 2005 the Administrator of the National Environment Authority (ANAM), in cooperation with a team of inter-institutional specialists, designed seven public policies for



the priority areas of water resources; climate change; cleaner production; supervision, control and monitoring of solid waste; environmental information and the decentralization of environmental management. These policies were promulgated in 2007, but they were never implemented because a new Government came to power in July 2009.

At the present time the country does not have an environmental policy; the new ANAM authorities who came to power in 2009 completely ignored the progress that had been made in this field. What is more and against all expectations, a year and a half after coming to power President Martinelli - with the backing of his Cabinet and a majority in the National Assembly - made a series of changes to the Environment Law that eliminated the requirement that enterprises perform environmental impact studies.⁴ These changes also opened the door for members of the Government to invest in and promote public works or mining projects without having to hold any public consultations. The ANAN administration said nothing about this change and remained passively in the background while the process went on. Environmental groups severely criticized its stance, denouncing the ANAM as "weak" and lacking "a loud clear voice" to guide the country's environment policy.5

Union groups protested changes to the labour law that restricted their right to strike and other social organizations protested similar legal maneuvres that constituted a violation of human rights. The population at large rejected the new legislation, causing



a chain reaction among civil society organizations and above all among environmental organizations. For three months Panama convulsed with public protests and demonstrations in a range of different sectors. The changes were finally repealed in October 2010. "[W]orkers' right to strike and union fees were re-established; the [Martinelli] policies could no longer go ahead with impunity; and the environmentalists were able to reimpose the obligation to carry out environment impact studies."⁶

The deterioration of natural resources

Another serious obstacle to sustainable development in Panama is the increasing deterioration of the country's biological corridors and a large part of its natural resources due to indiscriminate exploitation of its forests, extensive livestock rearing and environmental pollution caused by the open-pit mining techniques used by transnational enterprises. When these trends are added to the effects of climate change there could be serious repercussions not only on the environment but on people's health and well-being.

Panama is suffering from severe soil erosion and deterioration, which is gradually spreading to nearly all of its valleys, land and water resources, leading towards desertification and the loss of productive capacity. Large swathes of the country's forests have already been destroyed, mainly as a result of agriculture.⁷

ABC.es, Panamá: Crecimiento económico del 7% en el 2010, (16 December 2010), <vww.centralamericadata.com/es/article/ home/Panama_Crecimiento_economico_del_7_en_el_2010>.

² World Bank, Panama, <datos.bancomundial.org/pais/ panama>.

³ Trading Economics, *GINI index in Panama,* <www. tradingeconomics.com/panama/gini-index-wb-data.html>.

⁴ See: <www.asamblea.gob.pa/actualidad/ proyectos/2010/2010_P_227.pdf >.

⁵ See: <www.expresiones7.net/Exp2.0/Entrevista.htm>.

⁶ See: <www.rnw.nl/espanol/article/panama-se-deroga-lacontrovertida-%E2%80%9Cley-chorizo%E2%80%9D>.

⁷ Ibid.

According to ANAM's Environment Information System figures, desertification is taking hold at an alarming rate. In 1970 some 70% of the country was under forest cover but by 2011 this had been reduced to around 35%. The last in-depth report on the situation dates from 2000, and it shows that forest coverage in 1992 amounted to 49% of the country, but by 2000 (in just eight years) it had shrunk to 45%.⁸

Water pollution

Environmental protection organizations have reported that important sources of fresh water near the Panama Canal valley have been polluted by the operations of two gold and copper mining projects in the Petaquilla and Molejones area, 100 km from the capital. These groups monitored the situation, and water and sediment from sources near the mining area were analysed. The tests showed that the water has high levels of suspended solids and excessive turbidity. Little by little the pollution is negatively affecting the natural environment in very serious ways.9 These organizations have repeatedly warned the authorities that the levels of substances in rivers potentially dangerous to the environment and to people's health may increase. But instead of paying due attention to this threat, the Government has persisted in its policy of promoting activities that are not sustainable and cause pollution - mining is a prime example - as a strategy for economic development. In fact, the Government has made a series of changes to the mining laws to make it easier for various transnational mining enterprises to operate in the country.10

Access to potable water

According to a UN report on Panama's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), large sectors of the population do not have access to potable water. This problem is most acute in rural areas, indigenous communities and some marginalized urban areas on the outskirts of cities where most of the people are of mixed race or of African descent. The situation as regards access to improved sewage facilities is similar, and rural and indigenous population groups suffer the consequences of this unequal distribution of services.¹¹

- 9 Teorema Ambiental, "Advierten sobre el riesgo de contaminación de agua en Panamá.", *Teorema Ambental, Revista Técnico Ambiental*, vwww.teorema.com. mx/contaminacion_/advierten-sobre-el-riesgo-decontaminacion-de-aouas-en-panama>.
- 10 In a statement to the media the Minister of Trade said, "Adjustment (to the Mining Code) is needed as one of the countries interested in investing in the Donoso copper mine project in the province of Colón is the Republic of Korea, since numeral 1, article 4 of Decree Law 23, prohibits the granting of mining concessions to foreign governments or countries." In *La Estrella.com.pa*,(1 September 2010), <vvvvu.lastrella.com. pa/mensual/2010/09/01/contenido/273813.asp>.
- 11 See: <www.onu.org.pa/objetivos-desarrollo-milenio-ODM/ garantizar-sostenibilidad-ambiental>.

TABLE

Poverty rate by area (%)

Details	General poverty rate (%)					
	1997	2003	2008			
Country total	37.3	36.8	32.7			
Urban	15.3	20.0	17.7			
Rural total	64.9	62.7	59.7			
Rural non-indigenous	58.7	54.0	50.7			
Rural indigenous	95.4	98.4	96.3			
Source : Encuesta de Niveles de Vida 2008. Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas, Panamá.						

The MDG report also states that the precarious settlement populations are far from being able to satisfy their basic needs. Most are families in the grip of poverty and unemployment and have no other alternative in their search for a place to live. The report recognizes that there is a close connection between illiteracy and poverty that subsequently translates into other inequalities including limited access to health services and decent housing, gender inequality, reduced political participation and a lack of protection for the environment.¹²

According to a Levels of Life Survey (ENV) that was carried out in Panama in 2003, some 36.8% of the population were living in poverty, defined as an income of less than USD 100 a month, and 16.6% were living in extreme poverty. In 2008 a similar study found there had been a slight improvement with poverty falling to 32.7% and extreme poverty to 14.4%.¹³

In urban areas where migrants from the countryside are swelling the population without government planning for urban growth, the overall poverty rate is 20%, and 4.4% of the people are in extreme poverty. In non-indigenous rural areas more than half the population (54%) is still living in poverty, and over one in five of these people (22%) are in extreme poverty. In indigenous rural areas the situation is extremely critical as nearly the whole population (98.4%) is in poverty, and the extreme poverty rate is 90%.¹⁴

Gender inequality and poverty

If Panama is to overcome poverty and social exclusion, it has to tackle problems of social and gender inequality. Currently, women and children are more vulnerable to poverty than are men and have fewer opportunities to escape it. Poverty in general is high, but this is even more worrying when we consider its scope and impact by age brackets or ethnicity. Gender inequalities can be seen most clearly in the labour market. According to official figures, women's earnings were only 57% of men's earnings in 2009. Although women make up half the population a large percentage of women of productive age (51.7%) are not involved in the formal workforce, which is a major factor in the country's poverty profile. Women are still the most vulnerable group in the labour market, and most of the work they do is not paid at all. According to the 2009 household survey, some 80.9% of the economically active male population had jobs, but only 48.3% of the economically active female population was gainfully employed. In 2009, the unemployment rate among women was 9.27%, which contrasts sharply to the 5.25% rate among men.¹⁶

Women's situation is better in the education field. Statistics show they are an average of two percentage points ahead of men in access to schooling. Girls of the younger generations have greater access to education than their mothers and grandmothers had, but in some indigenous areas the schooling indicator for women is lower than that for men.¹⁶

Conclusion

Panama's approach to economic development ignores sustainability and has led to a degradation of its environmental resources while having only minimal impact in improving the lives and well-being of the majority of its people. Deforestation, desertification, water pollution, accessibility to potable water, and inadequate sewage facilities threaten the environment and the very health of the Panamanian people. Especially affected are migrants from the countryside in overcrowded settlements in towns and cities and the rural population, notably those in indigenous communities, which suffer from severe and sometimes extreme poverty. Women, particularly, have been hard-hit by economic development models that look first to benefit wealthy national elites and their international partners and investors.

14 Ibid,, La Pobreza En Panamá, Encuesta de Niveles de Vida – 2003 Principales. Resultados, Edición Revisada, (2005).

L. Vidal Berrío, "Cobertura boscosa se reduce 50%," *Capital*, (6 June 2011), <www.capital.com.pa/?p=4117>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas de Panama, *Encuesta Niveles de Vida*, (Panama, Panama City: 2008).

¹⁵ MInisterio de Controlaria de Panama, Encuesta Continua de Hogares 2009, <www.contraloria.gob.pa/inec/ Publicaciones/05-03-31/441-02.pdf>.

¹⁶ Atlas de Desarrollo Humano y Objetivos del Milenio, (2010).

PARAGUAY

The country must be rebuilt on new foundations



The development models implemented in the country have failed to meet the population's needs. The environment is still being exploited with no thought for the future; inequalities among the different sectors of the population are getting worse. What is needed is a new development plan that enables a better coordination between the State, the organizations of civil society and the market and at the same time lays anew the country's foundations to benefit the good of all. It means moving on from making protests to making proposals and showing that if everyone participates in the effort, it is possible to build a better country.

Decidamos, Campaña por la Expresión Ciudadana José Guillermo Monroy Peralta

Historically, the development models implemented in Paraguay have depended largely on agricultural exports and their goals have been exclusively focused on economic growth. The results have always been monoculture, progressive deforestation to extend productive land area, concentration of wealth in a few hands, impoverishment, and forced migration of part of the population for economic survival. These unsuccessful models have never met the needs of broad swathes of the population or slowed the serious deterioration of the environment. Their failures reflect an inadequate and incomplete coordination among the State, civil society organizations and the market.

An impoverishing economy

The economy of Paraguay is historically based on exploiting and exporting primary products. Each development model, based in agriculture and highly dependent on foreign trade, has led to an unequal distribution of land. According to the 2008 Agriculture Census, 84% of productive rural units are small farms of 20 hectares or less, and only 9% are enterprises with more than 50 hectares.¹ Families are constantly being driven off the land and moving to urban areas. This internal migration has swelled the slums around big cities. As a consequence, peasant movements have intensified their demands for agrarian reform.

In November 2008, the Government - by presidential decree – set up the Executive Board for Agrarian Reform (CEPRA) with the principal aim of coordinating and promoting economic, social, political and cultural development. CEPRA was also intended to foster the management of public policies in established settlements and contribute to the design and implementation of an agrarian reform. However, this initiative has achieved almost nothing.²

The Paraguayan economy expanded considerably in the period 2003-08, with an average annual growth rate of 4.8%, but the result is still an unequal distribution of wealth. For example, over the same



period, unemployment decreased by only 1.6% and under-employment increased from 24.2% to 26.5%. The inconsistency between the growth of the economy and the weakness of employment indicators clearly shows that economic growth did not generate meaningful numbers of jobs or reduced informal employment.³

Unequal society

Out of 6.4 million Paraguayans, 60% are under 30 years old; 1.7% are indigenous peoples, who face the most unequal conditions throughout the country.⁴ From 1997 to 2008, poverty increased from 36.1% to 37.9%. In rural areas it fell from 51.6% to 48.8%, but urban poverty went up from 22.5% to 30.2%. Half of the people identified as poor (1.16 million) are living in *extreme* poverty.⁵ Around half a million Paraguayans have had to emigrate. According to data from the United Nations Development Programme, in the period 2001-07 alone around 280,000 people emigrated, mainly to Argentina and more recently to Spain.⁶

- 3 D. Borda, "Efectos macroeconómicos e impacto social de la crisis global," in *Políticas sociales en Tiempos de Crisis: Memoria del Seminario Iberoamericano.* (Asunción: UNDP -Secretaría General Iberoamericana, 6 and 7 August 2009).
- 4 UNDP, Informe Nacional sobre Desarrollo Humano 2008. Equidad para el Desarrollo, (Asunción: 2008).
- 5 Government of the Republic of Paraguay, Dirección General de Estadística, Encuestas y Censos, Estadísticas Recientes sobre Pobreza. Encuesta Permanente de Hogares 2007, (Asunción: August, 2008); and Mejora de la metodología de medición de pobreza en Paraguay. Resultados 1997-2008, (Asunción: 2009).
- 6 UNDP, Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2009. Ampliando horizontes. Emigración internacional paraguaya, (Asunción: 2009).



The environment in danger

During the first decade of the 21st century the Government set in motion a series of initiatives geared to respond to the country's environmental problems and needs, including the National Climate Change Programme (2001), the National Strategy and the Action Plan to Preserve Biodiversity 2004-2009 (2003),7 the Paraguay National Environment Policy (2005) and the Paraguay Hydric Resources Law (2007). In spite of these plans and programmes, however, there are more and more environmental problems. For example, there has been a serious loss of forest area, mainly in the Eastern Region, which in 1945 had 55.1% of the country's forest land. By 2005, it accounted for only 7.56%, and resulted in considerable loss of biodiversity.8 The lesson to be drawn is that environmental policies can do little in the context of fragile institutions and scarce economic and human resources that are insufficient to establish the required control systems, enforce the law and impose penalties.

Development Plans 2003-2013

As the 21st century opened, the Nicanor Duarte Frutos Government (2003-08) established a development plan called "Agenda for a Better Country," which had four strategic aims:

 To rebuild confidence in State institutions and their representatives.

¹ Government of the Republic of Paraguay, *Censo Agropecuario Nacional 2008*, Vol. I, (Asunción: 2009)

² Ibid., Presidency of the Republic, Segundo Informe al Congreso Nacional. Período 2009-2010, (Asunción: July 2010).

⁷ SEAM- UNDP, Conservación de la Diversidad Biológica en el Paraguay: Una Propuesta de la Secretaría del Ambiente para la Guía de Acciones, Vol 2, (Asunción: 2006).

- To promote the active participation of the country's citizens in constructing democratic institutions.
- To reactivate the economy and generate jobs within a new model of sustainable development.
- To combat poverty, corruption and insecurity.

These aims were set out in 14 guiding core objectives, including 1) a modernized public administration; 2) a reliable economic environment; 3) sustainable economic growth; 4) a revolution in education aimed at improving human capital; 5) health priorities and policies; 6) public works and the construction of affordable housing; 7) energy for development; 8) defence of the environment; 9) establishment of a new model of international relations 10) development of new spaces in the State and society; 11) respect for human rights; 12) reduction of poverty and social exclusion; 13) elimination of corruption; and 14) a modernized State security force.

In order to operationalize the plan, in 2006, the Government laid out the National Strategy to Fight against Poverty. Subsequently social investment increased from USD 400 million in 2002 to USD 1,507 million in 2007.⁹ The Government sought to modernize the public administration apparatus and managed to achieve an average annual economic growth rate of 4.8%.

The Government also tackled agriculture with its National Plan to Re-activate Family Agriculture (2003-08), which included a Programme to Support the Development of Small Cotton Farms and a project called Food Security. In 2007 the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock set up the Fund to Support Family Agriculture, which not only provided financial incentives but also introduced the Agronomic Certificate and the Family Agriculture Register. This programme made it possible to directly support peasant family farming with the transfer of PYG 33,470 million (about USD 8.43 million) to 88,948 beneficiaries.¹⁰

But both the "Agenda for a Better Country" and its programmes fell short of expectations. In 2005, the Government of Paraguay had selected 66 priority districts in programmes to combat poverty. By August 2008 at the end of the mandate of the Duarte Frutos Government, these programmes reached only around 12,000 families. In that same period. unemployment was reduced from 7.3% in 2004 to 5.7% in 2008, but under-employment increased from 24.2% to 26.5%. 11

In August 2008, Fernando Lugo of the newly formed Patriotic Alliance for Change became president, bringing to an end more than 60 years of Colorado Party administrations. The following month the Strategic Economic-Social Plan 2008-13 was launched with the declared aim of improving the living conditions of everyone in the country. It had six strategic objectives: ¹²

- To pursue economic growth and generate more jobs;
- To strengthen State institutions in order to make public policy more effective;
- To increase and improve investment in social development, mainly education and health, and focus public expenditure in the fight against extreme poverty;
- To foster diversification in the productive sector of the economy while preserving the environment and developing the country's energy and human resources;
- To promote the participation of civil society and private sector organizations in the economy in order to strengthen micro and small enterprises; and
- To harmonize and coordinate Government action to support the decentralized development of regions in the country.

Then in 2010, the Lugo Government formulated a plan called "Paraguay para todos y todas 2010 -20," which comprised a series of intiatives and resource allocations designed to meet the population's demands and needs and generate opportunities for the people to enjoy and exercise their rights. As part of this plan the Government initiated a social protection system called "Saso Pyahu," designed to alleviate extreme poverty by establishing a package of public policies that would reduce economic and social vulnerability and improve the quality of life of Paraguyan families, mainly in the poorest municipal areas.

The Lugo Government had begun its term of office by setting as one of its priorities the intensification of social policies - above all, those to fight poverty and reduce inequality. It immediately expanded poverty-reduction programmes such as *Te-koporá* (Live Well), a conditional cash transfer and family support programme in select communities, resulting in an increase in the numbers of families receiving help – including new beneficiaries such as persons over 65 years old and the disabled – of 800% (from 14,000 to 112,000) from 2008 to June 2010. $^{\rm 13}$

Up until 2008, the country's health services provided insufficient coverage, reaching only 65-70% of the population. In August 2008, the development of a basic model for health services was given priority, which led to the building of 503 family health units. These services now reach some 1,500,000 people who were not covered previously.

To build a better country

The Chilean sociologist and political scientist, Manuel Antonio Garretón¹⁴, has said that no country (especially in Latin America) has been able to develop without the State playing a predominant role. Nonetheless, we are witnessing the emergence of a new development model, transnational in essence, which reverses the relation between the State and society and erodes the State's guiding role. Of necessity, this change requires a re-definition of the State's role in preserving not only the idea of autonomous development but also the notion of the "National Project." It means that when it comes to building a national effort - a "National Project" there will have to be greater coordination among all of the actors of a society, each putting their own narrow interests aside and joining forces to lay anew the foundations of their country. This year, 2011, the bicentennial of Paraguay's independence, would be an appropriate time to undertake such a task. Perhaps in this way the Paraguayan State might be able to move towards meeting the very serious challenges faced by its people.

The key is to build a generalized sense of the common good – of a shared destiny – and to establish better coordination between the State, civil society organizations and the market. It requires a broader and more inclusive national agenda, moving on from making protests to staging proposals, and above all, demonstrating that it is possible to build a better country if everyone becomes involved in the effort.

⁹ Government of the Republic of Paraguay, Presidency of the Republic, Secretaría Técnica de Planificación-Secretaría General de la Presidencia-Secretaría Privada de la Presidencia, Informe Presidencial al Congreso de la Nación, (July 2008).

¹⁰ Ibid. See also: Government of the Republic of Paraguay, Secretaría Técnica de Planificación-Secretaría General de la Presidencia, Por un País Mejor. 400 días, Cuarto Informe de Gestión, (July-September 2004).

¹¹ D. Borda, op cit., (6 August 2009).

¹² Government of the Republic of Paraguay, Equipo Económico Nacional, Plan Estratégico Económico y Social –PEES-2008-2013. Propuestas para un crecimiento económico con inclusión social en Paraguay, (Asunción: 2008).

¹³ Government of the Republic of Paraguay, Contraloría General de la República, Dirección General de Control de Recursos Sociales, Informe Final. Auditoría a la Secretaría de Acción Social "Programa Tekoporá," Ejercicio fiscal 2007, (Asunción: July 2009); and Secretaría de Acción Social, Dirección General de Protección Social y Desarrollo Humano, Programa de Transferencias Monetarias con Corresponsabilidad, Informe Trimestral 1º, Informe Trimestral 2º, (Asunción: 2009).

¹⁴ Garretón, Manuel Antonio, "La indispensable y problemática relación entre partidos y democracia en América Latina", en Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo. La Democracia en América Latina. Hacia una democracia de ciudadanas y ciudadanos. Contribuciones para el debate, (Buenos Aires: Alfaguara, septiembre 2004).

PERU

Environmental disaster and minimal efforts



Peru's current development model has been battered by crises, plundered the ecosystem, impoverished the population and severely polluted the environment. The State's sectoral and fragmented approach to environmental management and pollution control is weak and limited. Meeting the needs of the rural and urban poor will require structural measures, as well as new standards and practices. Policies that strengthen the institutional capacity of key actors, support environmental services and improve coordination among donor agencies are essential. The Government should serve the interests of the people rather than cater to the wishes of transnational corporations; this is the only way the country will be able to overcome the environmental challenges that lie ahead.

National Conference on Social Development (CONADES) Héctor Béjar

Throughout Peru's history, the ruling oligarchies have pursued extractive models that loot and pillage the country's remarkably diverse ecological and natural resources. One example is the guano crisis, which ended the country's first era of economic prosperity through over-exploitation. This led to economic ruin and widespread impoverishment during the administration of President Manuel Pardo y Lavalle (1872-76). The collapse of the guano industry led to a boom in saltpetre extraction in southern Peru. This, in turn, precipitated the War of the Pacific (1879-83), in which Peru and Bolivia made common cause against Chile, a rival in saltpetre production and export. The allies lost, and Peru was compelled to cede the provinces of Arica, Tarapacá and Antofagasta to its southern neighbour.

In the 20th century, the same pattern of overexploitation characterized copper, rubber, lead and zinc production,¹ bringing short-term economic prosperity followed by collapse. This pattern is further aggravated by the Government's interest in accommodating the global powers that engage in international price speculation, buy politicians and silence any form of protest, rather than promoting the well-being of Peruvians.

Extensive resource extraction today

Today, as in the 16th century, conquistadors hungry for gold, copper, timber and coca leaf confront the country's indigenous peoples. Instead of horses, dogs and muskets, today's conquistadors come with money, large drilling rigs and bulldozers to cut mountains and devour lakes. In the event that anyone protested, corporate ally Alan García, Peru's President from June 2006 until June 2011, ordered the army and police to "shoot first and think later."²



More than 274 million metric tons of fish were caught from 1950 to 2001,3 almost wiping out the Pacific anchoveta, a member of the Engraulidae Family which also includes anchovies. In the 1970s, the peak of the anchoveta industry. Peru was the world's prime fishing region. Anchoveta meal and oil factories proliferated, their waste severely degrading the environment. Indiscriminate fishing eventually brought the fish to the brink of extinction. In the following decades, the collapse of the fishing and processing industries gradually allowed the anchoveta to flourish in the ocean once again. Now anchoveta meal production is increasing to the point of excess, in all probability leading to depletion. coupled with pollution caused by oil and fishmeal processing facilities, especially in the provinces of Paraca, Paita, Chimbote and Parachique.⁴

At present, virtually all of the anchoveta harvest is used to produce oil and fish meal, with very little consumed by humans. The anchoveta could be a valuable food source, particularly in combating child malnutrition, as it is rich in vitamins A and D, iodine and Omega-3. Fish provides only 8% of the country's food requirements, another indication that the current development model ignores the needs of the population as well as the environment, and will thus prove to be unsustainable in the long run.⁵



At the same time, large forest rivers are dredged for gold, mountains of garbage lie on the Andes and dangerous lead deposits contaminate the main port. Other ports, used for the mining and gas industries, are wiping out marine life. The country's rivers are being poisoned by urban wastewater, in addition to the arsenic and mercury used to precipitate gold as well as the kerosene and sulfuric acid used to precipitate coca paste into cocaine.

