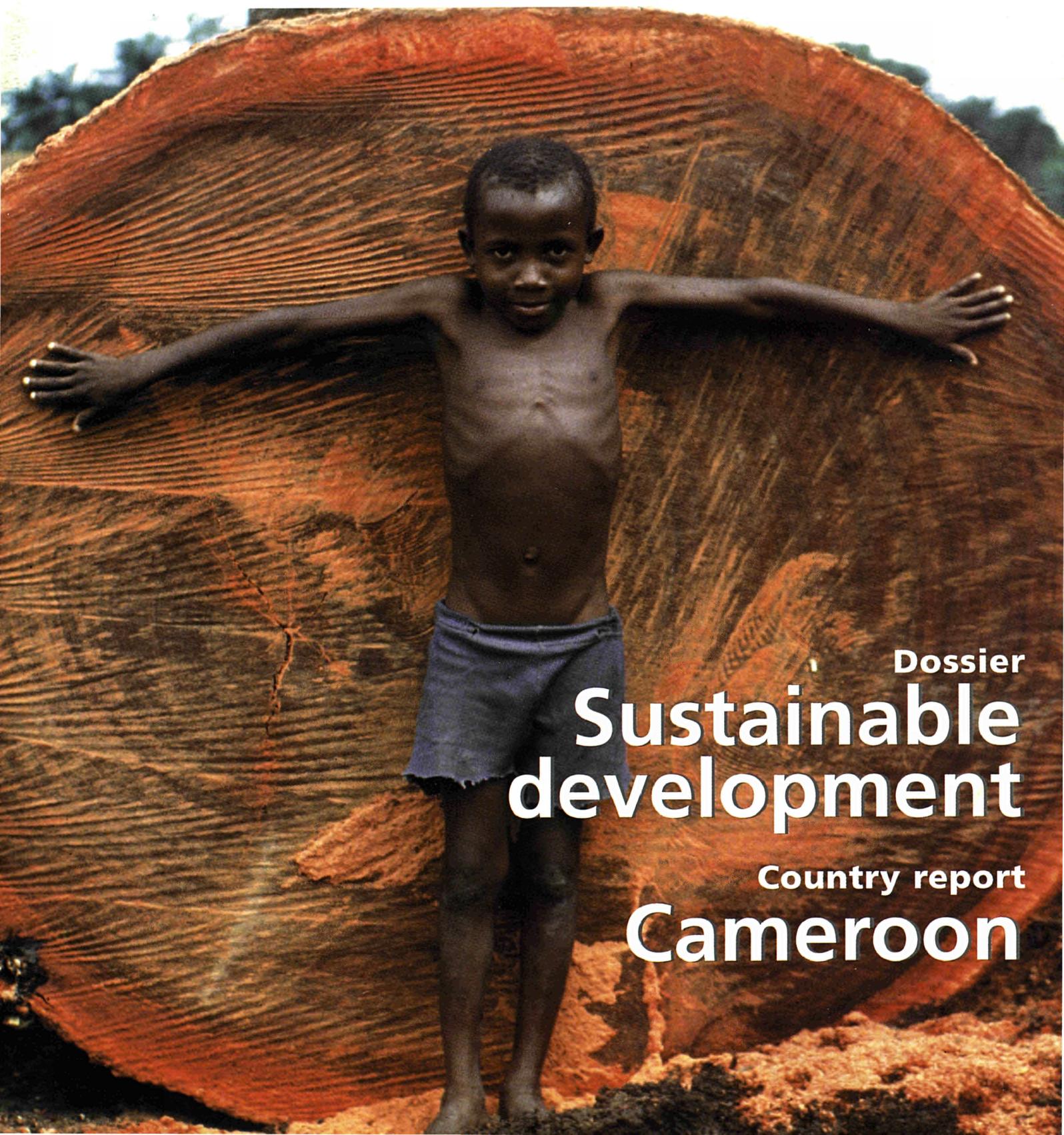


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Country report

Cameroon

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Postal Address

The ACP-EU Courier
European Commission (G12, 5/45)
B-1049 Brussels

Address for visitors

12 rue de Genève
1140 Brussels
Belgium
http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/publicat/courier/index_en.htm

ACP General Secretariat

451 avenue Georges Henri
1200 Brussels
info@acpsec.org
<http://www.acpsec.org>

Publisher

Koos Richelle

Director of Publications

Leonidas Antonakopoulos

Editor

Dorothy Morrissey
dorothy.morrissey@cec.eu.int
tel: +32.2.296.83.30

Journalist

François Lefebvre
francois.lefebvre@cec.eu.int
tel: +32.2.295.50.33

Production

Mounia Lakhdar-Hamina
mounia.lakhdar-hamina@cec.eu.int
tel: +32.2.299.48.58

Documentation

Constance Lusinde Zainati
development@cec.eu.int
tel: +32.2.296.35.53

Subscriptions

fax: +32.2.299.3002

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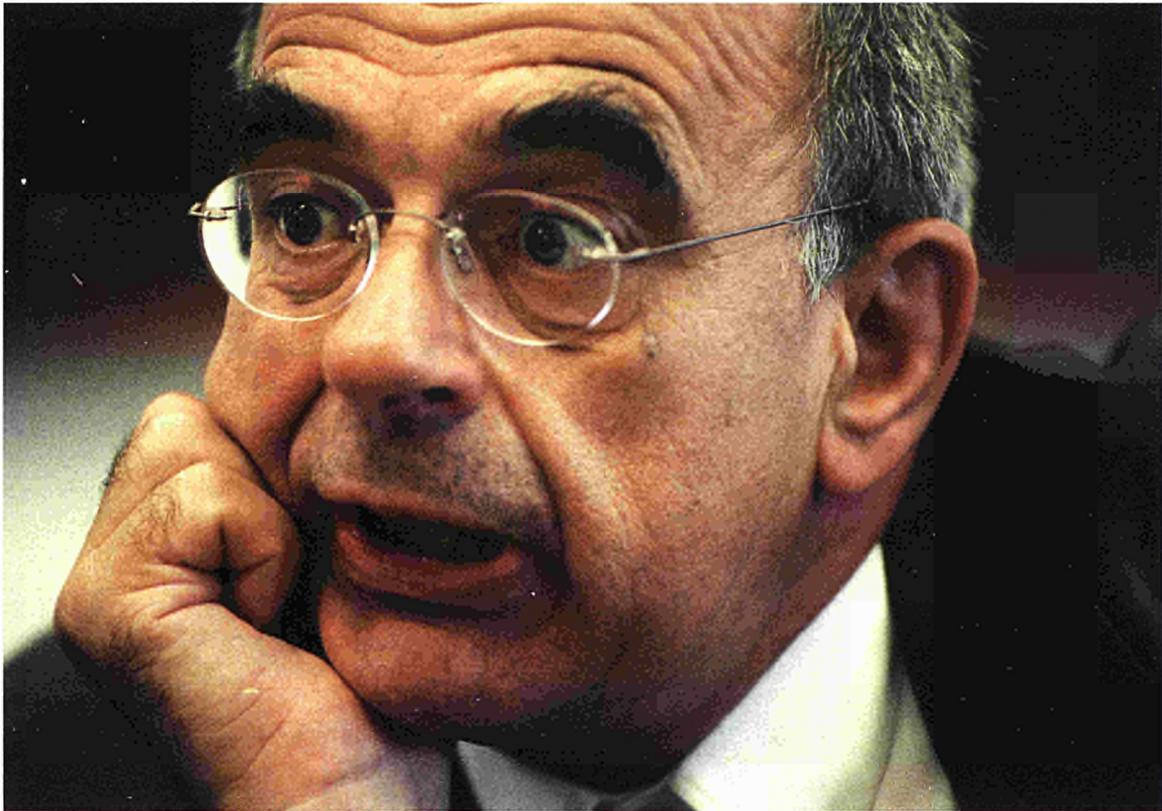


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The ACP-EU Courier is the voice of the ACP-EU partnership in political, economic and social cooperation which can be traced back 45 years to the Treaty of Rome. The two sides have set up joint institutions and are involved in an ongoing political dialogue. This partnership was last renewed on 23 June 2000 with the signing of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, covering a 20-year period. As well as the political dimension, this agreement provides for intense cooperation in the trade area as the EU seeks to ensure that the ACP do not suffer marginalisation in the current multilateral trade negotiations (Doha Round). This partnership has always focused on development assistance which targets the twin objectives of poverty reduction and sustainable development. Giving voice to men and women from ninety-three countries facing the future in a spirit of partnership: that is our mission.



Getting ready for Johannesburg an interview with special envoy, Jan Pronk

Jan Pronk has been appointed by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan as special envoy to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which will take place in Johannesburg at the end of August. He is¹ the Dutch environment minister and was development minister during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. As chairman of the Kyoto protocol talks on climate change, he was instrumental in retrieving the protocol when negotiations collapsed. Even though agreement seemed remote, Minister Pronk didn't give up. Instead, he organised a successful follow-up meeting in Bonn last year, where a historic agreement was reached. He attended the final preparatory talks for the WSSD at the end of May in Bali, where ministers met to discuss an action plan and a declaration. Mr Pronk gave this interview to the *Courier* shortly afterwards.

Dorothy Morrissey

This final preparatory meeting ended without agreement on some key issues, which many people believe are crucial to the success of the WSSD. What were the main contentious points?

There were quite a few. Finance and trade – despite the fact that most parties agreed that financial issues ought to have been settled in Monterrey, and trade issues were mainly part of the Doha process. But of course it is not possible to discuss sustainable development only in environmental and developmental terms. We have to take into account economic sustainability, which is to a great extent dependent on access to markets and the stability of international financial flows. The developing countries made quite an issue of this, to a certain extent perhaps unexpectedly. You may say that

Johannesburg is part of an overall process including Doha and Monterrey, but they wanted to make a strong political point.

There were a number of other issues, but they could have been solved. One was the relationship between the overall consensus on an action programme on the one hand, and the specific sustainability programmes and projects, action initiatives and networks to be established on the other hand. This was discussed intensively. Full agreement was not reached, but that's not a big political problem. There were other issues such as whether there ought to be decisions on some new targets in addition to the targets implicit in Agenda 21 and the multi-lateral Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). But trade and finance were the main bones of contention.

1. Following the 15 May general election, a new government was being formed at the time of going to press

Do you agree with the interpretation that the G77 were trying to recoup some ground they felt they had lost in Monterrey?

That's possible, some countries may have taken that view. The same may also be true for trade. That is a legitimate position. Whether they lost ground or gained ground is a matter of judgement, both in Doha and in Monterrey. I think they gained some ground but less than they might have wished. The G77 ministers explicitly said they did not intend to re-open these agreements. That was a politically important statement that the European ministers also wanted. The Europeans themselves could not re-open them. What could have been done was to discuss trade and finance issues in addition to the agreements reached in Doha and Monterrey, but we did not have enough time.

Are you optimistic that these issues can be resolved? Will there be an intermediary meeting or will this be left to Johannesburg?

It should not be left to Johannesburg. The length of the conference is not suitable for a substantive, intensive negotiation, so some work will have to be done between Bali and Johannesburg. We are now consulting each other on the way to do that. I hope very much that we will have a political discussion in order to cut through these remaining issues with a political bargain – and only the politicians themselves can bargain – in order to decide jointly on a package of issues.

It seems that at the last minute in Bali there was a compromise proposed by South Africa, which the G77 supported but the US and Japan were against?

That's not my reading. There was a "take it or leave it" text – which is different from a compromise – coming from the facilitator of the trade and finance discussions, the South African minister for the environment, Mr Moussa. But he produced that in his capacity as facilitator, not on behalf of South Africa. That proposal on trade and finance was accepted, after lengthy discussions, by the G77, was nearly accepted by the EU and was considered as a basis for political negotiations by Japan, the US and some other countries. We did propose one minor change, considered to be important for the EU, but even this was not considered acceptable by the G77. There was a – you can't even say a political stalemate – but a pre-political stalemate which was to a certain extent of a procedural character.

The EU has a self-proclaimed leadership role. But sometimes it is accused of not being tough enough. How did you judge the role the EU played in Bali?

I was pleasantly surprised – or not surprised, because the EU has done a couple of international negotiations quite well. I think this negotiation was very well done by the EU. There was a very good atmosphere – it is important to say so because it is not always the case. The EU should always be cautious about stressing its role as a leader, because that's a bit

pretentious. You should just be a good negotiator, looking both at your own European interests as well as at world interests including particular G77

interests. But always saying you are the leader and want to take the leading role creates expectations that cannot always be fulfilled, and irritates others. There was not enough time for political discussions. The discussions at working level continued too long. That's always a problem for multilateral negotiations. At the working level the experts are very good, but there's one for trade, one for finance, a third one for ener-

Since Rio, perhaps there has been greater progress in the field of environment than in development.

The Kyoto Protocol obliges industrialised countries to reduce greenhouse gases, and has now been ratified by the EU.



© Julio Etchart/Wildlife pictures

gy, a fourth one for agriculture – you name it. Their mandate is of course NOT to strike a bargain between trade, finance, and agriculture. That has to be done by the ministers – they are accountable back home.

As a former minister for development, you are well placed to see the links between development and the environment. Do you see a tension between them? A lot of people still see this as an environment conference. Is there enough focus on development?

It is a conference and a process of sustainable development, and this has been the case since the beginning, since the Brundtland report. That means the Rio conference was different from the Nairobi conference 10 years before, and the Stockholm conference 20 years earlier. It's on the relation between the environment and development. There is sometimes a conflict, and sometimes they mutually support each other. It depends very strongly on the time horizon. Rio was not an environmental conference, though environment did play an important role. Since Rio, perhaps there has been greater progress in the field of environment than

The WSSD also has consequences for our own domestic policies – in all the five focal areas designated by the Secretary General: water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity. You may say neither Europe nor the other northern countries are sustainable in any of those five areas

in development. But perhaps that was due to the fact that environment was lagging behind before Rio.

There was stagnation in the field of poverty eradication, international trade and finance negotiations in the 1990s. That meant that we needed to reconfirm the relationship between development and environment, and to have a discussion

on both in a broader context than the context of 1992 – taking into account globalisation, conflicts, terrorism, the weakening of nation states, which to a certain extent are eroding the basis for sustainable development. The broader context is very important for Johannesburg. One could see it in a different perspective after September 11 and try to take away some of the sources of conflict, frustration, alienation, which perhaps have partly led to that war which is going on in the world. This is an issue that has been more alive in the capitals than amongst the traditional negotiators who just continued the negotiations that took place during the 1990s.

For the EU, we did have more ministers for the environment than for development. I was very concerned that we could have prepared ourselves better. However, this did not turn out to be a problem in Bali. Cooperation was much better than could have been expected on the basis of a not too adequate preparation. But we have to do it better before Johannesburg, in particular to come forward with good initiatives and programmes. There is the jargon of Type 1 and Type 2. Type 2 is additional to the consensus of Type 1, and those are initiatives and concrete commitments in different fields, perhaps for and with specific parts of the world.

Could you elaborate on the different types of outcomes?

The political declaration is a declaration by heads of state, still to be drafted. It can be drafted between Bali and Johannesburg, hopefully by people who are very close to the prime ministers themselves. That is in my view the task of President Mbeki, together with his colleagues or representatives. That's one outcome. The second is the action programme, and that is what we were discussing. However, what was on the table was not so much an action plan as a new policy programme. It could have been more concrete, more to the point. That is still a draft. Thirdly we have the initiatives, or networks, the third layer. It is important to say that the third layer ought to be additional to the consensus on the world action programme, and not a substitute. The initiatives do not have to be of a global character. So you could imagine, for

example, a European initiative in the area of water, together with Africa.

Do you agree that the EU is focusing on the link between the two types of outcomes, while the US, for instance, is less willing to commit to Type 1 and keen to get involved in Type 2?

That has been a difficult discussion and I think we made progress on the acceptance of that link, which is now much greater in the US than a couple of months ago. This is the result of a long dialogue. What is that link? There ought to be some criteria. For instance, if you want to have sustainable agriculture with access to water but you have to do that with huge irrigation works, leading to displacement of people, uprooting them from their means of existence, then it is not sustainable. You need criteria otherwise everyone just defines it for themselves.

Another aspect of the link is transparency and reporting on what you are doing. For example if Europe is carrying out an initiative in the area of water, other donor and developing countries ought to know. Not only for reasons of sharing best practice – maybe the US wants to get involved in a water project, maybe Africa wants to have some specific initiatives in the field of biodiversity or agriculture which has overlaps. So you have to be transparent to be efficient and not to overlap. There ought to be partnership coordination, as I call it, not donor coordination. And it ought not to be “buying off”. In energy, for example, we cannot afford in Europe to continue consumption and production patterns that are intensely based on fossil fuel-based energy, and then carry out a number of interesting renewable, solar energy programmes in Africa. So we continue a non-sustainable energy policy domestically, buying it off or making it easier by helping capacity building to help other countries to go into renewable energy.

Are we in the developed world doing enough to change our consumption patterns?

No, not at all, and that is why we have to think beyond the traditional North-South frontiers. The WSSD also has consequences for our own domestic policies – in all the five focal areas designated by the Secretary General: water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity. You may say neither Europe nor the other northern countries are sustainable in any of those five areas. In water we are not sustainable at the moment. We have too much water pollution. We are not sustainable in terms of energy. We are still losing biodiversity in the EU. In agriculture we are over-consuming food and we are making it very difficult, because of our agricultural subsidies in Europe, to give access to our markets for agricultural products from developing countries. Health: we do have an increasing life expectancy, but due to a number of new diseases we do not have enough medical care and, in many of our countries, too long waiting periods for people to get access to care. You cannot call our health situation and health policy completely sustainable.

We should not say to developing countries: “Just do what we do, good governance just means you follow our governance practice.” Far from it. One of the elements of the WSSD is the translation of sustainability criteria also into better governance within the northern countries themselves, not only because our domestic governance has external effects, but also because it has consequences for our own people.



Climate change. How important is this in the WSSD, especially now that Kyoto has been ratified by the EU and Japan? How significant is it that the US is not coming on board?

For the time being I don't consider that a major problem. We know that the Americans do not want to participate and we cannot change the position of the present American government. We will have to change their position in the longer time frame. The most important step now is to have it ratified by other countries, like Canada, Australia, and Russia. One of my disappointments is the announcement by Prime Minister Howard of Australia during the Bali negotiations that they are not going to ratify. That may change in a couple of years when Labour takes

over in Australia, but you never know, it's a political issue. Australia is perhaps not necessary in quantitative terms because you need 55 countries which together represent 55 per cent of the CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emis-

Kyoto Protocol:

"One of my disappointments is the announcement by Prime Minister Howard of Australia during the Bali negotiations that they are not going to ratify"

sions in 1990 – which means, anyway, that we need Russia. We could even, if we have Russia as well as Japan and the EU, declare the Protocol operational. But we really need to wait also for Canadian ratification, otherwise it becomes very shallow if the whole Western Hemisphere is not participating – not Canada, the US or Australia. But the pressure should now be on the remaining countries, before we start pressing the US.

The WSSD follows on from Doha and Monterrey, which were regarded as being successful. Monterrey in particular had very high level political participation. You have said that for the WSSD to be a world summit and to have credibility it must have heads of state level participation. How is that looking?

Many promised to come, everybody is interested and nobody has said "no". However there are two concerns. All heads of state said from the outset: if the world political situation deteriorates, it will be difficult to have a sustainability conference addressed by heads of state. The Middle East is one example. It also has a sustainability dimension of course. The conference has an important role in addressing the underlying causes of violence, conflict, aggression and terrorism. But some leaders may look at it from a different angle, saying you first have to be more certain that the problem of terrorism will be solved before we can start discuss underlying sustainability. That is a different view – and in my view it is possible to resolve the issue as soon as there is some improvement. But if we see a deterioration in political terms, we will have a problem in Johannesburg.

The second and completely different point is that old summits were summits for resolving outstanding issues. Foreign ministers can do that. There are a number of issues still on the table and you strike a deal. We are accustomed to doing this in the EU. In the past also that happened as far as world summits were concerned. Rio was such a traditional summit because the Declaration and the Plan of Action – Agenda 21 – were not yet ready. They finally had to be agreed upon in Rio. It is possible but risky. It was made clear by many heads of state and government that they did not want to be associated with a failure. That meant that a decision was made to finalise all negotiations before the summit, like in Monterrey. They didn't have to do anything, just make announcements on the basis of the agreement that had been reached. That was the reason why it was rather successful. It is also difficult if you come together with 100 or 200 heads of state to have a negotiation amongst them on a number of major issues in a very short period – it's hardly feasible. Some heads of state, after Bali I'm afraid, will become a bit hesitant, and may take the view that they should not take the risk of being associated with a failure. Well, that's a political view. They could also take a different view by going – "It's difficult, so I go."

To go to a summit as a head of state and just to say you agree with what has been negotiated is not good enough. On that basis you have to start an action programme. This requires a political commitment, which can only be done in a credible manner by a head of state. That can be an announcement of resources – those Type 2 programme participation initiatives. It doesn't have to be money. Heads of state can announce that they will see to it that their own domestic policy and foreign policy, not only in terms of making resources available, will be sustainable. They can also announce that they would have liked to go a bit further than the summit agreed, and they will go ahead anyway, rather than leaning back on a comfortable consensus. ■

Plea for food sovereignty at UN summit

The second World Food Summit, organised by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations in Rome 10-13 June, owed its existence to the failed goal of the first one – halving the number of hungry in the world by 2015. Meeting the target set at the November 1996 summit required a reduction in the number of hungry people by 22 million each year. So far, according to the FAO, the number is diminishing by only six million a year. Today, there are still more than 800 million hungry people around the world. While hunger has fallen sharply in China, it has risen in sub-Saharan Africa for a variety of reasons – conflict, HIV/AIDS, weather conditions and governance issues.

Greta Hopkins*

According to Jacques Diouf, Director General of the FAO, the 1996 target can still be achieved, if the necessary investment is made: “The main underlying reason for the persistence of hunger is lack of political will, and as a result of this, the resources to fight hunger have not been mobilised to the extent required”. In its new Anti-Hunger Programme the FAO states that an additional public investment of \$24 billion is needed each year to combat hunger in poor countries.

According to the Anti-Hunger Programme, halving hunger would yield additional benefits worth at least \$120 billion a year, from longer, healthier and more productive lives for those benefiting from such improvements. Rural people represent 70 per cent of the poor, and the programme focuses mainly on rural infrastructure, research, emergency food assistance and small farmers, aiming to create more opportunities for rural people.

At the June 2002 summit world leaders renewed their commitment to halve hunger in a Declaration adopted unanimously by 180 governments. But governments pledged no new money, saying the necessary funds had already been promised at the UN conference on financing for development held in Monterrey, Mexico in March this year.

The Declaration calls on all stakeholders in society to make voluntary contributions to an FAO Trust Fund for food security. The FAO hopes that the Trust Fund will attract new money from governments, intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisations and the private sector, with an initial target of \$500 million.

Poul Nielson, EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, is not enthusiastic about this focus on new funding initiatives, rather than the “real work”. His spokesman Michael Curtis, explains that such trust funds do not attract new money, but encourage donors to move money from budget line to budget line to suit the calendar of summits. “The cause is noble, but it would be duplicating existing instruments. We are not opposed but we are certainly not enthusiastic”.

Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, said in his opening address that the EU is already making a significant commitment to food security. It contributes \$1.12 billion to action related directly to food security, and \$1.4 billion to broader programmes that have an impact

on food security such as rural development, agricultural production and research.

A low impact summit?

Despite the backdrop of serious food shortages in Southern Africa, the summit was deemed low-impact by most observers, largely because it was attended by the leaders of just two industrialised countries – Italian Prime Minister and summit host Silvio Berlusconi, and Spanish Prime Minister and EU President José María Aznar. Fatigued perhaps by a series of megasummits, world leaders had to govern and could not spend days in summits, Berlusconi said at the final press conference.

But South Africa’s President Thabo Mbeki called it a shame that so few political leaders had arrived. “I suppose that’s because they don’t think the problem of 800 million people going hungry in the world is important. I think that shows insufficient concern about human life”. The Malawi Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, Aleke K. Banda, made an impassioned plea to the international community to assist his country, which is facing serious food shortages. He said that the President of Malawi, Makili Muluzi, has declared a state of emergency. A statement issued by the 14-nation Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) during the summit says that the region as a whole needs at least 3.2 million tonnes of food aid to avert disaster.

The controversial right to food

The draft declaration proposed an international code of conduct on food rights, but this was watered down amid concerns by countries like the US about the legal implications of such language about the right to food. In the end, the declaration called for “voluntary guidelines” to achieve the right to adequate food, to be drawn up by FAO and its stakeholders within two years. The final declaration reaffirms: “the importance of strengthening the respect of all human rights and fundamental freedoms including the right to development, democracy, the rule of law, good governance, sound economic policies, the equality of rights for all...”.

Subsidies under fire

Subsidies given by rich nations to their farmers were roundly criticised as a barrier to food security in developing countries. The recent US farm bill came under fire

“The world now produces much more food than is required to provide everyone with an adequate diet, yet 800 million people – almost one person in seven – do not have enough to eat.”
The Anti-Hunger Programme

from countries as diverse as Thailand, South Africa, Canada, Australia, Brazil, Bolivia, and Uruguay which are part of the Cairns Group of agriculture-producing nations. Thoko Didiza, agriculture minister for South Africa, said that “the signal they (the US), have indicated does not bode well for developing countries and reducing hunger in the world. We will ask the US to reconsider their decision”.

The EU also noted its objection to the bill, which gives subsidies worth \$15-20 billion per year for crops alone, a 70 per cent increase on current levels. However, EU subsidies for farmers were in turn criticised by the US and the Cairns group.

Fishing worries

Fish is a critical food resource in many developing countries, including obviously the low-lying islands in the Pacific. It is also an important source of income and can generate much-needed foreign exchange through agreements to allow foreign boats to fish in their waters. Kiribati’s President Teburoro Tito drew attention to the link between sustaining this resource and food security. Local fishermen were complaining, he said, that “it would take them the whole day of fishing before they can have a sizeable catch whereas it would only take them an hour or two five years ago. They are also unhappy to see purse-seining vessels sweeping up and discarding many tons of small tuna around the islands”. He appealed to distant water fishing nations to enlarge the mesh size of their nets. Many believe that tons of juvenile tuna are discarded because of small mesh size.

Summit approves biotech

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) holding parallel meetings alongside the official summit decried as a disgrace the triumph of the biotechnology industry, led by the US, in pushing its agenda at the conference. The NGO Forum, representing 700 organisations, demanded a moratorium on the use of genetically-modified organisms (GMOs), rejecting the compromise model proposed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the start of the summit.

“Far from analysing and correcting the problems that have made it impossible to make progress over the past five years toward eliminating hunger, this new plan of action compounds the error of ‘more of the same failed medicine’,” said a parallel declaration by NGOs.

In a key departure from the 1996 declaration, which was silent on the issue, this summit declaration states openly: “We are committed to study, share and facilitate the responsible use of biotechnology in addressing development needs.”

It asks for advancement of “research into new technologies, including biotechnology”, and says “the introduction of tried and tested new technologies including biotechnology should be accomplished in a safe manner and adapted to local conditions to help improve agricultural productivity in developing countries.”

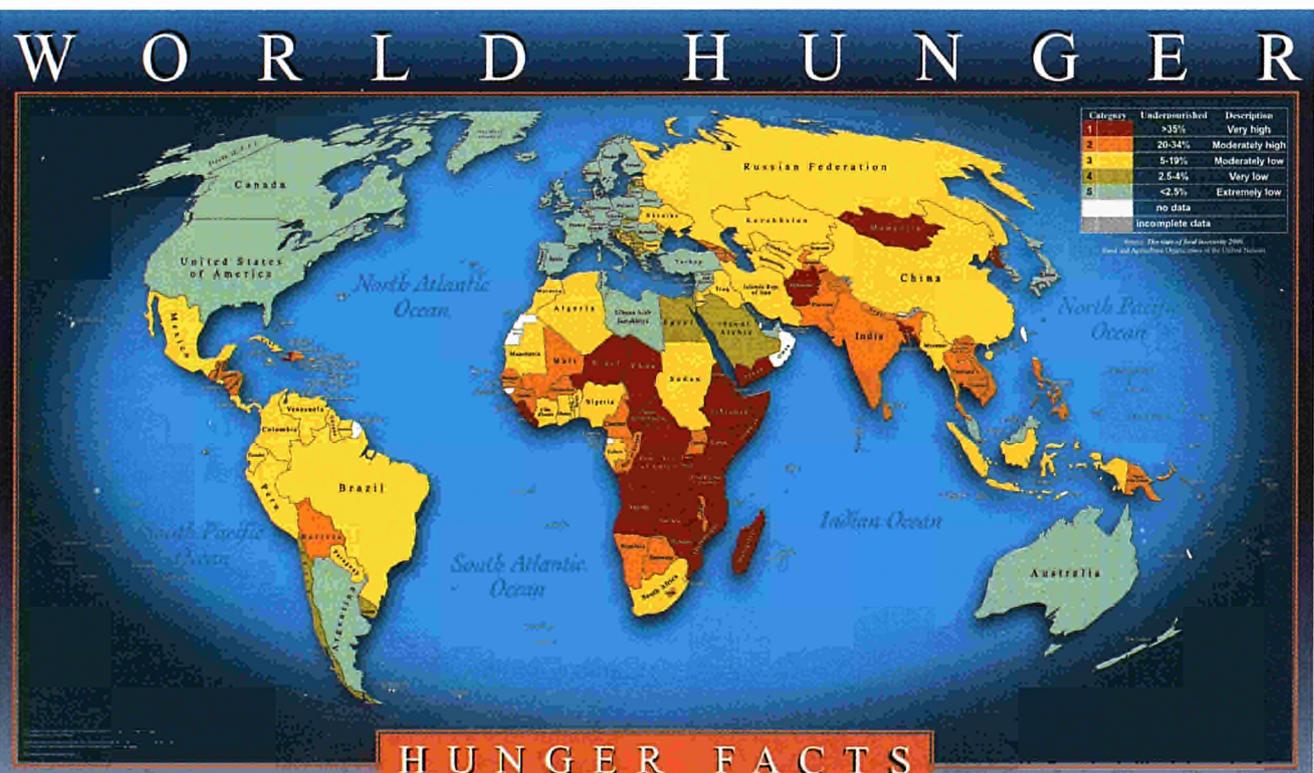
FAO Director General Jacques Diouf said that water, not biotechnology was the priority to solve world hunger. “For me biotechnology is marginal in the fight against hunger. But the scientific potential of biotechnology should not be eliminated”.

“GMOs are not the way to solve the problem of world hunger. There are too many health risks, they make small farmers dependent on large multinational corporations, and they will mean the end of biodiversity,” said Sergio Marelli, president of the NGO Forum. Brazilian activist Flavio Luz Schieck Valente added: “The agreement to increase research on biotechnology shows US pressure. In this way, the summit serves the industry, not the people.”

“We will fight to stop genetic engineering and the patenting of life and demand an immediate ban of terminator and similar genetic use restriction technologies. We also demand an end to the passing off of GMO food in food aid,” said Sarojeni Rengam of the Malaysia-based Pesticide Action Network (PAN).

Activists from both North and South are also tiring of summits and want to take their demands to the streets and onto the farms, through a plan of action for food sovereignty. For many activists, therefore, it is back to the streets, an increasingly common path these days by those who have come eschew world summits. ■

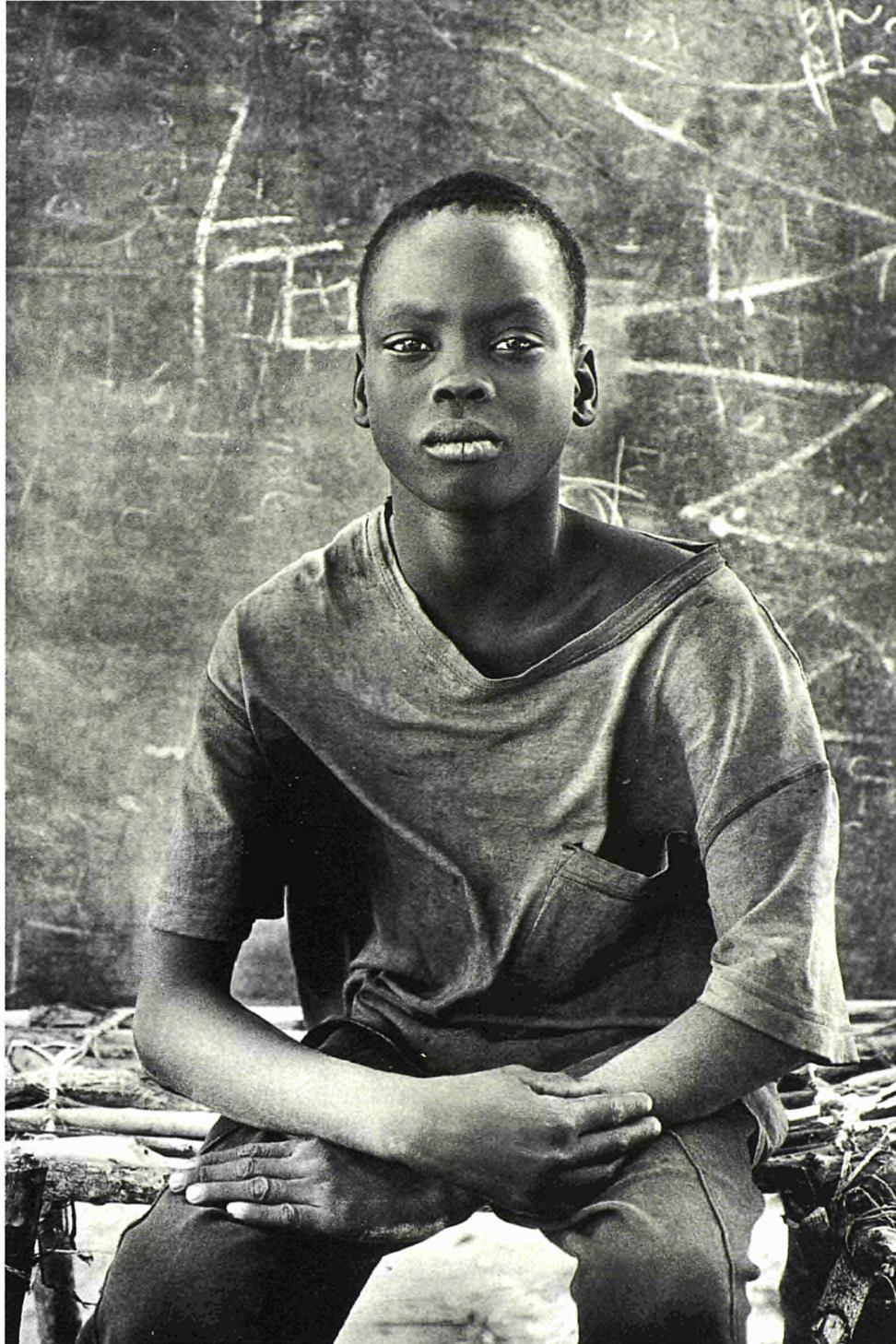
* Greta Hopkins is IPS Brussels correspondent and Editor of TerraViva Europe (<http://www.ips.org/tve/index.htm>)



HUNGER FACTS



- There is enough food in the world to feed everyone
- More than 800 million people know what it is like to go to bed hungry; most of them are women and children
- Almost 200 million children under five years of age are underweight due to a lack of food
- Malnutrition in children causes mental retardation and physical stunting



A boy sits in the Natinga School at a camp for the displaced in southern Sudan, a country at war for more than 20 years (1995)

A world fit for children?

Heated debate at the UN Special Session on Children

Did the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the Rights of Children secure a brighter future for the children of the world?

This question is being debated today in the wake of the controversy surrounding the meeting. Some believe great headway was made. Others view it as a step backwards.

Moussa Sawadogo

The special session of the UN General Assembly on the Rights of Children, held 8-10 May 2002 in New York, was an opportunity to assess the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child since its adoption in 1989. Following a week of negotiations on themes rang-

ing from vaccination to child labour and an exchange among Heads of States and 400 young delegates from all over the world, the representatives of some 180 nations unanimously adopted an outcome document, "A world fit for children".

This document sets out 21 specific targets and objectives for the coming decade in the areas of health, education and child protection. This consensus reaffirms the various countries' desire to build a safe world for children to grow up in and has enabled them to focus efforts on four key areas – a healthy life, quality education for all, protection against abuse, exploitation and violence as well as protection against HIV/AIDS.

It took eighteen months of negotiations to build this consensus and according to Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF, it is a success because it represents a new partnership: "I am extremely proud of and happy with what we have achieved. If our leaders keep their promises we shall be seeing extensive positive changes throughout the world in less than a generation. People have finally understood that if any form of lasting progress is to be made in the world they need to invest in children."

A step backwards?

Other participants do not share UNICEF's enthusiasm. Amnesty International views the meeting as a failure because the document does not unilaterally condemn the use of the death penalty against minors.

"It is ironic that the outcome document, whose main objective is to promote a healthy life for children, does not call for a ban on the execution of juvenile delinquents," maintains Yvonne Terlingen, an Amnesty International representative attending the meeting.

Representatives from Canada and the United Nations Programme on AIDS criticise "A World Fit for Children" because it does not promote reproductive health services. This sentiment likely stems from the fact that on the insistence of the United States, the term "service" was dropped from the agreement on reproductive health. The outcome document talks merely of education. This was viewed by the US as a way of excluding any reference to abortion.

In the view of Canadian representative Gilbert Laurin, "A World Fit for Children" represents a step backwards because women are entitled to the right to be informed regarding their sexual and reproductive health. Peter Piot, Head of the United Nations Programme on AIDS, talks about to a "scandal" and a "crime" against children.

"The biggest scandal, if not crime, is that we are denying children information, the right to know and the support that would enable them to grow up in a safer world," Dr Piot maintains.

The US refutes all the accusations. Richard Grenell, spokesman for the US Mission to the United Nations, says "the document stresses the importance of protecting children against armed conflict, prostitution and pornography and creates a safer world for them".

Those left disappointed by the meeting in New York are far from satisfied with such an explanation and have been quick to point an accusatory finger at the EU, for granting too many concessions to the US.

Consensus or strong text?

Says Amnesty International: "The European Union has not obtained a strong text that reflects its strong opposition to the execution of juvenile delinquents". Following Somalia's decision taken at the meeting to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, America is the only country to consistently refuse to ratify it. Says Amnesty International; "when it

comes to protecting a child's right to life, there is no room for compromise".

However, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Mirsini Zorba (Greece) holds the view that it is the consensus that counts. As she sees it, the EU has always condemned the death penalty but a consensus was required to ensure that all countries subsequently agree to make every effort to enforce the decisions taken. In her view, the outcome document had to stay within the realms of political realism.

She added that it was impossible to have a better agreement than the one adopted: "It is very important that the countries still agree afterwards to finance what they've promised."

John B. Richardson, Head of the European Commission Delegation in New York, shares this point of view, pointing out that in this type of summit, work is carried out on the basis of a "world consensus". The fact that the US has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in no way prevents the signatory countries from enforcing it.

The EU and its Member States are the largest contributors of official development assistance. Last March in Monterrey, at the UN conference on financing for development, they undertook to increase their official development assistance (ODA) from 0.33 per cent of GNP to 0.39 per cent by 2006, reversing the declining trend in ODA over the past decade.

"This should make available an extra twenty billion dollars," explains Mr Richardson. "We are seeing a rise in development aid, which is very important as far as children are concerned."

But can this mobilisation of funds make a difference to these children's lives if the decisions taken are just empty promises? In the eyes of one European Commission official, who took a pessimistic view of the meeting's accomplishments, the EU's concessions were inevitable given that Europe does not speak with one voice in UN fora.

MEP Zorba adds that the EU also has "no real common policy" in the area of children and childhood. In Europe, children's rights issues arise from the trade in people (which particularly affects women and children), sexual violation and problems in families. But it is still a domestic policy matter for individual member states.

Will there ever be a world fit for children?

Given the heated debates triggered by the session and the rather conservative stance adopted by countries such as the US, one would be justified in wondering whether there is a real political desire to deal with issues concerning children and in worrying that decisions taken might not be enforced. ■

Grim statistics mark the beginning of the 21st century:

- 600 million children live in families that earn less than a dollar a day.
- Armed conflicts kill and maim more children than soldiers. UNICEF reports that 300,000 children are involved in armed conflicts.
- 160 million children under the age of five suffer from malnutrition; ten million of them die every year.
- AIDS has left 13 million children orphans. Every day, 8,500 children and adolescents are infected with HIV.
- 110 million children of school age do not go to school; two-thirds of them are girls.

Development Council

Defining a common position for Johannesburg, amid concerns about the Development Council's future

At their six-monthly meeting, EU development ministers set out in detail the position the EU will be taking at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. The session was held amid concerns about the future of the Development Council, in danger of being abolished. All speakers, including the Commission, believed that this would be ill-advised*.

Aminata Niang

Johannesburg

Development ministers reiterated the EU's desire to steer international decision-makers towards political commitment and concrete results, which might help to make up for the "implementation gap" of the Rio Summit ten years earlier. The future of the planet and the conditions for fair socio-economic development are at stake. The session's Spanish Chairman, Miguel Ángel Cortés Martín, was pleased that the Council had succeeded in reaching a "solid common position". The ministers also adopted a number of resolutions and declarations aimed at reducing world poverty. Poul Nielson, Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, expressed satisfaction that "such a clear understanding of the situation gives the Commission a series of guidelines on which to base proposals and will markedly influence the implementation of sectoral policies by the Community and Member States".

A paradox or irony of fate? EU development ministers set great store by their work on 30 May 2002, a date which is set to go down in EU history as the date of the last Development Council.

Anxiety about the Development Council's future

With a full agenda, dominated by the adoption of a common approach for the Johannesburg summit (26 August-4 September), ministers devoted part of their discussions to anxious speculation on the future of their six-monthly meeting, in danger of being sacrificed on the altar of Council reform. Although this issue had not been formally included on the agenda or made the subject of an official bill, ministers had been unable to ignore rumours of a decision along these lines to be taken at the European Council in Seville, as a response to the report of Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Eddy Boutmans, Belgian State Secretary for Development Cooperation, took the initiative to air the ministers' concerns and their unanimous disapproval of such an eventuality. His information was that the Spanish presidency is thought to have consulted at the highest level in order to obtain from the Member States a consensus on the dissolution of the Council. This has since been backed up by José María Aznar, Prime Minister of Spain. Without specifically mentioning the Development Council, on 7 June in Lisbon he announced

"decisions to split the General Affairs Council in two and reduce the number of Council groups". Already regarded as an antechamber to the General Affairs Council for certain issues (once drawn up, the conclusions on the Johannesburg summit, for example, must then receive the approval of the General Affairs Council), it is feared the Development Council would be all but swallowed up by the meetings of Foreign Affairs ministers of the 15 Member States, which deal both with defence and external relations issues.

"It would be a mistake to do away with the Development Council. Promoting sustainable development and fighting poverty would no longer have its own political mouthpiece and would be lost amid the many other considerations of a General Affairs Council. It is worrying, especially for the structural link with ACP countries," Eddy Boutmans told the press.

Poul Nielson, when questioned as to the reality of such a danger, thought it "better to ask the Council Presidency", a diplomatic way of suggesting, without actually saying it, that the Commission had not been consulted on the matter. "I feel it is important to have a representative that can devote all its energies to development," the Commissioner added.

The Spanish Secretary of State for International Cooperation shares this view. "Our work proves that the Development Council plays an extremely valuable role. It enables the Union to take a stand on important subjects such as water, education and health," he declared, stressing the importance, for EU negotiators, of having "a structured framework to follow".

WSSD

The Council's conclusions outlined the EU's commitments that ministers would like to see reflected in the final summit declaration, capitalising on the achievements of Doha (the WTO agenda for development) and of Monterrey (world consensus on key financial and development issues). These com-

*On 21/22 June the European Council decided to reduce the number of specialised Council meetings from 16 to nine, as part of its process of reform. This means that development cooperation issues (as part of the whole of the EU's external action) will in future be dealt with under the auspices of the General Affairs Council, now re-named "General Affairs and External Relations", at the European Council.

mitments include eradicating poverty, making globalisation work for sustainable development, notably through the gradual elimination of European subsidies, "which have considerable negative impacts on the environment and are incompatible with sustainable development", developing sustainable consumption and production patterns, reversing the trend in environmental damage by promoting the long-term management of natural resources, achieving greater coherency of EU policies in terms of development objectives, promoting better governance at all levels and providing the necessary financial resources for sustainable development. The Council's conclusions also identify the key areas of action in which the EU will present concrete initiatives;

water, health, energy, but also sustainable consumption and production patterns, global public goods and technical assistance for all trade-related matters.

The aim is to reduce by half the number of people without access to drinking water and/or sanitation infrastructures, and by two thirds the infant and maternal mortality rate, to slow down the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the spread of other major infectious diseases, and to make exporting easier for developing countries.

A number of the resolutions, declarations and conclusions adopted by the Council serve these objectives and are a response to Commission communications, which met with the approval of the ministers. ■

Council resolutions and conclusions

Good governance and development

The Council's conclusions on good governance and democracy in developing countries were adopted following a political debate on ways to step up the fight against corruption as a medium of development. The conclusions reflect a concern of the Spanish Presidency and welcome the Commission's proposal to deepen its work on governance. A working party will be set up to establish, in consultation with Member States, a political framework based on the links between democracy and good governance with partner countries, and with the active involvement of non-state actors.

Reform of the management of the Community's external aid

Poul Nielson briefed the Council on the progress made on the implementation of the Community development policy, citing the increased rate at which the funds invested were being mobilised, the drawing up of country-specific strategies and the deconcentration of competences to Commission Delegations in developing countries.

The Council also adopted a short declaration affirming that the EU would continue to offer financial support to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and inviting all donor countries to do likewise.