Environmental challenges

The Amazonia, with 68 million hectares of natural forests covering 35% of the country's territory, is the eighth largest forest area in the world and the second largest in Latin America after Brazil, while the Andes contain 300,000 hectares of natural forests. However, decades of wood fuel use by homes and restaurants, along with the slash and burn agricultural methods practiced by farmers have already depleted mangrove, dry and sub-humid forests, and deforestation is continuing at a rate of 150,000 hectares per year.⁶

Peru is also extremely vulnerable to natural disasters. It is located in one of the most seismically active areas of the planet and subject to the volatile atmospheric and oceanic conditions caused by El Niño. The vagaries of this warm ocean current from the equatorial regions can cause both extreme drought and prolonged rains and flooding. Over all, the incidence of floods, earthquakes, hail, snow and drought

Third World Institute (ITeM), "Peru," in The World Guide 2010 (Montevideo: Ediciones G3, 2009), p.443.

² W. Ardito Vega, Perú: la criminalización de la protesta en el gobierno de Alan García, (Servindi Intercultural Communications Services, 2008), <servindi.org/ actualidad/4549>.

³ World Bank, Environmental Sustainability: A Key to Poverty Reduction in Peru, (Lima, Perú: Sustainable Development Unit – Latin America and the Caribbean Region, May 2007).

⁴ M. Quesquén, El caso de la anchoveta en Perú, <www. monografias.com/trabajos45/mercado-anchoveta-peru/ mercado-anchoveta-peru.shtml>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ El Comercio, El Perú pierde anualmente 150 mil hectáreas de bosques a causa de la deforestación, (July 2010), < elcomercio.pe/planeta/611350/noticia-perupierde-anualmente-150-mil-hectareas-bosques-causadeforestacion>.

is almost twice that of Latin America as a whole. The human devastation these natural occurrences cause is compounded by the ignorance of danger and lack of residential planning that leads people to build homes on river banks and dry river beds, at the foot of glaciers or on mountain slopes. According to a World Bank report, more than two million people were affected by natural disasters between 2000 and 2004.⁷ The fatality rate is the highest on the continent.

The Government's response

Since 1940, the Government has created several agencies to address environmental health problems. Currently, the General Directorate of Environmental Health (DIGESA) is the only agency with regulatory power. A Ministry of the Environment has been created, and environmental impact studies are now mandatory for approval of economic ventures. In a proactive programme to reduce the deforestation caused by wood fuel consumption, the Government has initiated a small campaign to promote the use of liquified petroleum gas for stoves.

In the last few years, the Government has enacted laws requiring environmental impact assessments (EIA) and strengthened the legal framework of the forestry sector. The National System of Protected Natural Areas (SINAP), for example, includes 61 natural areas and covers 17.66 million hectares, 13.74% of the country. The financial resources of the Fund for Natural Areas Protected by the State (PROFONANPE), established in 1992, have been increasing, and are being used to raise additional resources. According to the Ministry of the Environment, an estimated USD 90.6 million is being devoted to conservation efforts annually. However, no systematic mechanism has been established to identify priorities.

The institutional framework assigns the main regulatory responsibilities for pollution control and

environmental management to the energy and mining sector departments that develop standards based on the use of Environmental Impact Assessments, Environmental Management and Adaptation and Environmental Management Plans, Maximum Permissible Limits and special environmental standards in the subsectors of electricity and hydrocarbons. Environmental departments have also been established in the Ministries of Production, Transport and Communications, Housing, Construction and Sanitation.

Despite these efforts, the sectoral approach to environmental management and pollution control is disorganized, weak and has limited institutional capacity. Newly adopted environmental policies suffer from a lack of overall coordination and clarity. In sum, Government action to date has amounted to little or nothing compared to the challenge of ceaseless environmental deterioration and the overwhelming strength of the global powers destroying the country.

What is to come

Since 1980 the glaciers in Peru have lost one-fifth of their ice. In 50 years the country will not have enough water to drink, irrigate fields, or maintain the current hydroelectrical power system that provides electricity to towns and industries.8 With the rise in the sea temperature, phytoplankton and anchoveta, the foundation of the maritime food chain, will sink into the depths in search of colder temperatures or migrate to other areas, which could lead to the extinction of numerous species in Peru. Likewise, a reduction in rainfall altitude will reduce precipitation on mountaintops and slopes, and cause uncontrollable floods, damming and landslides further down. The higher water level in the ocean will wipe out fishing coves and beaches. Changes in temperature and precipitation rates will transform a great part of the Amazon rainforest into desert.9

Minimizing the impact of these impending threats demands an integrated response to natural disasters, with an emphasis on prevention through regulation of the activities of the formal and informal mining, logging and fishing industries. These activities are currently in the hands of corporations and hundreds of thousands of "informal" miners. Vulnerability to natural disasters could be reduced through the adoption of appropriate building technologies, standards and practices among the urban poor and rural populations.

Peru could produce more electricity from hydropower and wind energy sources, switch from fossil fuels to natural gas, manage waste and avoid further deforestation. The possible impacts of climate change, using the devastation and consequences of natural occurrences such as El Niño and its effects as a baseline should be investigated. Essential policies include building the institutional capacity of key stakeholders, clearly defining the roles and functions of the Ministry of the Environment, supporting national efforts to strengthen biodiversity and environmental services, utilizing Peru's comparative advantage in biodiversity, and strengthening coordination mechanisms among donor agencies.

The National Fund for Natural Areas Protected by the State (PROFONANPE) must be complemented by an Environmental General Fund, financed by taxes paid by corporations. The work of INRENA (National Institute of Natural Resources) should be carried out through watershed councils involving grassroots organizations.

All of these reforms require determined political will; a recognition that the Government must give priority to the country's present and future, rather than serving corporations and criminalizing the protests of indigenous and local communities, which are increasingly frequent and militant. =

⁸ P. Vargas, *El cambio climático y sus efectos en el Perú*, (Lima, Perú: Central Bank of Peru Working Paper Series, 2009).

PHILIPPINES

Clearing the path to sustainability



Addressing the vulnerability of the country's already degraded environment is as important as making the economy grow. In addition, the Philippines long ago exceeded the 0.4 hectares per person required to satisfy the optimum food requirement/capacity. Decentralization efforts attempting to create growth centres away from Manila are still unable to break the elite and urban-centred structure of power and resources. The Government must strive to find ways – in cooperation with farmers, NGOs, the mass media, schools and the national agriculture research system – to achieve long-term food security and environmental sustainability.

Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) Social Watch Philippines Isanani B. Serrano

In 2010, inspired by the Philippines' second greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory, then president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo pompously announced that the country was now a net carbon sink. Carbon intensity, as expressed by $\rm CO_2$ emissions, may indicate something about the level and nature of development, but there is much more to consider. Indicators vary widely, depending on what people value most.

Low CO₂ emissions are a poor indicator of sustainable development. A more sensitive single indicator of a society's well-being is probably the infant mortality rate, which reveals the quality of nutrition and healthcare. In addition, it is connected to other basic indicators such as the quality of water resources, housing, education, and especially women's education level. It can also be an indicator of State failure.1 In the case of the Philippines, child mortality indicators are discouraging: the infant mortality rate (under 1) stood at 26 per 1,000 in 2009 and the under-5 mortality rate at 33 per 1,000.2 While these figures do show some improvement when compared to data from 1990 (41³ and 34⁴ respectively), the country's problems, as seen below, remain structural.

Poverty and inequality: the same old story

Despite the restoration of democracy in 1986 and the subsequent succession of regimes that promised to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, and despite the fact that the economy has been growing, the country is still stuck with high poverty/high inequality alongside continuing environmental degradation.

While poverty declined to 32.9% in 2006 from 42% in 1991, the faces of those in poverty remained the same: rural, landless, indigenous/tribal, Muslim and female. Inequality has hardly decreased during

3 Ibid



the same period: it was 0.4680 in 1991 and 0.4580 in 2006.⁵ This is a high level compared to the majority of the Philippines' Asian neighbours and means the country is only slightly better-off than most countries in Latin America (the most unequal region on the planet). Most importantly, there is wide inequality among the country's regions, provinces and municipalities.

The gap between the richest 20% and the poorest is widening in spite of measures such as land reform and local autonomy. The regions with the most inequitable income distribution are Central Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao and Caraga. These regions have Gini coefficients higher than 0.44. More than 50% of the 20 poorest provinces were in Mindanao in 2003 and 2006, with Tawi-Tawi having the highest poverty incidence in 2006.

Debt and corruption – developmental nightmares

The Government derives two thirds of its revenue mainly from taxes on fixed-income earners. Over the years it has consistently spent more than it earns. It sets huge annual budgets and makes up for deficits by borrowing. It wants to cap the 2011 budget deficit at 3.2% of gross domestic product (GDP) or some PHP 290 billion (USD 6.69 billion).

Mounting debts and debt service are the bane of Philippine development. The country's outstanding debt ballooned from PHP 701 billion in 1990 to PHP 4.4 trillion in 2009 (USD 16.2 million to USD 101.5



billion), showing a steady increase except for a slight decline in 2006 and 2007. This is more than 50% of the country's GDP. The debt-to-GDP ratio remained high at 57.7% at the end of 2009 although it had declined from 63.8% in 2006.⁶ In September 2010 each of the 92.2 million Filipinos could be said to owe PHP 47,039 (USD 1,091) to local and foreign creditors.

About a third of the national budget goes to paying the interest and principal of the country's mounting debt stock. That is a third of the pie sliced off from poverty reduction activities. In addition, corruption has been a constant feature and has triggered most of the regime changes since the days of President Marcos. In 2004 Macapagal-Arroyo said that corruption was strangling the Philippines and called on citizens to "join hands to root out this evil." The evil, however, continues to be very much alive and to hinder Philippine development.

The need to break the urban-centred structure

The country's economic geography demonstrates highly uneven development and unequal distribution of created wealth. Primate cities suck up most of the resources. It is no wonder, therefore, that small savings deposited in faraway rural banks end up eventually in big banks in Makati⁷ and are then lent to big borrowers who prefer to invest in already highly developed areas.

G. King and L. Zeng, "Improving Forecasts of State Failure," World Politics, Vol.53, (July 2001), pp. 623-58.

² UNICEF, At a Glance: Philippines, <www.unicef.org/ infobycountry/philippines_statistics.html>.

⁴ World Health Organization, Mortality Country Fact Sheet 2006: Philippines, <www.who.int/whosis/mort/profiles/ mort_wpro_phl_philippines.pdf>.

⁵ Income inequality or disparity is commonly measured using the Gini coefficient. A Gini ratio of zero means perfect equality while a ratio of one would mean complete inequality.

⁶ C. M. Reinhart

and K. S. Rogoff, "Debt to GDP Ratios" in *This Time is* Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), <www.reinhartandrogoff. com/data/browse-by-topic/topics/9/>.

⁷ The financial centre of the Philippines and one of the cities that make up Metro Manila.

The conflict in Mindanao is instructive of the country's development situation. Violence first flared in the 1960s when the Muslim minority - known as the Moros - launched an armed struggle for their ancestral homeland in the south. Fighting escalated in 2008 after a decade-long peace process, but a truce was signed in July 2009. What needs to be underscored is that much of the violence is fuelled by deep poverty rooted in decades of underinvestment. Mindanao, an extremely rich area hardly visited by typhoons, could achieve prosperity if left to itself, but it has failed to make progress on something as basic as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The poverty and inequality that continue to dog that region, especially the Moro and *lumad* (indigenous) areas, are rooted in historical injustices and discrimination dating back to the colonial past and perpetuated by a succession of post-colonial regimes. They are embedded in unjust economic, political and socio-cultural structures urgently needing change.

The structure of growth and wealth creation in the Philippines contradicts the mantra of broadbased, inclusive growth. Attempts to create growth centres away from Manila will never work unless the Government alters the current elite and urbancentred structure of power and resources. The 1991 Local Government Code, although a landmark piece of legislation, has yet to result in the decentralization of elite power. Resources and authority need to be deliberately transferred from the richer regions to the poorer ones.

Population growth and vulnerability

Carrying capacity is a real problem in a mountainous archipelago with a population that has grown from 62 million in 1990 to about 95 million in 2010 and is expected to reach over 100 million by 2015. Although the population growth rate decreased from a high of 2.36% a year in 2000 to 2.04% in the 2007 census, it is still considered to be one of the highest in Asia. This high population growth rate makes the country vulnerable. For each person, a total of 0.004 hectares is needed to satisfy optimum food requirements/ capacities, and this possibility has long since been exceeded.⁸The population issue is also a reflection of poverty and inequality. Those with more money and more secure futures tend to have fewer children;

Poverty incidence among population (%), by region, 1991–2006								
Region	1991	1994	1997	2000	2003	2006		
Philippines	45.0	40.6	36.8	33.0	30.0	32.9		
National Capital Region	16.7	10.5	8.5	7.8	8.9	10.4		
Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)	55.4	56.4	50.1	37.7	32.2	34.5		
I llocos Region	55.3	53.6	44.1	35.3	30.2	32.7		
II Cagayan Valley	48.9	42.1	38.0	30.4	24.5	25.5		
III Central Luzon	35.5	29.2	18.5	21.4	17.5	20.7		
IV-A Calabarzon	43.2*	34.9* 30.0*	20.0*	19,1	18,4	20,9		
IV-B Mimaropa	43.2		30.0	45,3	48,1	52,7		
V Bicol Region	61.3	60.8	57.0	52.6	48.6	51.1		
VI Western Visayas	52.9	49.9	45.9	44.5	39.2	38.6		
VII Central Visayas	46.7	37.5	38.9	36.2	28.3	35.4		
VIII Eastern Visayas	47.1	44.8	48.5	45.1	43.0	48.5		
IX Zamboanga Peninsula	54.4	50.6	45.5	44.8	49.2	45.3		
X Northern Mindanao	57.4	54.1	52.7	43.8	44.0	43.1		
XI Davao Region	51.6	45.6	44.3	33.3	34.7	36.6		
XII Soccsksargen	63.1	58.7	55.8	46.8	38.4	40.8		
XIII Caraga	-**	-**	-**	51.2	54.0	52.6		
Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)	56.0	65.3	62.5	60.0	52.8	61.8		

the poor have bigger families and rely on numbers as productive assets and as their old-fashioned social security fallback for old age.

Although farmlands are shrinking, sustainable agriculture might be able to feed these millions. But for this to happen, the Government must work in cooperation with farmers, NGOs, the mass media, schools and the national agriculture research system to find ways of achieving long-term food security and environmental sustainability.

Conclusion

Addressing the vulnerability of the Philippines' already degraded environment is as important as growing the economy. Regarding development and environment as a trade-off is a false dilemma. Human needs cannot be met from an impoverished environment, and impoverished human beings do not care about protecting the environment.

Restoring the country's forest cover, now down to 27%, back to the ideal 40% for an archipelagic system like the Philippines is critical. Mining and other extractive industries will have to be put on hold or under the strictest control. The scope provided by coastal and marine zones, if restored from their present degraded state, could help the nation through worst-case scenarios that would affect food security and human settlements. Keeping debt at sustainable levels and controlling the repayment haemorrhage are central to solving the issue of where money for development will come from. The Government borrows a lot to fund its MDG commitments. Its major anti-poverty programmes, such as conditional cash transfer, run on borrowed money and further strain the country's fiscal situation. Corruption is also symptomatic of the state of governance, and curbing it is therefore a big part of the solution to the Philippines' development problem.

From 1972 to 2010 the Philippines has gone from democracy to dictatorship and back again. People's participation has been a key factor. Such participation has taken different forms, mostly peaceful movements addressing a range of issues including regime change. Yet it seems that after all those changes things remain the same. The country has yet to see real empowerment of the masses matching that of the elite. When that time comes, there will be a better guarantee of governance for sustainable development.

⁸ The Ecological Footprint (EF) is a measure of the consumption of renewable natural resources by a human population. A country's EF is the total area of productive land or sea required to produce all the crops, meat, seafood, wood and fibre it consumes, to sustain its energy consumption and to give space for its infrastructure. To calculate the number of hectares available per capita, one adds up the biologically productive land per capita world-wide of arable land, pasture, forest, built-up land and sea space, excluding room for the 30 million fellow species with whom humanity shares this planet.

National Statistical Coordination Bureau, 2009 Philippines Poverty Statistics, (8 February 2011), <vvvv.nscb.gov.ph/ poverty/2009/default.asp>.

POLAND A Green New Deal



The Government favours a neoliberal model of development that has led to growing social stratification and rising pressure on the environment. An alternative could be the Green New Deal, which aims to address global warming and global financial crises by implementing a set of policy proposals intended to secure global sustainable development. Green Growth and environmental protection programmes must act as catalysts to create decent work and sustainable livelihoods for the most disadvantaged Polish citizens.

ATD Fourth World Poland Pierre Klein Monika Kalinowska The Green Institute Dariusz Szwed

Introduction¹

Poland is one of the very few countries that have introduced the concept of sustainable development at a constitutional level. According to Article 5 of the Polish Constitution: "The Republic of Poland shall safeguard the independence and integrity of its territory and ensure the freedoms and rights of persons and citizens, the security of the citizens, safeguard the national heritage and shall ensure the protection of the natural environment pursuant to the principles of sustainable development."

Paradoxically Poland is also a country where any reference to the concept of sustainable development is rather difficult to find in public debate. In July 2000, for example, the "Poland 2025 - Long-term strategy for sustainable development" was adopted by the Council of Ministers with the clear objective to "improve the welfare of Polish families." According to some experts, however, its overall impact is extremely limited: "[It] has met with no response from society and today hardly anybody seems to remember its existence. The average citizen does not know about the concept of sustainable development, nor does he or she have even the vaguest notion of it." The authors go on to say that even people who have heard of sustainable development often consider it to be synonymous with environmental protection.²

In July 2009 the Government issued *Poland* 2030. Development challenges,³ intended to be the mainstream analysis and strategy line for development over the next 20 years. Written in hard-tounderstand jargon it favours the "polarization and diffusion model" as opposed to that of sustainable development. Developed by the Board of Strategic Advisors to the Council of Ministers led by Minister Michal Boni, the report was not discussed in its initial phase and no alternative projects were com-



missioned, which made consultations impossible. The power to set the direction for the future of the country was thus given to a narrow group.⁴Moreover in an interview for *Polska* one of the co-authors said that the departure point for the creation of this new model was the observation that "in reality, sustainable development is only a myth."⁵

Unsustainability and the neoliberal model

The lack of implementation (or rather comprehension) of the principle of sustainable development inscribed in the Polish Constitution can be illustrated by the fact that subsequent governments have implied the existence of a conflict between environment and economy or between environment and society. Ways of addressing the current state of affairs, as presented by key politicians, seem to have been poorly prioritized. "The economy first, my reasonable Pole," said Bronisław Komorowski, incumbent President of Poland, during a debate on the future of the Polish and European economies.⁶

In explaining the "polarization-diffusion model," *Poland 2030* states that "apart from boosting growth polarities (i.e. polarisation processes), we have to primarily create conditions for diffusion – anything and everything which might support the process of equalizing education-related opportunities, improve transport accessibility in all parts of



the country, eliminate the threat of digital exclusion, improve social integration levels, structure and support intergenerational solidarity, and offer a sense of capacity to follow individual ambitions."⁷ However the authors also define economic growth as a solid foundation for Poland's development, along with "efficient administration and demographic potential," and state that "current EU policy, as regards energy and climate security, is heading towards the reinforcement of Europe as a world leader in sustainable development. This, however, cannot occur at the cost of the Polish economy."⁸

Here lies the biggest trap of the Government's development strategy: Poles ought to tighten their belts in order to achieve a state of economic and social balance in 20 years time. But this model has led instead to increased social stratification, decreasing social capital and rising pressure on the environment measured by the total use of energy and non-renewable resources.⁹

The prevailing ideology was aptly described by Edwin Bendyk in the afterword to *Ecology: Guide for Political Criticism*. Noting that the dominant development discourse rested on neoliberalism and

8 Ibid.

9 One indicator of total energy use is the ecological footprint. In 2007 there were 1.8 global hectares (gha) of biologically productive space for each inhabitant of Earth. Between 2003 and 2007 usage in Poland rose from 3.3 to 4.35 gha – i.e., an average of 241% of globally available ecospace for each Pole. If everyone consumed this way humanity would need 2.5 planets.

¹ This report is partly based on D. Szwed, "Green New Deal in the World, in Europe, in Poland?" in D. Szwed (ed.), The Green New Deal in Poland, (2011), <zielonyinstytut.pl>.

² K. Kostrzewa and R. Piasecki, "Approaches to Sustainable Development in Poland," *L'Europe en formation nº 352,* (2009).

³ Available from: <www.polska2030.pl>.

⁴ E. Charkiewicz, "Rozwój społeczny – próba diagnozy," Raport Krajowy Polskiej Koalicji, (Social Watch, 2009).

⁵ A. Kozi ski, "Wojnarowski: Zrównowa ony rozwój kraju to tylko mit," interview in *Polska*, (29 June 2010), <www. polskatimes.pl/opinie/wywiady/275178,wojnarowskizrownowazony-rozwoj-kraju-too-mit,id,t.html>.

⁶ At the opening of the Second European Economic Congress in Katowice, (31 May 2010).

⁷ Board of Strategic Advisers to the Prime Minister, Poland 2030. Development challenges: Report summary, p. 4., <www.kprm.gov.pl/files/file/Dokumenty/Poland%20 2030_%20Development%20Challenges%20-%20 report%20summary.pdf>.

postcolonialism, he writes, "The former means the primacy of growth policy using free market instruments understood as a space for negotiations of private preferences that are only protected and not shaped by the state which is withdrawing from the management of interpersonal relations to the maximum extent. If at all, this can happen only under the influence of external commitments. This dictate, expressed in ideas like the climate and energy package or Natura 2000, is treated like divine retribution, a cost of membership in the club of developed countries. In fact, we are a postcolonial, developing country that was harmed by history and is still being damaged by the hegemonic centre that tries to enforce solutions detrimental to aspirations reflected in a desire to maintain economic growth."10

Neoliberal notions of the unfettered free market and of endless economic growth measured by GDP are wearing thin. The GDP does not reflect reality for it does not consider the country's low level of social capital, unpaid housework (done mainly by women) and increasing income stratification. Nor does it take into account environmental devastation, extinction of plants and animals, growing populations or the greatest challenge of the 21st century – the need to implement a global climate deal, which is a critical investment in our common future, as noted by the economist Nicolas Stern.¹¹

The Green New Deal: an alternative

The concept of the Green New Deal appeared first in a July 2008 report by the New Economics Foundation¹² in response to the economic crisis driven by credit bubbles, global climate change and increased oil prices. The authors stated that in order to avoid a deep recession comparable to the Great Depression it is necessary to undertake key structural changes both in the national and international financial systems, including the tax system, as well as make stable investments in energy savings and the production of energy from renewable sources.

The Green New Deal puts forward a set of policy proposals that aims to address issues such as global warming and financial crises by securing global sustainable development and creating a low emission economy. It also supports the development of modern technologies that are human-, environment- and climate-friendly, enhancing energy efficiency and greater use of renewable sources of energy, modernizing the building sector and promoting autonomous and sustainable buildings, developing environmentally friendly railway systems on the continent and changing the priorities of the EU Common Agricultural Policy. Like the reforms of the 1930s, the Green New Deal involves an active role for public authorities in the implementation of policies, in this case, for sustainable development.

In March 2009 prior to the European Parliament elections, the European Green Party issued its manifesto, A Green New Deal for Europe, which significantly develops this concept. The summary states: "As the economic, social and environmental challenges currently facing the EU are closely interrelated, they must be tackled together as part of a comprehensive package which for us is the Green New Deal. ... [This] is the only way of really delivering the changes to the way we live and work that will result in the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions which science shows will be necessary if we are to avoid the most disastrous impacts of climate change." It goes on to say that the benefits will go beyond the environment "to provide a major boost to the economy, lead to sustainable economic development and result in the creation of millions of new 'green collar' jobs in renewable energy and other future-oriented technologies." It adds that the Green New Deal will ensure that social and labour rights are not sacrificed in the name of competition and that public goods and services are provided so that all citizens can enjoy a good quality of life. "Greens will continue to defend equal rights for all within and outside the workplace, fight all forms of discrimination and intolerance and take the urgent action required to help the most disadvantaged in society."13

The Green New Deal in Poland also states that "business as usual" is no longer possible since it merely continues to push economic growth at the cost of the degradation of society and the environment.¹⁴

Building sustainable development

It is generally accepted that people living in extreme poverty are the most vulnerable to dangerous environmental conditions. One main issue for the poorest in Poland, for example, is housing quality. Roofs Over Heads,¹⁵ a coalition of 15 NGOs led by Habitat for Humanity Poland, launched a campaign in 2008 to raise awareness about poor housing conditions in the country. There is no national policy dedicated to building homes for low-income groups, nor for assisting them with home improvements. Nearly 12 million Poles – almost a third of the population – live in overcrowded homes. More than 60% of apartments need serious renovation and more than half of the housing stock is more than 40 years old. Low-quality building materials and poor insulation are resulting in high monthly energy bills, making funds even scarcer for families that need to improve their living conditions.

People facing extreme poverty are often seen as responsible for environmental damage and thus an obstacle to sustainable development. This has to change; in fact, people living in extreme poverty should be included in all levels of policy making. Thus the Polish and international response to the challenge of sustainable development must ensure that new technologies and mitigation and adaptation programmes benefit the most vulnerable populations and build on their capacities and efforts. People in extreme poverty are often at the frontline of development initiatives that aim to transform their living conditions by improving water, sanitation or heating facilities.

Conclusion

Some authors believe that in seeking an alternative development model, "it is essential to accurately define the goals of economic development, environmental improvement and social cohesion."¹⁶ This gets to the essence of sustainable development. Amartya Sen argues that eliminating poverty and preserving the environment could be considered as "different parts of an integrated task."¹⁷ This means that environmental protection programmes could be used to obtain decent work and training for the most disadvantaged groups while maintaining respect for local cultures.

Green Growth must act as a catalyst for creating decent work and sustainable livelihoods for the most disadvantaged populations, building on efforts they are already undertaking. This is in line with the priority theme of a "green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012 in Brazil. ■

¹⁰ E. Bendyk, "Ekologia Polityczna dla Polski, czyli w stron Zielonego Okr głego Stołu," in *Ekologia: Przewodnik Krytyki Politycznej*, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, (Warsaw: 2009).

¹¹ N. Stern, Globalny Ład. Zmiany klimatu a powstanie nowej epoki, post pu i dostatku, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, (Warsaw: 2010).

¹² Green New Deal Group, A Green New Deal, New Economics Foundation, (2008), <www.greennewdealgroup.org/?page_ id=53>.

¹³ European Green Party, A Green New Deal for Europe (Summary of Manifesto, <europeangreens.eu/menu/egp-manifesto/>.

¹⁴ For a full analysis of the Green New Deal and the possibilities for its implementation in Poland, see <zielonyinstytut.pl>.

¹⁵ See the coalition's website: <www.dachnadglowa.org>.

¹⁷ A. Sen, "Environment and Poverty: One World or Two?" address at the International Conference on Energy, Environment and Development, (Bangalore, India: 16 December 2006), www.institut.veolia.org/ive/ressources/ documents/1/166.Amartya-Sen.pdf.

SENEGAL A social and ecological time bomb



Senegal has been hit hard by the world economic crisis and it is faced with serious difficulties including a lack of transparency in State institutions and a lack of long term planning. This has made the country more vulnerable to natural disasters, but the Government has no effective plans to cope with these or to protect the population. Another serious challenge is deforestation, which is mainly due to the demand for fuel, and it is an ecological time bomb. Social unrest is on the increase and in the last year various sectors of society have taken to the streets in demonstrations calling for adequate governance.

Cultural Association for Educational and Social Self-Promotion (ACAPES); National Associations for the Disabled of Senegal (ANHMS); Democratic Union of Teachers (UDEN); Youth and Environment Action (AJE);Pan-African Youth Organizations (OJP), a member of the African Youth Coalition against Hunger; Syndicate of Professors of Senegal (SYPROS); Association for the Economic, Social and Environmental Development of the North (ADESEN); Enda TM.

In 2003 the Government began implementing its Strategy Document for the Fight against Poverty (DSRP), which is the reference framework for an economic and social policy aimed at national growth, reducing poverty and achieving the country's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The world crisis hit Senegal very hard and the negative impacts reached a peak in 2010 when the economy and public revenues were seriously hurt by problems with energy, food and finances, and this laid bare the country's basic vulnerability. GDP growth in 2011 has been estimated at 4.2%,¹ but to overcome the economic crisis and reach the poverty eradication targets that have been set, it is vitally important to maintain a 10% growth rate, and the means that are used to achieve this should be in line with the principles of sustainable development.

The economic situation has certainly worsened. For example, there have been power cuts because of a lack of funds to maintain and run the power stations, and this has hampered economic growth so much so that in 2010 the rate was an estimated -1.4%.² One effect of this is that social inequity and vulnerability have become more serious.

Confusion in governance

The MDGs are a new reference framework that can be used to measure countries' development and to set parameters for evaluating progress towards sustainable development.

Judged from the MDG perspective, Senegal's development policies and strategies are not effective enough, particularly as regards maintaining essential social services and promoting gender equity. This constitutes a challenge, and the Government and all the actors involved will have to redouble their efforts

2 Data from the Board of Economic Forecasting and Studies.



and gear their action to concrete objectives that are shared and focalised.

When we analyse the Human Development Index (HDI), which like the Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)³ gives ratings for gender inequality and for poverty, it emerges that Senegal has not laid solid foundations for sustainable development. In fact, in 2010 it ranked only 144th out of 169 countries.⁴ The way towards establishing a sustainable development model is plagued with difficulties and up to now the Government has not been able to tackle them effectively.

Official data show that since 2006 progress has been made towards reducing monetary poverty, but there is another indicator we should consider, nonmonetary poverty, which gauges access to basic social services, adequate food, unpolluted water, decent housing and the overall conditions for a healthy life, and by these criteria the country is moving far too slowly to reach its MDGs by 2015.

The programmes to improve in these areas suffer from problems of governance. There are many institutions and agencies involved and different ministries that have overlapping responsibilities, and this makes for a very confused institutional governance framework. The way the public sector is structured is not geared to making effective development possible. The State today does not have good governance, it is not transparent and it does not have a culture of combating corruption, but these are essential if the country is to achieve decisive results and make



genuine progress.

Large sectors of the population are still living in poverty not only in rural areas but also in the cities, and households headed by women are particularly vulnerable. In recent years public spending on social protection and security has been around 1.16% of GDP, but this is even below the average for Africa, which is 1.44% (Ministry of the Family, of Women's Groups and Child Protection).

It is clear that a new approach is needed because the programmes to tackle these problems are not coordinated, some interventions are repeated and much of what is done is ineffective, all of which is reflected in poor results.

A Social Orientation Law promoting and protecting the rights of the disabled was passed in 2010, but up to now it has not been implemented and the institutional framework needed to provide care for people with different capacities and integrate them into social and economic life is not yet in place.

Social unrest

There have been large scale movements in the country calling for better conditions of life, work and security, and there have also been street demonstrations protesting against the high cost of living, power cuts, and the Government's failure to take action to help flood victims. This wave of unrest has irreversibly altered the social climate. There has been tension in the air for a year with rallies and marches, and a series of strikes in the education system, health services and even in the legal system.

The protests originated on the outskirts of Dakar and were backed by religious leaders (imams and priests) and they have since spread to all parts of the country, but the Government has tried to ignore

¹ Data from the Ministry of the Economy and Finance – Board of Economic Forecasting and Studies.

³ For a detailed description of the BCI see the report on its 2011 edition that is included in this volume.

⁴ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *The True Wealth of Nations*.

them. Initially this was a wide-based expression of discontent with the high cost of living, the power cuts and a range of other issues including the erosion of democratic values and the general deterioration of the people's conditions of life.

The movement subsequently diversified into different groups and there were anti-Government marches headed by imams and priests in 2009, protests by the youth movement "Y' en a marre" (We are fed up) led by hip hop musicians, and action by workers associations and other social groups that held mass meetings and staged hunger strikes outside the railings of the Presidential palace.

The environmental challenge

Senegal has structural problems that go hand in hand with the unsustainable development of the cities. Sewage services are still inadequate even though a lot of money has been spent on public cleanliness (which has led to a common joke "there is gold in this waste"). But there are other problems besides public hygiene such as deforestation, and erosion on the coast that is threatening whole communities. The problem of flooding has got worse and it is appravated by a lack of precautionary planning and the fact that assistance initiatives are weak or non-existent. All parts of the country are under threat, a total of 521,968⁵ people have been affected in different ways by floods and lives have been lost in various places like Kolda in the south and Kaffrine in the east. Just in the northern region of Saint Louis some 5,661 families were driven from their homes and 4.354 latrines were destroyed, which caused a serious health hazard for the local population. Agricultural production was also hit as thousands of hectares of farmland that had already been sown were inundated

This distressing situation is further complicated by the fact that there is a chronic lack of infrastructure in rural areas, which is why civil society organizations are pressing for investment in highways in country areas, stimulus packages to bolster the rural economy in peripheral regions and measures to accelerate Senegal's connections with neighbouring countries.

A discouraging panorama

There has been a certain amount of progress towards goals like restoring natural resources and land, helping biodiversity to recover in some areas, managing transboundary resources in a better way and the fight against pollution, so the country seems to be on the right track at least as regards reversing

INTENSE DEFORESTATION: AN ECOLOGICAL TIME BOMB

The forests in the south of the country are disappearing very fast and this is going on completely unchecked. In a report by the Commission of the Kandion Mangana Rural Council entitled "The environmental time bomb", the destruction of vegetation in the area is described as "actual extermination". This attack on the flora throughout the northern strip of the Casamance region has been going on for decades, it is particularly severe in the department (province) of Bignona, and it has intensified since 2005. The main reason for this devastation is the disruption caused by an on-going conflict with the Casamance Democratic Forces Movement (MFDC), a guerrilla group that for more than thirty years has been demanding independence for this part of southern Senegal.

The deforestation process in this area involves vegetation being burned off indiscriminately, and one of the consequences of this is increased emissions of greenhouse gases, which cause global warming and climate change.

There are other factors involved in the degradation of these forests: land is being cleared so it can be planted with crops, vegetal coal is being extracted to meet the population's fuel requirements and wood is being taken for the construction industry, which is a direct threat to noble species that are mostly slow-growth ligneous hardwoods.

To put a brake on this ongoing deforestation a whole series of measures will have to be taken. The Government will have to restore forests that have been degraded, evaluate forestation programmes and implement the appropriate strategies, research and adopt sustainable resource management practices, protect existing forests (mainly by stopping people from burning off vegetation), promote the use of alternative sources of energy, protect the soils, and impose stricter controls on forest exploitation as part of a policy to regenerate and protect certain species of flora.

the degradation of the environment. Another good point is that it has a national strategy for adapting to climate change.

However, one area where there are serious problems is health. For example, investment in this sector is distributed in a most unequal way with a far greater proportion of the funds available going to the cities than to rural areas, particularly when it comes to setting up and maintaining health centres and maternity units. Far more finance goes to regional and national hospitals and specialized health organizations than to basic services that cater to the poorer sectors of the population. The Government's official line is that its main priority is to provide basic health care services, but this is not borne out by the facts.

Another problem is that there are not enough trained health care workers, particularly in country areas. This means some sectors find it far more difficult to access health case, and it is no surprise that the rural population is most disadvantaged in this respect. More than half of all trained health personnel are concentrated in just two regions, Dakar and Thies, which have 52% of Senegal's doctors, 69% of the midwives and 31% of the nurses.

The fight against HIV/AIDS is going well among the people as a whole but there are certain regions and population groups (sexual workers, long distance truck drivers) that still have rates above 7%.

The proportion of births attended by trained health care personnel is low, and even though a great effort has been made to improve the situation, in 2009 coverage was only 66.9%. It is no surprise that maternal and infant mortality rates are still relatively high in the context of the goals that have been set for 2015.

In contrast to health, education is one of the sectors that has benefited from a rather generous allocation in the budget. But in spite of this, academic results are still poor compared to the average for Africa. This is mainly due to low school enrolment rates. At the pre-school level, for example, coverage is only 3 to 4% in some parts of the country and the national average is only 9.8%. There are other problems too: the drop-out rate in secondary education is high, there are too few science teachers, and technical education and vocational training are very underdeveloped.
SERBIA

Laws and strategies await implementation



The country's severe environmental problems constitute key challenges for sustainable development and poverty reduction. In recent years a new legal and policy framework for environmental management has been put in place. However its effective implementation remains a serious concern. A National Sustainable Development Strategy, developed with the participation of civil society organizations, has been adopted but achieving the goals means that Serbia must invest more of its GNP into protecting the environment. Success in addressing the key challenges in this area depends on building capacity for implementation, monitoring and enforcement, raising awareness and securing political support for environmental management.

Association Technology and Society Mirjana Dokmanovic, PhD Danica Drakulic, PhD

Due to economic collapse during the 1990s, most needed environmental investments to prevent pollution in Serbia and build infrastructure for sanitation and water were not undertaken.1 In recent years the country has made progress in developing formal policies and laying the legal groundwork for environmental management, mainly by harmonizing legislation with the acquis communitaire (the accumulated legislation, legal acts and court decisions that constitute the body of EU law).2 The National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) for the period 2009-2017 was developed with the participation of civil society organizations and adopted in May 2008.3 The NSDS is based on three key factors of sustainable development: sustainable economic development, sustainable social development and environmental protection with rational utilization of natural resources. This strategic document has identified the following key environmental problems in Serbia:

1. Water pollution: this is the main environmental issue in the country. Only 63% of the population has access to public water supplies, while only 35% is connected to a public sewage system. The quality of drinking water is generally unsatisfactory. Only half the population is supplied with drinking water from controlled water supply systems. Water controls show that in central Serbia more than 40% of samples were contaminated with bacteria, while in Vojvodina, an autonomous province, the main problem is chemical pollution.⁴ The majority of industrial sites and major towns do not have wastewater treatment plants. Due to this fact, 44,000 tons of toxic agents are deposited into lakes and rivers an-

3 Official Gazette of RS, No. 57/08



nually.⁵ Serbia is the main polluter of the Danube, while the Danube-Tisa-Danube channel is the most polluted area in Europe.⁶

2. Air pollution: the main producers of air pollution are facilities for energy generation and industrial plants with deficient air-cleaning technology. Public electricity and heat production emit around 345,000 tons of SO₂ per year, which corresponds to 98% of total SO₂ emissions.⁷ Air is polluted in all the major cities, mainly due to transport as leaded petrol is still in use.

3. Inadequate waste management: while energy efficiency in manufacturing is one third of the world average, waste production is extremely high and waste recycling and safe handling is poor. Only 60% of municipal waste is collected (2.2 million tons per year). Waste disposal sites generally do not meet technical requirements. There are 3,251 illegal dumpsites, mostly in rural areas.⁸ There are no reliable data on the unsafe waste produced by manufacturing, and there are no treatment plans or disposal sites for this type of waste.

4. Soil degradation: agricultural land covers 60% of central Serbia and 82% of Vojvodina. Soil quality is affected by the use of polluted water for



irrigation, by chemical pollution from industrial plants, by dumping of waste and by erosion.

 Unsustainable forest management: forests cover 27% of the country's territory. However woodland growth and quality are threatened by overharvesting, illegal logging and poor management.

The links between the environment and public health

A study by the World Health Organization (WHO). which looked at people's exposure to environmental factors and the national statistic data published in 2007, estimates that 27% of the population of the country is affected by illnesses caused by environmental factors.9 Taking this into account, as well as the fact that children are the population group most sensitive to negative environmental influences on health, the Government adopted the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan on 1 October 2009. Its main priorities are increasing access to safe drinking water in rural areas, increasing access to adequate sanitation, reducing traffic injuries, reducing air pollution, reducing the exposure of children to tobacco smoke and stopping and subsequently prohibiting the use of leaded petrol.

The Roma and the internally displaced are particularly exposed to environmental risks due to lack of adequate housing and access to safe drinking water. In addition, land degradation contributes to rural poverty. The first and second Progress Reports on the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy concluded that: "investments in water supply facilities, wastewater treatment plants

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9 Ibid., p. 92.
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D. Slunge, A.Ekbom and E. Dahlberg, Serbia Environmental and Climate Impact Analysis, (Goterborg: School of Economics and Commercial Law, 2008).

² Government of Serbia, *National Sustainable Development Strategy*, (Belgrade: 2008).

⁴ Slunge et al., op. cit., p. 2. Vojvodina is an autonomous province in Serbia.

⁵ Ministry of Environmental Protection website, (2011), <www.ekoplan.gov.rs>.

⁶ Government of Serbia, Sustainable Development Strategy Is One of the Preconditions for Serbia Entering the EU, (Belgrade: 5 December 2007), <www.srbija.sr.gov.yu/vesti/ vest.php?id=79525>.

⁷ Slunge et al., op. cit., p. 2.

⁸ Government of Serbia, "Chapter 27: Environment" in Responses to the European Commission Questionnaire, (Belgrade: 2011), p. 150, <www.srbija.gov.rs/?change_ lang=en>.

and environmental hotspot clean-up programmes have had a direct impact on poverty reduction. Indirectly, such activities have also contributed to the employment of a number of semi-qualified, poorer workers."¹⁰

The National Assembly adopted the Public Health Act in 2009. This recognizes the impact of the environment on health as one of the priority areas within public health. In addition, the Public Health Strategy,¹¹ also adopted by the Government in 2009, lays out a set of strategic activities with the purpose of protecting the population's health from negative environmental effects.

Economic trends and environmental issues

In recent years the need to make national environmental protection legislation and policy comply with EU policy has led to the adoption of a great number of laws and policy documents¹² that address the identified challenges (air quality, waste management, water quality, nature protection, industrial pollution control and risk management, chemicals, climate change, noise and civil protection), as indicated in the Government's responses to the European Commission's questionnaire in 2011.

Financing the implementation of the NSDS is a key challenge, however, due to unfavourable economic tendencies. After the high growth rates of 5–6% between 2001 and 2008, the last three years have been characterized by a slowdown of economic activity and foreign exchange developments, followed by a decrease in foreign and domestic demand and in foreign investment. In 2010, gross domestic product (GDP) rose 1.5%, ¹³ while during the same period consumer prices increased 10.3% and living costs 6.8%. The negative foreign trade balance was 58% and the foreign trade deficit amounted to EUR 4.3 billion (USD 6.1 billion) in 2010. The foreign debt reached 80% of GNP and foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows were still

falling: they amounted to EUR 654 million (USD 931 million) in 2010. Small inflows of FDI and net credit outflow led to a worsening balance of payment. The public debt reached 36% of GDP.¹⁴ Obligatory reserves decreased and the referential interest rate went up from 9% to 9.5% in October 2010.

The official rate of unemployment in 2010 was 20%, but the real number of jobseeckers was considered to be higher and the rate of employment was decreasing. There was a high rate of work in the black market -20.6% compared to the total number of workers in regular employment.¹⁵

The Government predicted a mild recovery of economic activity as a result of the combination of several circumstances including the recovery of the EU economy, the successfully completed revision of arrangements with the IMF, the agreement of the largest foreign banks in the country to maintain their levels of credit exposure to stabilize financial markets, and the economic policy measures that were undertaken. However the macroeconomic indicators at the beginning of 2011 point to a further decline in economic activity as a consequence of setbacks in industries such as manufacturing and electric power as well as a decrease in agricultural production.

Inherited economic problems such as the insolvency of enterprises, negative trends in the labour market, continual unemployment growth, bad prospects in earning growth and increases in poverty are not only deepening this crisis but making it chronic. The Government has been insensitive to the consequences of the crisis and is increasingly facing social discontent. The failure to implement reforms and the worsening of living conditions at the beginning of 2011 – particularly for vulnerable groups such as the unemployed, rural population, Roma, people with disabilities and pensioners¹⁶ – has been further complicated by the reshaping of the Government and political instability. Social discontent and insecurity are in-

creasing due to lack of access to employment and decent jobs. At the same time, jobs are increasingly insecure¹⁷ due to the ongoing bankruptcy of firms, the enormous internal indebtedness¹⁸ and a badly led process of privatization resulting in a mounting number of strikes in 2011.¹⁹ Many new owners of privatized companies purchased them with the goal of making money by reselling them and not to maintain production. Trade unions estimate that average monthly salaries will decrease in 2011 from USD 435 to USD 350.²⁰

The Government's projections for 2011 (GNP growth of 3%, inflation rate of 5.8%, unemployment rate of 20%, and foreign debt in GNP of 74.2%) are already in doubt.

Conclusion

The Government is simply in denial regarding the real economic trends and the evident fall in the population's living standards. It limits itself to making optimistic pronouncements for the short term. However the need to change the previous path of development and growth is becoming increasingly urgent because the current state of affairs is untenable. In essence, the economic growth model should be changed and the economy should be oriented to development and the increase of investment and export, not to consumption.

Achieving the goals set in the NSDS demands that Serbia invests its best efforts in reaching the planned GNP. Currently, only 0.3% of GNP is devoted to protecting the environment. These modest resources are insufficient. It is estimated that there is need for supplementary financial funding of 1.02% in 2011 for delivering on this priority. Success in addressing the key environmental challenges depends on building capacity for implementation, monitoring and enforcement, raising environmental awareness and securing political support for environmental management.

- 10 Government of Serbia, *First Progress Report on the* Implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in Serbia, (Belgrade: 2005); Second Progress Report on the Implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in Serbia, (Belgrade: 2007).
- 11 Ibid., National Strategy on Public Health, (Belgrade: 2009)
- 12 For example, the National Strategy on Inclusion of the Republic of Serbia in the Mechanisms of Clean Production of the Kyoto Protocol in the Areas of Waste Management, Agriculture and Forestry; the National Strategy on Public Health; the National Strategy on Introducing Cleaner Production. See: www.srbjja.gov.rs/>.
- 13 The source of all data in this paragraph, if not given another source, is Ministry of Finance, *Revised Memorandum on* the Budget and Economic Fiscal Politics for 2011, with projections for 2012 and 2013, <www.mfin.gov.rs/?changelang=en#>.
- 14 B. Mijatovic, "The European View on Serbia", *Fokus,* (Belgrade: Center for Liberal-Democratic Studies, 2011.)
- 15 Government of Serbia, Social Connection Control in Serbia, (2010), <www.inkluzija.gov.rs/?p=2615>.
- 16 Government of Serbia, First National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia, (Belgrade: March 2010).
- 17 Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia, "250,000 Dismissals in Serbia in Last Two Years," (February 2011), <www.sindikat.rs/e_saopstenja.htm>.
- 18 Ibid. In 2010, the total amount of money owed to the banks was USD 27.17 billion.
- 19 Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia, <www.sindikat.rs/e_saopstenja.htm>.

20 Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia, op. cit.

SLOVENIA

The downward spiral continues



The failure of the current socioeconomic model in the country is obvious. The most burning social issues are rising unemployment, the reform of the pension system and new legislation on flexible part-time work, which replaces the previous system of student work while also offering unemployed and retired people incentives for "flexible" work. The bankruptcy of many companies and small businesses, widespread corruption, violations of workers' rights and the exploitation of migrant workers, together with a controversial new coal power plant, have made the headlines. The country has also already faced significant penalties from the EU because of its deficient environmental policies.

Društvo Humanitas Rene Suša

The lack of coherent economic, environmental and social policies is leading Slovenia in a downward spiral in which exploitation of the environment and people continues to take an increasingly high toll on the population's wellbeing. Thus, the country will be building a new coal power plant while it is already paying sanctions of EUR 80 million (about USD 113 million) for failing to meet Kyoto standards. The economic crisis has revealed many underlying contradictions and uncertainties in Slovene society, with the public debate revolving around questions of employment, intergenerational solidarity, wealth distribution and the environment.

During the transition to a market-driven economy, Slovenia morphed from having almost no social differences to having a distinct elite group owning a significant portion of the national economy on the one hand, and a record number of poor and unemployed people on the other. The economic elite consolidated itself through shares acquired from controversial management buyouts. Some of these buyouts (and other fraudulent behaviour) are now in court; one case includes the first Slovene ombudsman, who later became the manager of a big petrol company and is currently being charged with money laundering.

The gaps translate also to the basic services the population can access. For instance, the division of healthcare into public and private systems has decreased quality in the public system and led to absurdly long waiting times. Often the same doctor who it takes a few months to see in a public clinic will attend to a patient immediately if the appointment is made in his or her private clinic.