Ratification of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement

Poul Nielson used the opportunity of this Development Council to appeal to the eight Member States with ratification procedures still outstanding (Austria, Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal) to complete ratification procedures by the autumn so as not to impede the mobilisation of funds in the 9th European Development Fund. Any delay would be "to the detriment of the best performing ACP countries". The commitment was entered into by all except Belgium and Italy, which, as the Commissioner pointed out, were "unable to specify a date for concluding a formality that a sufficient majority of ACP countries (51 out of 77) have already taken care of".

Management of water in developing countries

The Council resolution identifies the key areas of action, such as the assignment of an economic value to the use of water and the consolidation of partnerships for the sharing of technologies and know-how, and recommends that the resolution be used by the EU as the basis for its strategic partnership initiative on water and sanitation, to be presented at Johannesburg.

Health and the fight against poverty

The Council resolution acknowledges that the Commission has defined a series of community investment guidelines with respect to health, the fight against AIDS and population increase, and urges the Community to implement its programme of action on transmittable diseases without delay.

Education and training aimed at reducing poverty

The Council sets out in its resolution that the development cooperation strategy should make universal and free primary education an absolute priority, and insists on the need to accord it the status it deserves in conflict and post-conflict periods and in the fight against AIDS.

Role of information and communications technology (ICT) in development

Recognising the importance of ICT, the Council conclusions recommend that EU support for the development of ICTs in developing countries should concentrate on reducing poverty, and should be available for regional integration organisations that are keen to draw up common regulations in the fields of telecommunications and electronic commerce, the latter being recognised as a crucial element in integration into the world economy.

Food crisis in southern Africa

The Council expressed grave concern at the food crisis facing Southern Africa, and adopted a declaration calling for immediate and substantial humanitarian aid from all donors. It insists on the need for reforms at both national and regional level if the underlying causes of food insecurity in the country are to be effectively addressed.

Prospects in Sudan and Afghanistan

At the request of the UK, the Council held an exchange of views on the various peace plans in operation in Sudan and on the possibilities of resuming, subject to a number of conditions, cooperation with this country.

The exchange of views on Afghanistan enabled the Council to reiterate its firm belief that cooperation and discipline on the part of donor countries are essential if priority is to be given to strengthening the country's own capabilities and if public affairs in the country are to be effectively managed. The ministers also looked into whether the country was in a position to be able to export agricultural products other than opium.

EU and ACP countries negotiate Economic Partnership Agreements

Q & A with trade commissioner, Pascal Lamy

Negotiations between the European Union and the ACP states with a view to concluding Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) – as laid down in the Cotonou Agreement – begin at the end of September. In June, the Council of the European Union adopted negotiating directives. Pascal Lamy, European Commissioner with responsibility for trade, will lead the negotiations on behalf of the EU. Here he answers *ACP-EU Courier's* questions from Kenneth Karl on this complex and delicate process.

The aim of the forthcoming trade negotiations with the ACP countries is to establish a framework that can meet their development needs and the requirements of globalisation, all in compliance with WTO regulations. How are you going to approach these negotiations, which pose such a challenge?

The ACP countries and the EU are indeed about to start negotiations for Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), intended to create a framework to meet several interlinked needs and requirements: providing a catalyst for ACP trade and development; helping these countries to foster regional integration and meet the challenges of globalisation; and putting ACP-EU trade relations on a long-term, stable basis compatible with the WTO. We must do all of these things simultaneously if we want to help the ACP countries with their own efforts to integrate into the mainstream of globalisation and to benefit from it. We want to set up a new North-South relationship based on mutual obligations: we offer market access and our partners will aim to adopt the right policies to help to foster regional integration, among other things. This will improve the investment climate and prospects for growth and development. Trade and development policies must work hand in hand. EPAs are a novel approach and we will be pioneers in designing and implementing them. It's quite a challenge. But I am optimistic. ACP countries are committed to it and we will be working together as partners in meeting mutual goals.

Is the trade framework with ACP countries being reviewed because of the acknowledged failure of the preferences granted under the Lomé Agreements? In what way will these future agreements offer better prospects to the ACP countries?

I wouldn't agree that the preferences available under the Lomé Convention did not work at all. Several ACP countries did benefit significantly from the Lomé trade arrangements, and managed to turn those benefits into development. But ACP countries as a whole did not make enough progress. On the contrary, ACP countries have seen their share of EU imports drop. Moreover, many ACP countries failed to diversify their exports. They are still exporting the same few products as they were years ago. That is why we and our ACP partners have agreed that offering them nominal market access is important, but this alone is not enough to enhance their prospects.

We have to go beyond and analyse many other factors that determine export performance. For example, ACP exporters may have difficulty coming to grips with EU sanitary and phytosanitary requirements. So the new Cotonou Agreement will take into account all relevant factors. We will address all relevant



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trade-related areas such as sanitary and phytosanitary issues, standards, competition, trade facilitation and investment rules. Moreover, funding for development will be closely linked to the EPA process. We want to make sure trade aspects are mainstreamed into development cooperation. This is one of the best ways to contribute to development in ACP countries.

What can you say to reassure those who fear that the bilateral dimension of ACP-EU relations, which had the advantage of acting as a buffer against external impacts and of managing instability, will be diluted under a multilateral framework in which few developing countries have any real faith?

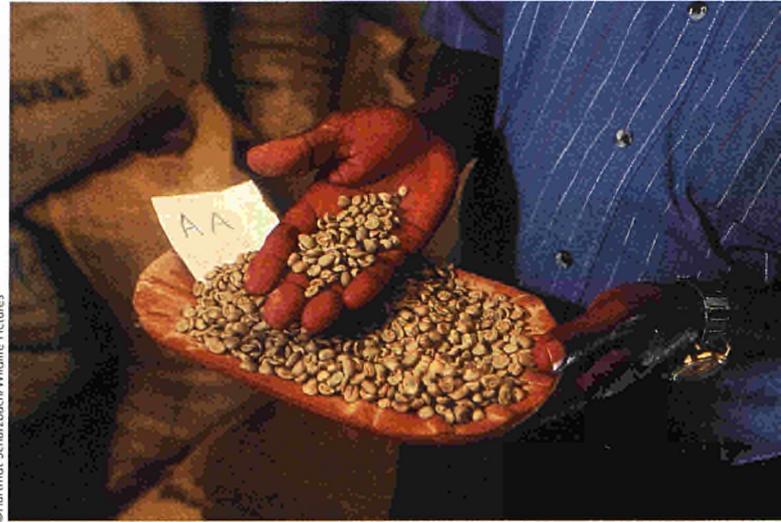
The Doha Development Agenda (DDA) couldn't have been launched without the support of the many developing countries that are fully aware of the importance of multilateral rules in an increasingly globalised world. Our bilateral and multilateral undertakings are designed to complement and indeed reinforce each other. EPAs will not only incorporate the rules set within the framework of the DDA but they will go further. They will address their implications for development, identify any difficulty ACP countries may have in implementing multilateral rules, and the best way to benefit from them. EPAs will also be instrumental in tackling problems by defining appropriate policies and ways in which these relate to ACP-EU development cooperation.

The EPAs should in theory facilitate the integration of ACP countries into the world economy at a time when compensatory mechanisms are no longer really in vogue. Should we not then fight to obtain further flexibility within the WTO as we saw in Doha, or should we be content with what we have?

The main objective behind EPAs is to gradually integrate the ACP countries into the world economy. Our development cooperation will accompany this process. Where required, we will have to examine whether and how temporary compensation schemes for fiscal stabilisation are to be set up. But it is equally important for ACP countries to achieve gradual structural change in response to the new challenge. ACP countries' integration into world markets will of course be fully compatible with WTO rules. However, they will need enough flexibility to make this process compatible with their constraints and priorities. So we will make the most of the flexibility which multilateral rules allow. In Cotonou, we both agreed to cooperate closely in the multilateral context. We want rules that allow us to find developmentally sound solutions via the bilateral EPA process. Never losing sight of "multilateral" in our bilateral efforts will also help us in our efforts to make the DDA bear fruit.

How will these negotiations take account of the issues of consistency of EU policies with the main objectives of the EPA as regards, for example, agriculture?

Given the diversity of the EU, it is likely that we will hear differing views expressed within the EU when it comes to responding to some of the ACP countries' specific demands for further



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liberalisation. But we are all determined to achieve a developmentally satisfactory outcome that includes better market access. But we also expect our ACP partners to do their bit to contribute to the common goal. They have to establish sound policies. They must, above all, foster regional integration in return for EU market opening. We have a strategic interest in seeing the ACP countries accelerate their development, and we believe that trade is central. That is why I am confident we will reach consensus on a mutually satisfactory outcome.

In your recent book, "L'Europe en première ligne", you say that you were surprised by the extent of the resistance in Europe during your campaign to get the Everything But Arms initiative passed. Is there a risk of this overcautiousness reappearing during these negotiations, since both parties will have to make sacrifices to reach a fair outcome?

ACP regions and countries vary considerably. From Nigeria, a big continental country with 120 million inhabitants and abundant oil and other resources, to Cape Verde with only 0.4 million inhabitants, an island state with very few resources and a completely different economic and trade profile. EPAs must take such differences and specificities into account. In our negotiating mandate, we stressed the importance of taking into account different levels of development among ACP countries, as well as economic and social constraints and the capacity to adjust to liberalisation. EPAs will be tailored around these and important parts of the negotiations will be on a regional level to remain sensitive to them. In the end, we want to achieve a gradual rapprochement between integrated EPA regions. As regards the "A" in the ACP, I share the long-term vision of African leaders for a united borderless continent. EPAs will be building blocks on that road.

We have a strategic interest in seeing the ACP countries accelerate their development, and we believe that trade is central. That is why I am confident we will reach consensus on a mutually satisfactory outcome

Does the United States' current return to protectionism, in defiance of trade rules, risk giving the wrong impression to developing countries,



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EPAs will take full account of sustainability in all its dimensions including the economic, social and environmental aspects. For me, EPAs are basically an instrument for sustainable development. They have many built-in features to make them sustainable. First, we will liaise closely and have a dialogue with all stakeholders, including non-governmental actors. We want in-depth knowledge of real needs and concerns. Then we will carefully study the issues and options with our ACP partners, including environmental concerns, before deciding anything. We will assess in detail where we are

particularly ACP countries, which are soon to enter into liberalised trade relations with the EU?

The signals we have received recently from the United States have indeed been worrying – for developed as well as developing countries, and for the functioning of the multilateral system. But let's not exaggerate. We are confident these matters will be solved within the existing rules. One way or another, we must press on with our objective of achieving more liberal markets, as agreed in Cotonou. This is a basic requirement for achieving sustainable development and poverty reduction. There is strong commitment to this principle on all sides.

We know of cases where protection has worked for development, since it was applied in a very careful, targeted and above all temporary way. But broad protection, unlimited in time, is different, and generally damaging for development. It may provide wealth for the few, but it limits opportunities and growth for all others. It's clear that so-called temporary protection that has crept on in time has blocked development in many cases. There is broad agreement today that if we want to foster development, greater liberalisation is essential.

This is fundamental to the Cotonou Agreement and the EPAs. However, we must design the transition towards a more liberal environment carefully, along with appropriate flanking measures so that transition takes place in a socially and economically sustainable way. Our discussions with ACP countries on EPAs will be all about this. We will study the options and the implications of different liberalisation and regional integration scenarios. We will look for solutions and for ways to support these solutions through appropriate policies and our development cooperation. What we want is to move gradually towards a more liberal environment that fosters investment, development and, ultimately, poverty reduction.

I share the long-term vision of African leaders for a united borderless continent. EPAs will be building blocks on that road.

In an ever more globalised and interdependent world, the need to focus on the sustainability of development has become a priority. These issues will come into sharper focus during the forthcoming conference on sustainable development in Johannesburg. To what extent will EPAs serve the objective of sustainable development?

going and how we should move from here. Sustainability impact assessment studies are one important instrument in this regard. There will be enough time to reach balanced agreements as well as to implement them later on. There will also be enough flexibility in all aspects of implementation. As I have already mentioned, we will design flanking cooperation programmes and discuss appropriate national policies. This will drive and support the whole process. This will also enable us to avoid disruption, and it will help to cushion the adverse effects of EPA implementation. Our main objective is to enable ACP countries to benefit from new opportunities, and to use globalisation for sustainable growth and development.

The forthcoming negotiations will deal with all the issues that in some way affect trade, in the context of an interdependent and complex world. The image of Europe and the ACP countries side by side, in a strong position to satisfy the increasingly felt need for global governance – is this something you would like to see become a reality?

Of course! The EU and the ACP countries have adjusted their special relationship continuously over the years to take global developments into account. The Cotonou Agreement makes enhanced trade cooperation one of the central pillars, and we are just starting to implement fully the relevant provisions. As regards the multilateral framework, we co-funded the setting up of an office for ACP countries in Geneva so as to reinforce their presence and coordination vis-à-vis the WTO. We are now increasingly liaising with ACP countries on multilateral issues. It is obvious that we can all benefit from enhanced cooperation in this area. All 15 countries of the EU and 55 ACP states are members of the WTO. Together we account for about half the WTO membership and can make a major input. ACP countries and the EU are fully aware of how important universal, transparent and enforceable rules are in a globalising world. I'm confident we will work well together on shaping balanced multilateral trade rules as an important element of global governance for the benefit of all. ■

Cotonou and the private sector

Action plan for ACP private sector development

The ACP Secretariat organised, with the support of the European Commission, the first meetings of ACP and ACP-EU private sector representatives on the operationalisation of the Cotonou Agreement, in Brussels from 15-17 May. The first two days were reserved for an internal ACP private sector meeting that led to its structuring and the definition of an action plan. This was followed by a meeting with the representatives of the EU private sector on the third day. The objective of these meetings was to enable the private sector to effectively participate in the implementation of the provisions of the new ACP-EU Partnership Agreement. About 100 representatives from business circles, trades unions and civil society in the ACP countries and EU Member States took part.

The Cotonou Agreement reserves an important role for non-state actors, including the private sector, and stresses the need to unite all economic and social actors under the common goal of attaining the sustainable development of the ACP states; through job creation, fighting poverty, and facilitating the integration of the ACP states into the global economy.

According to the Agreement, non-state actors (private sector, economic and social partners, including trade union organisations, and civil society) should be informed about and involved in cooperation policies and strategies and political dialogue, and should be provided with financial resources and capacity-building support.

The meeting of private sector representatives follows on from the convocation of NGOs last year in Brussels, also at the initiative of ACP General Secretary Jean-Robert Goulougana.

To open the ACP private sector discussions, Senegal's Ambassador and Chairman of the ACP sub-committee on Investment and Private Sector, Mr Saliou Cissé stressed the need for greater coordination amongst the different ACP-EU instruments for the development of the private sector. Moreover, he described the transformation of the Centre for the Development of Industry (CDI) into the Centre for the Development of Enterprise (CDE) as a major asset for the development of the ACP private sector. Another advantage is the "investment facility" set up by the European Investment Bank (EIB), an EU financial institution. The investment facility, has a budget of €2.2 billion, will thus be able to encourage growth in private investment and the long-term mobilisation of local resources. Ambassador Cissé announced the organisation of regional seminars for informing the ACP private sector about how the investment facility works and, in particular, about the conditions of access to its resources. Meetings will also be organised to stimulate partnerships between the European and ACP private sectors and the creation of investment-protection and promotion programmes.

Informing ACP private-sector actors

Mr Ramón Baeza, President of the ACP-EU Monitoring Committee and a member of the European Economic and Social Committee (ESC), confirmed the ESC's desire to fulfil the mandate conferred on it by the Cotonou Agreement to organise consultation sessions and meetings between ACP and EU economic and social circles. He believes that the priority at this stage of implementation of the Cotonou Agreement must be to inform non-state actors in the ACP countries.

Adoption of an action plan

At the end of their discussions, ACP participants adopted an action plan for the development of the private sector, setting out five priority actions to be implemented: dialogue and awareness-raising, capacity building, institutional arrangements, maximising the use of the financial and technical resources under Cotonou, and the creation of an ACP-EU Business Forum.

The action plan highlights the importance of structured dialogue with ACP governments, the European Commission and other key players in the implementation of Cotonou.

The need for representative private sector structures and institutional arrangements is recognised as a crucial element in the action plan, hence the establishment of an ACP-EU Business Forum and a Brussels-based Focal Point. The objectives of the Business Forum are to set up structured dialogue between the ACP and EU private sectors; to promote business between enterprises in ACP countries and between ACP and EU enterprises; to promote investment from EU enterprises to ACP countries; to foster the development of joint ventures, strategic alliances and technology transfer programmes and projects with collaborating organisations; to promote awareness in the ACP and EU private sectors of the relevant provisions and opportunities of the Cotonou Agreement and of the financial resources and technical assistance available to the private sector.

A follow-on meeting of ACP private sector representatives is expected to be held in September. ■

Article 75 - Investment promotion

The ACP States, the Community and its Member States, within the scope of their respective competencies, recognizing the importance of private investment in the promotion of their development cooperation and acknowledging the need to take steps to promote such investment, shall:

- i. promote national, regional and ACP-EU private sector business dialogue, cooperation and partnerships, in particular through an ACP-EU private sector business forum. Support for operations of an ACP-EU private sector business forum shall be provided in pursuit of the following objectives:
 - a. to facilitate dialogue within the ACP/EU private sector and between the ACP/EU private sector and the bodies established under the Agreement;
 - b. to analyse and periodically provide the relevant bodies with information on the whole range of issues concerning relations between the ACP and EU private sectors in the context of the Agreement or, more generally, of economic relations between the Community and the ACP countries.

Africa on the sidelines of world football

Senegal 1, France 0.
Who would have believed it? Yet this shock result is actually a just reflection of the huge potential represented by Senegalese football, indeed by African football as a whole. This victory for the "Lions of Teranga" is also a victory for the whole of Africa, a continent which has seen itself sidelined in world football. While Africa pours talent into European football, it has yet to benefit from the economic and social development that could be generated by professionalising this sport. It is under-represented on FIFA's decision-making boards and the World Cup finals have never been hosted by an African country.

Isabelle Saussez



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Senegalese defender Khalilou Fadiga (right) celebrates his goal from a penalty kick with teammates Henri Camara (left) and El Hadj Diouf (centre), during the match against Uruguay at the 2002 World Cup, in Suwon, Republic of Korea 11 June 2002

Since the 1980s, more and more African footballers have left home to play for European clubs. One just has to take a look at the composition of the African national teams in Japan and South Korea: the whole of the Cameroonian squad plays abroad, along with 22 Senegalese, 21 Nigerians, 16 South Africans and nine Tunisians. Africa is losing its top athletes along with its brainpower. Some would attribute this to Europe's suffering from post-colonial syndrome. In fact, it is managers in the North who are benefiting most from under-funded African national leagues which are incapable of setting up and maintaining the infrastructures needed for professional football.

"When I arrived in Cameroon, there was no longer a national football federation. Many African countries have the same problem, they have great individual players but no team," says Henri Depireux, former coach of the Cameroon national team. Where they do exist, national leagues cannot afford to provide adequate training, let alone pay their professionals. Under such conditions, young footballers are quick to take up the talent scouts on their tempting offers. However, in the world of football many are called but few are chosen. As Henri Depireux explains, "For Africans, Europe is their Nirvana. There is a lot of talk about Mboma or Okocha, who earn lots of money, but for every one such player there are thousands who cannot make ends meet."

Football and development

With limited public or private investment, African countries have little with which to persuade their best players to stay at home. But, as football is Africa's most popular sport, professionalisation could be beneficial.

Paul Darby, a lecturer at the University of Ulster, explains: "Football could be good for the economy and lead to investment. It could also help in overcoming ethnic divides and encourage feelings of national unity. In the absence of an economic or military force, football could be a way for African countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, to express themselves and participate on the international stage."

This opinion is shared by Jean-Marc Guillou, manager of a Belgian first division club and founder of a training centre in Côte d'Ivoire. "Football is very much a development factor for African countries," he says. "Like African art or music, it is an activity that can build confidence and increase Africans' standing."

But for a national football team to be able to act as its country's showcase, enormous investment is required. In a World Cup editorial, Jean-Baptiste Placca, manager of fortnightly magazine *L'autre Afrique* ("The Other Africa"), makes the point that "even among those who claim to love football, few African politicians understand that the sport could also be a vehicle for development. If they would

only provide some significant funding they could then reap the economic rewards. Unfortunately, just as with raw materials, our talented athletes are sold off cheaply to others who then transform them and market them at a premium."

In 1999, in an attempt to help the lagging African national leagues and lighten the burden of essential public investment, FIFA launched the "Goal" initiative, a programme intended to develop football as a sport in developing countries. With an approved budget of 100 million Swiss francs, "Goal" covers 80 to 120 projects. FIFA distributes funds according to the national leagues' needs, such as construction or renovation of grounds, establishment of training centres, training for sports medicine and for refereeing. It is a laudable initiative on the part of the international federation, but the final destination of funds is sometimes obscure. In his campaign for election as FIFA president, Issa Hayatou, the Cameroonian candidate standing opposite Sepp Blatter, denounced the lack of transparency of this project on several occasions.

"Euro-centrist partisanship"

In 2002 the Asian continent is hosting the World Cup finals for the first time in the tournament's history. Since 1930, Europe has played host nine times, South America four times and North America three times, leaving Africa and Oceania the poor relations in this world event. But granting the World Cup finals to Africa could in theory benefit the local economy and the prestige of African football. In its ill-fated campaign to become the 2006 hosts, South Africa emphasised the economic benefits it could gain from it. This is also discussed by Paul Darby in his book *Africa, football and FIFA*: "If South Africa was given the chance to host the 2006 World Cup finals it could mean significant social, economic and sporting benefits for the country. Hosting the event would create many new openings for employment, would develop sports facilities and help put this nation on the world map, generating tourism." Justice, equality and common sense would have given the finals to Africa in 2006, and the pan-African aspect of the Rainbow Nation's candidacy has not been lost on observers.

Instead, Europe will be doing the honours for the tenth time. FIFA's executive committee voted 12 to 11 against South Africa for the 2006 World Cup finals to be held in Germany. This result provoked a great deal of indignation among those who advocated having the World Cup in Africa, all the more so in light of New Zealander Charles Dempsey's surprise abstention¹, despite being instructed by his federation to support South Africa. Allegations of corruption and even death threats abounded, but exactly why Charles Dempsey abstained will

probably never be known. In Paul Darby's view, "discounting the part played by Dempsey in this affair, the South Africans also felt that the decision to award Europe its tenth World Cup finals was proof of a sort of Euro-centrist partisanship, an aspect of FIFA that limits Africa's ability to build and consolidate its place in world football."

For such an event to effectively be a factor of development, it is necessary for the host country to have itself reached a certain degree of economic, social and political development. In this respect, the organisation of the 32nd African Nations Cup in Mali was much criticised, even by development aid organisations. Mali officially pumped almost €90 million into welcoming the 16 teams in the competition, an extravagant luxury for a country that ranks among the ten poorest in the world. All the more so since the direct benefits amounted to little more than zero, the country having to make do with income from ticket sales. However, the economic situations of South Africa and Mali are very different and the African Nations Cup does not draw as big a crowd as the World Cup. South Africa has well-developed sporting, hotel, road and air infrastructures and has already proven its suitability as a host during the Rugby World Cup in 1995.