Intergenerational solidarity

The pension system is built on the concept of intergenerational solidarity, since the current active population provides the taxes from which the pensions for retired people are paid. However with rising unemployment and an increasing number of retired people (due to an ageing population) this model is falling apart. New laws – such as the one discussed below on flexible part-time labour – will further diminish the contributions to the pension fund as the employer will be motivated to hire "flexible" workers for whom they have to pay significantly smaller contributions.



Young and jobless

There was a 15.6% increase in the number of registered unemployed people between January 2010 and January 2011,¹ representing 11.8% of the active population.² The actual number is estimated to be somewhere between 160,000 and 200,000. About 25% of young people not in the formal education system are unemployed.³

At the same time, almost 75% of those aged 20–24 were enrolled either in secondary or tertiary school programmes in 2010.⁴ It has become common for young people to enrol in further study programmes after graduation in order to keep their health insurance, collect benefits (subsidized food and accommodation) and still get work through the networks of student employment agencies. Just how difficult it is for young graduates to get a job is evident from the fact that from 2000–2010 the number of unemployed young people with tertiary education increased by 240%. There is also a considerable gender gap, as the percentage of young unemployed women is almost twice as high as that of young men.⁵

- 1 ZRSZ, *Trg dela v številkah*, <www.ess.gov.si/trg_dela/ trg_dela_v_stevilkah>.
- 2 ZRSZ, Stopnja registrirane brezposelnosti, <www.ess.gov. si/trg_dela/trg_dela_v_stevilkah/stopnja_registrirane_ brezposelnosti>.
- 3 Milan Lavri et al., *Mladina 2010*, (Ljubljana: URSM, 2010), p.109, <www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/ pageuploads/pdf/Mladina_2010_Koncno_porocilo.pdf>.
- 4 Ibid.,p. 110.
- 5 Official data shows no such discrepancies: in fact it portrays unemployment among women as lower than that among men. See ibid., pp.113–16.



Part-time work: a full-time issue

Connected to the issue of unemployment is the proposed new law on flexible part-time work. This type of work enables employers to lower their costs as they do not have to pay pension contributions. sick leave, and so on. The total share of taxes and other contributions for such work is only about 17% of labour costs,6 which is two to three times less than in regular employment. Since the work is strictly on a daily basis there is complete flexibility about hiring and firing. Many of the students who obtain work through student employment agencies lose this work as soon as they finish their studies because registered students are much cheaper and, by definition, flexible. The agency mechanism puts great pressure on the labour market by pushing down wages and increasing employment insecurity.

The new flexible part-time work law (passed in October 2010, entering into force in January 2012) addresses the issue of student work by limiting the number of part-time working hours, previously unlimited, to 60 per month while also setting an annual earning limit, previously unlimited, of EUR 6,000 (USD 8,492). It also greatly increases the pool of people who are able to work in this fashion by including retired people, the unemployed, asylum seekers and other non-active individuals.⁷ Moreover,

7 DZ RS, Zakon o malem delu, (Uradni list RS no. 102-01/10-28/87 EPA 1133-V), <www.dz-rs.si/index.php?id=101&vt=4 6&sm=k&q=zakon+o+malem+delu&mandate=-1&unid=PZIF 47C7FF2C259B251C12577C900237714&showdoc=1>.

⁶ Mladi podjetnik, Koliko delodajalca stane delo prek študentske napotnice, <mladipodjetnik.si/podjetniskikoticek/poslovanje/koliko-delodajalca-stane-delo-prekstudentske-napotnice>.

the employer is not obliged to pay full contributions for social welfare (1 working hour counts only as 40 minutes of "regular" work). Student organizations and trade unions have launched a massive campaign opposing the legislation, and a referendum will take place in Spring 2011.

Pension reform and working conditions

Another expected referendum regards the proposed reform of the pension system, which relies heavily on a prolonged working period of a minimum of 38 years (40 years for men) and a retirement age of 65.⁸ According to a recent study by Eurofond, only 13.5% of Slovene workers answered positively when asked whether they would still be able to do their job when they turn 60—compared to an average of 44.1% across all 27 EU countries. Also, 59.2% of respondents said that they had worked while feeling ill in the last 12 months—compared to an EU average of 39.2%; almost 75% said they had to work at a very pressing pace; and very few —13.5% – expressed great satisfaction in their work—compared to an EU average of 25%.

The issue of the exploitation of migrant workers for heavy physical labour (especially in construction) surfaced over the last year when many of the companies went bankrupt. However in several cases (e.g., SCT – the largest Slovene construction company) the main company survived at the expense of thousands of workers, who lost their jobs and who never received full payment for their work.⁹ Invisible Workers of the World (IWW)¹⁰ estimates that some 14,000 migrant workers have returned to their countries of origin in the past three years without ever receiving their wages. Unpaid forced overtime, forced residence in company hostels, threats of deportation and other forms of abuse have been reported.

Coal: a 19th century resource for a 21st century society

It hard to believe that the largest investment in the Slovene energy policy will apparently be a new EUR 1.2 billion (USD 1.7 billion) coal power plant in Šoštanj. It is estimated that the proposed power plant, which relies on lignite to produce electricity, will produce approximately 3,500 GWh per year, about the same as the old plant it is to replace. The proposed project has been subject to much criticism for alleged environmental, economic and legislative flaws. It is still unclear whether the signed agreement for its construction is even valid since there was no public tender for offers.¹¹

The price of the project has more than doubled since the preliminary analysis. The cost of construction is also estimated to be about twice as high per installed MW as in comparable projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Germany.¹² In addition there are obvious environmental concerns as it is estimated that the plant will produce over 100 million tonnes of C02 during its lifetime. Slovenia already exceeds the globally acceptable levels of greenhouse emissions and depletion of natural resources by two to four times.¹³ The EU target of 2 tonnes of CO₂ per person until 2050 is the amount that the Šoštanj plant alone is going to produce. This will make it impossible for Slovenia to reach the common goal.

Some laws but no order

Another pressing issue is the illegal burning of waste in the Lafarge cement factory in Trbovlje, which is having a serious effect on people's health and the local environment. The company lost the legal battle over this, but it continues to ignore court orders.¹⁴ This is hardly surprising in a country where even State-owned enterprises consider themselves above the law, as evidenced by the constant abuses in the construction sector, where many companies are (at least partially) State-owned. A recent report from Umanotera, the Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development, quotes the "lack of implementation of already accepted programmes as the biggest issue of Slovene environmental policy."¹⁵ Traffic, waste management and energy policy are cited as especially problematic. The country produces 435 kg of waste per person and only about 25% is recycled. The national monitoring scheme for environmental protection is apparently inoperative as only 14 out 188 indicators have been marked.¹⁶

Of the many companies going into bankruptcy and exploiting workers, the worst are previously successful companies that were involved in highly questionable management buyouts involving massive loans from partly State-owned Slovene banks, where the securities on the loans were the very shares the managers were buying. This involved cronyism of the worst kind as most of the bankers and business people involved were acquaintances.

Conclusion

Slovenia has already faced considerable penalties from the EU because of its environmental policies, yet the ruling elite seems unwilling to respond to the challenges of environmental protection. The huge coal power plant and related investment leaves little space for future efficient and renewable energy sources. Although energy efficiency could lower emissions even in the short term, it does not receive proper support from the Government.¹⁷

Energy efficiency programmes could also create and sustain jobs and provide long-term economic, social and environmental benefits. The new law on flexible work, in contrast, is likely to lower standards, increase the number of poor yet employed people, intensify pressure on "regular" work, increase job insecurity and lead to lack of long-term benefits for employees.¹⁸ The fact that so many young people are unemployed combined with the late age at which many people start work greatly undermines the financial basis of the intergenerational solidarity model on which the State pension system is built. The proposed pension reform, by merely extending both the age of retirement and the number of years of work needed to qualify for a pension, fails to address this key issue.

- 8 DZ RS, DOPOLNJEN PREDLOG ZAKONA o pokojninskem in invalidskem zavarovanju (ZPIZ-2), druga obravnava, <www. dz-rs.si/index.php?id=101&vt=40&mandate=-1&o=10&unid= PZI7C61DD6BEF7AA4E2C12577DE0053A035&showdoc=1>.
- 9 It is only the ad hoc subsidiaries, with virtually no assets of their own, that have filed for bankruptcy.
- 10 IWW, *Nevidni delavci sveta*, <www.njetwork.org/IWW-Nevidni-delavci-sveta>.
- 11 RTVSLO, Bi morali dobavitelje za TEŠ 6 izbrati na razpisu?, <www.rtvslo.si/gospodarstvo/bi-morali-dobavitelje-za-tes-6-izbrati-na-razpisu/252118>.
- 12 M. Dodevska, *TEŠ 6 za telebane*, (Delo.si, 19 December 2010), <www.delo.si/clanek/132096>.
- 13 D. Plut, Trajnostni razvoj med mavrico teorij in skromno prakso, (2010), <www.planbzaslovenijo.si/upload/trajnostnirazvoj/plut-besedilo.pdf>.
- 14 EKO KROG, Sodba v imenu ljudstva, <www.ekokrog. org/2011/03/>.
- 15 Umanotera, Ogledalo vladi 2010: Nevladni zeleni monitor, <www.planbzaslovenijo.si/upload/dokumenti/2010/ ogledalo-vladi.pdf>.

16 Ibid..pp. 9–11

- 17 Focus, Sporo ilo za javnost: Ne zaklenite nam prihodnosti! Poziv vladi pred odloanjem o TEŠ 6, <focus.si/index. php?node=26&id=1024>.
- 18 ZRSS, Malo delo miti in dejstva, <www.zsss.si/ attachments/article/422/MALO%20DELO%20%20MITI%20 IN%20DEJSTVA_ZSSS.pdf>.

The quest for stability



Somalia's national institutions collapsed in January 1991 when the late president Siyad Barre fled the capital. Since then factional fighting and the formation of fiefdoms and mini-states have replaced the unified Government. At least five authorities now coexist and various groups strive for one cause or another. Instability and insecurity have pushed the country further into poverty despite its low population density and significant natural resources. There is much to be done to restore stability and statehood in order to initiate effective development.

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Despite Somalia's abundant resources, the lack of effective development policies through successive governments since independence in 1960 have contributed to a continuous cycle of poverty that has often led to upheaval. In 1969, for instance, a military coup put army officers into power and ushered in a pro-socialist regime that eroded human rights. Social unrest led to rebel group challenges to the military regime of the late Major General Mohamed Siyad Barre in the 1980s, a situation made worse in January 1991 when rebel militias toppled the regime but failed to fill the power vacuum. When rebel factions turned their guns on each other, they initiated a two-decades long struggle for power.

Governance structures subsequently emerged in Somaliland and Puntland in the north of the country that allowed for the attainment of some degree of stability and economic recovery. However they have shown no concern whatsoever regarding environmental issues and so the potentially rich territory of Somalia has been marked by degradation.

Yet despite the unrest Somalia has maintained a healthy informal economy based mainly on livestock, remittances and telecommunications. Living standards have actually improved faster since the early 1990s than in the average sub-Saharan African country.¹ The most interesting part of this relative success is that it has been achieved in the absence of any effective central government. Yet about 43% of the population still lives on less than USD 1 a day, a figure that rises to 53% in rural areas, where extreme poverty is more prevalent.² Somalia remains very dependent on international aid.

The economy

Due to the lack of official government statistics and the recent civil war, it is difficult to gauge the size or growth of the economy. The CIA World Factbook

2 Rural Poverty Portal, "Poverty in Somalia."



estimated GDP at USD 5.61 billion in 2008, USD 5.75 billion in 2009 and USD 5.89 billion in 2010, with a projected real growth rate of 2.6%.³

Agriculture is the most important economic sector, accounting for about 65% of GDP and employing 71% of the workforce. Livestock contributes about 40% to GDP and more than 50% of export earnings.⁴ Other principal exports include fish, charcoal and bananas, and the country is also a major world supplier of frankincense and myrrh. The main imported goods are sugar, sorghum, corn, qat (*Catha edulis*, a natural stimulant) and manufactured goods. Imports total about USD 798 million per year while exports total about USD 270 million, leaving an enormous trade deficit.

This deficit, however, is far exceeded by remittances sent by Somalis in the diaspora. Remittance firms (*hawalas*) have become a large industry in the country with an estimated USD 1.6 billion annually, or 71.4% of GNP, sent to the region via money transfer companies.⁵

Taking advantage of the country's location near the Arabian Peninsula, Somali traders have increasingly begun to challenge Australia's traditional dominance over livestock and meat markets in the Persian Gulf. In response, Arab States have started to make strategic investments in the country, with Saudi Arabia building livestock export infrastructure

3 CIA World Factbook, "Somalia," <www.cia.gov/library/ publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>. and the United Arab Emirates purchasing large farmlands.⁶ Additionally fishing fleets from Europe and Asia have reached commercial fishing agreements in the northern Puntland region. This is considered one of the richest fisheries in the world, which has led to a lot of illegal fishing by foreign ships in Somali waters.⁷

On the other hand, the industrial sector, based on agricultural products, accounts for a mere 10% of Somalia's GDP.[®] Medium and large manufacturing firms foundered due to the conflict. However, primarily as a result of substantial local investment by the Somali diaspora, many small-scale plants have re-opened and newer ones have been created. The latter include fish-canning and meat-processing plants in the north, as well as about 25 factories in the Mogadishu area that manufacture goods such as pasta, mineral water, sweets, plastic bags, sheets, hides and skins, detergent, soap, aluminium and foam mattresses.⁹

According to the UNDP, investments in light manufacturing have also expanded in Bossaso and Hargeisa, indicating growing business confidence in the economy.¹⁰ In 2004 a USD 8.3 million Coca-Cola bottling plant opened in Mogadishu, with investors hailing from various constituencies in Somalia. The robust private sector has also attracted foreign investment from companies such as General Motors and Dole Fruit.¹¹

Telecommunications

Telecommunications is a major area of success in Somalia. The number of telephone landlines has shown dramatic improvement from about 2 per 1,000 of population in 1990 to 25 in 2011. Some nine private operators provide competitive telecommunication services to almost every part of the coun-

7 Partnership Africa Canada (PAC), Peace and development in northern Somalia: opportunities and challenges, (2009), <www.mbali.info/doc200.htm>.

8 CIA, op. cit.

- 9 M. Yuusuf, "Somalia: The resilience of a people," *The African Executive*, (2011), <www.africanexecutive.com/modules/ magazine/article_print.php?article=4693>.
- 10 AfricanSeer, Economy in Somalia, <www.africanseer.com/ countries-in-africa/somalia/economy.asp>.
- 11 Ibid

^{*} There are no available data on GEI.

B. Powell, "Somalia: failed state, economic success?" Freeman 59(3), (April 2009).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ UNDP Somalia, "Sustainable partnerships with the Somali Diaspora forged", *News Update*, <www.so.undp.org/index. php/View-document-details/313-Sustainable-Partnershipswith-the-Somali-Diaspora-forged.html>.

⁶ C. West, "Africa a poor alternative to Aussie exports," *Farm Weekly*, (12 August 2010).

try. Research has shown that this moved Somalia from 29th to 8th position among African countries studied. $^{\rm 12}$

Funded by Somali entrepreneurs and backed by expertise from China, Korea and Europe, the nascent telecommunications firms also offer affordable mobile phone and Internet services.¹³ Somalia ranks high in mobile phone (16th in Africa) and Internet users (11th), while it ranks 27th in the number of households with televisions.¹⁴

Deforestation and soil erosion

According to RMSN (Resource Management Somalia Network) and other local environmental agencies, the environment is one of the sectors in the country that has suffered as a result of the anarchy and particularly in the absence of a functioning government.

Coastal people, for example, have complained of hazardous waste dumping and pastoralists have reported the increased loss of forests. Moreover the country is marked by water scarcity as rainfall is very low (250 mm a year) while evaporation is generally very high (over 2,000 mm a year).¹⁵ Frequent droughts especially in the southern part of the country have serious impacts on rural communities, whose survival greatly depends on the availability of rainwater. These droughts are often followed by devastating floods.¹⁶ Tree cutting, deforestation and overgrazing contribute to soil erosion and other ecological problems.

Deforestation in Somalia is closely associated with charcoal production for local use and export. This puts a severe strain on wood resources, especially in a country with only 9% of land covered by low-density woodland. According to the World Bank 55% of Somalia's land area is suitable for grazing, while the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates only 29% demonstrates a certain degree of suitability for livestock production.¹⁷

The land is also affected by inefficient irrigation methods, causing higher salt concentrations. This has a negative effect on farmland.

Waste dumping

People living on the coast frequently complain of waste being dumped in the sea. In early April 2011, for example, residents in Hobyo district 660 km northeast of Mogadishu spotted three large, drumshaped containers washed up on the beach by the high tide. They were afraid these might contain dangerous industrial or chemical waste, which they blame for a number of health-related issues in the area. The event revived the long-held suspicion that the marine environment was being spoiled by foreign vessels taking advantage of the political confusion in the country and lack of central government to dump hazardous waste in Somali waters.¹⁸

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and other agencies have in the past promised to assess the issue of illegal waste dumping; however lack of security in the war-torn Horn of Africa has hampered local and international efforts.¹⁹

Social services

In addition to environmental and economic challenges, all Somali regions face real challenges concerning access, availability and quality of indispensable social services.

Enrolment in education, for instance, is one of the worst in Africa. Just over 20% of school-age children are in school, and only a third of them are girls. This is accompanied by a high female dropout rate. Both the quality and quantity of vital educational resources and materials are poor, even in relatively more stable regions such as Somaliland and Puntland.

In the absence of a fully functioning government, and following a joint needs assessment carried out in 2005–2006,²⁰ many groups have supported the public education system, including UN organizations (under the UN Somali Assistance Strategy), donor agencies, international and regional banks, NGOs and other associations. Such groups have also contributed to improving the health, water and sanitation sectors. These services are purely in unregulated private hands or reliant on traditional sources, and in most cases their affordability is beyond the capacity of poor families.²¹ In addition to seemingly endless wars and an ongoing culture of impunity that have eroded people's ability to enjoy civil and political rights, the absence of an effective central rule has also eroded economic, social and cultural rights.

Gender inequality

Women make up some 50% of the population but lag behind in access to resources and services. Policies are needed to guarantee women and other disadvantaged groups access to education and health care, especially to maternal health and family planning. Further research and improvements are vital in the areas of HIV/AIDS and female genital mutilation (FGM). The latter is profoundly rooted in the Somali culture, necessitating strong measures to eliminate or at least minimize its impacts on society as a whole and on women in particular.

Equitable provision of social services calls for appropriate policies and adequate resources as well as legislation. Instability in Somalia originating from two decades of power struggles has hindered the country's ability to empower women through skills training and incentives and make significant improvements in gender equity.

Conclusion

Events in Somalia are proof that development is tied to peace and stability. Apart from the clan-based factions, self-styled authorities and rag-tag militias, opportunists emerged to vandalize everything from private property to natural resources and the environment. Regarding the latter, civil society activists insist this negative trend must be reversed. No central coordinating body was in charge of environmental protection even under the last Government prior to January 1991 and a strong agency is needed. The transitional Federal Government needs to renew its attempts to set up relevant ministries. State policies must be put in place to protect and improve the environment.

One way to reverse the negative trends is to strengthen development cooperation under Goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals and other development programmes in order to stimulate stronger collaboration between Somalia and its development partners. It is time to turn risks and challenges into opportunities to stabilize and rebuild a country and society shattered by years of civil war.

21 Ibid.

¹² Powell, op. cit.

¹³ A. Mohamed and S. Chidress, "Telecom firms thrive in Somalia despite civil war, shattered economy," *The Wall Street Journal*, (11 May 2010).

¹⁴ Powell, op. cit.

¹⁵ A. Saidyhan, Somalia's Degrading Environment, (11 October 2001), <www.aaeafrica.org/cgi-bin/africa/index. cgi?action=viewnews&id=78>.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ A.E. Mohamed, Somalia's Degrading Environment: Causes and Effects of Deforestation and Hazardous Waste Dumping in Somalia, (2001).

¹⁸ A. Khalif, "Suspicious containers wash up on Somalia's coast," *Africa Review*, (8 April 2011).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ United Nations, "Somali Joint Needs Assessment: Social Services and Protection of Vulnerable Groups Cluster Report," draft, (14 September 2006), <www.somali-jna. org/downloads/SSPVG%20140906%20AD%20Final%20 Draft%20rec-social%20rev-1.pdf>.

Wasted words, empty policies



When the present Government came to power it announced it would support sustainable development, but it has not made good on these commitments. In fields like gender and energy policies and overseas development assistance Spanish civil society organizations have heard a lot of promises but the actual concrete results have been meagre. Today, as a consequence, there are no solid policies to promote gender equality or to work towards a sustainable development model that involves reducing greenhouse gas emissions or promoting the development of renewable sources of energy.

Plataforma 2015 y más Ana Bustinduy Pablo Martínez Osés

In 2011 the Government moved even further away from the pursuit of sustainable development and turned instead to economic policies centred on adjustments and reducing public spending. In spite of numerous protests it has continued to reject any of the alternative proposals aimed at fiscal reform, changing the production model or implementing anti-cyclical measures that would help the country recover from the recession with policies based on people's rights. This change in economic direction marks the end of a political cycle.

In this report we will analyse the evolution of the public policies that were put forward to promote the transition to a sustainable development model in Spain in three key areas: gender equality, environment protection and overseas development assistance.

Gender: empty promises

In its first term in office (2004-2008) the socialist Government tackled the problem of gender inequality with a two-part strategy aimed at social change. First, there were public information campaigns to raise awareness about the great inequalities between women's rights and those of men, and second, steps were taken to initiate a wide legislative framework in this area.

The effort to make gender injustice more visible led to the emergence of many spaces for debate in Spain, a society in which patriarchal attitudes and constructs still carry a lot of weight. However, progress towards overcoming the generalised tolerance of discriminatory practices and towards social change in favour of equal treatment has been slow, and the extent of the debate about this has made it increasingly evident that to tackle the problem public resources will have to be allocated and there will have to be political spaces geared to gender equity.

In addition to the campaigns to disseminate information and raise awareness there have also been institutional initiatives to try to set up a legal framework that is coherent with other aspects of the strategy to promote equality. This effort to enact legislation lasted from the beginning of the first democratic legislature until the end of the second. It bore fruit in the form of the Integral Law against Gender



Violence and the Abortion Law. There was a further initiative, an equal treatment and anti-discrimination bill, but this bogged down in Parliament and did not complete the whole legislative procedure.

Besides raising awareness about the problem and initiating institutional change, the Government set up a Ministry of Equality, which was a tangible expression of its political will to make gender equality a basic pillar of its other public policies. There was also a public declaration in favour of forming governments that were balanced in the sense that there would be the same number of women as men in the cabinet. This sparked off a debate about quotas as a means to break through the glass ceilings that are keeping women in Spain down, and it put the spotlight on subjects like the pay gap between men and women, the precarious labour conditions some women are subject to, and the fact that very often women find it difficult to coordinate their home lives with their work lives.

There is more information available today and it is managed better, and it shows that in general gender discrimination is still prevalent in Spanish society. For example, in 2008 the typical annual pay for a woman was 13,494 euros (USD 18,370), which was only 86.9% of the typical pay for a man (15,522.9 euros, or USD 21,131.6). In terms of mean remuneration the pay gap was 79.2% and in terms of average gross pay it was 78.1%. It works out that women's annual pay for a full time job was 86.3% of the amount men earned, and for part time work women received only 84.8% of men's pay.

What is needed to tackle this and many other kinds of gender discrimination is a sustained long term institutional, political and economic policy. To overcome the underlying causes of discrimination there will have to be a generalised effort from social.



educational and cultural sectors to bring about a genuine change in the country's culture, and this will have to be supported by the public at large.

However, in 2010 the Government started making cuts to public spending and this has had a negative impact on gender policies. In October 2010 the State apparatus was changed in various ways and the Ministry of Equality was closed down, which left no doubt what the Government's new priorities were. "Putting equality polices back under the Ministry of Health means the situation of women is a question of health again rather than a social matter, and this will cause bitter disappointment in many sectors."¹ The abolition of this Ministry gives the impression that setting it up in the first place, which was costly in terms of structure, human resources, dedication and innovation, was no more than a symbolic gesture.