Investment needed

If football is to become a factor in local, national and transnational development, it will require considerable investment, something not all governments can afford. For African countries, many of whom are among the world's least developed, it is a question of priorities. As Paul Darby explains, "It essentially boils down to whether governments should invest the necessary money in sport while their people live in conditions of extreme poverty." ■

1. In the event of a tie, as would have been the case if Dempsey had not abstained, FIFA President Sepp Blatter would have cast the deciding vote. As it happens, he would have voted for South Africa.



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Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade celebrates the Senegalese victory over France in the World Cup in Seoul.



EU enlargement: a brake on development cooperation?

The European Union is expected to expand from 15 Member States to 25 in 2004. Will the accession of this new wave of members impact on the EU's development cooperation policy and should the ACP countries be on their guard?

Valérie Michaux/InfoSud

In two years' time, at the present rate of progress, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia are likely to become Member States of an enlarged European Union. Bulgaria and Romania will probably have to wait slightly longer. All twelve have embarked on the negotiation process and there is no division between them, but some are simply moving faster than others. Joining the EU means accepting the Union's rules and regulations (the *acquis communautaire*), and applicants must be capable of assuming various obligations on accession.

The candidate countries will have to play their part in achieving the EU's objectives on poverty alleviation. Accession will require them to make a financial contribution to and participate in the implementation of EU development policy.

These twelve countries have long received financial support from the EU – in order to boost their transitional economies, in the case of the ten former communist bloc countries. But sooner or later they will become donor countries in a Europe that finances almost half the world's international development aid.

No tradition of development aid

Accession negotiations with these countries on foreign policy have already been completed and all candidates have undertaken to accept the *acquis* without applying for exemptions. Included in this is development cooperation, which is the EU's third area of external activity after trade and foreign policy. In practical terms, the new Member States will have to adhere to the Cotonou Agreement – which is still in the process of ratification – and will contribute to the next European Development Fund (the 10th EDF). The size of their contributions has not yet been negotiated.

Francisco Granell, Director at the Commission's DG Development, refers to "forecasts", explaining that the financial aspects of accession are still under negotiation. "With the accession of these countries, it might be expected that the 10th EDF would be greater than the 9th". However, he predicts that this increase "is unlikely to be very substantial, given that the level of income of these countries is barely half that of current Member States."

He adds: "It should generally be borne in mind that these countries have no great tradition of development aid and no development cooperation policy in the modern sense." The European Commission's reports on the progress achieved by the candidate countries support this view. They show that such matters are not at the forefront of their concerns, and are insignificant compared with trade.

Even so, a number of countries have made progress since 1999 in putting in place a national development policy. In the long term this should enable them to participate in implementing EU policies. According to a recent study¹ of development policy in candidate countries, five of them have brought or are in the process of bringing their development practices into line with the principles laid down by the OECD Development Assistance Committee. In 1999 there were only three.

The five are the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. Four more – Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Malta – are lagging behind and have not yet set out a clear policy on development cooperation. In Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania, the issue has quite simply not yet been raised at government level. As regards the proportion of GNP that these countries devote to public development aid, Estonia leads with barely 0.1 per cent (compared with the EU average of 0.33 per cent). The others are way behind.

Economies in transition – catching up with the West

The former Communist bloc countries have for the past decade been concerned with making up for their own retarded development. Cooperation with third world countries has not been high on their list of concerns and is a concept that is not always widely understood.

"Enlargement of the Union confirms that their populations have very different levels of awareness of development and under-development issues", acknowledges Belgium's development cooperation minister. He is the instigator of a resolution, adopted during the Belgian Presidency of the EU, on the content of the Member States' future common policy on development education.

On the eve of enlargement, this resolution is more necessary than ever. Poland is one of the few candidate countries to have adhered to the UN Millennium Declaration and has a large number of development NGOs. But even here "the term

'development' has little meaning and is still unfamiliar to the [wider] NGO community", confesses Jakub Boratyski, international programme director at Warsaw's Batory Foundation.

ACP concerns

For all these reasons, there are worries that the enlargement process might result in the EU reducing aid to the "traditional" developing countries or further distancing itself from the Southern Hemisphere in terms of cooperation. The European Parliament has for some time been calling for the impact of enlargement on EU cooperation with countries in the South to be properly discussed during accession negotiations.

For their part, the ACP countries have long viewed enlargement as a matter of great concern. "After the Berlin Wall came down, the former Communist countries threw the baby out with the bath water. They disclaimed any idea of internationalism or of cooperation with countries in the Southern Hemisphere," commented an official from the ACP Secretariat. He regretted the near-indifference with which these countries appear to view the South.

Fears may prove unfounded

Recently, however, there has been less apprehension within the ACP countries. The various meetings organised between the two groups have undoubtedly contributed to this change of mind. "The important thing is to get to know them and to arouse their curiosity", said the ACP official, who pointed out a number of cultural and historic links with the newcomers. "One should also remember that enlargement will offer us new markets", he went on, "and although public aid helps us survive, only trade will enable our countries to develop".

In the mind of the ACP countries, the real fear stems from the risk of entering into competition with these new EU Member States on certain products, as yet unspecified. However, Francisco Granell puts a reassuring slant on things: "If problems arise, peaceful adaptation systems will be found", just as happened with the accession of Finland, whose sugar refineries were seen as a threat to some ACP countries.

Apprehension about enlargement undoubtedly contains an element of resistance to change – all new accessions have given rise to concern. When Franco's dictatorship came to an end in Spain and the country wanted to join the EU, there was concern that it had no tradition of development cooperation. These fears were also expressed in the cases of Portugal and, especially, Greece and Ireland which had never been colonial powers.

Francisco Granell confirms this: "The accession of the United Kingdom signalled the passing of the Yaoundé system and the adoption of the Lomé system with the integration of the Commonwealth countries. Enlargement of the EU to countries in southern Europe included the Mediterranean area and Latin America in Community foreign policy. Enlargement to include the Nordic countries brought with it cooperation with the United Nations. Future enlargement should not result in any great change in the concept of development, precisely because these countries have no tradition of providing development aid."

Current concerns about development cooperation and enlargement may prove to have no more substance than they did in the previous rounds. This should become clearer in the next few years. ■

1. Soon to be published: Léna Krichewsky, *Development policy in the candidate countries*, Trialog



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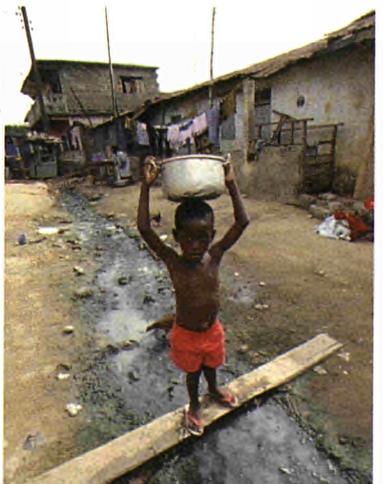
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Sustainable development



"Sustainable development" is a concept that is often invoked but difficult to define. The Brundtland Commission memorably defined it in its 1987 report "Our Common Future" as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". It took many years of intensive work to reach a global consensus on the elements of sustainable development, but it was finally achieved in 1995 at the World Summit on Social Development, which took place in Copenhagen. This definition brought together the so-called "three e's"; environment, economy and equity. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which will take place in Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August to 4 September, will build on these three pillars.

International environment and development policies have been strongly influenced by reports, like the Brandt Commission's report in 1980 and the Brundtland report in 1987. These establish the complex relationship between environmental degradation, population growth and social inequities. Degradation of natural resources is a harbinger of poverty; overfishing and deforestation for instance deplete the very resources on which the poor depend. The "Our Common Future" report was one of the major incentives for the UN World Summit on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The gathering, commonly known as the Earth Summit, adopted Agenda 21 – a comprehensive action programme to achieve sustainable development in the 21st century. The conventions which were put in place at the Earth Summit have provided a framework for ongoing negotiation and major progress on issues like climate change, biodiversity and desertification.

From Rio to Johannesburg

The Earth Summit was a time of great optimism and hope. Yet ten years after the Rio "deal" we are still far from sustainable development. The world faces endemic poverty, environmental degradation and unsustainable lifestyles. Global inequalities have increased. The question is how to ensure economic growth to help lift the poor out of poverty, without leaving an even more degraded environment for future generations.

Still, there is reason for hope. The conference on financing for development in Monterrey earlier this year may turn the tide on development assistance. As we know, Doha has put development firmly at the centre of the trade (market access, subsidies etc), intellectual property and investment agenda. These are issues of fundamental importance for developing countries. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have for the first time set a framework of quantifiable and costed targets agreed by all development partners, and against which performance can be measured.

Decisive action needs to be taken at Johannesburg. Only governments can take the necessary decisions to create the framework of rules needed to protect the global commons and remove the barriers and distortions which hold back development.

The WSSD is an occasion for frank discussion and agreement on practical ways to implement Agenda 21. It is a unique opportunity to close the implementation gap, and renew political commitments by all stakeholders.

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EU policies for sustainable

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. This definition is now universally accepted as a starting point for looking at sustainable development – a policy that implies tackling problems with foresight and one that the EU has wholly embraced.

Commitment to sustainable development is enshrined in the EU's Treaty, Agreements and Policies. The essential direction is laid down in Articles 177-181 of the EU Treaty, providing the framework and principles for its policies on development cooperation.

According to Article 177: “Community policy in the sphere of development cooperation shall foster the sustainable economic and social development of the developing countries particularly the most disadvantaged among them.” Article 177 also stresses the need to integrate developing countries into the world economy, as well as clearly focusing on eliminating poverty in EU policies. These goals, combined with emphasis on good governance and common ownership, form the basic pillars of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement between the EU and the ACP countries.

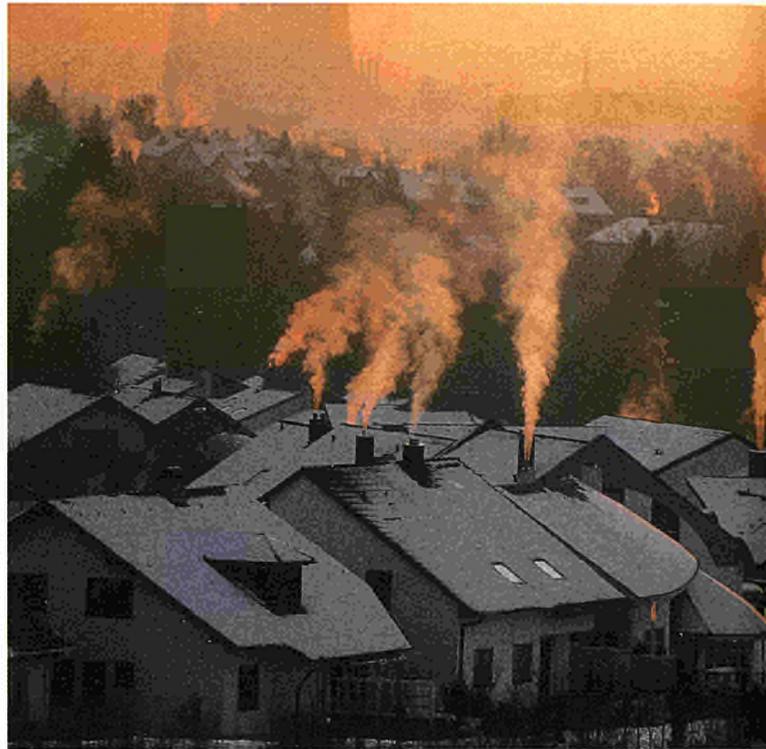
The EU's commitment to sustainable development is also set out in the European Commission's Communication: “The European Community's Development Policy”. This summarises the EU's development policies as “a multidimensional process integrating broad-based equitable growth, social services, environment, gender issues, capacity and institution building, private sector development, human rights and good governance. The concept of sustainable development encompasses these new priorities.”

What must be achieved in Johannesburg

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg at the end of August must achieve a concise and action-oriented plan of implementation. We have to avoid agreeing policies and failing to implement them to avoid a new “implementation gap” similar to that which occurred with the ambitious and comprehensive Agenda 21 agreed in Rio in 1992. To prevent this, Johannesburg will follow a dual track approach, aiming at two types of outcome. In the view of the EU both are equally necessary and important, and are closely linked to one another.

The so-called “Type 1” outcomes consist of a political declaration and a plan of implementation, agreed through intergovernmental negotiations. They will support an enhanced implementation of Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The plan of implementation should contain clear lines of action.

These should be complemented by “Type 2” outcomes – specific commitments, agreements or initiatives by stakeholders (including governments, the private sector, international organisations and community and citizen groups, but not negotiated or agreed by everyone). These partnerships will provide important support to action taken by governments to implement their own commitments. They do not make commitments by the international community redundant. Type 2 outcomes must be based on and evolve from Type 1 outcomes. Initiatives must be backed up by the means to secure their implementation. Work on Type 2 outcomes does not have to



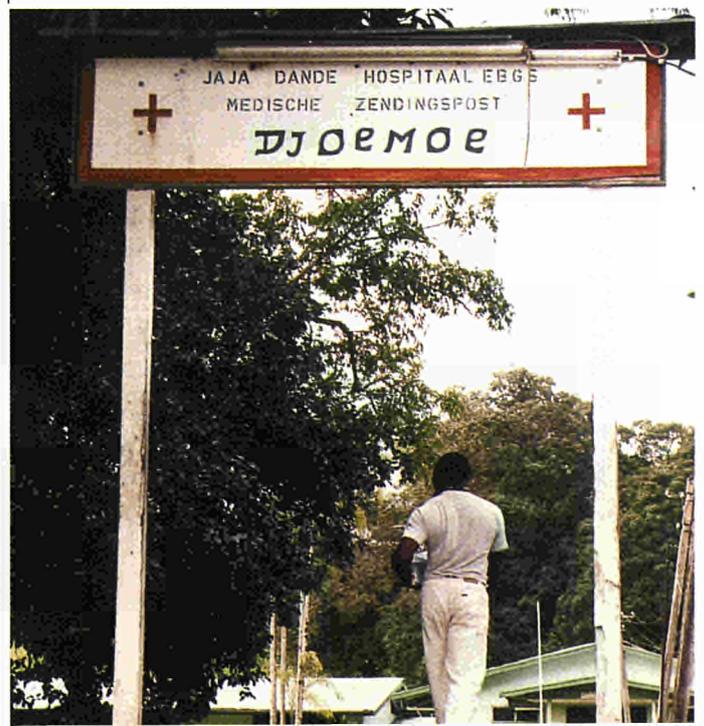
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be completed in Johannesburg, but clear procedures and time frames for their implementation have to be established.

The EU strategy for sustainable development

The EU is promoting a coherent approach to the summit's outcomes. The political declaration, the plan of implementation and the Type 2 partnerships must be mutually re-enforcing. The EU aims to play an important role in ensuring that the outcome of Johannesburg is balanced in two major respects – in addressing the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) and in terms of North-South interest. The second aspect is crucial in ensuring that stakeholders commit themselves to a sense of common ownership.

Medical post in Suriname. The EU is preparing initiatives in three key areas of sustainable development: health, water and energy



The Courier

The EU strategy for Johannesburg emphasises two important aspects. The first is the internal dimension of sustainable development – aiming to make consumption and production patterns sustainable within the EU.



This will be indispensable in the follow-up to the summit.

Coherent global management, rather than unilateral action, will be necessary to counteract the negative effects of globalisation and to achieve the goal of sustainable development. All the players will have a role: developing countries by implementing sound policies, good governance and the rule of law; industrialised countries by good management of social aspects and by ensuring that markets are open to all; and international institutions by developing a model for global governance that will support sustainable development.

Against this background, a focused and politically attractive agenda is needed. The summit is an opportunity to discuss and determine important additional steps towards combating poverty and achieving the MDGs. Underlining the importance of this event for the EU, President Prodi and Commissioners Wallstrom and Nielson are already committed to attending. Other Commissioners may also attend. The delegation will include MEPs and civil society representatives from social, environmental and development NGOs among others.

Reflecting the need for a coherent approach, the EU strategy for Johannesburg emphasises two important aspects. The first is the internal dimension of sustainable development – aiming to make consumption and production patterns sustainable within the EU. This internal strategy for sustainable development has already been established by the Commission's Communication, "A sustainable Europe for a better world: a European Union strategy for sustainable development". This was endorsed by European leaders in Goeteborg (Sweden) last year.

The second aspect is the EU's contribution to promote sustainable development beyond its borders. The Commission's Communication, "Towards a global partnership for sustainable development", published in February this year, sets out the Union's external strategy. It focuses on poverty reduction, trade, management of natural resources, the coherence of EU policies, global governance and financing aspects. But it also provides the strategic components for a "global deal".

The process of planning a strategy was based on the outcomes of the EU summit in Goeteborg and of the Environment Council last year. These meetings endorsed the key themes and identified the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns as overriding objectives for Johannesburg.

As a further preparatory step, the Development Council at the end of May adopted conclusions that addressed both Type 1 and Type 2 outcomes. Initiatives in three key areas of sustainable development were agreed: health, water and energy. The EU has continued to work on other possible areas, such as governance, and has remained open to proposals that might emerge from discussions in the run-up to

Johannesburg. The EU's overall position on the WSSD was adopted in Seville on 22 June. The European Council conclusions stress the EU's commitment to a successful outcome at the WSSD and its willingness to continue to play a leading role in the preparations for the Summit. Building on the successful steps of Monterrey and Doha, without reopening the agreements reached there, the objective is to reach a global deal reaffirming a global commitment to sustainable development.

International efforts to reach a consensus

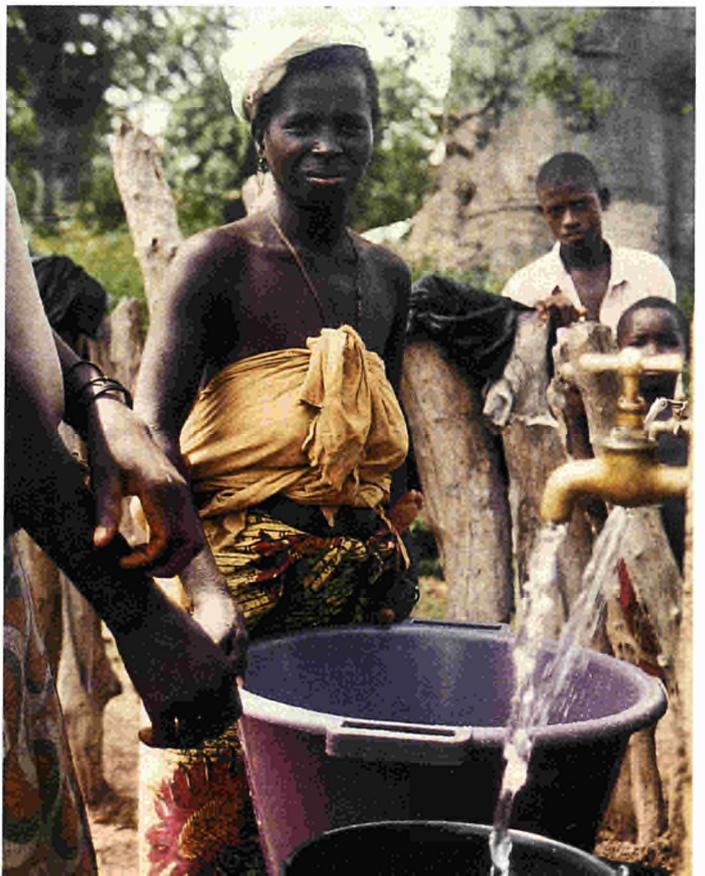
At the UN level, the summit is being prepared by the Tenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), acting as a preparatory committee in four meetings, known as PrepComs. The CSD was created in December 1992 to ensure an effective follow-up to the Earth Summit in Rio – to monitor and report on the implementation of agreements at the local, national, regional and international levels.

The last session of the preparatory committee was held in Bali, Indonesia, in May and June. While a consensus was reached on a number of important issues, the international community did not reach agreement on a plan of implementation or on elements for the political declaration. Important areas of disagreement remain between the three main players in that process: the EU, the USA and the G77. These include new targets and timetables, finance and trade and governance for sustainable development.

The baton has now been passed to South Africa as the host of the conference. Huge efforts will be needed before and during the summit. The EU will continue to be a constructive force and will use every opportunity to support these efforts.

Addressing environmental issues that matter to the poor is critical to sustained poverty reduction and achieving the millennium development goals.

EU funded solar pump for water, Guinea Bissau





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Energy is also an important aspect of efforts to support gender equality. Women are often burdened with the collection of everyday goods such as fuel and water, and frequently suffer the ill-effects of indoor air pollution from the use of "biomass" (organic matter) for cooking.

Energy for every aspect of development – the EU energy initiative

Lack of access to energy is among the key factors preventing economic and social development, and slowing down growth and the reduction of poverty. Providing adequate supplies of energy is crucial to achieving development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. Energy must therefore be viewed as an integral part of strategies for poverty reduction, cutting across most development sectors. Access to energy services is intrinsically related to social sectors such as health and education, to economic development and to the environment, where it impacts on a global level as well as locally.

Energy is also an important aspect of efforts to support gender equality. Women are often burdened with the collection of everyday goods such as fuel and water, and frequently suffer the ill-effects of indoor air pollution from the use of "biomass" (organic matter) for cooking. It is estimated that around two billion people remain without adequate, affordable and clean energy supplies. The problem is especially acute in "peri-urban" and rural areas. The proportion of those with adequate energy services in Africa has not increased in the last decade and remains low.

A number of international events and activities have stressed the link between energy and poverty eradication in the past few years. Notable examples are the UN Commission on Sustainable Development 9th Session (CSD9), and the Third Conference on Least Developed Countries in Brussels last year. Johannesburg provides an ideal opportunity for the international community to take stock of past work and agree to raise the profile of energy in poverty eradication.

In support of this effort the EU is developing an energy initiative, which will be announced at the WSSD. This will involve strategic partnerships between the EU and beneficiary countries and regions, as well as private sector and other stakeholders. Ownership of the initiative by developing countries will be key to its success.

The strategic objective of the initiative will be to help achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people in extreme poverty (and other MDGs) by 2015, through the provision of adequate, affordable and sustainable energy services. The initiative will be open to all possible solutions to the problem of supplying energy to

the poor. Through dialogue with partners in developing countries and regions, it is expected that the following broad themes will emerge:

- institutional capacity building, technical cooperation, transfer of knowledge and skills;
- market development;
- facilitating public-private partnerships; and
- facilitating cooperation with financial institutions.

As energy cuts across most economic and social areas, dialogue will need to be open to those working in other disciplines as well as in the energy sector. The EU seeks to open the partnership with all countries and to cooperate with other activities whenever appropriate.

Water for life – the EU water initiative

Fresh water is a finite and precious resource essential for sustaining life, for undertaking economically productive activity and for the environment itself. No strategy for the reduction of poverty can ignore people's vital need for water.

At the beginning of the new millennium, that need remains unmet for many people. In the year 2000, 1.1 billion people (17 per cent of the world's population) were without access to a safe water supply and 2.4 billion people (40 per cent) lacked adequate sanitation. Water problems are most acute in Africa. Fourteen countries already experience water stress or water shortage. It is estimated that 300 million people in Africa are currently affected by water shortages.