The Government's failure to get the equal treatment bill passed into law has brought other contradictions to light. Just one year ago liberal labour reform legislation was passed, but shortly afterwards the same Government, under pressure from the ECO-FIN, the IMF and credit rating agencies, interrupted the passage of a law that would have made it compulsory to pay women at the same rate as men and would have extended paternity leave to four weeks. The bill has now been modified and these and some other less well known dispositions have been eliminated.

Not long ago the sense of solidarity with the victims of abuse, and pressure to use institutions, mechanisms and budgets to bring about far-reaching changes in our society and eliminate gender discrimination, were

El País, (20 October 2010), <www.elpais.com/ articulo/espana/Igualdad/hoguera/recortes/ elpepuesp/20101020elpepunac_26/Tes>.

reflected in Parliament by the progressive left, which supported the feminist cause in opposition to the right, which as always opposed any changes. But today there is almost no difference between the two sides in Parliament; they both have an orthodox neo-liberal stance and both are promoting economic adjustment policies. It seems that equality will just have to wait.

The environmental void: unsustainable energy

In the early days of its mandate, the socialist Government tried to project the idea that its international policy included strong support for multilateral mechanisms to promote environmental sustainability. President Zapatero was applauded for his celebrated speech at the Copenhagen Summit where he said, "We have to unite the world to save the earth, our earth, where there are poor people who are too poor and rich people who are too rich. But the earth does not belong to anyone, only to the wind."²

At the very centre of the Government's programme there were domestic measures to combat climate change and reduce CO₂ emissions, and this was supposedly a clear signal that Spain was taking its fair share of responsibility for the challenges the world is facing. The Government's plans to enact legislation to facilitate the change to a new production model that would be less vulnerable and more in line with the principles of sustainable development came to fruition in October 2009 when its sustainable economy bill came before Parliament. After more than a year and a half of troubled procedural delays the bill was eventually passed into law in March 2011. The final content of this lengthy document - 114 articles and 60 additional dispositions spread over 200 pages - was heavily influenced by the economic crisis and includes measures with little connection between them and some that even contradict each other.

With this legislation the Government missed an opportunity to set up coherent and effective mechanisms to lead the country towards sustainable development. As a consequence of this bungled effort, the sustainable economy law aroused nearly no public debate, and now it merely serves as a supposed achievement in the Government's empty rhetoric. This legislative process coincided with, and suffered from, policy decisions flowing from the administration's adjustment programme and its efforts to reduce public spending, so the law can hardly be said to meet the requirements of sustainability. In article 2 the concept of a sustainable economy is defined as "a growth model that reconciles economic, social and environmental development in a productive and competitive economy". The main point of reference is "a growth model", which shows that this law is geared above all to economic growth and is hardly conditioned at all by environmental concerns. A genuinely sustainable economic model would be based on natural and human principles and limits, but this legislation ignores essential points such as setting reduction targets, which is considered essential by the international community.

Another problem area is electrical power. The Government presented a Renewable Energy Plan (PEN) 2011-2012, but this has been criticized for disregarding the whole question of generating electricity by renewable means. According to the IPCC, countries like Spain should reduce domestic CO_2 emissions by 40% in the 1990-2020 period, but Spain has set itself a target of only a 30% reduction by 2020.³ This feeble commitment to renewable energy looks even worse when we consider that Spain is one of five European countries that together will be responsible for two thirds of the increase in emissions in the near future because the Government has invested in biofuels, which could generate an additional 9.5 million tons of CO_2 .⁴

The Zapatero administration has also reneged on its commitment to close down the country's nuclear power stations. In 2011, in the wake of the tragedy at Fukushima, there was renewed public debate about how safe these installations were, but plans to definitively close down the nuclear programme have not been forthcoming. To make matters worse, the Government is still insisting that in the energy balance nuclear power should figure as "domestically produced", but this manoeuvre evades the inconvenient fact that all the fuel used in the process - enriched uranium- is imported. This is a way presenting the false impression of how self-sufficient Spain is as regards electrical power, and it is also a factor that makes it more difficult to integrate renewable energy systems into the power transmission network.

To sum up, policies that are coherent with sustainable development seem to have lost all their force as a result of political reactions to the global economic turnaround. This shows that these policies were regarded as little more than luxury items the country was able to afford in times of economic boom, whereas in fact the Government could have taken advantage of the crisis to make radical changes to its development model.

Empty international cooperation policies

Like institutional reform, another promise that has come to nothing is the commitment to raise official development assistance (ODA) to 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) by 2012. Social organizations have identified two very worrying trends in this area.

First, since 2009 public funding for international assistance has been cut a lot more than the general cuts in public expenditure. In 2010 and 2011 the resources allocated to international cooperation have been reduced by around 20% but overall public spending has only been cut by just over 6%.⁵

Second, the Government has also aided private enterprises in the cooperation for development area by fostering their capacity to invest in and finance foreign development projects, but it has not set any kind of regulatory limits on these activities. It would seem that not only has the Government been unable to maintain coherence or keep up the level of what was formerly a priority policy, but now it has sought assistance from the private sector to raise finance for development abroad. To help private initiatives in this field it has enacted legislation that makes it easier to internationalise companies and has set up a new fund to provide repayable loans for capital investments that serve to develop private enterprise. This might be a key tool in the near future because these funds are repayable so levels of investment can be maintained without generating a deficit. It is an entirely different question whether this instrument will yield results that are useful for the development objectives of the receiving countries or will be congruent with the aims of Spanish development cooperation.

In May 2011 a parliamentary committee was set up to investigate the whole question of assistance for overseas development. Civil society organizations criticized the committee's report, which was approved by the Cooperation Committee in Parliament, because it gives a lot of weight to private sector profits and carries the implicit risk that the main focus of overseas aid, which is the fight against poverty, could be lost. But this focus was the guiding principle behind the original reforms and improvements in the country's overseas development assistance policy, and these original reforms were supported by a broad consensus of the social and institutional actors involved in international cooperation.

Conclusion

All the signs are that gender equality will have to wait. Public policies that are coherent with sustainable development seem to have been drained of any effective content because of the Government's change of course brought on by the economic crisis. The inescapable conclusion is that these policies, which seemed so encouraging when they were first undertaken, were little more than luxuries the country could afford in times of economic boom. In a similar way, Spain's commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and invest in renewable energy projects have been discarded, much to the disappointment of people who thought the Government's pronouncements about sustainability and the fight against climate change would actually lead to concrete results. Another disturbing change is that in Spain's foreign assistance programme the Government has abandoned the fundamental guiding principle of fighting poverty. This was done so as to be able to bring in other actors, albeit with laxer ideas about sustainable development, but it could turn out to be a step backwards and might have unforeseeable consequences in a field that, by definition, is an expression of solidarity with poorer countries on the part of the Spanish people.

² Speech at the Climate Change Summit, (Copenhagen: 17 December 2009), <www.psoe.es/ambito/saladeprensa/docs/ index.do?action=View&id=428476>.

³ Greenpeace, Comentarios de Greenpeace al borrador del PER 2011-2012, < www.greenpeace.org/espana/Global/espana/ report/cambio_climatico/20110919_Alegaciones%20 PER%202011_2020_GP.pdf >.

⁴ Institute for European Environmental Policy, Anticipated Indirect Land Use Change Associated with Expanded Use of Biofuels and Bioliquids in the EU – An Analysis of the National Renewable Energy Action Plans, (March, 2011) p. 19, <www.foeeurope.org/agrofuels/ILUC_report_ November2010.pdfs.

⁵ See the Plataforma 2015 y más annual report Balance de la cooperación española: crisis, estancamiento y debilidad política, and Política Globales Importan, Plataforma 2015 y más, (2011), pp. 45-56, vwww.2015ymas.org >.

SRI LANKA

People and the environment should be first



The Government of Sri Lanka is implementing a neo-liberal, non-sustainable development model that has displaced and impoverished people and has no regard for environmental needs. Already ravaged by the longest civil war in Asia and by natural catastrophes such as the 2004 tsunami, Sri Lanka currently faces severe environmental issues including deforestation and loss of biodiversity. Meanwhile the gap between rich and poor grows wider. The defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has led to strong feelings of dissatisfaction among minority ethnic communities, who feel their control over their lands has been reduced. The Government's military victory has nullified civil society's political expectations.

Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reform (MONLAR) Sarath Fernando

The neo-liberal model currently in place in Sri Lanka continually displaces people from their livelihoods. It breaks up social cohesion and disrupts the collaborative relationship between nature and humanity as it strives to extract more and more resources from the environment in an aggressive and destructive approach.

In 1996, for example, the Government considered shifting rural agriculture from low-value crops (domestic food production) to high-value crops (for export). It was also suggested that farmers should be encouraged to sell their land plots and move out of the villages to seek non-farm employment. A subsequent policy document stated that the Government expected migration from the countryside to make rural/urban proportions 50:50 by 2010.¹

A tsunami that hit the island in December 2004 led to a death toll of 35,322 and displaced 516,150 people. In 2005 plans for rebuilding the country suggested the expulsion of all coastal fisher people.² Their land was to be used for the development of tourism zones and modernized cities, designed for a rich elite. It was also intended to switch into large-scale industrial fishing that would replace the small-scale, beach-based fishing on which people's livelihoods depended. Labour protection laws were to be revised to enable the free hiring and firing of workers, since it was assumed that investors were unlikely to come to countries where labour was protected by law.

Supporters of the neo-liberal economic growth model assume that the best way to make it work is by expanding exports through attracting foreign investment and promoting the private sector by providing more infrastructure facilities such as express highways, international airports, harbours, mega city developments, large tax holidays and cheap labour.



However this model has clearly failed to achieve its declared objectives over the last 33 years. Sri Lanka needs a different strategy, which has to address serious issues including poverty, unemployment, hunger and malnutrition.

Environmental issues

Sri Lanka is featured in several lists of "biodiversity hotspots" – meaning regions both biologically rich and endangered – along the Indian Western Ghats. It is home to as many as 140 endemic species of amphibians, for example.³ But now the country is facing important environmental issues, among them the loss of biodiversity. A report by Conservation International states that only 1.5% of the island's original forests remain.⁴

Most of these forests were lost during British colonial rule when they were cleared for rubber, coffee and tea plantations, but deforestation also took place during the 1980s and early 1990s when Government soldiers cleared the rainforests because they served as refuges for rebel forces. This also displaced small-scale farmers. Between 1990 and 2005 Sri Lanka had one of the highest deforestation rates of primary forest in the world with more than 18% of the remaining forest cover lost in that period.⁵ Over 2.5 million palmyra trees, for example, were felled for construction purposes alone. Reconstruction efforts in the wake of the



2004 tsunami also increased the pressure on the country's forests.

The impact of climate change is a major concern in Sri Lanka as well. For example, very heavy rains that continued from 2010 to early 2011 caused serious floods in many districts with huge losses in agricultural yields. This will intensify food shortages in 2011.⁶ Many reservoirs and waterways have been damaged and will require a large allocation of money for repairs. Erosion is making the soil much less fertile, so producers will need to spend more money on fertilizers. All these issues have led to increasing food prices, which are becoming almost unaffordable by the poorer sections of society.

Political unrest

The military victory achieved in the north over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (see box) has created an appearance of peace in the country, but minority ethnic communities have a strong feeling of dissatisfaction since their control over their lands has been reduced. It is feared that the continued military control of the area is set to provide opportunities for businesses, including foreign investment, that will take control of the land and other natural resources.

People's political expectations (such as for transparent elections and commissions for better functioning of the judicial system and civil service) have been nullified by the Government's military victory, which enabled the presidency to extend its powers and period of rule.

Government of Sri Lanka, "Connecting to Growth: Sri Lanka's Poverty Reduction Strategy," in *Regaining Sri Lanka: Vision* and Strategy for Accelerated Development, (2002), p. 83.

² Amnesty International, "Sri Lanka – Waiting to go home, the plight of the internally displaced," (2006), <vww.amnesty. org/en/library/info/ASA37/004/2006/en>.

³ Conservation international, Western Ghats and Sri Lanka, <www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/hotspots/ghats/Pages/ default.aspx>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Mongabay.com, *Sri Lanka*, <rainforests.mongabay. com/20srilanka.htm>.

⁶ S. Patranobis, "Flood situation worsens, impending food shortage", *Hindustan Times*, (13 January 2011), https://www. hindustantimes.com/Flood-situation-worsens-impendingfood-shortaae/Article1-649962.aspx.

ASIA'S LONGEST CIVIL WAR

The Sri Lankan civil war was fought between 1983 and 2009. The parties involved were the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a separatist militant organization.

The Tamil people, an ethnic group native to the southern regions of the Indian subcontinent, have historically occupied the northern and eastern parts of the island of Sri Lanka. They share the Tamil language and a long cultural tradition including poetry, sculpture and architecture, one of the best-known examples being the art of the Chola dynasty, which ruled southern India from 848 to 1249 AD.

The roots of the conflict go back to British colonial rule, when the country was known as Ceylon. A national liberation movement of Sinhalese people (the ethnic group that comprises the majority of the island's population) arose in the early 20th century calling for political independence, which was eventually granted by the British imperial authorities after peaceful negotiations. One of the policies adopted by the new State was to make Sinhalese the official language, and the 1956 Sinhala Only Act led to ethnic riots that escalated into the civil war.

The first documents regarding the establishment of an independent Tamil Eelam state began to circulate in 1963, and the Tamil New Tigers

(TNT) emerged in 1972 when several groups that had adopted the tiger emblem of the Chola Empire as their icon joined together.

In 1976 the TNT changed its name to Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and started a campaign of assassinations that included members of parliament. The beginning of the civil war was triggered by a LTTE ambush aimed at a Sri Lanka army patrol, which was followed by retaliations against the Tamil people including the killing of several civilians.

The war ended officially in 2009 when the LTTE admitted defeat. The conflict had a severe impact on the population, the environment and the economy, with an estimated 100,000 casualties of which more than 27,000 were Tamil militants.¹ The final stages of the war displaced almost 300,000 people from their homes into camps.² Allegations of war crimes committed on

2 Amnesty International, Unlock the camps in Sri Lanka: safety and dignity for the displaced now. A briefing paper, London, (2009), <www.amnesty.org/en/library/ asset/ASA37/016/2009/en/5de112c8-c8d4-4c31-8144-2a69aa9tff58/asa370162009en.html>. both sides of the conflict include attacks on civilians, executions of combatants and prisoners, enforced disappearances, shortages of food, medicine and clean water for civilians trapped in the war zones and also child recruitment.³

The US-based Tamils Against Genocide group has presented evidence of discrimination, prosecution and even genocide against Tamils in Sri Lanka before, during and after the war, including embargos of food and medicine, disappearances, implementation of race-based citizenship laws, pogroms (in 1956, 1958, 1977 and 1983)⁴ and cultural genocide such as destruction of books and temples.⁵

- 3 Human Rights Watch, Sri Lanka: US war crimes report details extensive abuses, (22 October 2009), <www. hrw.org/en/news/2009/10/22/sri-lanka-us-war-crimesreport-details-extensive-abuses>.
- 4 Tamil Mirror Canada, "Anti-Tamil pograms in Sri Lanka – M. K. Eelaventhan," (15 January 2011), <tamilmirrorcanada.blogspot.com/2011/01/dec-2010feature-anti-tamil-pogroms-in.html>.
- 5 Tamils Against Genocide, "Genocide in Sri Lanka 101: Sheet 2", <www.ptsrilanka.org/index.php?option=com_ content&view=category&layout=blog&id=6<emid=16>.

Conclusion

The current growth model relies on improving the economy through competition in the international market. However the last 33 years show that this approach has failed to reduce poverty in Sri Lanka. Government figures showed 15% of the population living below the official poverty line in 2010, but the World Bank put the figure at 23%.⁷ Moreover economic disparities have been increasing; the richest 10% of the people hold nearly 40% of the wealth and the poorest 10% hold just 1%,⁸ and while the GINI index for 1985 ranked in the vicinity of 0.32, it climbed to almost 0.36 in 1995 and reached 0.41 in 2005.⁹

The social problems that have resulted from this model could be solved by the adoption of sustainable small-scale ecological agriculture. Based on an overall vision of developing a friendly relationship between nature and human society, the strategy would utilize people's creative potential to improve their livelihoods and life situations in a manner that protects and improves the environment. It could regenerate nature and its resources and enable the country to mitigate and adapt to climate change issues.

This approach is also based on understanding the way ecology principles could be applied to enhance soil fertility, maximizing the absorption of sunlight by plants, allowing and enhancing natural biological control of pests by adopting principles of integrated pest management, improving the use of microbial activity and recycling of organic matter, preventing erosion, and timing farming seasons with greater understanding of natural cycles of rain and sun. This approach could be adopted very effectively to improve the productivity of land even in plots as small as 1/8th of an acre. It has the potential to reduce rural poverty while also addressing important environmental issues and becoming a much more sustainable model than the one that has been historically applied.

ABC News, Up to 100,000 killed in Sri Lanka's civil war: UN, (20 May 2009), <www.abc.net.au/news/ stories/2009/05/20/2576543.htm>.

⁷ M. Hardy, "Poverty in Sri Lanka," *The Sunday Leader*, (4 April 2010), <www.thesundayleader.lk/2010/04/04/poverty-in-srilanka/>.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Trading Economies, Gini index in Sri Lanka, (2009), <www. tradingeconomics.com/sri-lanka/gini-index-wb-data.html>.

Two countries, more challenges



The secession of South Sudan will have severe impacts on both the northern and southern States. Development plans in North Sudan will be seriously at risk due to its dependence on oil revenues, while South Sudan faces major economic and social hardships that could turn the new country into a failed state. Although some gender indicators have improved, there is still a long way to go to bridge the gap between women and men, especially since bias against women is deeply rooted in society. The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 paved the way for civil society organizations to play an effective role in monitoring elections and referendums and to establish parliamentary watch groups.

National Civic Forum Mdani Abbas Medani Afaf Awad

2010 marked a turning point in Sudan's political history. Presidential and parliamentary elections were held and preparations were made for the South Sudan Independence Referendum, which included a census in order to determine the nature and number of the electorate. The referendum took place from 9–15 January 2011 and the results, published on 7 February, showed that 98% of voters were in favour of independence. As a result, it was agreed that the Republic of South Sudan would be officially declared a new sovereign State in July of the same year.

According to a survey on poverty conducted in 2009, 46.5% of the Sudanese population currently lives below the poverty line.¹ Critical issues include conflict, displacement and food insecurity, to which major contributing factors are natural and partly human-made disasters such as drought, desertification and floods.²

A brief history of the civil conflicts

Sudan has faced two great civil wars since independence, the first between 1955 and 1972 and the second (considered a prolongation of the first) between 1983 and 2005. The roots of the conflicts can be traced back to colonial times when the British established separate administrations for the northern part, which was more akin to Islamic Egypt, and the southern part, which was similar to Kenya and Tanganyika (now Tanzania). The independence process took place without the participation of emissaries from the south, so their demands and needs were not considered. This led to the First Sudanese Civil War, which started after the Government attacked southern protesters and political dissidents, bringing about increased violence and mutinies that transitioned



into a full-scale war. This phase of the conflicts ended with the Addis Ababa Accord, which was meant to grant the south a good deal of autonomy.

The terms of the agreement were not fully implemented, however, and so the Second Civil War broke out. This was officially ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 between the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). In its aftermath the South Sudan Independence Referendum was proposed.

Environmental challenges

The Sudanese territory faces some critical environmental challenges, including soil erosion, land degradation, deforestation and desertification, which threaten prospects for lasting peace and sustainable development. Expanding settlements, for example, have already compromised the country's forests. Almost 75% of its energy supply is provided by traditional fuels such as wood, which (in addition to the demand for charcoal) has led to the clearing of many forests. This is speeding the process of desertification as the Sahara advances onto previously arable and forested land.³ The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has also identified two other major causes of desertification: climate-based conversion of semi-desert to desert: and degradation of existing desert environments, including wadis and oases, through human activity.4



Although the Government designated nearly 4% of the land as protected areas, there is still severe poaching, threatening animal populations throughout the country. Many conservation efforts were jeopardized by the civil conflicts, especially since military forces took control of ecologically rich woodlands in South Sudan.⁵ According to the UNDP, there are clear linkages between environmental problems and the wars that have afflicted the country: "Competition over oil and gas reserves. Nile waters and timber, as well as land use issues related to agricultural land, are important causative factors in the instigation and perpetuation of conflict in Sudan. Confrontations over rangeland and rain-fed agricultural land in the drier parts of the country are a particularly striking manifestation of the connection between natural resource scarcity and violent conflict."6

Despite serious water shortages, flooding is common – both flash floods caused by heavy rains and more widespread floods caused by the overflow of the Nile and its tributaries – and results in widespread damage, including riverbank erosion and the corresponding loss of crops.⁷

¹ Ministry of Welfare and Social Security and National Population Council, *Sudan Millennium Development Goals Progress Report 2010*, <www.sd.undp.org/doc/Sudan%20 MDGs%20Report%202010.pdf>.

² United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Sudan: Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment, (Nairobi: 2007), <postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP_Sudan.pdf>.

³ Countries Quest, Sudan, Land and Resources, Environmental Issues, <www.countriesquest.com/africa/ sudan/land_and_resources/environmental_issues.htm>.

⁴ UNEP, op. cit.

⁵ Countries Quest, op. cit.

⁶ UNDP Sudan, Environment and Energy for Sustainable Development, (2011), <vwww.sd.undp.org/focus_ environment.htm>.

⁷ UNEP, op. cit.

TABLE 1					
Summary of general education in Sudan					
Level	Institutions	Pupils			Teachers
		Males	Females	Total	164611613
Whole Sudan	3,4301	3,174,809	2,641,668	5,816,477	194,800
Preschool education	8,648	228,944	221,188	450,132	14,964
Basic education	14,071	2,332,612	1,967,125	4,299,737	141,315
Academic secondary education	2,268	306,184	305,395	611,579	32,917
Technical secondary education	114	18,230	8,003	26,233	1,143
Private education	48			6,821	184
Adolescent education	570	10,111	9,330	19,441	159
Adult education	8,582	49,784	130,627	180,411	4,118
Source: Sudanese Studies Center, Strategic Report on the Sudan, 2007–2008 (Jartum).					

Fresh challenges for the two Sudans

North Sudan and South Sudan have been discussing pending issues such as border demarcation, especially concerning the oil-rich Abyei region, which by 2003 contributed more than a quarter of the country's total crude oil output, although production volumes have declined since and some reports suggest that the region's reserves are nearing depletion.⁸ A referendum was planned to decide whether Abyei would be part of the Bahr El Ghazal region of South Sudan or the South Kordofan region of North Sudan. Originally, it was intended to hold this referendum simultaneously with the independence referendum, but it had to be postponed due to severe disagreements over the process, and violence has escalated since then.

The economy of North Sudan, highly dependent on oil revenues, will be negatively affected by the secession, while the South will face several obstacles in its path to establishing itself as a viable State. For example, despite the fact that the southern territory holds three quarters of the oil production sites, nearly all of the refineries and pipelines are in the north. In addition, the question of nationality and integration remains open. Will the Government in South Sudan be able to forge a national identity uniting the peoples inhabiting its territory, which are among the most linguistically and culturally diverse in the world? Even greater challenges for South Sudan are poverty, lack of access to healthcare and rampant maternal and child mortality.⁹

Gender inequality

Female enrolment in primary education increased from 64.4% during 2006–2007 to 69.9% in 2009, while female enrolment in secondary education increased from 30% in 2005 to 35.5% in 2009.¹⁰ In addition, Sudanese women have made some progress in terms of representation and political participation: in the 2010 elections women won 28% of parliamentary seats.

Despite this encouraging data, however, there is still great inequality when it comes to women's chances of being promoted to higher positions and also getting access to training opportunities and most of the activities run by Sudanese women are in agriculture and the informal sector. Also, due mostly to the armed conflicts and civil wars, Sudanese women have been suffering from the lack of basic services, especially healthcare. Maternal mortality, for example, stands at 509 per 100,000 live births.¹¹ In addition, social and cultural norms, beliefs and traditional practices continue to hinder women from engaging actively in all walks of life.

The role of civil society

The signing of the CPA in 2005 paved the way for civil society organizations (CSOs) to engage effectively in addressing key issues, and many have been participating in monitoring Sudan's elections and South Sudan's referenda, observing the entire electoral process in terms of voter education, voter registration and electoral campaigning, and providing technical assistance for the training of domestic observers. Also some CSOs have started establishing parliamentary watch groups charged with monitoring the performance of parliament at State and Federal levels.

However CSOs have not engaged actively in decision-making and major policy issues. This is mostly due to their tense relationship with the Government, especially regarding restrictions on their activities.

Conclusion

Both North and South Sudan face serious developmental and environmental challenges that can only be exacerbated by continuing conflict, and agreement still needs to be reached on key issues such as oil rights, water rights and citizenship. Donor countries have urged both countries to reduce their reliance on oil, increase their food security through agricultural development, and expand health, education, water and sanitation services.¹² Stability and increased trade between north and south as well as with their neighbours would provide economic opportunities for young people, who make up more than half of the population, and for women and girls, whose educational and job opportunities have been limited to date.¹³

13 Ibid

R. Hamilton, "Oil-rich Abyei: Time to Update the Shorthand for Sudan's Flashpoint Border Town?," *Christian Science Monitor*, (3 November 2010), <pulitzercenter.org/articles/ oil-rich-abyei-sudan-accuracy-label>.

⁹ A.Thurston, "Five Challenges South Sudan Will Face After Referendum," Christian Science Monitor, (27 January 2011), <www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/Africa-Monitor/2011/0127/Five-challenges-South-Sudan-willface-after-referendum/(page)/3>.

¹⁰ Trading Economics, *Sudan World Bank Data*, (2010), <www. tradingeconomics.com/sudan/indicators>.

¹¹ UNICEF, Sudan Statistics, <www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ sudan statistics.html>

¹² E. Solheim, A. Mitchell and R. Shah, "Sudan at a Crossroads," *The Guardian*, (7 May 2011), <www.guardian. co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/may/07/ sudan-at-crossroads-south-unresolved>

Stuck in poverty



Food insecurity and poverty are the main challenges Tanzania faces today. Environmental issues such as deforestation, desertification, soil erosion and air pollution are not given appropriate attention by the Government, while small farmers continue to be displaced by foreign enterprises and the country's resources are exploited nearly to depletion. Inadequate and unsustainable policies, inappropriate technologies and insufficient rural infrastructure and institutions – combined with factors such as desertification, deforestation and the high incidence of pests and diseases – have led to increasing poverty, food insecurity and stalled development. If the present policies are not corrected, Tanzanians will be doomed to more poverty and hunger.

SAHRiNGON Tanzania Armando Swenya Martina M. Kabisama LEDECO Clarence Kipobota

The Tanzanian economy depends heavily on agriculture, which employs some 80% of the workforce, contributes more than 40% of gross domestic product (GDP) and provides 85% of exports.1 In 2010 74% of the population lived in rural areas while 26% were based in urban areas.² However rural-to-urban movement is increasing due mostly to the unequal distribution of social services. Farming and livestock production, which are among the key driving forces for poverty alleviation in the country, are therefore increasingly being jeopardized. The Government is doing very little to address the issues of poverty, food security and development, despite various policies and strategies including the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (better known locally by its Kiswahili acronym MKUKUTA) and the National Development Vision 2025.

Poverty is spreading

Tanzania is among the world's least developed countries, ranking 128th out of a total of 169 countries in the 2010 human development index.³ Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 6.0% in 2009 compared to 7.4% in 2008, a slowdown attributed by the Government to the impact of the global financial crisis as well as the 2008–09 drought, which affected agricultural production, hydro power generation and industrial production.⁴ Moreover, although agriculture employs a huge number of people in Tanzania, for at least six years no more than 7% of the entire national budget has been allocated for that purpose. According to the 2007 House Budget Survey, about 33.6% of mainland Tanzanians live below the basic

4 Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, *The Economic Survey 2009*, (Dar es Salaam: June 2010), <www.tanzania. go.tz/economicsurvey1/2009/THE%20ECONOMIC%20 SURVEY%202009.pdf>.



needs poverty line, while 16.6% live below the food poverty line.⁵ The number of poor people has increased in recent years by 1.3 million,⁶ and the rate of unemployment is rising: about 11.7 million people who are able to work are unemployed.⁷ Moreover, the gap between the poor and the rich is getting wider.⁸

Although Tanzania has legislation on investment issues, there are a number of problems relating to foreign direct investment. This is the case, for example, with the signing of dubious mining contracts (e.g., Buzwagi, Richmond and Dowans, and IPTL) between the Government and foreign investors.⁹ Also, land grabbing by State bodies in favour of foreign investors is on the rise. The open door policy of the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC), which is committed to attracting foreign investors, has been detrimental to local people. Small and medium-sized enterprises are unable to compete because they do not have enough capital and business expertise, while villagers are forcefully evicted to make room for foreign enterprises.

- 6 World Bank, *Tanzania: Country Brief*, <go.worldbank. org/7SUHE823V0>.
- 7 Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania; Maoni ya Watanzania Kuhusu Ukuaji wa Uchumi na upunguzaji Umaskini na Kipato, Hali yao ya Maisha na Ustawi wa jamii na Utawala Bora na Uwajibikaji, (2007).
- 8 Trading Economics, *Gini Index in Tanzania*, <www. tradingeconomics.com/tanzania/gini-index-wb-data.html>.
- 9 The Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania's Hansard of the 44th meeting, (14 August 2007), <www.ereto-npp. org/...Walsh_2007_Pastoralism_and_Policy_Processes_ in Tanzania.pdf>.



Environmental and health challenges

Deforestation is one of the main environmental problems that threaten the country. Despite 40% of the territory being preserved in parks, forests are rapidly shrinking in some regions. Overall forest cover fell by 15% between 1990 and 2005, but deforestation rates have increased significantly since 2000.¹⁰ Also, there is concern about soil degradation (as a result of recent droughts), desertification and loss of biodiversity, with 22 of Tanzania's mammal species – along with 30 bird species and 326 plant species – endangered as of 2001.¹¹ Marine habitats are also threatened by damage to coral reefs caused primarily by the use of dynamite for fishing.¹²

Soil erosion and pollution are of particular concern in mining sites. In January 2009, for example, North Mara Gold Mines piled up about 2,000 tonnes of toxic debris without any precaution or assessment of its impact on the surrounding communities. When the rain came, the debris was washed into River Tighite, which serves the villages of Nyakunsuru, Nyamone and Weigita in the Mara Region, causing fish and trees to die.¹³

CIA, The World Factbook, Tanzania, (May 2011), <www.cia. gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tz.html>.

² Ibid

³ UNDP, Human Development Report 2010 – The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development, (New York: 2010), <hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2010/chapters/en/>.

⁵ Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), Tanzania Human Rights Report 2009, (Dar es Salaam: 2009), cwww. humanrights.or.tz/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Tanzania-Human-Rights-Report-2009.pdf>.

¹⁰ Mongabay.com, *Tanzania*, <rainforests.mongabay. com/20tanzania.htm>.

¹¹ Encyclopedia of the Nations, *Tanzania – Environment*, <www. nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Tanzania-ENVIRONMENT. html>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ LHRC, op. cit., pp. 134-35.

Agriculture and food security

Challenges in the agricultural sector include a lack of appropriate agricultural policies and practices and the lack of funds in – and poor utilization of – the agriculture budget. In addition, the agricultural field technicians are unmotivated and inexperienced.

Dependence on development partners is another obstacle to the sustainability of agriculture, since most of the budget for development comes from donors. In fact, for the 2010 budget, all the funds that were to be allocated came from development partners.¹⁴ With this poor limited budget farmers and livestock keepers are unable to fight food insecurity, while their very low incomes do not meet even the minimum standard of life.

The country has a number of policies and laws focused on food security. The Food Security Act of 1991, for example, established a Food Security Department to oversee the establishment and management of a strategic grain reserve. Other institutional mechanisms in this regard are the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) and the National Food Security Division. The aim of the former is to maintain an optimum national level of food reserves to address local food shortages and respond to emergency food requirements as well as to guarantee national food security by procuring and reserving food stocks in an efficient and cost-effective manner. However despite all these efforts the challenge is still looming. For instance, in June 2009 the Ministry of Agriculture announced a severe lack of food in the Chamwino district in Dodoma region, with a total of 17,080 households being unable to afford daily food. In order for the district to satisfy its basic needs 63,501,000 kg of food are required, while the realized production for 2008/09 was only 12,178,000 kg.¹⁵

Partly this is due to the inadequate measures undertaken by all the institutions set up under the food Security Act, together with the use of inappropriate technologies, desertification, deforestation and the incidence of pests and diseases together with inadecquate rural infrastructure, as well as weak and underfunded rural institutions.

Sustainability challenges

Since 1990, Tanzania has been implementing a sustainable development strategy that pays special attention to environmental issues. A National Environmental Action Plan was established in 1994, leading to the adoption of the 1997 National Environmental Policy and to the drafting of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development in 2000.¹⁶

Nevertheless, despite this policy framework, the country has not succeeded in coping with environmental challenges. This is due mostly to insufficient institutional frameworks for coordination, limited government capacity for environmental management, and insufficient involvement of local authorities and communities in environmental management and conservation. Poverty is also a key factor: it adds to environmental degradation, through for example, the use of wood as a source of energy, which contributes to deforestation and soil erosion, while environmental degradation contributes to the intensification and perpetuation of poverty. Throughout the country, energy utilization is characterized by a high consumption of traditional energy sources such as wood for cooking and kerosene for light. In addition, high prices for petroleum products (especially kerosene) and increasing electricity prices could turn urban and rural energy demand back to traditional fuels.¹⁷

Conclusion

To achieve sustainable economic development, the Government needs to focus on issues such as rural development, agricultural improvement and economic empowerment of the rural population. It also needs to increase transparency in contracts with foreign investors and at the same time give legal and economic empowerment to local producers and traders. Problems such as unemployment and the widening gap between the poor and the rich also need to be tackled. While issues such as the budget allocation for agriculture and food security remain only partially addressed, Tanzanians will continue to suffer from hunger and poverty.

17 Ibid.

¹⁵ LHRC, op. cit., p. 121.

¹⁴ Policy Forum, The Citizens' Budget: A Simplified Version of the National Budget 2010/11, (Dar es Salaam: 2010), <www. policyforum-tz.org/files/CBenglish2010.pdf>.

¹⁶ B. Makiya Lyimo, Energy and Sustainable Development in Tanzania, (Helio International/ Sustainable Energy Watch, 2006), <www.helio-international.org/uploads/Tanzania-EN.pdf>.

THAILAND

Coastal resources in danger



Over the past 40 years, the country has undergone tremendous changes in its pursuit of economic growth, and at the local level there has been a movement away from subsistence livelihoods to an increased focus on monetary income. The main challenges the country now faces are the rapid degradation of marine and coastal resources and the multiple consequences of urbanization and industrial and tourism development. The unsustainable development models in use are placing a tremendous strain on the limited marine and coastal resources and the livelihoods of small-scale fishers, while policies and legislative, institutional and operational frameworks fail to support local communities in exercising their constitutional rights.

Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) and Social Agenda Working Group Jonathan Shott

The lives and livelihoods of around 13 million Thai are directly dependent on the use of marine and coastal resources. Thailand's waters cover an area of around 350,000 km² and the country has some 35,000 km² of coastal land.¹ Important natural habitats and natural resources include beach forests, sea grass beds, minerals, ores, oil and natural gas. The country also has an estimated 12,000 km² of coral reefs with a biodiversity of at least 240 different species, and 1,964 km² of mangrove forests comprising 35 different species.²

Major industries dependent on marine and coastal resources include capture fishery, aquaculture fishery, tourism, transportation of produce and merchandise, heavy industry and power generation. Thailand is estimated to derive some THB 7,500 billion (around USD 250 million) from its marine and coastal resources each year.³

Thailand's coastal waters have traditionally been rich and productive, characterised by high biodiversity and large, healthy populations. These abundant resources have contributed to the development of a robust fisheries sector. Both capture fishery and aquaculture fishery are important to the country's economy, with Thailand accounting for 3% of total fish catch and nearly 2% of total aquaculture production globally in 2003. Its annual marine fish catch is valued at over THB 120 billion (around USD 4 billion).

Small-scale fishing

Thailand's 2007 Constitution enshrines the rights of traditional or local communities to participate in the conservation, care, management and balanced and sustainable use of natural resources and the environment. However implementation and operation by Government agencies at the local level often fail



to promote, support and facilitate local communities in exercising their constitutional rights, and in many cases the approaches employed by Government agencies contradict those rights.

That is, for example, the situation in the case of small-scale fishers. Over 60,000 households from 4,000 villages are engaged in fishing, of which around 93% are small-scale fishers who account for around 9% of the country's annual catch.⁴ They make use of traditional, handmade fishing boats and fishing gear, which effectively limit them to fishing only in waters within 3 to 5 km of the shore. This makes them especially vulnerable to local changes in the condition of marine and coastal resources.⁵

Sustainability challenges

Marine animal populations in Thailand's waters are in a degraded state as a result of fishing beyond the sea's carrying capacity. The Gulf of Thailand has been particularly affected, and the country has been exceeding the highest sustainable annual catch (1.4 million tons) since 1972.⁶ Other challenges include the failure to eradicate the use of push nets, the



lack of control over the use of dragnets, and the fuel subsidies and low-paid migrant labour that allow the commercial fishery sector to maintain artificially low costs.

Aquaculture fishery has also greatly affected the condition of marine and coastal resources. The Department of Marine and Coastal Resources reports that nearly 74,640 hectares of mangrove forest have been used for aquaculture fishery, in particular shrimp farms.⁷

In the Trang province (on the Andaman Sea coastline), large commercial fishing boats employing destructive fishing gear such as push-nets and dragnets have devastated local marine resources, drastically reducing fish populations in a very short period of time and bringing damage and destruction to invaluable marine ecosystems such as coral reefs and sea grass beds. Such large commercial fishing boats have been found operating within the 3,000 metres nearshore zone reserved specifically for small-scale fishing, and even within the boundaries of local marine protected areas.

In the Nakorn Sri Thammarat province on the Gulf of Thailand coastline, illegal dredging for surf clams has caused rapid degradation of the marine environment.⁸ The illegal dredgers tend to operate during the monsoon season (when small-scale fishers are unable to put to sea) and excavate material from the seabed to a depth of 1 metre or more. An area dredged in this way can take five or six years to return to its previously abundant state. Furthermore, illegal dredging can also cause

7 Ibid

Thailand Reform Office, *Reforming the Structure of Marine* and Coastal Resource Management, (Bangkok: March 2011), pp. 1–2.

² Ibid., p. 1

³ C. Cheung, et al. (comp.), Marine Protected Areas in Southeast Asia (Los Baños, Philippines: ASEAN Regional Center for Biodiversity Conservation – Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 2002), p. 86.

⁴ M. Unkulvasapaul, et al., *Thailand Environment Monitor* 2006: Marine and Coastal Resources (Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2007), pp. 8–10.

⁵ R. Prasertcharoensuk and J. Shott, Samudra Mongraph: Time for a Sea Change – A Study of the Effectiveness of Biodiversity Conservation Measures and Marine Protected Areas Along Southern Thailand's Andaman Sea Coastline, (Chennai, India: International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, 2010), <vww.icst.net/icsf2006/uploads/ publications/monograph/pdf/english/issue_110/ALL.pdf>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid

damage and destruction to the fishing gear of local small-scale fishers.⁹

When marine and coastal resources become degraded, small-scale fishing tends to be more severely affected than commercial fishing. Unlike commercial fishers, small-scale fishers are unable to venture further out into deep offshore waters. While in theory they might decide to travel daily to neighbouring areas where resources are less severely degraded, in practice they have very meagre incomes, so additional fuel costs could threaten their livelihoods.

Urbanization, industrial development and tourism

Thailand's coastal provinces have been transformed by urbanization, industrialization and tourism development, which have had a range of negative effects on both marine and coastal resources and the livelihoods of small-scale fishers. There is increased demand and competition for land, with the privatization of coastal land and nearshore waters restricting access. Moreover, environmental changes and pollution have affected the availability and condition of marine and coastal resources and have exacerbated existing issues such as coastal erosion.

Small-scale fishing communities must, through necessity, be located on the coastline, because they typically moor their boats on sandy beaches or in coastal inlets. Even relatively small developments that affect the navigation of nearshore waters, such as the construction of privately owned marinas, can have a profound impact on them because of the additional fuel, and therefore additional expenditure, required to navigate around such structures.

Mangrove forests have been threatened by encroachment for settlement and industry as well as by the use of timber for firewood, charcoal, furniture and construction. Thailand's almost 10,400 hectares of sea grass beds have been negatively affected by sediment arising from coastal construction, deforestation and agriculture, the release of waste water in coastal areas and the use of illegal fishing gear such as push-nets. Severe coastal erosion causes Thailand to lose 3 km² of land to the sea each year, at an estimated cost of THB 6 billion (around USD 200 million). Although coastal erosion is brought about by a combination of both natural and human influences, factors related to coastal development include activities that disrupt the natural accumulation of sediment, including dam construction, sand mining and dredging deep-water channels to facilitate marine transportation.¹⁰

The country's coastal areas have been earmarked for the development of mass transportation systems and heavy industry under the Government's Southern Seaboard Development Plan. There are 37 projects planned, including deep-water ports, oil rigs, fuel depots, fuel transportation pipelines, heavy industry and power plants. The plan has emphasized the development of heavy industry without considering alternative forms of development potentially more appropriate to the socioeconomic circumstances and cultural ecology of the targeted areas, the economies of which are founded on fishery, agriculture, tourism, education and minor industry.¹¹

Thailand has witnessed many examples of inappropriate and unsustainable tourism development, as well as tourism activities that directly affect marine and coastal resources such as 'coral walks', which involve walking directly on coral reefs. But for many small-scale fishing communities living in some of Thailand's most important tourist areas, problems and conflicts relating to land and land rights are a much bigger issue. Conflicts have arisen between local communities and tourism operators who have been issued title deeds, or who have encroached on land without any right of ownership, in areas that overlap with community terrestrial forests, community mangrove forests, community settlements and public roads.¹²

Changing global, national and local socioeconomic contexts are placing increasing strains on limited marine and coastal resources. Over the past 40 years, Thailand has undergone tremendous changes in its pursuit of national-level economic growth, while at the local level rapidly changing expectations regarding standards of living and quality of life have moved away from subsistence livelihoods to an increased focus on monetary income. Despite great advances generally at the policy level, ¹³ smallscale fishers still have no formal, established identity within existing policy and legislative frameworks, meaning that there is frequently a failure to identify and address the issues that affect their livelihoods and well-being.

New policies, but the same old practices

There is a significant gap between national level policies and legislation and implementation at the local level. Promising changes in policy direction¹⁴ fail to bring about tangible, widespread and lasting change at the local level because the intervening legislation, bureaucracy and administration are resistant. There is also lack of coordination, cooperation and integration between the various organizations and agencies related either directly or indirectly to the management of marine and coastal resources, which leads to at best inefficient and incoherent, and at worst conflicting and counterproductive implementation and operation at the local level. The lack of coherence between the approaches and practices of the diverse organizations and agencies highlights the need to rationalize the overlying and complex legislative framework applicable to the management of natural resources and the environment.

In many cases legislation has not been updated to reflect positive policy changes at the national level. In other cases existing legislation, that could potentially be beneficial to marine and coastal resources as well as to small-scale fishers, fails because enforcement is either poor, and so individuals are able to flout the law, or else it is arbitrary, with different standards being applied in different circumstances. Specific issues include legal loopholes that allow offenders to escape prosecution, penalties too lenient to act as useful deterrents, and insufficient resources or bureaucratic hindrances that prevent regular, comprehensive patrols from being carried out.¹⁵

Conclusion

Unsustainable development practices are having a negative impact on marine and coastal resources and the livelihoods of small-scale fishers. Although changing socioeconomic contexts at the global, national and local levels are certainly placing increasing strain on the limited marine and coastal resources, a range of other underlying issues are also to blame, all related to policy, legislative, institutional and operational frameworks that fail to support local communities in exercising their constitutional rights and also fail to control and suppress illegal, inappropriate and unsustainable practices.

⁹ S. Jitpiromsri, and Sustainable Development Foundation, "Strengthening the Capacity of Vulnerable Coastal Communities to Address the Risks of Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events: Community Study Report," reference document for Global Environment Facility / Special Climate Change Fund project development process, (Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani Campus, 2009), p.16.

¹⁰ Thailand Reform Office, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 6.

¹² Ibid., pp. 5-6.

¹³ For example the policy to control the number of fishing vessels. See <www.fao.org/D0CREP/005/AC790E/ AC790E02.htm>.

¹⁵ Prasertcharoensuk and Shott, op. cit.

UNITED STATES

Wanted: a new economy and a new social contract



The multiple crises facing the United States and the world are rooted in the prioritization of economic growth over human well-being. The consensus that current economic priorities and unsustainable consumption patterns are deeply flawed, unjust and *compromise the human rights and well-being of future generations in the United States and globally is growing.* The Occupy Wall Street movement has given voice to the growing number of Americans demanding a new social contract and a completely different approach to the economy.

Global-Local Links Project Tanya Dawkins Center of Concern Aldo Caliari & Julia Wartenberg Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy Karen Hansen-Kuhn & Alexandra Spieldoch

From the Arab Spring to the Occupy Wall Street movement, millions of the world's citizens are raising their voices to demand human rights, real democracy, dignity and a just economic order. Together they are finding ways to harness the forces of technology and globalization to communicate and advance the demands of the rapidly growing numbers of citizens marginalized by an economic model that has not and cannot prioritize their interests.

The human and community impacts of the 2008 crisis and its predicating economic policies are intensifying as accesses to the basic necessities of life exceed the grasp of more and more Americans. Deep poverty, the share of the population with incomes below half the poverty line, is on the rise in the United States. The number of people in deep poverty rose to 20.4 percent in 2010, up 25 percent or 4 million since 2007.¹

In what some are calling the "Lost Decade" in America², the 2010 U.S. Census portrays a chilling picture of the deteriorating fortunes of working families, children, youth, women, and minorities in the last ten years. In 2009, over one-third of black children (35.7%) and nearly one-third of Hispanic children (33.1%) were living in poverty. Families (with children) headed by single mothers hit 38.5% in 2009. Of the 6.6 million families living in poverty, 3.8 million of them were headed by a single mother. During that same period African American incomes dropped by 4.4% and an additional 3.7 million Americans slipped below the poverty line, as the poverty rate increased from 13.2% to 14.3%, the highest rate since 1994.³



Access to Healthy Food at Home and Abroad in Focus

Access to nutritionally adequate food has emerged as a serious and growing problem in the United States. Agriculture and food policies have created what physicians call an "obesogenic" environment, in which much of the food available to consumers is simultaneously high in fat and calories and low in nutrition. Processed foods, meat, and dairy have become relatively cheaper than more nutritious fruits and vegetables, contributing to rising obesity rates and declining health among children and adults. The United States currently has the highest rate of obesity in the world, at 33%, closely followed by its NAFTA partner Mexico.

The overwhelming majority of farm supports encourage production of grain for processed foods, meat and biofuels, limiting consumers' choices. Prices for farmers have been volatile, and the number of small, but commercially viable farms has dropped by 40%, from half of total farms in 1982 to less than a third in 2007. Expenses have risen to offset higher sales revenues, and government payments have declined because some are triggered by lower prices. With the recession, off-farm income has declined dramatically, leaving family farm households worse off than they were earlier when crop prices were low.

There is a growing movement of food activists in the United States committed to sustainable local production and healthier foods. The 2008 Farm Bill expanded programs to encourage purchases of sustainably grown fruits and vegetables in school lunch programs. First Lady, Michelle Obama's focus on bringing awareness to the need for healthy foods and lifestyles has been a significant contribution.



At the international level, the Obama administration has continued its support programs to bolster food production, with special emphasis on women and smallholder farmers. Funding for the Feed the Future initiative as well as the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (a trust fund administered by the World Bank) has continued to flow even with current budget constraints. The potential gains for small scale farmers and healthy food production in the US and around the world can only be maintained if the Administration's push to double U.S. exports breaks with the trade policies of the past.

The Debt Ceiling Debacle Ignored the Real Issues

Until now, raising the debt ceiling has been a largely administrative policy matter. This year, congressional Republicans threats to push the country into default kicked off a protracted, partisan debate that kept America's Congressional gridlock on the global stage for months.