The Bonn International Freshwater Conference in December last year clearly stated that water is key for sustainable development. Solving water problems means progress in all three pillars of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental). In March the European Commission adopted a "Communication on water management in developing countries", which has been endorsed by the Development Council.

When heads of state meet in Johannesburg it is crucial that they commit themselves to solving the global water crisis. To this end the European Commission is promoting the development of an EU water initiative as a key agenda point for the summit.

At the WSSD, the EU will be launching an initiative for a strategic partnership with governments and other stakeholders. It will



European Commission

Solving water problems means progress in all three pillars of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental). Papua New Guinea: transport of containers for drinking water (rural water supply programme)

focus on access to safe drinking water and sanitation, to contribute to good health and the reduction of poverty; and on integrated water resources management, as a catalyst for sustainable development and the prevention of conflict.

The overall target of the initiative is the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015, together with a complementary target on sanitation. The water initiative should address the health of aquatic ecosystems and integrate the need to balance human water needs with those of the environment.

The objectives should be implemented through integrated water resource management, based on a river basin approach that draws on EU experience in river basin management. Applied to national and international river basins, it should provide the framework for good governance in the water sector.

The water initiative should achieve:

- better governance arrangements, stronger partnerships between public and private sectors and local stakeholders;
- conflict prevention and security; and
- sustainable financing of water infrastructure and services.

The initiative should provide a platform to coordinate and streamline existing and future activities in order to achieve greater efficiency in water-related development.

Key elements will be :

- capacity and institution building; awareness raising and promotion of the active involvement of stakeholders;
- provision of expertise, and improved partnerships for sharing technology and knowledge; and
- development of regional and sub-regional cooperation, through helping the application of river basin approaches in national and cross-boundary waters, including support for building up river basin organisations, and the twinning of river basins.

The first phase will focus on Africa. It will be launched in Johannesburg and subsequently developed further to include other regions. The initial focus on Africa should respond to the needs and priorities expressed by the African Ministerial Conference on Water, as well as supporting the overall goals for poverty reduction and economic development in Africa.

Linking poverty reduction and environmental management

Addressing environmental issues that matter to the poor is critical to sustained poverty reduction and achieving the millennium development goals. But this requires a more "pro-poor" and integrated approach – linking action at local, national and global levels.

Four organisations are pursuing similar objectives for poverty eradication and environmental management. These are the department for international development (DFID) in the UK, the European Commission's directorate-general for development, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. They have prepared a joint contribution to the summit.

This document, "Linking Poverty Reduction and Environmental Management", focuses on improving the environment in ways that benefit people living in poverty (as a means to to reduce poverty and

sustain growth). It seeks to draw out the links between poverty and the environment, and to demonstrate that sound and equitable environmental management is a prerequisite for achieving the Millennium Development Goals – especially eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, reducing child mortality, combating major diseases, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

First and foremost, poor people must be seen as part of the solution (rather than part of the problem) to improving environmental management, in order to help lift themselves out of poverty. Given the right incentives and support, the poor will invest in environmental improvements to enhance their livelihoods and well-being. At the same time it is essential to address the activities of the non-poor, since they are the source of most environmental damage.

Another key lesson is that the environment cannot be treated separately from other development concerns, but requires integration into poverty reduction and sustainable development efforts. Nor is it a luxury that can wait until growth has alleviated poverty. Improving environmental management in ways that benefit the poor requires policy and institutional changes. These cut across sectors and lie mostly outside the control of environmental institutions – changes in governance, in domestic economic policy and in international policies.

Sound and equitable environmental management is key to sustained poverty reduction and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The World Summit on Sustainable Development is an opportunity to focus on what is most important and to forge a coherent framework for action. It should have clear goals and achievable targets backed up by adequate resources and effective and transparent monitoring mechanisms. There can be no more important goal than to reduce and ultimately eradicate poverty on our planet. ■

Tackling climate change EU ratifies the Kyoto Protocol

At the international level, the vehicle for addressing climate change is the Kyoto Protocol. It obliges industrialised countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by an average of five per cent between 2008 and 2012. The EU commits to reducing emissions by eight per cent.

For Kyoto to be legally binding it has to be ratified by at least 55 countries, including countries which together are responsible for 50 per cent of emissions. In May the EU ratified, bringing that 55 per cent figure very close. Even without the USA – which has rejected the Protocol – the target can be reached if Russia and one other small country ratifies. EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallstrom called the Protocol "the only existing effective international framework for combating global warming".

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that the EU ratification is "good news for the entire world.... With these ratifications, the EU shows that it takes this threat seriously. I hope others will follow suit".

The ACP vision for sustainable development

The ACP Group has just finalised its "Vision for Sustainable Development". This document sets out a framework for sustainable development in key strategic areas for ACP states. The Vision will serve as a reference document for the Group, to be used in the development and implementation of projects and programmes. The Vision was approved at the ACP Council of Ministers meeting in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, at the end of June.

The aim of the ACP "Vision for Sustainable Development" is to create a strong foundation for sustainable development in key strategic areas for ACP states. It has at its core a people-centred approach.

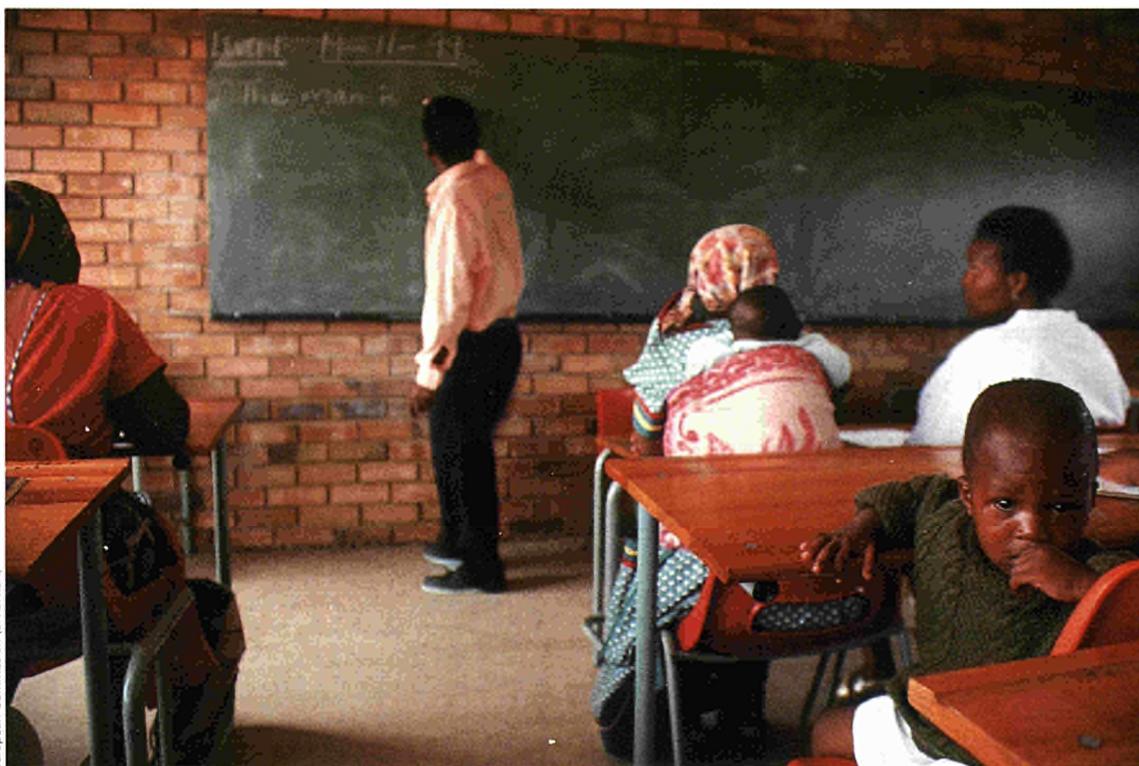
The document recognises that ACP states have made advances in various sectors of development. It also acknowledges the contribution of development partners as well as intra-ACP cooperation in this. ACP states however still face a multitude of political, economic, social, and cultural challenges to sustainable development. These contin-

ue to contribute to the impoverishment of a great number of people in ACP states, hence necessitating a major investment in both political will and financial resources.

To be effective, sustainable development requires governments to take long-term integrated perspectives of the development process. In addition, states need to reduce their vulnerable status in the global economy by increasing their capacities to address national and international challenges.

Development challenges for the ACP group of states

The challenge is to address the impediments to development as well as to ensure that effective development policies are transformed into successful interventions. In the formulation of an ACP vision for sustainable development, ACP states are embarking upon a path of self-examination that seeks to respond to the following issues: collective self-reliance; effective intra-ACP collaboration; benefits from increased North-South interdependence; effective management and exploitation of natural resources and the high levels of indebtedness in ACP states.



European Commission (EPRD/RSA)

One of the key aspirations for ACP states is to be fully literate societies with improved investment in education, with the aim of life-long learning and basic education for all.

In the formulation of the document therefore, consideration was given to the importance of international integration and partnership, the role of ACP solidarity and the challenges to development. These factors are crucial in guiding the design of interventions, programmes and activities that are needed to realise the goals of the Vision.

Aspirations

The ACP "Vision for Sustainable Development", outlines ACP states' aspirations in key strategic areas; social development, research, environment, agriculture and globalisation.

In social development, the focus is on human and institutional capacity development and quality health care.

One of the key aspirations for ACP states is to be fully literate societies with improved investment in education, with the aim of life-long learning and basic education for all. The employment of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in learning and skills development is considered essential for practical and effective education and training programmes aimed at increasing productivity. Emphasis is also placed on attaining gender equity in human resource development. ACP states recognise the need to build effective institutional infrastructure which is responsive to national development requirements as well as those of the global economy to which they belong.

Making available quality health care for all is a strategic goal for sustainable development in ACP states. The attainment of this goal will be influenced by the effective prevention and control of the key communicable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

Furthermore, the document emphasises the promotion and strengthening of research to address the development challenges of ACP states. It underlines the importance of applied and practical research efforts aimed at improving the well-being of people in ACP states. It further emphasises the need for ACP states to improve their investments in research and development (R&D) to an agreed target as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). Relevant also to R&D is the development of national and regional frameworks for the protection and management of intellectual property rights. This is crucial in stimulating innovation.

The ACP states further aspire to establishing and maintaining sound policies for environmental management of natural resources based on principles of good governance, transparency and scientific credibility. The role of cultural diversity in the sustainable utilisation of natural resources, the employment of environmentally sound and affordable technologies and good environmental governance, are all recognised as enhancing sustainable development.

In the formulation of an ACP vision for sustainable development, consideration was given to the importance of international integration and partnership, the role of ACP solidarity and the challenges to development

Noting that energy consumption in ACP states will continue to increase steadily as populations grow and economic development expands, ACP states will need to have affordable access to suitable, adequate and sustainable energy supplies. In addition, technologically efficient and environmentally benign transport systems, able to manage transport congestion, air pollution and accidents, are earmarked as key for support of sustainable development in ACP states.

Food security at household level is a major goal of sustainable development in ACP states. Strategies to increase the productivity of appropriate staple food crops including their value-addition to enhance essential nutrients and vitamins are essential to reach this goal. The promotion of more farmer-based and farmer-led science, including participatory plant breeding is therefore significant for the

ACP states. Optimum utilisation of available free improved seed varieties in the public domain of ACP states should be a priority. This needs to be complemented by increased availability of new crop technologies for poor farmers and the contribution of the private sector to agricultural development in ACP states.

Managing the impact of globalisation

Many of the development challenges which confront the ACP states are in part manifestations of the forces of globalisation. Sustainable development in ACP states will therefore be influenced by their capacity to manage the impact of the multi-faceted globalisation process. The utilisation of modern information and communication technologies in international trade as well as the global integration of money and capital markets particularly requires a new approach by ACP states as emerging players in the global economy. In this connection, appropriate analytical tools, policy instruments and enforcement tools need to be devised to address the vulnerability of the small island ACP states to natural and other socio-economic constraints, which contribute to their relative isolation from major international markets.

Therefore, policies adopted by ACP states in response to global socio-economic requirements, such as economic liberalisation, should be designed in such a way that they support the strategies for sustainable development. ■

Sustainable agricultural dream or reality?

Improper farming practices, unchecked deforestation, plundering of fish stocks and pollution of the air, the water table, rivers, seas and oceans are still commonplace despite all that has been written and said about them.

So will the dream of the conscientious farmer – mankind using the world's natural resources without exhausting them – ever become a reality?

Pierre Antonios*

FAO recommends an approach to agricultural production based on ecosystems



FAO photo/D. Debert

The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg at the end of August is undoubtedly intended to push agriculture in the right direction, but is it already too late to stop the pillaging of our natural resources or can we reverse the trend? Will the earth be able to feed a population expected to reach eight billion by 2030? Sustainable agricultural and rural development is vital for us all, as 70 per cent of the poor on this planet live in rural areas. But declarations of goodwill will not be enough.

Understanding the need for sustainable land management

The first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 marked a turning point in our approach to the environment and development. The UN and its many specialist agencies were mobilised and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) was to play an active role in implementing the summit's Agenda 21 programme. FAO is the leading organisation for several chapters of Agenda 21. These are: "Integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources" (Chapter 10), "Combating deforestation" (Chapter 11), "Sustainable mountain development" (Chapter 13) and "Sustainable agriculture and rural development" (Chapter 14).

Following the Rio Summit, two other important meetings were organised by FAO in Rome: the World Food Summit in 1996 and the World Food Summit: Five Years Later in June this year. In the resolutions passed by the world's leaders at these meetings, recognition of the need for the sustainable management of natural resources has occupied a prominent place.

The Plan of Action of the World Food Summit recommended addressing the "multifaceted causes underlying food insecurity" so that "the overall goal of food for all, at all times, will be achieved". To do this, the heads of state and government leaders from 185 countries undertook to "pursue participatory and sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development policies".

The environment-poverty link

This June's food summit reaffirmed the paramount importance of increased national production to achieve food security in the framework of sustainable agricultural and rural development. Policy-making will now have to go hand in hand with the mobilisation of greater financial resources to combat global hunger.

To create the right climate for development, the international community must redouble its efforts to eradicate poverty. To this end, developed countries are being urged to reverse the trend of falling development aid – a phenomenon made worse by the drop in investment in the agricultural sector. Despite repeated calls to increase it, aid remains desperately low. It fell from \$58 billion in 1992 to \$53 billion in 2000. As a percentage of gross national product, it fell from 0.35 in 1992 to 0.22 in 2000. Only five countries – Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden – reached the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP.

Environmental damage and poverty are closely linked. According to the United Nations, 15 per cent of the world's population, living in the richer countries, account for 56 per cent of global consumption, while 40 per cent, living in the poorer countries, account for only 11 per cent. Although most people consume more nowadays, the consumption expenditure of an aver-

age household in Africa is 20 per cent lower than it was a quarter of a century ago.

According to FAO, some 815 million people around the world are malnourished: 777 million living in developing regions, 27 million in transitional countries and 11 million in the industrialised nations. Although most people suffering from hunger are in Southern Asia, their number is falling. In Africa about a third of the population is malnourished and this proportion is on the increase.

The challenge of feeding eight billion people

Experts believe that we will be able to feed eight billion people in the year 2030 in a sustainable manner. But they recommend more environmentally friendly farming methods, institutional and regulatory reforms, a redefining of priorities in development and research policies, making scientific developments available to all and tackling problems at both global and local level.

Above all, we must ensure better management of agriculture in the future, as the strain on the environment will increase as a result of both population growth and food production trends. According to FAO forecasts, production in developing countries is set to increase by 70 per cent by 2030 (from a mid-1990s base). About 80 per cent of this increase will be attributable to the intensification of production and about 20 per cent to the expansion of arable land, which will lead to further loss of rainforests. Irrigation is also set to play a greater role but it will cause soil salinity and clogging if poorly managed. Still in developing countries, greater use of mineral fertilisers may pollute the water table while the intensification of breeding may cause the discharge of ammonia into ecosystems.

Respecting ecosystems

To overcome these problems, FAO recommends an approach to agricultural production based on ecosystems. In other words the soil, water, plants and animals have to be managed as components of a functional whole in order to re-establish and maintain a natural ecological balance.

This approach is based essentially on three elements. The first is the integrated management of production and the combating of pests using natural predators, resistant varieties and traditional farming methods. The second is biological farming – with no artificial agents and using crop rotation to strengthen the soil. The third is conservation farming, which maintains the fertility of the soil through better control of the cycle of nutrients, less ploughing or no ploughing at all, and mulching. According to an FAO report, soil erosion is responsible for about 40 per cent of all damage to land around the world, mainly as a result of ploughing.

Farmers in developing countries are often forced to abandon sustainable methods, for economic reasons or to meet their immediate needs. As in the North where farmers (in OECD countries) received subsidies amounting to \$311 billion in 2001, they might benefit from incentives. Without them, where farmers are not forced to abandon their land in desperation, poverty often leads them to adopt productive practices that damage the environment. The protection of natural resources can be achieved by protecting the poorest farmers. ■

* Pierre Antonios has been the media officer for FAO since 1989



FAO photo/G. Diana

The protection of natural resources can be achieved by protecting the poorest farmers

Sustainable management of tropical forests

in the Pacific ACP States

The Pacific ACP states have extensive and economically valuable forest reserves of vital importance to our planet. These are part of a tropical rainforest that stretches from South America across Africa to Asia, and is home to the Earth's richest source of biodiversity.

Augustin Oyowe*

Covering only six per cent of the planet's landmass, tropical rainforests are disappearing at the rate of 14 million hectares (source: FAO) per annum. In the Pacific, which only ten years ago was considered to have the least degraded forests, the rate of deforestation has accelerated at an alarming rate and for little economic benefit. It is forecast, for example, that at the current rate of exploitation Papua New Guinea, one of the poorest ACP states in the region but with the largest forest resources, will be completely logged out by the end of this decade. There is an urgent need for measures to ensure more rational and sustainable management of the remaining reserves, not only for the economic development of the Pacific ACP states but also for the ecological balance of our planet.

The values of forests to humanity are now fully recognised and understood. Forests fulfil a range of regulatory functions in respect of climate, nutrients, energy flows, erosion and sedimentation processes and hydrological cycles. They mitigate natural hazards, act as carbon sinks, and produce oxygen, food, medicine, income and employment. Because deforestation has adverse impacts on soil conservation and productivity as well as the flow and quality of water, it aggravates poverty. It is, therefore, an extremely important issue in poverty reduction – one that the European Union takes very seriously in pursuit of its overall development objectives.

This article looks at the global context of the forest industry, the size and importance of the resource in the Pacific ACP states, government policies and management, the driving forces of deforestation in the region and the role of the EU in conserving forests in the various countries. It concludes with some recommendations on combating deforestation.

The global context and the environmental movement

Forests conservation was one of the most important and controversial issues dealt with at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992. Forests remain the only major environmental issue on which no international, legally binding instrument has yet been devised. The North-South polarisation, which characterised the Earth Summit, has dogged efforts at reaching an agreement ever since. However, the step by step



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Solomon Islands, forestry plantation

confidence-building approach adopted by the United Nations over the past decade is now paying off in stimulating a large number of initiatives and activities around the world on forest conservation.

Because forest is such a profoundly cross-cutting issue, it is dealt with in various ways within the frameworks of a number of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). Parties to these agreements are required to draw up National Action Programmes – laborious and expensive processes. They are also required to integrate these programmes into national and regional sustainable development plans as

Status of forests in four Pacific ACP states^o

Country	Forest cover in millions of hectares	Percentage of land area	Annual rate of deforestation	Annual revenue in €	Formal Employment
Papua New Guinea	39.3	77%	1.5%	119.6 million	8000
Solomon Islands	2.4	85%	n.a	77.7 million	2700
Fiji	1.8	47%	n.a	24.8 million	3000
Vanuatu	.9	60%	n.a	3.8 million	500

^oFigures obtained from Secretariat of the Pacific Community and World Bank sources



well as into development cooperation programmes. Most South Pacific countries are parties to these conventions and are therefore obliged to observe them. The European Community and its Member States are also parties and are active in negotiating in the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). At a regional level, the South Pacific has one notable environmental agreement, the Convention for the Protection of Natural Resources and Environment in the South Pacific.

In parallel with these efforts, environmental NGOs have been very active (and successful) in recent years in pushing forest issues onto the agenda of international trade. The ideas of managing forests in a sustainable way and combating illegal logging through eco-labelling and certification have come to prominence through their efforts. Eco-labelling and certification are controversial concepts within the framework of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Some resource-rich developing countries regard them with suspicion because of their potential as a means of disguised protectionism.

Papua New Guinea (PNG)

The total forest cover of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu is around 42.5 million hectares, 92 per cent of which is located in PNG. It has a closed natural forest cover of between 26 million and 39 million hectares, depending on whose estimate one

accepts. This article assumes the higher figure, which is 77 per cent of PNG's total land area. It harbours one of the four remaining tracts of tropical rainforests in the world and one of the richest reserves of biodiversity, supporting approximately 200 species of mammal, 15,000-20,000 species of plant and 750 species of bird. PNG's forests are home to the largest butterfly, the longest lizard, the largest pigeon and the smallest parrot. So important are its forests that PNG is among the 15 countries in the world singled out by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for conservation funds.

Indigenous groups hold 95 per cent of the land area of PNG under varying and largely undocumented customary land tenure systems. Of the 39 million hectares of forest, 15 million are suitable for commercial exploitation. At least seven million of these are thought to have been allocated for this purpose already.

Forests provide significant incomes and jobs in PNG, although both have declined in recent years. This has been attributed to high government taxation and low prices in the world market. The vast majority of PNG's valuable timber is exported as low-value logs. This means that in addition to suffering the effects of the destructive and unsustainable exploitation of its timber, the country misses out on the added value from timber processing.

In contrast to commercial logging, more than 100 indigenous groups have taken to community-based forest management (eco-forestry) over approximately 200,000 hectares. This alternative method of exploitation is proving successful not only in providing livelihoods for rural people but also as an effective method of conservation.

If environmental activists are to be believed, Papua New Guinea has already lost its most valuable forests. This situation is alarming for a country where the forces of industrialisation and urbanisation have not yet made a significant impact. Logging companies have taken enormous profits and damaged the environment, all for little or no return to PNG.

The country's forest policy, which encourages large-scale projects by foreign companies, is driven by the government's need for revenue. Official corruption and a weak forestry service, which makes it easy for companies to take timber without paying full royalties to the government and resource owners, continue to weigh heavily on the industry and to negate all efforts at reform.

Although successive PNG governments have worked with the support of the World Bank and others to establish transparency and develop new laws and regulations to ensure sustainable management of PNG forests, logging companies continue to find ways of circumventing forest laws and regulations, cleverly exploiting loopholes rather than engaging in outright illegal logging.

Forests engender a lot of controversy in PNG. Both Sir Mekere Morauta's Government and the World Bank have been accused of preventing communities from deriving a living from their forest resources as a result of a moratorium on all new logging licences. But over the past five years NGOs and most donors have encouraged the development of eco-forestry as an alternative policy to the large-scale logging that has seen resource owners grant concessions to logging companies for very small fees.