It should come as no surprise that with poverty and income inequality at historic levels and a debt debate that largely revolved around preserving the Bush-era tax cuts and dramatically cutting social spending that an unprecedented 84% of Americans disapprove of Congress' handling of the economy.

There is little doubt that without the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 the recession would be even worse. Now, as states and communities reel from the most recent round of federal funding cuts to vital programs, a so-called Congressional "Super Committee" has been tasked with developing legislation that will recommend additional cuts in discretionary funding and direct spending by USD 1.5 trillion through 2021.

¹ See: <www.offthechartsblog.org/deep-poverty-on-the-rise>

² Elise Gould and Heidi Shierholz, (Economic Policy Institute Economic Indicators Report, September 16, 2010).

³ U.S. Census Data, as reported by the Economic Policy Institute.



Getting Real About Social Protection and the Social Contract

A recent report found that 65.7 million Americans provide unpaid care to a family member; the majority of these care-givers are women (66.6%). Additionally, three-quarters of caregivers are employed in addition to their care-giving responsibilities. The value of these services is estimated at USD 375 billion a year. Despite these numbers, 47% of working caregivers report that they have had to use their savings to cover the high costs of care-giving.

The United States can and must move beyond the current shortsighted debate about so-called entitlement spending to embrace the reality that investing in children, communities, eldercare and healthcare are fundamental features of a modern democracy and strong, resilient economy. A recent International Labor Organization's (ILO) report, noted that ensuring basic social protections can be a powerful tool for ensuring sustainable growth, addressing poverty and mitigating the impact of the economic crisis. The report goes on to frame social protection as both a human right and a human need. These rights' based approaches to economic development are likely to find resonance in the current environment.

Getting Serious About Sustainability

The primary goal of domestic and international economic and development policy must be to ensure must place human and community. Redesigning the economic model through this lens is an undertaking that has global, national and community dimensions. It requires, for example, rethinking the increased reliance by US-based companies on global supply chains that have profit maximization as their sole objective.

The inherent risk and potential for abuses of human rights and global ecosystems in global production chains has reignited interest in relocalization and other more sustainable business practices. The recent tragedy in Japan and the spike in oil prices of 2007-08 have prompted some reexamination of these trends among the business community. The time has long since passed for questioning whether the United States and the world can afford the continuation of approaches that have profit maximization as their prime directive.

Interest in solidarity economy and responsible business movements, worker owned companies and cooperatives that bring high quality economically and ecologically sustainable living wage jobs to their communities is increasing. Cities like Cleveland and Detroit, hard hit by past, short-sighted trade policy and the recession are reinventing their economies by focusing on the express goal of building wealth, decent jobs and anchoring capital in the community. Others still, are exploring the benefits of community food security initiatives, community-owned banks and participatory budgeting. Fiscal and monetary policy measures that encourage these trends are needed in order to bring these efforts to scale.

Changing American consumption patterns is key to achieving sustainable development and addressing the devastating impacts of climate change domestically and globally. The United States is home to 5% of the world's population, yet it consumes 25% of the world's energy and is responsible for 22 % of the world's industrial carbon dioxide emissions, a leading cause of global warming. The daily consumption of 19,150,000 barrels of oil per day is more than all of Europe and twice that of China.

The United States has a unique responsibility and opportunity to make aggressive and affirmative efforts to pursue domestic and international policies that are geared toward the well-being of Americans and the rest of the human race.

Citizens Must Take Center Stage

The consensus that the current economic models are deeply flawed and act to deepen and reproduce harmful inequalities is growing. The Occupy Wall Street, domestic human rights and other citizens' movements have given voice to the growing number of Americans demanding a completely different approach to the economy and a new social contract.

The task of building and re-imagining a new economy is urgent and will not be achieved by mere tinkering around the edges of the failed model which created the current crisis. As long as citizens continue to demand and take their rightful place in the democratic and policy processes, America's best years can still be ahead of her.

VENEZUELA

The unfortunate consequences of extraction-based growth



The economic model pursued under the Government of President Chávez bears the stamp of neoliberalism and is in fact a continuation and expansion of resource extraction. It has had serious negative environmental consequences and has proved unable to meet people's needs. There has been some improvement in education but other areas of basic rights like health and housing have regressed. Social development programmes have been cancelled or neglected and the Government, which disdains dialogue with the opposition or with critical civil society organizations, is weakening democracy by implementing far-reaching changes to the 1999 Constitution. The country needs to design a development model that is genuinely sustainable.

Programa Venezolano de Educación-Acción en Derechos Humanos (Provea) Rafael Uzcátegui

Since the early 20th century development models in Venezuela have been based on an extractive economy and the export of energy resources. When Hugo Chávez became president in 1998 he criticized past governments and claimed that his model was a new departure and that, unlike previous ones, it was "supportive" and "endogenous." He summed up his overall policy as "Oil Socialism ... This is our model ... We have this oil wealth ... We cannot think of Oil Socialism without the oil industry... [and this resource] gives our economic model an unusual form."¹

Various social and human rights organizations warned that this policy was not sustainable, as the social programmes or "missions' that benefit large sectors of the population depend on inflated profits stemming from high oil prices on the world market. According to the 2011 budget law,² income from exports in the energy sector would account for 27.6% of the total money available for expenditure so long as the oil price remained at or above USD 40 per barrel, which was near the previous year's price. However, experts such as José Guerra, former president of the Central Bank, argued that this estimate did not reflect the real situation since oil prices were oscillating around USD 100, which meant the Government had considerable additional funds to manage at its discretion and were difficult for civil society organizations to keep track of.

International prices for crude oil have now recovered, but there was a recent period of economic crisis during which, according to official figures,³ the Venezuelan economy contracted for 18 consecutive months. This resulted in spending cuts for social policies (except the education sector) and as a result the "missions" stagnated and social conflict worsened. According to reports by two human rights organiza-

3 See <www.bcv.org.ve/>.



tions in Venezuela, Espacio Público and PROVEA, in 2010 there were at least 3,114 protest meetings and marches in the country, continuing a steady rise in the number of demonstrations.⁴

Development based on oil

The basis of the Government's development model is large oil, gas, mining and infrastructure development projects, but these have serious socio-environmental impacts and are not sustainable in the long term because they are based on extraction-led growth. This exploitation of the country's oil and gas resources has also interfered with policies that would benefit various sectors of society. One clear example is the project to mark out the boundaries of indigenous lands in compliance with article 119 of the Constitution. This demarcation process was due to have been completed in 2002 but the initiative is now at a standstill.

One well-known critic points out that while President Chávez and other members of the governing institutions claim to have renounced capitalism and neoliberalism, the country's development model is continuing and expanding the extractive system that was in place previously, which has serious detrimental effects on the environment.⁵ This situation has been aggravated by the Government's moves to break off dialogue with its critics, both in the opposi-



tion parties and in civil society. Sustainable development is not possible unless the warnings that people are sounding about the social and environmental consequences of oil and gas exploitation are heard and taken into account. Unlike in other oil-producing countries in the region, Venezuela has no ecology organization studying pollution caused by the oil industry in various parts of the county. Other environmental problems including deforestation⁶ and serious pollution in the Valencia Lake are not being addressed.⁷

Social unrest

Some 36% of the demonstrations in 2010 were by people demanding labour rights. Critics of the Government have claimed that it has tried to shift the burden of the effects of the world economic crisis onto the workers' shoulders, and at the same time is stalling on talks about collective bargaining in the public sector and in State enterprises. For the second year in a row the increase in the minimum wage –currently about USD 462– has not been enough to cover the cost of the basic consumer basket or compensate for the national currency's loss of purchasing power. Venezuela has persistently had the highest inflation in the region and according to official sources the rate in 2010 was 30.9%.⁸ To make matters worse, after several consecutive years in

7 Infociudadano.com, Situación del Lago de Valencia, (16 August 2010), <www.infociudadano.com/2010/08/16/ situacion-del-lago-de-valencia/>.

8 See: <ipsnoticias.net/inflacion.asp>

Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Comunicación e Información, Programa Aló Presidente 288, https://www.elinformacion/7/248/programa_alupresidente_288.html.

² Ministerio del Poder Popular de Planificación y Finanzas, Ley de Presupuesto para el Ejercicio Fiscal 2011, <www.ocepre. gov.ve>.

⁴ PROVEA, Public Demonstrations Report 2010, <www. derechos.org.ve/proveaweb/wp-content/uploads/ Manifestaciones-P%C3%BAblicas-Informe-2010.pdf>

⁵ M.P. García-Gaudilla, "Ecosocialismo del siglo XXI y modelo de desarrollo bolivariano: los mitos de la sustentabilidad ambiental y de la democracia participativa en Venezuela," *Revista venezolana Economía y Ciencias Sociales*, Vol.15, no.1 (2009), 187-223.

⁶ Informe21.com, Denuncian que la deforestación en nuestro país es la segunda en América, (22 April 2010), <informe21. com/actualidad/denuncian-deforestacion-nuestro-paissegunda-america>.

which unemployment decreased, since the end of 2009 the number of people out of work has been on the rise. Between that time and August 2010 unemployment increased from 6.8% to 9.6%.⁹

In response to this worsening situation the Government should review and revitalize the Ché Guevara Mission, initiated in 2004 under the name of "Misión Vuelvan Caracas," to help people who had dropped out of the workforce to reenter the labour market and to bring unemployment down to 5%. However, although this initiative has not reached its targets in the six years it has been in operation, its budget was drastically cut from USD 59 million to USD 7 million in 2011.¹⁰

Regression in health and housing

In 2006, the Barrio Adentro Mission was initiated, raising hopes for health services for large sectors of the population. Some 13,000 doctors were brought in from Cuba and 8,573 health care centres were built across the country. While this helped to improve basic health care provision, there were big problems with these modules and 2,000 of them were closed down. In September 2009 Chávez declared a state of emergency in health.¹¹

In 2011, the Government announced a plan to revitalize the Barrio Adentro Mission and made a budget allocation of USD 195 million. However, this policy initiative is not coordinated by the Ministry of Health as would have been expected given the nature of the task, but by the Ministry of the Office of the President, which is an eloquent testimony to the lack of coordination between institutions in the health field.

The old hospital network, which consists of 299 centres throughout the country, is fraught with structural defects including a lack of medical supplies, insufficient personnel and serious deficiencies in health care infrastructure all of which means that large sectors of the population are being denied their right to health services. In the 1999 Constitution a time frame of not more than one year was stipulated for the introduction of an Organic Health Law to unify the system and put it in order, but today, 11 years later, there has still been no legislation to bring this about.

Another sector the President has called a "problem for the State" is housing. In 2009 the Government built 23,649 housing units, for a total 324,588 units over its 11 years in office. This falls far short of the goal to build 150,000 per year to remedy the country's housing shortage, estimated at around 3,000,000 units, in 10 years.¹² There are a variety of reasons for the delay, including the fact that the Ministry was only set up in 2005, its institutions are fragile, its top directors are rotated frequently, it neglects to supervise or monitor the projects or the funds invested in them adequately, and it lacks a housing construction and land urbanization plan with clear targets for the short, middle and long term.

In spite of this dismal performance, and in spite of cutting back on policies that have already shown themselves to be inadequate, President Chávez has announced plans to built two million housing units in the next six years.¹³

Progress in education

At present the Government is still achieving positive results in education, moving up from 64th to 59th in the UNESCO ranking,¹⁴ with an Educational Development Index (EDI) rating of 0.956, which is higher than its 1999 rating of 0.910.¹⁵

However, the quality of the education provided must be improved. The main problem is that Venezuela does not have a national system to evaluate progress in learning so there are no parameters against which to implement improvements. In addition, in 2010 some 44% of the teachers were temporary staff or substitutes.¹⁶ The situation is worse in less developed areas such as Amazonas state, where half the teachers lack teaching qualifications.

Making protest illegal

Social conflict is becoming increasingly serious as the Chávez Government has failed to address people's complaints and demands, and instead has responded by making demonstrations illegal. It has closed institutional channels for negotiation, conducted campaigns to discredit demonstrators and social leaders, violently repressed and used the law against people who mobilize, and promoted legal action against them with no evidence. In 2010, some 135 street demonstrations were met with violence by the military and police security forces and 438 people were arrested and 386 injured.¹⁷

Perhaps the most worrying aspect of this escalating conflict is the fact that legal action has been taken against demonstrators. PROVEA has calculated that more than 2,400 people have been hauled before the courts, including 125 union activists and 1200 peasants, both women and men. This was made possible by the promulgation of a series of regulations that make protest in the country illegal:

- 14 Ministerio del Poder Popular para Relaciones Exteriores, Venezuela es la nación que más ha disminuido la desigualdad social y económica en América Latina y el Caribe, (15 October 2010), <venezuela-us.org/es/2010/10/15/venezuelaes-la-nacion-que-mas-ha-disminuido-la-desigualdad-socialy-economica-en-america-latina-y-el-caribe/>.
- 15 Abrebrecha.com, UNESCO: Venezuela a punto de lograr metas educativas, (13 April 2010), <www.abrebrecha. com/50753_Unesco:-Venezuela-a-punto-de-lograr-metaseducativas.html>.
- 16 PROVEA, Informe Anual 2010 Derechos Humanos en Venezuela, <www.derechos.org.ve/proveaweb/?page_id=9235>.
- 17 PROVEA and Espacio Público, Informe de Protestas en Venezuela año 2010, <www.derechos.org.ve/ proveaweb/2n=11272>

article 357 of the reform to the Penal Code, articles 47 and 56 of the Organic Law of the Security of the Nation, articles 139 and 141 of the Law for the Defence of People's Access to Goods and Services, and articles 24 and 25 of the Special Law to defend the people against monopolies, boycotts or any other conduct that may affect the consumption of food or products that are subject to price controls.

These laws make it illegal to engage in street protests, which is one of the ways people's movements have traditionally demanded their rights, and set up various "security zones' where it is forbidden to disturb public order. The best known case of using the law against social leaders is that of trade unionist Rubén González, who was jailed from September 2009 to March 2011 for supporting a shutdown in the State enterprise Ferrominera in the state of Bolívar over a series of labour demands. On 28 February 2011 González was sentenced to seven and a half years in prison for conspiracy, incitement to commit illegal acts, violation of a security zone and interfering with the right to work. Five days later, after widespread demonstrations, the Supreme Court of Justice overturned the sentence and ordered a retrial in the city of Caracas, and González was allowed out of custody during the trial.18

Weakening democracy

In December 2010 a law was passed giving the President extraordinary powers for a period of 18 months. A further set of 24 laws was promulgated that confirmed moves to push ahead with a project called "Socialism of the 21st Century." Two human rights coalitions, Foro por la Vida and Sinergia, claim these "seriously affect the rule of law and the full enjoyment of human rights" in Venezuela.¹⁹ The package is in effect an initiative to impose a Constitution different from that passed by popular vote in 1999. The new laws deny the right to association by making it illegal to receive funds from international organizations.

On 22 December 2010 a Law of Political Sovereignty and Self-Determination²⁰ was hurriedly passed, which explicitly prohibits organizations "with political ends" from receiving funds from abroad. Two of the three activities the law classes as initiatives of a political nature can be interpreted to cover nearly all popular and social initiatives in the country, since they include promoting people's participation in public spaces and exercising control over political decisions. A second piece of legislation, the Law of International Cooperation, gives the President the power to take resources sent to civil society organizations into Government hands.

20 See: <www.minamb.gob.ve/files/leyes-2011/ No6013ledespan.pdf>

⁹ See: <economia.noticias24.com/noticia/34229/ine-tasa-dedesempleo-en-venezuela-repunto-al-96-durante-agosto>.

¹⁰ Calculations based on the official exchange rate of 4.3 bolivars to the dollar.

¹¹ La Cl@ase.info, Chávez admite cierre de módulos de Barrio Adentro y declara en emergencia la salud, (20 September 2009), <laclase.info/nacionales/chavez-admite-cierre-de-modulos-debarrio-adentro-y-declara-en-emergencia-la-saluds.

¹² Latest available figures from the Ministry of Housing and Habitat, (2007).

¹³ See: <www.correodelorinoco.gob.ve/nacionales/inicia-alopresidente-numero-370-estado-vargas/>.

¹⁸ See: <www.derechos.org.ve/?s=rub%C3%A9n+gonzalez&x =0&y=0>.

¹⁹ Foro por la Vida and Sinergia, Ley habilitante coloca en serio riesgo los derechos humanos, (2010), <www.derechos.org. ve/proveaweb/?p=9494>.

VIETNAM

Civil society should be consulted



Through strong economic growth Vietnam has reached lower middle-income country status, but the Government has to make more efforts to meet people's long-term needs. Poverty and environmental challenges such as worsening pollution, rising sea levels and increasing soil erosion need to be addressed, together with risk factors for corruption such as unequal access to information and officials' discretionary powers over land compensation. Civil society and independent experts must be involved in developing strategies to tackle the challenges of sustainable development.

VUFO-NGO Resource Centre

Vietnam has achieved an impressive rate of economic growth in the past 15 years. Real gross domestic product (GDP) grew on average by 7.3% a year from 1995 to 2005.¹ In 2009 in the aftermath of the global financial crisis Vietnam still registered a real GDP growth of 5.3% and has been one of the fastestgrowing economies in East Asia and the Pacific.² Whether this development is sustainable, and how it is affecting the environment and the livelihoods of the current and future generations, are key questions for the nation.

Support for pro-poor economic growth has been widespread. Growth has brought relative prosperity to many after the years of war and postwar privation. However while mainstream development has reduced poverty it is also degrading the environment on which many poor people depend.³

In 2010 Vietnam reached lower middle-income country status. The 2009 gross national income (GNI) was USD 1,010, which put the country at the bottom end of the World Bank's middle-income range. While this is a notable achievement, there are concerns that Vietnam will not implement the further reforms needed for sustainable development.

There are concerns that this growth is creating new challenges, including increasing social inequality, inadequate services, more pollution and industrialization leading to the loss of agricultural land.⁴ In addition, current policies do not support the modernization of the rural economy. Rural infrastructure and other services lag behind those provided to the cities.⁵

- 2 D. Mishra, et al., Taking Stock: An Update on Vietnam's Recent Economic Developments, prepared by the World Bank for the Annual Consultative Group Meeting for Vietnam, (Hanoi: 8 December 2010), <www.worldbank.org/vn>.
- 3 S. Bass, et al., Integrating Environment and Development in Viet Nam: Achievements, Challenges and Next Steps, (London: IIED, and Hanoi: UNDP, March 2009), pubs.iied. org/pdfs/17505IIED.pdf>.
- 4 VUFO-NGO Resource Centre, International Non-Governmental Organizations' Statement for the Consultative Group Meeting, (paper prepared for the Annual Consultative Group Meeting for Vietnam, Hanoi, 7-8 December, 2010), <www.ngocentre.org.w.</p>
- 5 C. Kirkpatrick, N. J. Freeman and K. N.B. Ninh, *Managing Risk and Attaining Equitable Growth*, (Hanoi: UNDP, 2010).



Environmental impacts and climate change

The country's rapid economic growth is placing tremendous strains on the natural environment, but while legislation protecting the environment is strong, its implementation is often weak. As the population, economy and process of urbanization all grow, the main threats to the environment include overexploitation of forests, loss of arable land, water and air pollution, soil erosion due to unsustainable land practices, loss of biodiversity through – among other factors – poaching in national parks and environmental damage due to mining.⁶

There has been strong opposition to bauxite mining in Central Highlands due to concerns about environmental damage. There is concern about slurry reservoirs of alkaline sludge produced by two mines being constructed in the Lam Dong and Dak Nong provinces in this region, and that flooding or earthquakes could provoke toxic spills. These concerns were heightened when a reservoir at an iron ore mine in Cao Bang Province last year spilled untreated waste into 50 farms. Scientists and intellectuals signed a petition asking the Government to halt the projects to conduct further research.⁷

Vietnam's average temperature rose by about 0.5 - 0.7°C between 1958 and 2007 while the sea level rose by 20 cm.⁸ Its long coastline makes the



country very vulnerable to the impact of climate change and rising sea levels, which are likely to affect the three pillars of sustainable development: economics, society and environment. Progress made in reducing the incidence of poverty – from 58% of the population in 1993 to 12.3% in 2009⁹ – might not be sustained.

Vietnam is largely an agricultural country: 75% of its population live in rural areas, most of them making their living through small-scale farming, with little technical input, leaving them heavily dependent on the weather.¹⁰ Any rise in temperature will have a huge impact on agricultural production. Poor rural communities have weak infrastructure and finances, making it harder for them to adapt to climate change. Global warming may also lead to more frequent and intense natural disasters such as typhoons, floods, droughts and saltwater intrusion.

The Government has developed extensive policies and programmes on climate change, but some policies do not have the legal backing that would facilitate implementation. There are no bodies to coordinate ministries, local governments and other public and private entities, nor are there effective ways of ensuring that all communities can participate in these programmes.¹¹

In terms of the country's own impact on global warming Vietnam produces relatively low carbon

- 10 World Bank, *Rural Development and Agriculture in Vietnam*, (February 2007), <go.worldbank.org/04CQBWJP00>.
- 11 ActionAid Vietnam, Losses and Damages: Research on Climate Impacts on Poor Communities in Vietnam and Their Responses, (Hanoi: 29 November 2010).

¹ World Bank, Vietnam Country Overview, (June 2008), <www. worldbank.org/vn>.

⁶ VUFO-NGO Resource Centre, op. cit.

⁷ Thanh Nien, Bauxite Mining Projects Cost-effective: Official, (7 November 2010); Thanh Nien, Lawmakers Inspect Bauxite Sites, Call for Further Measures, (12 November 2010), <www.thanhniennews.com>.

⁸ Vietnam Aujourd'hui, Vietnam Makes Active Contribution to Fight Climate Change, (5 September 2009),
slog.vietnamaujourdhui.info/post/2009/09/05/Vietnam-makes-activecontribution-to-fight-climate-change>.

⁹ AusAID, Australia's Strategic Approach to Aid in Vietnam, (December 2010), <www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/ strat-approach-vietnam-2010-15.pdf>.

emissions. It is important that emissions are kept low as the country develops, rather than to try reducing them later. However, rapid economic development is increasing demand for energy and Vietnam is still building polluting coal-fired power stations.

Hydropower plants are a low-carbon energy source, and already account for 20% of energy consumption, but also demonstrate some of the difficulties faced in achieving sustainable development. In central Vietnam vast forests are being sacrificed to build these plants, and experts have warned that there will be serious environmental and social consequences.¹² Local media have repeatedly reported how residents displaced by power plant construction are struggling to live in sloppily constructed resettlement areas where they no longer have land for farming.13 The Government has issued strict procedures for dams including environmental impact assessments, but some provincial administrations responsible for approving small and medium sized plants have breached these regulations.14

Transparency and corruption

The lack of government transparency is a key obstacle to sustainable development. To give one important example, the nature of land rights including the extent to which they are perceived as predictable and secure, plays a key role in shaping economic options and livelihood strategies across society. Vietnam has progressed towards a sound legal framework for integrity and anti-corruption, but key risk factors in the system remain. Information on the issuing of land-use rights and asset ownership certificates is incomplete and hard to understand, the application process is complicated and the appeals process against perceived irregularities is often improper, slow and only partially transparent. In the process for land acquisition and allocation, corruption risks include unequal access to information and the potential for abuse of officials' discretionary powers over land compensation and the recording of land inventories.15

Little space for civil society

Civil society's influence on government policy is limited. For the thousands of formal and informal organizations, the Government generally allows and even encourages daily activities, while retaining a detailed regulatory structure and making it clear that it has control over the pace and direction of growth in activity.¹⁶ International and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) may be invited to make input into the development of policy. However, there is little advocacy for change in policies and legislation already in place, or opportunity to influence policies without first being invited by the Government.

Another restriction on local NGOs occurs through the detailed regulation of the use of funding from foreign donors, as set out in Decree 93/2009. Regulations govern how such money can be used, how its use is reported, and how it is monitored and regulated by government agencies. These guidelines have the effect of limiting funding from foreign donors to local NGOs because many will not have the capacity to comply with the regulations. Vietnamese companies have not yet assumed a corporate social responsibility role, and therefore are not an alternative source of funding for civil society. Therefore local NGOs lack funding sources and opportunities to be able to make much of a contribution to policies that affect sustainable development.

The voice of experts is also restricted. The Government's Decision 97/2009 limits the areas in which science- technology-, research-, and serviceoriented organizations can operate by specifying what are considered legitimate areas of activity. Economic, public, governance and environmental policies are excluded.

All these restrictions have the effect of stifling, narrowing and hindering the input of civil society into sustainable development policies. In an increasingly complex economy the policy formulation process is too closed to be able to deal with challenges and solutions for equitable and sustainable development. The public debate that would help find those solutions is severely constrained, although people do raise their voices, and there is sometimes vocal opposition to projects that threaten the environment and people's livelihoods. The media is playing a role in throwing light on the Government's action - and inaction - and reporting on community opposition to environmental threats.

Bilateral donors, United Nations agencies and international NGOs have a responsibility to support Vietnam to move towards a more open relationship between the Government and civil society. However they have focused more on building government capacity and less on building the capacity of local NGOs and civil society and assistance is still needed for the country to implement institutional reform and policy renewal, and to pursue greater public transparency and accountability. Due to Vietnam's ascension to middle-income status some NGOs and donors are leaving despite these challenges.¹⁷

Conclusion

Many voices and different approaches are needed to find solutions for equitable sustainable development in Vietnam's increasingly complex economy and society. A change in government attitude is needed in order to allow civil society and independent experts the space and capacity to contribute. The capacity of civil society needs to be strengthened, while technical and research institutions need more freedom to publicly comment on issues of public concern. Communities know about problems in their locality but often do not know how to report them: their capacity to monitor pollution or other obstacles to sustainable development needs to be improved. Governance standards and capacity building for local authorities also need to be enhanced.

Practical procedures are needed to integrate climate change adaptation into provincial and district development plans. Local authorities and civil society organizations in the community need to be involved in developing, implementing and monitoring mitigation and adaptation plans. Technical support at the local level for analyzing local vulnerability to climate change and how to plan adaptation and mitigation should be provided to provincial departments. More training for local people about climate change should be provided so that they can make the necessary changes in their communities. There should be easier access to bank loans, especially for those near the poverty line. This could make people's economic situation more sustainable, and less vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

The country needs mechanisms and legal procedures to encourage transparency. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment should be strengthened to enable it to better enforce existing environmental laws. Some NGOs are already working with local organizations, students and young people to build their capacity to monitor local administrative systems and on attracting the attention of the media to poverty and environmental issues.¹⁸

¹² Thanh Nien, *Dammed and Damned*, (3 November 2009), <www.thanhniennews.com/2009/ Pages/2009113124411053447.aspx>.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ihid

¹⁴ IDIU

¹⁵ World Bank, Recognizing and Reducing Corruption Risks in Land Management in Vietnam, (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House – Su That, 2011).

¹⁶ M. Sidel, "Maintaining Firm Control: Recent Developments in Nonprofit Law and Regulation in Vietnam," in *The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law*, Volume 12(3), (May 2010), <vww.icnl.org/knowledge/ijnl/vol12iss3/art_1. htm.

¹⁷ VUFO-NGO Resource Centre, op. cit.18 ActionAid Vietnam, op. cit.

YEMEN

On the brink of becoming a failed State



Little progress can be made towards sustainable development because the country is teetering on the edge of civil war and faced with widespread famine and social catastrophe. Its problems are endemic: the population is being impoverished, political corruption is rife, agriculture and food production is feeble, the economy is overdependent on oil, water resources are scarce, and all this has been aggravated by a general state of insecurity brought on by anti-Government demonstrations and the threat of total collapse. If Yemen cannot find a balance between its citizens' demands and its structural needs, sooner or later it is going to become a failed State.

Human Rights Information & Training Center (HRITC) Arafat Alroufaid

The agitated months of demonstrations by the Yemeni Youth Popular Revolution against President Ali Abdullah Saleh have shaken the country to its foundations and have made sustainable development less likely than ever. In 2011 the United Nations Security Council sounded the alarm when it expressed "deep concern" about the deteriorating situation of the country and said it could be heading for a massive economic and humanitarian disaster. In October 2011 UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) warned that Yemen could go the way of Somalia and become so irreparably fragmented that it would become a failed State.¹

The economy is paralysed, poverty is increasing, unemployment has doubled, public services are failing, the prices of basic products have trebled since the start of the year and about 60% of the country's 24 million people are living below the poverty line with an income of less than a dollar a day. Inflation is running at over 35%. If this goes on the economy will collapse and famine will come, especially in rural areas.

The aim of the popular youth protest movement is to bring down President Saleh, who has been in power for more than 30 years. His administration has been exploiting the country's oil deposits for export but a large part of the population has been sliding into extreme poverty and Yemen is now the poorest country in the Arab world. It is evident this decline has been caused by bad administration and generalised corruption. Yemen is placed 146th (out of a total of 178) on the Transparency International 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.²

More people, more poverty

One of the biggest obstacles to sustainable development is demographic. Yemen has a relatively high birth rate, population growth is 3.2% per year, and if this continues the economic and social problems



will get worse as the country's rate of development simply cannot keep pace. And the outlook is alarming because the population is expected to increase to 43 million by 2025. As the economic crisis has worsened, poverty has increased, there are more beggars in the streets and hundreds of thousands of families are unable to obtain even the most basic food they need.

The Government, in cooperation with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)³, has drawn up a plan for a National Food Security Strategy, and this has shown that 32% of the people do not have food protection. This means that almost a third of Yemenis, some 7.5 million people, cannot get enough food and are going hungry. Some 57% of the children are suffering from malnutrition.

Census data show that the overall poverty rate jumped from 33.8% in 2009 to 42.8% in 2010. The situation is particularly serious in rural areas where, according to official figures, some 47.6% of the people were living in poverty in 2010, up from 38.5% in 2009. This is worse than in urban areas, where the increase over that year was from 19.7% to 29.9%.

Yemen is classed as a low growth country. It was ranked 133rd out of the 169 countries in the United Nations Development Programme 2010 Human Development Report.⁴ Some 15.7% of the people are living on less than a dollar a day and 45.2% on less than two dollars a day.



The country produces less than 20% of the food it consumes and it imports around 75%, including 2.1 million tons of grain per year. A lot of agricultural land and huge amounts of water are devoted to the cultivation of the drug khat (catha edulis), a stimulant that is very popular in East Africa and the south of the Arabian Peninsula.

In 2010, 60% of State revenues came from oil. Production was around 300,000 barrels per day but this has decreased in 2011 because of the Yemeni Youth Popular Revolution. Similarly, the economic growth rate fell from 4.5% in 2010 to 3% in the first half of 2011 and then to 1.5% after June. Activity in the building and trade sectors has fallen by 80 to 90% and tourism has practically come to a stop. At the start of the year private sector profits of 17 thousand million dollars were forecast, but the actual result is far less.

Internal and external tourism have fallen by 95%, transport services, many development and investment projects, business and sales in various sectors of the economy have decreased significantly, while construction work, the property market and imports are completely paralysed.

Water is running out

Only 3% of the land is fertile enough for agriculture and this sector is fraught with difficulties like the serious depletion of water resources and the fact that there is little credit and little investment in infrastructure for production and commercialization. Only 1.25% of total investment goes to agriculture. The State subsidises the sector, and these funds go mainly to pay for livestock feed, fertilizers and diesel fuel for tractors and irrigation pumps. A Government report shows that agriculture's low growth rate, only

UN News Centre, UNICEF and WFP warn of danger of humanitarian disaster in Yemen, (24 October 2011), <www.un.org/spanish/News/fullstorynews.asp?newsID=22 074&criteria1=hambre>.

² Transparency International. 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. <www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_ indices/cpi/2010/results>.

See: <www.ifpri.org/publication/health-nutrition-and-riskmanagement>.

⁴ See: <hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2010_ES_Table1_ reprint.pdf>.

3%, is due not only to its small size but also to the exhaustion of water resources and delays in implementing a plan to reduce the amount of land devoted to khat. At the moment some 25% of agricultural land is sown with this crop and it consumes 30% of water in this sector, and the target is to reduce its share to 10% of the land and water.

The National Water Strategy administration has calculated that to meet the country's needs the water sector will require investment of around 4,430 million dollars over the next ten years. The Government has tried to raise these funds from donors like the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), but this body has made a series of conditions including improving administrative capability to process the aid, implementing good practices, and that water reserves must be managed in a rational way.

According to the Fourth Economic and Social Development Plan for the Reduction of Poverty 2011-215, cited in the United Nations (September 2011)⁵ draft for a programme for Yemen (2012-2015), the water sector is in serious difficulties caused by lack of finance, and if it is to reach its targets it will need an enormous injection of funds. The main problems are that fresh water is in short supply, pollution levels are rising, there are floods, the dry season is getting longer, drought is affecting more areas, there is increasing competition for water from all sectors of society, access to potable water and sewage services is limited, and the institutions that organize and administer this resource are feeble and fragmented. This bleak scenario is further aggravated by a lack of coordination and

THE MINUSCULE ROLE OF WOMEN

Several studies show that women make up more than half the population of the country but less than 20% of the workforce. Half the women who work are in agriculture, and in Yemen's public administration and services sectors less than 0.9% of the employees are female.

Women are also seriously under-represented in the other sectors of the economy and there are several reasons for this including social custom - the idea of women working is not completely accepted - and the fact that a high proportion of women, some 79.2%, are illiterate, as against a rate of 36% among men.

A mere 17.3% of primary school teachers are women and 82.7% are men, and in secondary education the figures are only slightly better at 22.8% and 77.2% respectively. In the field of education administration only 11.5% of employees are female. In the legal sector there are very few women indeed, only 0.06% of the total, and in all the branches of the communications industry put together only a paltry 16.7% of the workers are women.

cooperation among the various parties involved in managing the water sector, whose responsibilities are unclear and often overlap.⁶

The above-mentioned report also shows that at the end of 2010 only around 60% of city dwellers had access to potable water and only 30% had sewage facilities. The amount of water produced in 2010 for the main and secondary cities was estimated at 148 million cubic metres, which was an increase of 21 million cubic metres, which was an increase of 21 million cubic metres over the 2005 total, but an estimated 104 million cubic metres were consumed, which was an increase of 20 million cubic metres. This difference between production and consumption means that up to 30% of what was produced was lost.⁷ At the end of 2010, some 50% of the rural population had potable water and only 25% had sewage services.

The country's renewable water resources have been estimated at 2,500 million cubic metres per year, of which 1,500 million are underground and 1,000 million are surface water. But an estimated 3,400 million cubic metres a year are being consumed, which means there is a shortfall of around 900 million cubic metres. It is believed that the excessive pumping out of underground reserves is contributing to the country's water scarcity. Levels in the various aquifers differ but some of them are being over-exploited by an estimated 250 to 400%. There are also around 45,000 privately owned wells in Yemen and some 200 drilling platforms.

6 Ibid. 7 Ibid.

ZAMBIA

Deforestation and sustainable development



The country's economy has been growing since 2000, but poverty continues to be a pressing issue while life expectancy remains very low. Although the Government has shown some concern regarding environmental challenges, the plans put in place lack coordination and have failed to create public awareness about soil erosion, loss of biomass, climate change and deforestation. The country has lost 6.3% of its forests in the last 20 years. High poverty levels and lack of alternative sources of livelihoods exacerbate environmental degradation resulting from the dependence of poor people on natural resources. It is time for the Government to establish more adequate policies and strengthen coordination in the environment sector.

Women for Change Lumba Siyanga Lucy Muyoyeta

From 2000 onwards Zambia experienced strong economic growth at an average rate of 5% per annum.¹ Poverty levels decreased from 68% in 2004 to 64% in 2006, but 53% of the population remained in extreme poverty, which is most common in female-headed households. The rural population is predominantly poor, with an overall poverty rate of 78%.² Levels of extreme poverty are also high in rural areas (where two thirds of the extremely poor live) and in households with the least formal education. In fact, households headed by those with no formal education have a poverty incidence of 81%, and of these 70% are extremely poor.³

Providing access to education is still a challenge for the country, particularly at higher and tertiary levels. In 2004, only 11% of the population managed to complete their senior secondary education. This problem is more acute for women and girls; in 2006 only 8.6% of females had finished senior secondary level. ⁴ Moreover, although tertiary education is crucial for long-term economic development as well as strengthening democracy and achieving social cohesion, only 2% of the population had completed a Bachelor's degree or above.⁵

The attainment of good health among the population, an essential factor for social and economic prosperity, faces a number of challenges despite the Government's introduction of various measures and programmes to improve the quality of life. There is a high prevalence of infectious

- Imani Development International Ltd, 2007 Update Survey of Non Tariff Barriers to Trade: Zambia, (Regional Trade Facilitation Programme, July 2007), 5.
- 2 allAfrica.com, Zambia: Poverty Levels Go Down, (20 November 2009), <allafrica.com/stories/200911200074. html>.
- 3 Ibid
- 4 R. Siaciwena and F. Lubinda, The Role of Open and Distance Learning in the Implementation of the Right to Education in Zambia, (The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, February 2008), <www.irrodl.org/index. php/irrodl/article/view/481/995>.



diseases, including an HIV rate of 13.5% among adults, and life expectancy at birth is 52.36 years.⁶

Sustainable development and environmental issues

The Government's goal since 2006 has been to ensure environmental sustainability by reversing environmental damage, maintaining essential biological processes and ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources. However a number of factors continue to constrain the achievement of this goal, including:

- Coordination problems.
- Lack of comprehensive policies on environmental issues.
- Limited public awareness about environmental issues.
- An inadequate legal framework and lack of implementation of the Forest Act of 1999.
- Inadequate budget allocations and investment.
- Poor maintenance of biological diversity and limited local participation.
- Inadequate mainstreaming of environmental and climate change issues into other sector policies and programmes.
- Slow implementation of the National Policy on Environment to reduce conflicts related to land use (including those between humans and animals).

The issue of climate change also needs to be addressed. The main local indicator of climate change is the



modification of temperature and rainfall patterns. The consistent warming trend shown by mean annual temperatures for 1961–2000, for example, has had several negative effects, including limited crop yields and increased risk of malaria transmission at higher altitudes. The latter is especially important in Zambia, where malaria accounts for 47% of all deaths annually.⁷

The impact of higher temperatures on rainfall is not easy to assess, especially since the country is affected by the periodic El Niño phenomenon, the complexity of which is beyond the scope of current climate models. Nevertheless, the Government's National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) reported that drought and floods had increased in frequency, intensity and magnitude over the previous two decades.⁸

In terms of biodiversity, Zambia has 1,234 known species of amphibians, birds, mammals and reptiles according to figures from the World Conservation Monitoring Centre. Of these, 1.5% are endemic and 1.9% are threatened. The country is also home to at least 4,747 species of vascular plants, of which 4.4% are endemic.⁹

- 8 Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, Formulation of the National Adaptation Programme of Action on Climate Change, Government of Zambia, UNDP Zambia and Global Environment Facility, (September 2007), <vvvv.preventionweb.net/english/policies/v. php?id=8581&cid=192>.
- 9 Mongabay.com, Zambia Forest Information and Data, (2010), <rainforests.mongabay.com/deforestation/2000/ Zambia.htm>.

5 Ibid

⁶ CIA, The World Factbook: Zambia, (May 2011), <www.cia. gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/za.html>.

⁷ IRIN, "Zambia: Decreasing Cases Cause for Optimism", in In Depth: Killer Number One – The Fight Against Malaria, (January 2006), <www.irinnews.org/InDepthMain.aspx?InD epthId=10&ReportId=58010&Country=Yes,>.

The national biomass (above and below ground) is estimated at 5.6 billion tonnes, with an additional 434 million tonnes of dead wood biomass, for a total biomass estimate of 6 billion tonnes. Of this, approximately 2.8 billion tonnes of carbon is stored in forests. The forests therefore hold a considerable amount (90%) of the country's total aboveground biomass.

Deforestation and its impacts

Over the last 40 years the forests have been depleted due to population increase, economic imperatives, charcoal production, demand for new land for agriculture and uncontrolled fires. The rate of deforestation that for decades was said to be about 300,000 hectares per annum was reported in 2008 to be 800,000 hectares per annum.¹⁰ Between 1990 and 2010, Zambia lost an estimated 6.3% of its forest cover or around 3,332,000 hectares.¹¹

Commercial exploitation of indigenous woods started during the third decade of the 20th century. Increasing activities in mining and construction also contribute significantly to deforestation. The practice of slash-and-burn agriculture to feed a growing population is widespread. Logging is also increasing. The hardwood forests of the western grasslands, which had been reasonably well conserved, have in recent years come under pressure.¹²

Households and industries are major consumers of forest resources. The main commercial product from indigenous forests is charcoal for cooking – 27% of households in Zambia use it as their main source of cooking energy while 56% use firewood. Electricity is used by 16% of households for cooking and by 19.3% of households as their main source of lighting. The charcoal industry provides employment for about 50,000 people in rural and urban areas.¹³

Forests provide an important source of livelihood for rural communities. In particular, poorer households show a higher dependency (44%) on wood fuel than those who earn more. The demand for wood fuel is increasing exponentially while there are severe local shortages. Poorer households also have a greater dependence on wild plants for medicinal purposes and food. Other uses of forest products include animal grazing and provision of construction materials such as poles and thatching grass. Overall most forests fall under traditional customary management and have no formal management arrangements: 41% fall under traditional management; 36% are recorded as not having a known management plan; and only 23% have formal management arrangements (national parks and forest reserves).

Although both men and women play critical roles in managing natural resources in Zambia, women's relationship with the environment is critical to their daily lives as they are responsible for the provision of domestic water and fuel as well as for cooking. Women play major roles in forest resource management as gatherers and users of various forest products including grass for thatching. The high poverty levels and lack of alternative livelihoods sources, especially in rural areas, exacerbate environmental degradation resulting from poor people's dependence on natural resources for survival.

Forest destruction is leading to soil erosion, loss of bio-diversity and biomass, dwindling water supplies, reduced agricultural productivity and environmental degradation. There are also widespread negative impacts on food security, energy supply and social welfare. Customary lands are increasingly degraded and deforested because they are under the most pressure for alternative land uses. The use of charcoal and wood fuel is not only harmful for the environment but also bad for people's health.¹⁴

The country cannot afford to continue losing forests at the current rate. Forests are important for carbon restoration, which helps to mitigate climate change.

Key policies and programmes

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources was created in 1991 as the primary institution for environmental management. Successive efforts to deal with the challenges in the sector have included adoption of the National Conservation Strategy, the National Policy on Environment (2007), the National Environmental Action Plan, the Zambia National Biodiversity and Action Plan, the Forestry Policy of 1998, the Zambia Forestry Action Plan and the Forest Act of 1999.

To deal with ozone layer depletion, the Government enacted Statutory Instrument No. 27 of 2001, and the country signed and ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and subsequently prepared a national plan of action in 2002.

Zambia also implemented its Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP) from 2006 to 2010, the key policy objectives of which included the promotion of sustainable forest management by encouraging private sector and civil society participation in forest resource management. A number of activities were introduced to deal with forestry matters during this period, but in the final analysis it was difficult to monitor progress because of a lack of data and information. The deforestation rate, the only indicator available, showed that FNDP objectives in that area were not achieved in full. In fact, it is clear that the pace of forest depletion has accelerated.

Furthermore, there are inadequate macroeconomic policy incentives or disincentives to promote sustainable management of environmental resources and discourage unsustainable consumption patterns.

Conclusions and recommendations

Development cannot be sustained in a deteriorating environment, and the environment cannot be protected when economic growth does not take into account the cost of environmental destruction. The high poverty levels, limited access to basic rights such as education and health, and continued degradation of the forests mean that sustainable development is under threat in Zambia despite high economic growth.

The Zambia Social Watch Coalition therefore recommends the following:

- To ensure sustainable forest management, and mitigation of or adaptation to climate change, Zambia must recognize the importance of land tenure and ownership, especially with respect to customary lands, which account for nearly two thirds of forest land.
- Government must accelerate the pace of adopting the revised draft forest policy and the subsequent revision of the Forest Act of 1999.
- In revising existing policies, laws or programmes or developing new ones, gender mainstreaming must be strengthened to ensure both women and men are not adversely affected and they both benefit equally.
- Coordination in the environment sector should be strengthened and environmental issues mainstreamed in all sectors.
- Government and other key stakeholders in the field must embark on massive public education campaigns on the environment.

European Commission, Governance Profile – Zambia, (2008), <www.programming.eu/wcm/dmdocuments/ gover_08_zambi_fi_en.pdf>.

¹¹ Mongabay.com, op. cit.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ World Bank, Delivering Modern Energy Services for Urban Africa - Status, Trends and Opportunities for Commercially Sustainable Interventions, (2003), <info.worldbank.org/ etools/bspan/presentationView.asp?EID=239&PID=501>.

¹⁴ Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR), The Path Away from Poverty: An Easy Look at Zambia's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2002–2004, <www.sarpn.org.za/documents/ d0000280/index.php>.

USA: The country is home to 5% of the world's population, yet it consumes 25% of the world's energy and is responsible for 22 percent of the world's industrial carbon dioxide emissions.

MALAYSIA: Annual deforestation rate jumped nearly 86% between 1990 and 2005, with a total loss of forest coverage of 140,200 hectares per year since 2000.

HOUSING: 1.6 billion people are currently living in sub-standard housing, 100 million are homeless, and around a quarter of the world's population is estimated to be landless.

VIETNAM: Average temperature rose by about 0.5 - 0.7 $^\circ\mathrm{C}$ between 1958 and 2007 while the sea level rose by 20 cm.

THAILAND: Nearly 74,640 hectares of mangrove forest have been used for aquaculture fishery, in particular shrimp farms.

TANZANIA: In order for the district of Chamwino can satisfy its basic needs 63,501,000 kg of food are required, while the realized production for 2008/09 was only 12,178,000 kg.

SLOVENIA: 25% of young people not in the formal education system are unemployed.

PANAMA: In 1970 70% of the country was under forest cover but by 2011 this had been reduced to around 35%.

NIGERIA: Almost 350,000 hectares of arable land are being lost annually to the advancing desert.

ITALIA: Currently at risk are 68% of its terrestrial vertebrates, 66% of its birds, 64% of its mammals and 88% of its freshwater fish.

HONDURAS: The murder rate in 2010 was 77.5 per 100,000 inhabitants.

GUATEMALA: The deforestation rate is around 82,000 ha per year. If exploitation continues at this level, all the country's native forests will have been wiped out by 2040.

ERITREA: All adults, male and female, up to the age of 45 are subject to what amounts to slavery.

ECUADOR: The exploitation of copper deposits at Mirador will generate at least 326 million tons of waste, which is equivalent to four hills like El Panecillo in Quito or the volume of all the rubbish collected in Guayaquil for the next 405 years.

CANADA: One in three Aboriginal and racialized people in Canada live in poverty. One in four people with disabilities, immigrants, and female single-parents in Canada live in poverty.

CAMBODIA: 64% of mothers and girls are reducing their food intake in order to leave more to the other members of the family.

BURMA: During the construction of the Yadana gas pipeline, Government soldiers and proxy military groups providing security forced civilians to cut down trees, serve as porters, and build military infrastructure. Those who refused were beaten, raped, tortured and killed.

AZERBAIJAN: In many cases the Soviet era oil industry created huge petroleum lakes which literally destroyed all of the biomass around them.

ARGENTINA: In the period 1998 to 2006 around 250,000 hectares per year disappeared, which is a rate of one hectare every two minutes.

BCI: With carbon dioxide emissions at three tons per capita a year, Costa Rica and Uruguay have managed to lower their infant mortality to the same level of a country that emits twenty tons a year: the United States.

GENDER: Feminist economics has shown that over 50% of all work hours is unpaid.

Social Watch is an international network of citizens' organizations in the struggle to eradicate poverty and the causes of poverty, to end all forms of discrimination and racism, to ensure an equitable distribution of wealth and the realization of human rights. We are committed to peace, social, economic, environment and gender justice, and we emphasize the right of all people not to be poor.

Social Watch holds governments, the UN system and international organizations accountable for the fulfilment of national, regional and international commitments to eradicate poverty.

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