Eco-forestry is based on enabling communities to exploit their forest resources in an environmentally sustainable manner, enabling them to harvest not only wood but also non-food products such as gum arabic, rattan, bamboo, cork, vegetable, fungi, essential oils, wild honey, plants



A walkabout sawmill, part of the EU funded "Islands Region Environmental and Community Development Programme" in PNG. Landowners had to be persuaded that ecoforestry is in their own interests

and animals – raw materials for industrial processing. The returns to those communities that have embarked on eco-forestry projects have been much higher – sometimes three times higher – than the fees paid by commercial companies to indigenous people for forest concessions.

It is against this background that the EU funded "Islands Region Environmental and Community Development Programme" (IRECDP) in PNG was developed. The project addressed landowner education and information – drawing their attention to the range of available options for the use of their forest resources. From its base at the Nature Centre – a specially developed centre situated close to Kimbe in the West New Britain Province serving as a base for the eco-forestry programme and terrestrial and marine environmental research and education – the programme trained landowners in sustainable eco-forestry techniques as well as exposing them to other, environmentally-friendly, income-earning activities such as insect farming. The programme was instrumental in bringing together other civil society actors and aid organisations active in this field and in helping to educate the public at large – and especially school children – in the importance of the natural environment.

More recently, the World Bank has become involved in landowner education and information. It will also set up a trust fund to promote the conservation of forests with biological diversity of global significance, support institutional reform and provide technical assistance.

The Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands were estimated to have 2.4 million hectares of forest cover (85 per cent of their total land surface) in 1995, of which only 10 per cent was made up of natural forests, the only areas believed to be suitable for commercial exploitation. Others are either on sloping land or scattered across many small islands. Customary ownership accounts for 88 per cent of the total land area and a large proportion of the country's forests.

Their exploitation has been inordinate. The results of an inventory made in 1995 – that is, four years before the civil war in 1999 – showed that harvestable timber would be exhausted within 16 years at the rate of logging at the time. Since the peace agreement in August 2000 and a virtual breakdown in law and order, illegal extraction is believed to have accelerated once again, and the current state of the islands' forests is unknown. The extent to which this is fueling ethnic tension and pre-

venting weapons disposal as laid down in the Townsville Agreement is also unknown.

Because of the serious forest degradation, environmental damage and social unrest caused by destructive logging practices, the EU together with the non-governmental organisation ICCO decided to support a local initiative of the United Church of the Solomon Islands to come up with an alternative use of the forest resources. In 1995, Solomon Western Islands Fair Trade, the so-called SWIFT, came into being. It managed to secure 10,000 hectares of virgin rainforest and worked with more than 100 local community foresters. It achieved the first ever community-based Green Umbrella FSC Certificate scheme in sustainable forest management. The success of the project had a significant impact on the regional and global development of FSC certified group sustainable forest management schemes. Unfortunately, the civil war and the breakdown of law and order caused SWIFT to close down its operations. It awaits revival.

Fiji

Fiji has a total land area of 1.83 million hectares, of which 800,000 hectares (about 47 per cent) is under natural forest cover. The country's natural forest resources have been over-exploited during several thousands of years of human occupation and more than a century of European influence. Fiji has made efforts towards the sustainable management of its remaining forest reserves. It has adopted a successful policy of reforestation and is trying to implement the various international and regional environmental agreements to which it is a signatory.

Fiji began large-scale planting of pine forests in the 1960s, and this has enabled a timber industry to develop over the years for domestic use and for export. The country has, in response to international agreements, taken a number of steps, including reviewing its forest sector, drawing up a National Forestry Action Plan, making a new inventory of its indigenous forest resources, establishing a Geographical Information System on Forestry and adopting a Logging Code of Practice. These major initiatives, though widely welcomed, have not been without negative political consequences. The last coup d'état was indirectly connected with government forest policy.

Vanuatu

Vanuatu has a total land area of 1.2 million hectares, of which 60 per cent is under forest cover. These forests support more than

The smaller countries

Samoa – one of the highest rates of deforestation in the Pacific.

Only 4.8 per cent of its total land area remains under forest cover. It could be completely logged out in the next five years.

French Polynesia – 80 per cent of the land area is mountainous and all the territory's timber needs are imported.

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) – in 1995 only 15 per cent of the land was under undisturbed forest, compared with 42 per cent in 1976.

Niue and Tonga – pressure on very limited forest resources is also an issue.

The Cook Islands, FSM, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Niue, Tuvalu and Samoa – loss of forests as a result of agriculture is a major issue in these island countries with high population densities.

1,000 species of plant and animal: coconut palms, banyan trees, orchids and ferns, small reptiles, bats and a variety of birds such as pigeons, parrots and thrushes.

Vanuatu's forests are now relatively well controlled by the Government, albeit belatedly. They are, however, still under considerable pressure from logging companies.

The facts behind deforestation

The close link of forests to land use issues, indigenous peoples' rights and international trade make sustainable management a complicated and difficult task, and even a controversial concept. This difficulty is compounded, in the case of the Pacific ACP states, by pressure on governments for revenues, official corruption, the avarice of logging companies, population pressures (clearing for permanent or shifting cultivation) and bush fires caused either by natural events or by humans.

These factors are largely internal. Some are more important in some countries than in others, but they all are linked to questions of good governance, environmental policy and planning as well as to social welfare – in which all the Melanesian countries except Fiji are seriously deficient.

External factors, however, are proving the greatest threat to the tropical rainforests of the Pacific ACP states. There is an extremely high demand for their wood. The majority of the logging companies in PNG and the Solomon Islands are foreign-owned – mostly Taiwanese, Malaysian and Indonesian (these last two countries are themselves battling against deforestation and illegal logging).

In 1998, China introduced a new forestry law banning logging in the remaining natural forests of the country's western provinces. China is now looking to the tropical rainforests of the Pacific to fill the huge gap created domestically as a result. The competition between China and Taiwan for political influence is an additional factor in the region. They give development assistance in return not only for support at the United Nations, but also for access to natural resources, especially fisheries and forests.

The role of the EU

Conservation of tropical forests is provided for under the Lomé Convention and forms an important part of the development strategies of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement (Articles 20 (3) and 32). Within the framework of the Lomé Convention the EU sought to help its partners embrace the principles of conservation and derive maximum benefit from their forest resources, and to develop eco-forestry as an alternative to large-scale commercial logging. This concept is being introduced systematically at the national and local levels by assisting in the establishment of the policy frameworks at the local level and helping the indigenous communities to manage their forest resources on a commercially viable and environmentally sustainable basis.

When PNG signed its first structural adjustment programme with the World Bank in 1994, monitoring of log exports was one of the main conditions imposed. The EU helped the country set up a log monitoring system, under which all logs destined for export were inspected before shipment. The PNG authorities have since taken over this operation. As mentioned earlier, the EU also funded, in 1994, the Islands Region Environment and Community Development Programme (IRECDP), which promotes eco-forestry and other environmentally-friendly community based activities in five island provinces. Its success led to the launching of a similar programme in mainland PNG last year.

At the regional level, a four-year pilot scheme in eco-forestry, sponsored by the EU, was started in 1997 in five countries: the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Kiribati and Tonga. The project, which generated new jobs and income while protecting natural resources, had two distinct parts. The first was environmentally friendly timber production in the more heavily forested countries of the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji. The second was raising awareness of environmental issues and positive tree management in the more crowded and resource-poor countries of Tonga and Kiribati.

It is estimated that at least 50,000 and 5,000 hectares of forest respectively in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have been protected from commercial logging as a result of the scheme. Although funded by the EU, these projects were carried out largely by NGOs. Another EU sponsored eco-forestry project with NGO participation is being prepared in Vanuatu.

The way forward

There is no doubt that the forest reserves of the Pacific ACP states are being depleted rapidly. There are both internal and external pressures – specifically the very high demand for tropical wood from Pacific Asian countries, and the demand for cheap Asian-made furniture around the world.

The World Bank has helped Papua New Guinea in particular to introduce controls and a measure of good governance in its forest industry with limited success. The EU has promoted conservation and eco-forestry. This approach has produced significant results and the idea of eco-forestry is gaining ground – but not enough to counteract the devastating impact of international trade in tropical wood where greater efforts towards sustainability need to be made.

In the circumstances I believe that a number of strategies should be considered.

Firstly, eco-forestry should be increased and innovative approaches used. Information on the financial gains to be made from community-based forest management and its environmental advantages should be spread more widely. NGOs have played a crucial role in propagating the value of eco-forestry and should receive more support. Institutional capacity building and the serious adoption of eco-forestry as a policy at national level should be encouraged. Secondly, payment schemes to landowners for environmental services should be introduced. In Costa Rica, which has the most advanced system of this kind in the world, landowners who protect their natural forest or reforest their land receive payments of about \$50 per hectares per year. These payments are financed from energy taxes, the sale of carbon offsets and funds received from international donors for biodiversity protection. PNG could be encouraged, with donor help, to introduce such a scheme. Thirdly, help should be given in drawing up National Action Programmes within the framework of UN Conventions, in particular on Climate Change, Biological Diversity and Desertification, and in national reporting to the relevant conferences.

Finally this third point should be included in the mid-term review of the Country Strategy Paper for PNG in accordance with the Cotonou Agreement. PNG has 92 per cent of the forest resources of the Pacific ACP states. These are crucial to the country's economy and to humanity, but they are disappearing much faster than is generally realised. ■

* Pacific Regional Desk Officer, DG Development

The Caribbean – 10 years after Rio

A prescription still not filled

The most striking things about the Caribbean, 10 years after the Earth Summit wrote a prescription for improving its environmental health, is that it has aged and its environmental illness is better known.

Terry Ally*

One can conclude that the diagnosis was right, but the prescriptions outlined in Rio have not been filled, largely because of lack of funds. There is little money and as the region continues to grapple with the basic ills that the world community found back in 1992, complications have arisen in the form of trade requirements which make demands on the region to adhere to certain high environmental standards in every sphere of life if it wants to continue to do business with the big industrialised countries.

While there have been pockets of success in the Caribbean after the Earth Summit, overall the region has not made the strides envisioned back then and the main reason is lack of financial resources.

"We have had successes which we can shout about and which we can use as lessons but in a general sense we have not moved forward substantively on the agenda of the Earth Summit, specifically with the agenda under the SIDS Programme of Action which relates to the Caribbean region and small island states," says Dr Joth Singh, Executive Director of the Caribbean Conservation Association which is headquartered in Barbados.

This position is echoed from the Government side as well: the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stated in their recent 10-year assessment that "there hasn't been enough progress on the financial targets that the international community committed itself to meeting in Agenda 21."

How did this happen?

The development/environmental link was squarely put on the international agenda with the 1992 Rio Conference. The Earth Summit, as it is known, made a number of recommendations and adopted a number of resolutions. Among them Agenda 21 which identified the major environmental problems, their solutions, and the cost of the solutions.

Argued strongly at the conference was the issue of small islands states (SIDS), such as those in the Caribbean, which have special vulnerabilities and need special attention. A resolution called for the convening of a separate conference to examine the needs of the SIDS so that they would not become lost within the global context of Agenda 21. The

UN Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was convened in Bridgetown, Barbados in 1994. This produced its own Agenda 21, so to speak, the Barbados Programme of Action which identified 15 areas which needed addressing if sustainable development were to be achieved within the Caribbean. These were:

- Climate change and sea level rise
- Natural and environmental disasters
- Management of wastes
- Coastal and marine resources
- Freshwater resources
- Land resources
- Energy resources
- Tourism resources
- Biodiversity resources
- National institutions and administrative capacity
- Regional institutions and technical cooperation
- Transport and communication
- Science and technology
- Human resource development
- Implementation, monitoring and review.

The problems and solutions were well articulated. The question was: "Who pays?" and that question remains at the heart of the issue as the world prepares for the WSSD. The Barbados Programme of Action makes it clear that "adequate" finance will be needed and refers to Agenda 21, which recommends potential sources.

One of the major sources of financing identified was the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) which was established in 1990 as an experimental facility with a fund of US\$1.1 billion. GEF was restructured after the Earth Summit to serve the environmental interests of people in all parts of the world. In 1994, 34 nations pledged US\$2 billion; in 1998, 36 nations pledged US\$2.75 billion. It was also able to lever another US\$3.8 billion in co-financing of its projects, mostly due to associated large World Bank loans for the energy sector in developing countries.

While the cost of making the Caribbean or all SIDS ship-shape was not mentioned in the Barbados Programme of Action, Agenda 21 put a figure on a global clean-up at US\$8.8 billion per year. So from the start there was never enough money.

Dr Singh says that when the programme started there was more money than proposals and so any substantive proposal would be funded.

"That has changed entirely now. There is now a long line regarding financial resources being allocated to support the work which we are expected to do in the region."

The fine print of the GEF has complicated matters: GEF funds are for solving global – and not local problems unless they have "incremental costs" attached.

"If in Barbados there is a programme designed to fund coral reef preservation and there is an additional cost which would exemplify the global impacts of coral reefs degradation or preservation then GEF will fund that part. The expectation that national funding is taken care of leaves governments in a dilemma. Not only must they show global consequences but they also have to demonstrate that they are funding the national issues," says Dr Singh, who represents the Caribbean non-governmental organisations on the GEF-NGO Network.

The largest slice of GEF funds goes to countries with expertise in formulating proposals which are acceptable to GEF: a lack of project design capability can stop proposal getting far.



This was recognised, and Country Dialogue Workshops were implemented by the UNDP twice yearly to train Caribbean experts in formulating GEF proposals.

"The last was in 2000 and there are no plans to hold more. The last ones in the Caribbean limited the number of NGOs which attended as the workshops were geared mainly towards governmental agencies."

NGOs are struggling for survival in the Caribbean. The two UN conferences recognised NGOs as a critical player in co-management with governments in the sustainable development of the region and expected them to perform certain roles, but did not give them adequate tools with which to work.

This is reflected in the assessment of even the governmental agencies. ECLAC and the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM) were identified as the lead governmental agencies to implement Agenda 21 and the Barbados Programme of Action. They too have been critical in their assessment, recently completed in preparation to negotiate the WSSD articles.

ECLAC and UNDP concluded in their assessment that "achievements remain insufficient" for the Caribbean islands and the states of neighbouring Latin America.

"Almost ten years after the Earth Summit, Latin America and the Caribbean have barely started out along the road to sustainable development," says the report, pointing out that "the prevailing patterns of production and consumption are completely lacking in social, economic and environmental viability."

In an assessment on financing, ECLAC and the UNDP were frank: "there hasn't been enough progress on the financial targets that the international community committed itself to meeting in Agenda 21".

They identified the following six main trends in financing for sustainable development since 1992:

- Solving the external debt problem is essential to generating an environment favouring sustainable development. The international community has appraised the status of 37 poor, highly indebted countries, and proposed relief strategies in the cases of 13.
- Flows of official development assistance (ODA) have declined and today amount to less than one-third of commitments assumed at the Rio meeting. ODA fell from 0.33 per cent of Gross National Product (GNP) in donor countries in 1992 to 0.22 per cent in 2000. Agenda 21 established the ODA target of 0.7 per cent of GNP. The region receives about 0.4 per cent of its GNP in ODA, which has reached US\$14 per capita.
- In contrast, private international financial flows rose significantly. However, they show two worrisome features: their volatility and a high concentration in developed or emerging economies, which marginalizes the poorest countries. International trade has become a factor essential to economic growth and sustainable development and, in this sense, the transfer of cleaner, more efficient technologies is a priority in the framework of agreements through the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- Financial contributions from international bodies to support environmental management in the form of loans and grants rose significantly. More and more, environmental criteria are applied in project evaluation.
- International multilateral funds of a concessional nature have begun to operate, for instance the World Environmental Fund and the Montreal Protocol Multilateral Fund. But their resources are limited. New financial and investment alternatives are being analysed, based on



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The Courier



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placing a value on global environmental services and their possible sales abroad, but application remains in the very early stages.

- Domestic policies for financing sustainable development, expressed as both public and private environmental expenditure, have evolved much more slowly, reflecting the ongoing weakness of the relevant institutions within the state apparatus, especially in developing countries. With some national differences, in the region environmental expenditure still doesn't usually exceed one per cent of GDP.

There are numerous other issues concerning the Caribbean as it prepares for the WSSD, including equity, trade, availability of fresh water resources, green energy, poverty, and the impact of climate change. But at the crux of it all is inadequate finances. Unless that can be appropriately addressed at the WSSD, then it will be Rio all over again – prescriptions for medicine, a well-stocked pharmacy that only the wealthy can afford. ■

* Terry Ally is a former environmental journalist in the Caribbean and now information officer with the Caribbean Regional Environmental Programme.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), was established in 1972 and is headquartered in Nairobi. It works to encourage sustainable development through sound environmental practices. Covering a wide range of issues, its activities range from atmosphere and terrestrial ecosystems, the promotion of environmental science and information, to an early warning and emergency response capacity to deal with environmental disasters and emergencies. Alex Kirby* looks at how it is "putting flesh on the bare bones of sustainable development".

Some years ago I lived in Burkina Faso. Much of West Africa then was gripped by the drought which periodically scours the Sahel. And what should I see sitting on the runway at Ouagadougou airport several times a week, ready for loading onto the Air Afrique flight to Paris? Strawberries, grown in a country whose own people were starving, to titillate the jaded palates of the wealthy north. Another Burkinabè image remains vivid. Driving back to Ouagadougou from any direction, you had to mind the donkey-cart drivers, teenage boys who'd go to sleep after dusk with their heads resting on the side of the road. You'd find them up to 40 kms from the capital – the distance they had to plod to find a worthwhile load of firewood to sell. That was nearly 30 years ago: how far they have to travel now I can only guess.

Those two memories remind me of what sustainable development is not. Of course the Burkinabès need development (they have one of the lowest standards of living and shortest life expectancies in the world). But earning a few cents by chopping down the savannah's sparse tree cover buys only a very little time. And of course developing countries need to be able to sell their goods abroad. But growing nonessential crops to be flown thousands of miles to markets which name their own price is a fragile way of doing it.

For millions of people, those in abject poverty, this is the only and inevitable model of development – exploit the little you have for the brief time you have it, because that is the only way you can feed yourself and your family today. Tomorrow, the next generation, the planet – they must look after themselves. Partnering the poor in this macabre dance to oblivion are those wealthy enough not to need to care how they satisfy their desires.

But recognising what won't work is one thing. Suggesting an alternative, putting flesh on the bare bones of sustainable development, is another, and much harder.

Enter UNEP, the United Nations Environment Programme. UNEP wouldn't claim any monopoly in understanding sustainable development, or in making a reality of it. But it has impressive experience of turning vague aspirations into practical achievements.

turning aspirations into achievements



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UNEP works across the entire spectrum of environmental hopes and fears. For several reasons, though, it is not always the leading actor. Partly this is because it is simply a programme, not a fully-fledged independent UN agency like the WHO or the FAO. That means a constant struggle for funds. Partly, too, some of UNEP's key concerns are managed by separate parts of the UN. The Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, are examples.

UNEP's focus areas are: environmental assessment, atmosphere, chemicals, marine areas, freshwater, land, biodiversity (despite the separate CBD), energy, urban issues, sustainable consumption, business and industry, governance and law, and civil society. UNEP has active offices and programmes across the world.

The bare programme headings give little idea of the range of UNEP's activities. Biodiversity, for example, includes

EUROBATS, an initiative on bats across Europe, as well as work on coral reefs and the emerging threats to the world's mountains. In energy, the African Rural Energy Enterprise Development Initiative (AREED) seeks to develop sustainable energy enterprises, and there is a similar project in Brazil. The business and industry area is working on tourism, and seeing what so-called ecotourism can offer.

Sometimes UNEP goes where others fear to tread. It investigated the possible risk from the use of depleted uranium munitions in Kosovo, and examined the environmental impact of the NATO attack on Serbia. It is also investigating the Palestinian environment. It is spearheading an effort by more than 20 UN agencies to tackle HIV/Aids in a novel way, through an African soap opera produced for both TV and radio, and carrying messages as well about poverty, the environment and good governance. It is tackling the disappearance of the great apes, often killed for bushmeat.

Keeping records

One of UNEP's most worthwhile efforts is simply to catalogue what we are doing to our world. In June 2002 it published an online atlas of the state of the world's oceans, a big advance for scientists, policymakers and anyone concerned to know what is happening.

In 1999 it published an end-of-century review, its Global Environment Outlook (GEO-2000), which concluded: "The

continued poverty of the majority of the planet's inhabitants and excessive consumption by the minority are the two major causes of environmental degradation. The present course is unsustainable. A ten-fold reduction in resource consumption is a necessary long-term target..."

In 2002 UNEP published a follow-up report, GEO-3. In the 30 years of UNEP's existence, it says, there has been real progress (it was the 1972 UN Stockholm environment conference that gave birth to UNEP). But the planet has reached a crossroads, with very different futures opening up ahead, in line with the choices this generation makes. Poverty, according to UNEP's executive director Dr Klaus Toepfer, remains "the most toxic element in the world". And globalisation, while it promises much, can destroy as well. It can, Toepfer says, be "the instrument for closing the gap between rich and poor". But he adds: "The market is necessary, but not enough. Left to itself, it always means the big will win – unless we make sure that it doesn't."

UNEP's critics say it is an expensive and unnecessary talking shop. Like most other UN agencies, it is guilty sometimes of duplication, of re-inventing the wheel, of not talking to people doing the same job, like the UN Development Programme. One test is whether UNEP has a practical programme to translate the rhetoric of sustainable development into practice that changes people's lives.

UNEP's strategy for Johannesburg

Some people say the World Summit on Sustainable Development will stress poverty, not the environment, "a shift in emphasis" from the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. UNEP's is one voice insisting that it is not an either-or choice, rather a matter of both, in a way Rio failed to realise.

The UN asked member agencies to produce "deliverables", goals to be laid before governments in Johannesburg. UNEP's list shows an eye for the detail that can make global agreements work. Some of its key goals are:

- setting up a panel on global environmental change, and developing a global early warning threat system
- working to integrate policy on environment, trade and development
- investing in renewable energy
- promoting environmentally sustainable freshwater use
- minimizing the impact of air pollution on health
- providing sustainable waste water treatment in at least 20 per cent of coastal cities
- protecting the marine environment from land-based activities.

The acid test of UNEP's contribution to the WSSD will be twofold: its vision, and its ability to make things happen. Klaus Toepfer says: "We need concrete actions, concrete timetables, and an iron will." If it is left to him, he will do it. He once told me: "I am driven by the hundred per cent conviction that unless we change the structures and the situation we have today, we shall pay an enormous price tomorrow." ■

In May 2002 UNEP hosted the African Mountains High Summit, part of the preparation for the Global Mountain Summit to be held in Kyrgyzstan in October. It revealed the wealth of knowledge that international organisations can tap when they listen to people with first-hand experience. The conference had five "pillars", or themes:

- water: mountains are the world's reservoirs
- culture: their people possess knowledge that will be lost if their unique way of life cannot continue
- economy: mountain resources need to be valued
- risks: there are particular hazards for mountain dwellers
- policy: legislators must think about the specific policy, institutional and legal framework needed for sustainable mountain development.

The conference agreed that mountains matter to us all, because although few of us live on them, we do live downstream from them. Klaus Toepfer says: "Mountains were once considered indomitable, unchanging and impregnable. But we are learning that they are as vulnerable as the world's oceans, grasslands and forests. It is not just the risk to human lives, agriculture and property that should worry us. Mountains are the world's water towers, feeding the rivers and lakes upon which all life depends. If the glaciers continue to retreat at the rates being seen in places like the Himalayas, many rivers and freshwater systems could run dry."

Given the modest progress achieved since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, it has been argued that reform of the existing system of environmental governance would improve effectiveness in global environmental policy. The proposal advanced by Germany and France, and endorsed by several other nations, to create a new agency with competence for environmental matters has met with the opposition of the United States and most developing countries.

Maurizio Carbone* reviews the challenges that international environmental institutions face coming up to the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Despite the multitude of treaties, conventions and institutions, the current system of environmental management has been inadequate to address the increasing number of threats to the "global commons". The depletion of the ozone layer, climate change, loss of biodiversity and overfishing have generated remarkable interest in new mechanisms for global environmental governance. The debate, both at the policy and academic level, has centered on the creation of a new agency to deal with environmental matters, whether a Global Environmental Organisation (GEO), a World Environmental Organisation (WEO), a World Organisation for Sustainable Development (WOSD), or a United Nations Environmental Organisation (UNEO). The proposal, initially coming from Germany and France, has been endorsed by many other nations (Brazil, Singapore, New Zealand and South Africa) and by important international policy-makers, such as Gustave Speth, former head of UNDP, and Renato Ruggiero, former Executive Director of WTO. On the contrary, the US is strongly opposed to the creation of a new and expensive international institution, and developing countries are against the creation of an organisation that deals only with environmental issues.

Looking for the right model

Although the debate has been going on for more than four years, a consensus among those who have proposed an international environmental agency has not been yet reached. Three different models have emerged so far:



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A new environmental organisation would help to improve the overall implementation of international environmental standards

Issues in global governance

- in the cooperation model, UNEP would be merely updated into a specialised UN agency, like the WHO or ILO, and no other agencies would be disbanded;
- in the centralisation model, various existing agencies, programmes and regimes would be integrated into one organisation. This could follow the model of the WTO, which has incorporated the different multilateral trade agreements under the same umbrella;
- in the hierarchisation model, a quasi-supranational agency would have decision-making and enforcement powers. For the moment this model has little support¹.

Despite the disagreement on the right model to adopt, advocates of a new environmental agency agree that it would bring many advantages. In particular, it would allow: a) improved coordination and less duplication of efforts among the various institutions; b) strengthening of the enforcement mechanisms in existing environmental treaties; c) promotion of the transfer of technologies from the North to the South.

Why a new agency?

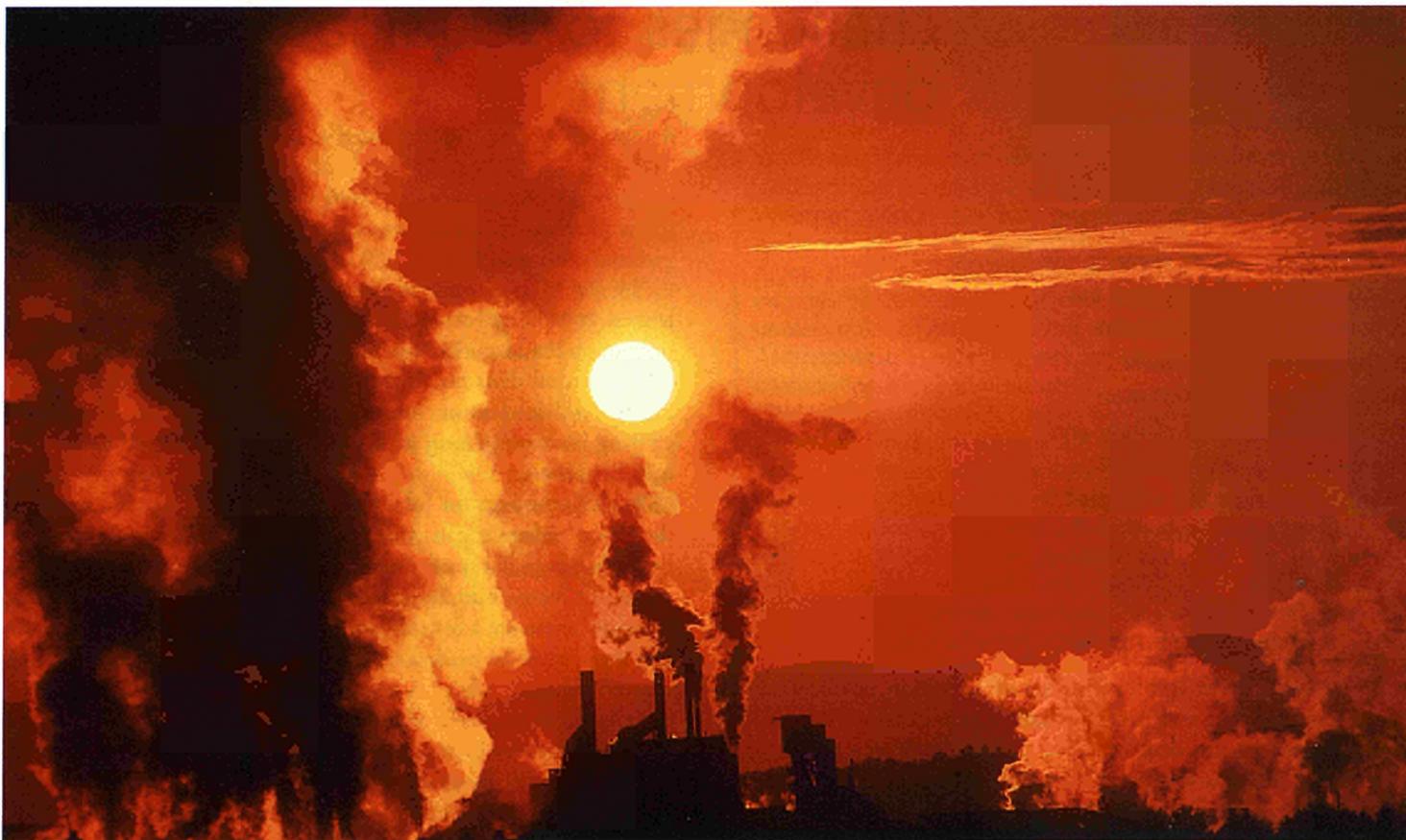
First, international environmental governance is spread among too many players, whose mandates and competences are often overlapping, if not conflicting. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), established after the 1972 Conference on the Human Environment, is only one component of the international environmental architecture. The two other major components of this system are: the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The CSD, created in the course of the 1992 Earth Summit, is attached to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) and has no funds of its own. The GEF, created in 1990 to protect global environmental goods, is a global fund administered by the World Bank, UNEP, and UNDP.

This level of fragmentation is further increased by the independent secretariats to the numerous environmental treaties, such as the Climate Convention, the Biodiversity Convention, the Desertification Convention, the Montreal Protocol, to name just a few, and by the various environmental programmes initiated over the years by other UN bodies or international institutions.

Second, a new environmental organisation would help to improve the overall implementation of international environmental standards and would allow the development of a common reporting system and a common dispute settlement system for all multilateral environmental agreements. It has been calculated that there are over 500 multilateral environmental agreements, and 60 per cent of them have come into force since the 1972 Stockholm Conference².

Discussion on a new environmental agency is paralleled by the more recent debate on setting up an international environment court, which would have the advantage of bringing a much greater level of predictability to international environmental governance. There is a lack of enforcement mechanisms in most existing treaties, but states are not yet ready to leave decisions on non-compliance with individual agreements to an independent body.

Third, a new agency would assist in the buildup of environmental capacities in developing countries and would allow a more efficient transfer of technologies from the North to the South. Establishing an independent body would facilitate coordination of the



There is a lack of enforcement mechanisms in most existing environment treaties

various financial mechanisms and provide opportunities for developing countries to have their voice heard in international negotiations³.

A digression?

Those who are against the creation of a new organisation call for an efficiency revolution within the UN system. A new agency would just add another layer of bureaucracy to a system which is already complex and ultimately would slow down progress. Furthermore, creating a new organisation exclusively responsible for environmental matters runs counter to the experiences of modern institutions, which are decentralising their operations.

Calestous Juma, former Executive-Director of the Convention on Biodiversity, argues that this debate only serves the purpose of diverting attention from more urgent needs. The real problem is that many governments fail to pay their dues to the United Nations and do not honour their commitment to poverty alleviation. As a consequence, developing countries cannot meet the obligations set by various environmental treaties. Agencies created to provide assistance to developing countries have too little funding and there is no evidence that the situation will change with the establishment of a new organisation.

Finally, most developing countries are also concerned that, drawing on their experience of the IMF and World Bank, a new organisation could become another source of conditions and sanctions. Yet, environmental conservation should be promoted as part of the overall economic goals, as agreed in Rio ten years ago. Says Calestous Juma: "Creating a new agency focusing on environment more than development, as proposed, would amount to renegeing on this historic agreement and will antagonise developing countries. Seeking to separate environment from development is impracticable and tact-

less."⁴ In addition, instead of creating a new organisation as a counterweight to the WTO in balancing trade with social and environmental objectives, environmental interests should be directly incorporated into the WTO. The mandate of the WTO needs to be restricted for the sake of global environmental protection.

The way ahead: looking for collective action

What all these discussions suggest is the need to rethink how to address the various global threats to the environment. Whether by establishing a new agency or by promoting a more coherent and coordinated form of global governance, it is clear that the existing system is not bringing about the necessary means to manage the world's environmental challenges.

The environmental challenges the world faces today, such as climate change, pollution, overfishing and ozone depletion, demand collective action. The ultimate outcome of the reform of international institutions would be better management of the "global commons". Any attempt to strengthen environmental governance without the necessary guarantees for developing countries is destined to fail. The World Summit on Sustainable Development can do more than start discussions, but unless countries perceive problem as common and recognise the advantages of collaboration, further efforts will be ineffectual. ■

* Ph.D. candidate and member of the European Union Center, University of Pittsburgh

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Climate change and extreme

challenges to sustainable development

Weather phenomena adversely affect 200 million people a year – seven times more than wars and conflicts. Violent storms, cyclones, hurricanes, typhoons, floods, droughts, heat waves, cold spells, avalanches, landslides, hail and sandstorms can all cause loss of life, damage and disruption. Their severity and frequency is increasing and this is to a large extent attributable to human activity. The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) believes that climate and the way we deal with it will chiefly determine the course of sustainable development.

Daniel Wermus/InfoSud

Natural disasters kill a quarter of a million people every year. Between 1991 and 2000, meteorological or climatic conditions caused 90 per cent of these. Estimates of the extent of property damage vary between \$50 and \$100 billion a year. Asia is the continent most frequently affected by “hydrometeorological” disasters¹, with 43 per cent of recorded incidents and 80 per cent of victims.

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), based in Geneva, has been sounding an alarm during preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg at the end of August. For its Secretary-General, Godwin Obasi, “this worrying trend is counterproductive to a sustainable way of life for all world populations”. WMO is proposing a strategy for “reducing vulnerability to weather and climate extremes”. This vulnerability is mostly felt in developing countries, where 98 per cent of the people affected live.

Global warming

One of the main causes of these disruptions has been clearly identified by the 2,500 specialists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It is carbon dioxide (CO₂) which, with the aid of other greenhouse gases released by human activity, retains the heat produced by the planet. Scientists estimate that as a result the atmosphere will gradually heat up by between 1.4 and 5.8 degrees by the year 2100. Emissions of these gases have increased many times over since the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century. Their causes include intensive farming, the spread of built-up areas, deforestation and fossil fuels (heating, transport and industry).

Another problem is the “hole in the ozone layer”, mainly around the South Pole. The disappearance of this protective layer has been caused by CFCs – substances used in aerosols and refrigerators – and allows ultraviolet B rays, which are particularly harmful to the skin, to pass through the atmosphere. The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer in 1985 and the Montreal Protocol in 1987 put in place a timetable for the gradual ending of the use of CFCs. But the damage had been done and its effects may last for decades.

“In the longer term, sustainable development will be determined to a large extent by projected climate change and its impact on sea-level rise, agriculture and water resources and associated natural disasters. It is projected, for example, that climate change will lead to an intensification of the hydrological cycle causing increased droughts in some places and floods in others”, says Mr Obasi.

WMO’s message for Johannesburg is that if mankind does not decide to reduce the harmful effects of this change, sustainable development will simply be impossible. Climatic extremes undermine the very foundations of human security and economic activity. There are scientific and technical ways to address them, but these must be made available to all developing countries as a matter of urgency.

Bangladesh has suffered more than most from natural disasters. In 1970 a violent cyclone ravaged the country’s coastline causing 300,000 deaths. By gradually building defences (sea walls, shelters and resistant buildings), early-warning systems and effective response mechanisms, the country has been able to come through similar cyclones with fewer deaths – 13,000 in 1992 and 200 in 1994. This reduction in fatalities is also due to the fact that the people affected now understand better the information given to them, see the dangers and react in time. But some countries have yet to draw up proper emergency and prevention plans.

Floods and droughts

The consequences of these disasters are immense and affect the whole world. The El Niño phenomenon, which results from a warming of the surface of the Pacific, alters atmospheric pressures from Latin America to Asia, causing floods in some places and droughts in others. Drought is sometimes accompanied by vast



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Floods are often dramatic, spectacular and expensive...

forest fires (like the one that recently ravaged Indonesia), which cause widespread air pollution.

Above the warm ocean waters, an average of 80 tropical cyclones are triggered every year, sometimes with winds of up to 200 k.p.h. and gusts of more than 280 k.p.h. The waves that they whip up around the coast can form a veritable wall of water that pours onto the land. In the Indian state of Orissa in 1999, a tidal wave devastated everything up to 20 kilometres inland and caused 40,000 deaths.

Floods are often dramatic, spectacular and expensive. But it is drought followed by famine that claims the most victims. The world undoubtedly has the resources to provide food and sanitation aid, and to save many lives. However, it is easier to find money (and volunteers) for humanitarian operations than for prevention. Taking action against the causes and long-term effects of drought is a complex matter that attracts little media attention. Climatic changes can also expose regions to long-term drought. Part of Central Asia has had virtually no rain for four years and an area of Central America is threatened by the same fate.

Temperate zones are not spared

In the mid-latitudes heat and cold can cause sudden disasters. In August 1998, Shanghai experienced a heat wave so intense that the number of deaths was four times higher than average. Beijing is directly threatened by encroaching desertification. In Mongolia, in January 2001, a blizzard with winds exceeding 100 k.p.h. killed 12 shepherds and 467,000 animals. Last winter, there was exceptional snowfall in Siberia.

Even temperate Western Europe is not immune from these extremes. In December 1999, hurricane Lothar claimed 29 victims in Switzerland alone and caused €1,200 million of damage. Developed countries will not be spared by climatic disturbance, though they are better able to deal with it. But dozens of developing countries still do not have the know-how to avoid the disasters that are almost certain to arise. The example of Bangladesh will have to be followed.



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...but it is drought followed by famine that claims the most victims

Global surveillance

WMO, in collaboration with other bodies, has formed a network for the surveillance of weather conditions. The **World Weather Watch** is a programme for observation and free exchange of data to disseminate forecasts and alarm messages. It has a highly sophisticated surveillance system that includes 1,000 high-altitude observation stations, 7,000 volunteer observation ships, ten satellites, and 250 **Global Atmospheric Watch** stations which monitor the chemical composition of the atmosphere.

WMO ensures that each country has daily access to the observations and in return collects the data from national meteorological and hydrological services. High-speed transmission is enabling the development of **Early-Warning Systems**. Three weather watch centres and 25 regional centres provide the forecasts and bulletins on cyclones, droughts, floods, forest fires, pollution, volcanic ash, etc. The **World Climate Research Programme**, sponsored by WMO, ultimately aims to create a system whereby major climatic phenomena can be predicted.

For further information see www.wmo.ch

Towards greater climate security

A global effort is underway to reduce the effects of disasters. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction² brings together many international organisations, including WMO. This interdisciplinary approach addresses a range of issues such as health, farming, forestry, water management, human communities and tourism.

Detailed observations of the global climate system are the key to a risk-reduction strategy. Local climate archives need to be developed and improved. Incorporating socio-economic and environmental data will help to assess vulnerability to extreme meteorological and climatic events. WMO is working to improve national meteorological and hydrological services and is

currently coordinating a project for the transfer of technology to more than 130 countries.

A number of other steps need to be taken to support these efforts. These include strengthening national and local preventive measures, introducing greater coordination (including cross-border) and providing training in the prevention of disasters and self-help activities. The Johannesburg Summit will be a good time to show that the importance of climate security in combating poverty has been properly understood. ■

1. Hydrometeorology is the study of the atmospheric and land phases of the hydrological cycle – the succession of stages through which water passes in the atmosphere: evaporation, condensation to form clouds, precipitation, accumulation in the soil or in bodies of water and re-evaporation.

2. www.unisdr.org

A recipe for success

Subsidy reform deals to jump-start global sustainability

At the end of August the eyes of the world will be on Johannesburg. Heads of state from around the globe will gather for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), to decide what national and international policies should be implemented to promote sustainable development. At least one key area offers a recipe for successful international action: public subsidies that undermine sustainable development.

André de Moor*

Studies have revealed that governments spend massive amounts in subsidies for agriculture, energy and water – sectors that have been identified as absolutely crucial for the WSSD. Many of these subsidies have an adverse affect on the environment, equity and international trade. Reforming them would bring about huge benefits to society and would significantly improve global sustainability. There is ample scope for striking international Grand Deals to reform harmful subsidies. The key to making it happen is genuine political will and leadership by some of the OECD countries.

This article explores the importance of subsidies for the WSSD by highlighting their size and impact on key sectors. It will further develop proposals for international Grand Deals and institutional structures to guide and monitor subsidy reform.

A closer look at public subsidies and policy failures

The concept of “subsidy” involves more than just traditional hand-outs of money by governments. It also includes regulatory interventions in market prices, specific tax breaks and the uncovered costs of infrastructure provision. In fact, most government support is hidden in tax laws, prices or other public structures¹. These policy interventions not only impose an indirect cost on the government but also inflict costs on society as a whole. Worldwide, governments spend up to \$1,065 billion on public subsidies each year (see Table 1). This is about four per cent of world GDP and equal to the total GDP of all low-income countries in 1999. OECD countries account for three-quarters of all subsidies, spending most of the \$725 billion a year on subsidising producers. Developing countries spend about six per cent of their GDP, primarily on supporting consumers.

It is remarkable that public subsidies are particularly large in those sectors that have been identified as crucial for the WSSD. Agriculture is by far the largest subsidised sector and the bulk of it is in the OECD countries. In fact, the EU, Japan and the USA alone spend \$300 billion a year in public transfers, mainly by offering their farmers guaranteed prices above market level. This price support boosts production and results in vast surpluses, which have to be bought by OECD governments. Further support is needed to transport, store and eventually dump these surpluses on the world market.

Is this cycle of support effective in maintaining farm incomes? Clearly not, according to the OECD. It calculates the transfer efficiency ratio at 0.2, which means that only 20 cents in every \$1 of support actually reach the farmer. The other 80 cents leak away in higher use of fertilisers, pesticides and water. It is this inefficient use

of resources that leads to higher emissions and a higher environmental burden. The support and protection of OECD farmers and the dumping of surpluses further distorts international trade, as their counterparts in developing countries cannot compete in the international marketplace or enter OECD agricultural markets.

Energy subsidies run to an impressive \$240 billion a year worldwide. One-third of this is spent by OECD governments in subsidising domestic producers, while the remaining two-thirds includes support for consumers in developing countries. The common element is that most energy subsidies flow to fossil fuels. So governments are effectively subsidising pollution and global warming. Various studies show that eliminating producer and consumer subsidies would increase the incentive to allocate resources more efficiently and would actually help economic growth. Removal of subsidies would further reduce global CO₂ emissions by up to 10 per cent.

Water is subsidised by some \$60 billion, mainly through the under-pricing of irrigation and drinking water in developing countries. These subsidies, however, dramatically fail to serve their purpose of providing water for low-income groups. As the irrigation payments are based on the area irrigated, irrigation subsidies mainly accrue to the larger and better-off farmers. Similarly, it is usually not the urban poor that benefit from drinking water subsidies, as they are disconnected from public water systems.

Key elements for reform

What are the options for reforming subsidies that have such a negative impact on the natural environment, on equity and on trade? Subsidy reform should include at least three key elements. The first is good governance, with absolute priority given to

The global cost of public subsidies each year, 1994-98 (US\$ billion)

	OECD	Non-OECD	World
Agriculture	335	65	400
Water	15	45	60
Forestry	5	30	35
Fisheries	10	10	20
Mining	25	5	30
<i>Subtotal:</i> <i>natural resource sectors</i>	390	155	545
Energy	80	160	240
Road transport	200	25	225
Manufacturing industry	55	Negligible	55
<i>Subtotal:</i> <i>energy and industry sectors</i>	335	185	520
Total	725	340	1065
Total in % GDP	3.4	6.3	4.0

Source: Van Beers and de Moor, 2001, *Public Subsidies and Policy Failures*, Edward Elgar Publishers, Cheltenham, UK



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Agriculture is by far the largest subsidised sector and the bulk of it is in the OECD countries

transparency in policies and institutions. Increasing transparency raises the political cost of irresponsible policies and rewards responsible ones. For subsidies to be transparent it is essential to develop a common methodology to identify and assess them, to set up information systems and to monitor them. The second key element is decoupling, that is to say cutting the link between subsidies and production, consumption and income. The third element is providing compensation to subsidy recipients. A viable reform strategy should produce benefits for all².

Even more effective is to agree and embark upon common international action. There is plenty of opportunity to reach agreement on Grand Deals for reforming subsidies in agriculture, water, fisheries, forestry and energy. These sectors account for \$750 billion in subsidies every year, or 70 per cent of global public support. The target date for full subsidy reform could be set at 2012, ten years after Johannesburg, following a gradual removal of subsidies, differentiated by income level³.

Agriculture and water

The agenda for international subsidy reform cannot ignore the world's largest subsidy. If OECD countries promise to abolish their price and input subsidies and open up their markets, developing countries should commit themselves to removing their input and food subsidies. The OECD countries should lead the way, given their enormous impact on world agriculture. This would help growth and international trade, as well as the environment. However, an international Grand Deal also needs to encourage a "double-switch" and to restructure world agriculture.

There are four elements crucial to achieving this. The first is the decoupling of agricultural support from prices and inputs, in order to make policies more effective and to prevent negative side effects. The second is using a part of the resources generated by subsidy removal to compensate farmers financially or buy them out.

The third is using another part of these resources to finance a system that rewards farmers for services that help the environment, nature conservation and land stewardship. Paying for environmental services offers farmers an alternative income and the

choice between traditional food production and modern production geared to nature conservation. The removal of all food subsidies in exchange for a global system of "green payments" would certainly contribute towards an increase in biodiversity.

The fourth element is using the remaining resources derived from subsidy removal to restructure and improve public budgets. This should create a strong incentive for finance ministers to be more actively involved in agricultural reform. As irrigation makes up a large part of agricultural subsidies in developing countries, any international Deal would probably need to incorporate water subsidies.

Supporting Kyoto and funding reform

The idea for an international agreement on energy subsidies is simple: if OECD countries abolish their fossil fuel subsidies and help non-OECD countries with their reform through real financial and technology transfers, the developing countries would have to make commitments under the regime of the Kyoto Protocol. One of the key US objections to the Protocol would then be eliminated. Such a global strategy would also contribute towards the OECD countries' Kyoto targets. The financial and technology transfers would help developing countries in their transition towards more sustainable economic growth. The environmental benefits are clear⁴.

One might consider creating a "global subsidy reform fund" to support the Grand Deals. Contributions from this fund could be

Burkina Faso, hand irrigating vegetables.

Water subsidies fail to serve their purpose of providing water for low-income groups



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used to finance the implementation of reform policies for individual countries. It could be made up of contributions from the developed world based on their GDP level or, perhaps more appropriately, on their level of subsidy. Both developing and developed countries could call on the fund and, in due course, repay perhaps 50 per cent of what they had received.

International structures for change

How could the international community put global subsidy reform and, in particular, these international Grand Deals into practice? A sound international structure with a strong international organisation and a far-reaching mandate is needed to identify and evaluate subsidies, to conduct negotiations on subsidy reform and to monitor and assess progress⁵. The most promising approach, in our view, would be to make an explicit link between subsidies and trade relations, as this is the common denominator that brings together countries' differing interests. Government subsidies imply a benefit for domestic sectors and a competitive disadvantage for foreign competitors. Removing them and improving market access could then be the common objective of global subsidy reform.

Linking subsidy reform to trade relations would also enable the World Trade Organization (WTO) to be used as a vehicle for negotiations. Van Beers and de Moor (2001) recommend a more powerful role for the WTO, which should become actively involved in domestic support policies and subsidy evaluations. The WTO should be given a broader and stronger mandate that explicitly allows it to assess public subsidies targeted at domestic sectors such as, in the first instance, energy, forestry and fisheries. It should conduct detailed subsidy reviews and specific research.

Where countries are committed to subsidy removal, the WTO should also monitor and report regularly on whether they are really making progress⁶.

At the same time the WTO needs to be opened up. It should have an independent 'decision panel' working alongside it. This would act as a dispute settlement mechanism in reviewing subsidies and monitoring reform progress. It could assess cases brought forward by the WTO, member countries or outside organisations and decide whether a subsidy should be removed or not. Allowing access to organisations like NGOs would mean a step forward for the acceptance and credibility of the WTO. It would be especially important for the panel to apply objective and pre-determined criteria and its rulings should be legally binding. It should be absolutely independent and of unimpeachable authority.

Wanted: political will and leadership

How realistic are such Grand Deals? Political will and leadership is crucial and presents a particular challenge for OECD countries like the USA and the EU. For the USA, the WSSD offers a timely opportunity to play a leadership role in promoting international policies and agreements. President Bush could, for example, commit his country to the rapid removal of subsidies in agriculture, fisheries and energy sectors – before 2010. Similarly, the EU would gain credibility by initiating international agreements, especially on agriculture, fisheries and energy. It could jump-start international action by committing itself to a swift reduction of subsidies by 2010 in order to demonstrate real progress at the next (Rio+20) summit.

The WSSD is crunch time to prove concern for, and commitment to, sustainable development. Major OECD countries face a particular challenge in demonstrating genuine political will and commitment towards a more sustainable future, and in taking action on global subsidy reform. With the eyes of the world turned to Johannesburg, aspirations are high but there is a compelling recipe for success. ■

* RIVM Netherlands Institute of Public Health and the Environment
P.O. Box 1, 3720 BA Bilthoven, NL
Andre.de.moor@rivm.nl

1. For example, governments may deliberately keep consumer prices below world market level or, conversely, support producers by imposing minimum prices above market level.
2. Various domestic reform options have been extensively documented in van Beers and de Moor, 2001, *Public Subsidies and Policy Failures*, Edward Elgar Publishers, Cheltenham, UK.
3. Since OECD countries are economically and financially in the strongest position, their subsidy reduction commitments could be achieved sooner, say, a complete elimination of subsidies within a period of six to eight years and ultimately by 2010. Middle-income countries could aim for full subsidy removal within eight to ten years while low-income countries could aim for a 50 per cent reduction within eight years and a complete removal in 12 years.
4. This agreement should also include the removal of forestry subsidies. Forestry subsidies are doubly counterproductive from an environmental point of view, as they contribute to excessive forest clearing and biodiversity losses and prevent further carbon sequestration by forests.
5. Some sectors offer scope for conducting international negotiations, such as the UNFCCC for reforming energy and forestry subsidies.
6. The mandate should hence also include the authority to conduct inspection and post-reform reviews.



Coal-fired power plant. Energy subsidies run to an impressive \$240 billion a year worldwide. Most energy subsidies flow to fossil fuels. So governments are effectively subsidising pollution and global warming

Marine environment and sustainable development:

The oceans as a global resource

Despite numerous international conferences and international agreements, degradation of the oceans and seas has continued and even intensified. The major problems identified in the 1972 UN Conference on Human Development – marine pollution and overexploitation of marine resources – are still unresolved, while new threats have emerged as a consequence of the pressures of population growth, increased urbanisation, and rapid industrialisation. Because of the crucial role they play, oceans and seas must be integrated in the agenda of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Maurizio Carbone*



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As human activities increase and extend, the state of the world's oceans deteriorates. In 1997, an estimated 50 per cent of the world population, including more than 70 per cent of the world's mega-cities (greater than 8 million inhabitants), was located in coastal areas. By 2025 the percentage of people living in the coastal zone is expected to increase to 75 per cent.

Coastal areas and oceans are a vital resource for a sustainable world. They yield extraordinary economic and social benefits:

- marine transportation accounts for 90 per cent of international trade;
- exploitation of coastal and offshore mineral resources provides about 25 to 30 per cent of the world's energy supplies;
- fisheries provide many jobs both in developed and developing countries;
- marine aquaculture represents a rapidly growing industry and accounts for 30 per cent of the world's fish consumption;
- tourism, the fastest growing sector of the global economy, generated \$3.5 trillion in revenues and close to 200 million jobs in 1999. Coastal tourism is a major portion of GDP in many small islands¹.

These economic activities, in addition to population growth, are putting increasing pressure on the integrity of coastal and marine areas. A recent FAO report claims that at least 60 per cent of world fisheries are either fully exploited or overfished; 58 per cent of the world's coral reefs are threatened by human activity; and more than half of the world's coastal areas are at high or moderate risk of environmental degradation. The situ-

ation is even more serious for developing countries, where rapid population growth combined with great poverty often means that environment is not a priority for governments².

Recognition of the threats to oceans, seas, and coasts has increased in the past decade. The signing of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982 marked the first major political step towards environmental ocean management. The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and Chapter 17 of Agenda 21, called for a new and integrated approach to sustainable development of oceans and coasts. Since 1992, numerous international and regional agreements, such as the UN Fish Stock Agreement, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities, and the Jakarta Mandate of the Convention on Biological Diversity have provided a more detailed framework for addressing critical aspects of marine management. Finally, the World Summit on Sustainable Development will be a unique occasion to agree on a limited number of targets as universal benchmarks for a focused plan that addresses the main causes of marine degradation.

Marine pollution

One of the biggest threats to the oceans is global warming. Yet most of the focus has been on the impact climate change has on human beings and on land. Global warming alters marine ecosystems and causes sea levels to rise. Because the oceans expand as they warm up, a great number of people, especially in developing countries, risk being displaced.

Apart from climate change, the main threat to the marine environment comes from pollution. Today, some pollutants

Trobriand islands, Papua New Guinea.
Fishing for clams and sea-urchins



©Caroline Penn/Panos Pictures

are less hazardous than in the past, while others, like sewage, represent the largest source of contamination. In the developed world the quality of water has improved significantly, but in the developing world urban sewer systems and sewage treatment are still a matter of serious concern. Sewage pollution causes major economic losses by ruining large areas which could be used for fisheries and tourism. It can also have devastating effects on health: diseases such as cholera, typhoid and infectious hepatitis are caused by contaminated seafood and bathing water. According to a recent WHO study, bathing in polluted areas causes some 250 million cases of gastroenteritis and upper respiratory diseases every year. The study also shows that eating contaminated shellfish causes some 2.5 million cases of infectious hepatitis each year. Some 25,000 of the victims die; another 25,000 suffer long-term disability from liver damage³.

While sewage tends to be the main source of pollution near cities, agricultural run-off is the major cause in rural areas. The use of pesticides, fertilisers, and other agrochemicals is rising worldwide: use has stabilised in developed countries, but has dramatically increased in developing nations. Such expansion is also a direct consequence of the subsidies that governments provide to farmers to increase food production and reduce food costs.

Finally, atmospheric inputs from vehicle and industrial emissions are also increasing with industrialisation and as car ownership rises in developing countries.

Fisheries

Fishing represents the major contribution to the economy in many countries, both directly as food and indirectly in the production of meal and oil for animal feed. Fish is the most internationally traded food, with developing countries providing some 50 per cent in international trade. The fishery sector contributes more than five per cent to GDP in Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, and Seychelles. Fish is also a major source of protein for many poor people. From 1973 to 1990, fisheries supplied some 20 per cent of the animal protein intake of the population in sub-Saharan Africa⁴.

Statistics show that the world's aggregate catch of fish has grown over time. But after four decades of boom, this growth has come to an end, mainly due to overfishing. Overfishing occurs when fish are caught faster than they can reproduce. In most areas, the world's oceans have reached their maximum level of production and "production may not be sustainable under present circumstances". The decrease in the amount of fish caught for human consumption will be replaced by aquaculture, an activity that in recent years has exploded, becoming one of the fastest-growing sectors in world food production. However, as it is currently practiced, aquaculture causes environmental damage, such as the destruction of mangrove swamps, pollution from chemicals, and displacement of traditional fisheries.

Causes of overfishing

There are several reasons why overfishing occurs. First, open access to fishing in most fisheries. In the past 25 years, the

worldwide number of fishermen has more than doubled. In most developing countries, the poor have no choice but "to glean the last of the resource". Free and open access encourages overfishing: fishermen tend to catch as much fish as they can without taking care to maintain the fish stock.

Second, subsidies from governments to the fishing industry. A World Bank study estimates that subsidies, although declining, are still worth a total of up to \$20 billion a year³. Fisheries subsidies sometimes provide jobs in poor coastal regions and help countries expand their fishing industry. However, most of the time, the same subsidies encourage companies to develop high-tech fishing and thus overfish. A recent UN Environment Programme (UNEP) report points out how in Senegal trade liberalisation and other trade-related policies on fisheries have led to overexploitation of fish stocks by foreign fleets, which are financed by subsidies from developed countries for fishing overseas. A similar situation has happened in Uganda, where trade liberalisation in the form of industrial privatisation and tariff reduction on fishing technology has contributed to overfishing of the Nile Perch in Lake Victoria. As a source of employment and export revenue, the fisheries industry has become one of Uganda's most important industrial sectors. However, such tremendous growth has put into question the long-term sustainability of the industry – and, therefore, the future of the local fishing communities.

Third, increasing technological sophistication. Distant-water fleets bring industrial fishing to developing countries, which do not have big boats of their own. Over the last decade, tuna, salmon and other ocean fish have come under threat as a consequence of the development of new technologies. Furthermore, excessive trawling and dredging and illegal fishing with explosives, poisons, and drift nets have a negative ecological impact. Finally, the "by-catch" of unwanted fish causes

further depletion of fish stocks. Because of the impositions of quotas on the number of fish caught, fishermen discard their low-value fish and keep only the more valuable. The FAO estimates that discarded fish amounts to 20 million tons – almost one fourth of the annual marine catch.

The future of the oceans

Thirty years ago the Stockholm Conference on Human Environment marked a change by linking environment to development. Much has been achieved since then, but much more remains to be done. In December 2001, scientists, NGOs, and policymakers from developed and developing countries met in Paris to discuss the state of the oceans before the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Most of the problems are well known, but have not been adequately addressed locally, nationally, or globally. Governments need to become stronger in preventing and controlling environmental damage. A small portion of national budgets should be devoted to environmental activities. Further funds could be raised from charges on emissions, fines, and other economic instruments and incentives. However, as most developing countries are constrained by widespread poverty, they are often forced to give low priority to the environment. Yet, lack of coordination between donors and between recipient ministries often causes programmes and projects to be duplicated and money wasted.

Lasting solutions can only be achieved through a comprehensive, sustained, and coordinated approach. A key to poverty reduction and the attainment of healthier oceans and coastal areas has been identified in the establishment of programmes of integrated coastal management (ICM) which are designed to guide oceans and coastal development while maintaining environmental quality. The aim of ICM is to bring together diverse groups of people operating in various sectors – fishing, tourism, and agriculture – in order to identify shared problems and reduce the vulnerability of coastal communities to natural hazards. It involves addressing the inter-relationships between the physical process and human activities, and integrating the major economic activities which can be sources of livelihood for coastal residents. Over the years, problems have been recognised and solutions proposed. The WSSD must deliver: if governments fail to provide sufficient political and financial commitment to prevent and control environmental damage, the sustainability and life-support functions of the world's oceans and seas will be at serious risk. ■

Online atlas of world's oceans

Last June, after a decade of planning and more than two and a half years of work, the United Nations and other leading scientific institutions launched the first atlas of the world's oceans. Identified during the 1992 Rio Earth Summit in response to a call to address the world's greatest environmental challenges, the Atlas represents a «big ocean watch» designed to help coordinate the work underway in different agencies, academic institutions and other organizations. It is also intended to inform the general public about the state of the world's oceans. The Atlas contains an initial 14 global maps, links to hundreds of others, including 264 maps showing the distribution of fishery resources, and more than 2,000 documents on several subjects.

The UN Oceans Atlas can be found online at <http://www.oceansatlas.org>

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2. FAO, 2001, The State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2000. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation.
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* Ph.D. candidate and member of the European Union Center, University of Pittsburgh

Desertification and biodiversity

Shifting desert boundaries in the world's arid and semi-arid regions is a major cause of degradation, leading to decreased levels of agricultural production, reduced plant cover, flora and fauna. It also has drastic effects on ecosystems and the climate. With two-thirds of its 1,030,700 km² under desert, Mauritania is the epitome of a country which is struggling against the winds, desertification and the ever-encroaching sands, yet has no national strategy of environmental management. Marième Bekaye, environmental manager for UNDP in Mauritania, spoke to *The Courier*.

Dewa Dianifaba



The Courier

Besides the climatic factors responsible for desertification, is poverty also to blame?

First of all, it should be recalled that desertification is not just an expansion of the existing deserts but, above all, the degradation of arid land, which takes the form of the destruction of the natural vegetation cover, the exhaustion of ground water, a decrease in soil productivity and erosion. Desertification has many causes, but it is primarily due to climate changes observed over time and in particular places, to successive droughts as well as to non-sustainable human activity (intensive agriculture, poor irrigation practices, overgrazing and deforestation). The situation has worsened over the last few decades as a result of political and economic changes, population growth and a tendency towards an increasingly settled way of life. The areas it effects are precisely those areas where poverty is greatest. If specific poverty eradication measures are not taken, rural populations will have no alternative but will exert ever-greater pressure on natural resources.

The link between the advance of the dune front and the loss of biodiversity is well established. What is the situation now in the Sahel, specifically in Mauritania?

In Mauritania, soil erosion and degradation has led to destabilisation of the sand dunes, which have spilled over into the irrigated paddy-fields, market garden plots, watering places and villages. The forests have been largely destroyed, as well as the Tamourts and other wetland areas (lakes, wadies and ponds) which are natural refuges for wildlife and which are used by migratory birds. In the Senegal River valley, the extension of the land under cultivation together with bad drainage practices are

the main causes of soil deterioration and the loss of large areas which were important for biodiversity.

Biodiversity, climate changes, desertification... since Rio one has the impression that there is a multitude of protocols and conventions on these issues. Isn't there a need to harmonise these agreements?

The Earth Summit, or the Rio Summit as it is more commonly known, adopted three conventions, each of which has specific objectives even though all three are aiming for the same overall objective: sustainable development as defined in Agenda 21, the blueprint for global action adopted in Rio.

The Convention on Biological Diversity aims to preserve and use our wealth of living species in a sustainable way and to ensure the benefits from using biological diversity are equitably shared. Financial aid has been earmarked for developing countries, which provide a habitat for approximately 90 per cent of plant species.

The aim of the Convention on Climate Change is to stabilise the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere in order to fight against global warming. This Convention mainly concerns developed countries, who are responsible for 75 per cent of total emissions and who must be the ones to take the first steps. The Convention on Combating Desertification aims to promote concrete measures to fight desertification and the effects of drought. Special measures for Africa are the subject of an annex to the Convention. Nonetheless, these three issues are interlinked. The disappearance of plant and animal species is very closely linked to the degradation of their habitat and other fundamental changes to ecosystems. Climate changes can influence drought cycles and provoke natural catastrophes. The

results of research on climate phenomena have made it possible to improve our capacity to forecast and therefore to adopt the measures to be taken. Clearly, the search for synergies in the implementation of these conventions is paramount and should have the added benefit of facilitating the release and effective use of financial resources, which remains one of the major limiting factors.

In the past few years we have also seen an increasing involvement of NGOs in implementing environmental projects and programmes. What is the state of play in Mauritania?

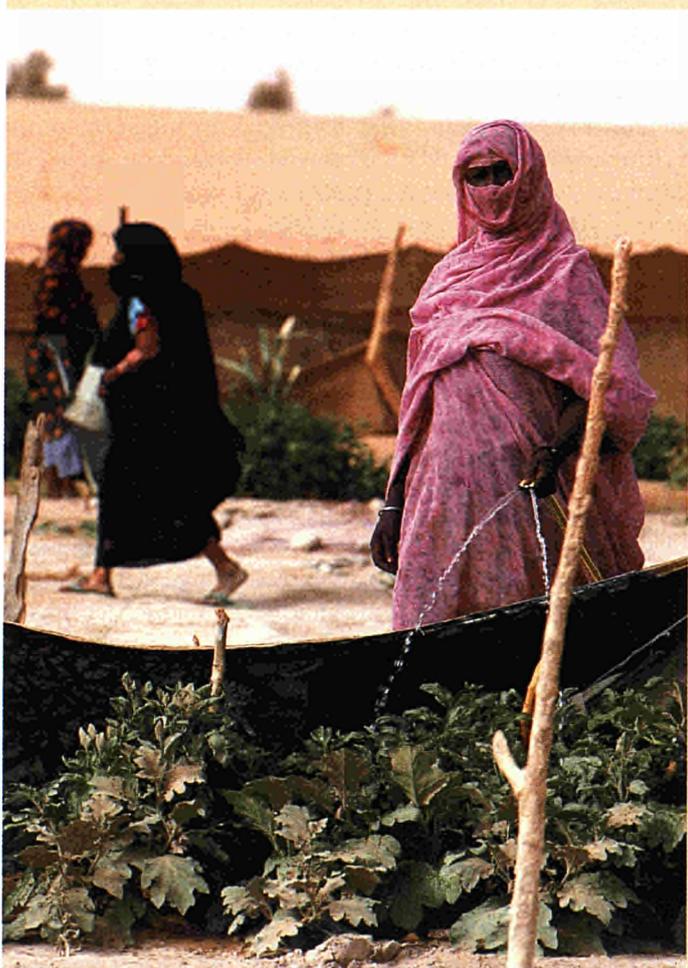
In Mauritania, the movement towards associations is still in its early stages. NGOs really only began to develop in 1992, with the beginning of the democratic process and the commitment of the State to involve civil society, and in particular the NGOs, in the country's development process. They have gone

from strength to strength and we now have over 600 NGOs, many of which work in the areas of poverty reduction and the environment.

In the last few years, we have seen real participation on the part of NGOs in all debates and workshops focusing on the development of environmental policies, strategies and environmental action plans. Nonetheless, only about thirty NGOs have the real capacity to implement pilot projects as well as certain activities entrusted to them in the framework of development programmes, particularly awareness-raising campaigns, advocacy and training, which they manage very well. As to the actual implementation of programmes, there is still a need to strengthen the capacity of NGOs and to enable them to become a fully-fledged partner. The UNDP is supporting government efforts in this context via a capacity-building programme in favour of NGOs and the establishment of a fund to promote the professionalisation of national development NGOs. ■

Mauritania-Senegal biodiversity project

Joint ecological management



The Mauritania-Senegal biodiversity project, currently underway in the Sahel, is a regional, transborder ecological project for conserving and maintaining the biodiversity along both sides of the Senegal River. One important aspect of this innovative project is that it came into being at the request of the local population.

The main component of this project is the re-establishment of forests over an area of 2000 hectares, pastures (1,300 hectares), the dune boundaries (1,500 hectares) and wetlands of over 500 hectares, taking into account particularly their degree of degradation and the effects of human activity in the river valley.

The project was launched in 2001 for a five-year period. It is funded by the two countries, along with development partners for a total amount of €12 million. Equally important is the project's "Brush fire control" or "Brush fire management" component. In this river valley forest fires are partly responsible for the progressive degradation of the land and a reduction in plant and animal biodiversity. The long-term objective is to establish an early-warning system which fits with local realities and to set this up in all of the villages concerned by the project. Each village now has a "brush-fire-fighting committee".

A novel aspect of the project is that it also includes components on "Increasing community income" and "Income-generating activities". A microcredit system, aimed at conservation of the natural habitat, has also been set up. This enables the local population to considerably increase their income. The two governments intend in this way to put in place a consensual management of their common biodiversity, and permit sustainable exploitation of the natural resources by the local population.

New paths

for international tourism

When delegates at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit drafted their long-range blueprint of action, Agenda 21, they made little reference to the environmental and social impacts of one of the world's fastest growing industries—tourism. Ten years later, however, tourism's connection to the future of the planet cannot be understated.

Lisa Mastny*

Commercial jets, and low airfares have helped to accelerate tourism. But air transport is one of the fastest growing sources of greenhouse gas emissions

Central Audiovisual Library/European Commission



In 2001, some 700 million tourists crossed an international border – nearly 30 times the number in 1950. And tourism and related activities contributed some \$3.3 trillion to the global economy, generating an estimated 11 per cent of world GDP. This boom is expected to continue well into the century.

Tourism is especially important in the developing world, where it can be a lucrative alternative to traditional income-generating activities like agriculture and mining. But the rapid growth of the industry also brings a heavy burden. Uncontrolled tourism development – on mountaintops, along coastlines, and in remote jungle areas – is stressing fragile ecosystems and cultures in many destinations. Meanwhile, existing strategies for tourism development tend to concentrate the benefits in the hands of a few.

As the World Summit on Sustainable Development approaches, participants will need to work together to find practical ways to minimise tourism's negative impacts, while boosting its benefits for local communities and the environment. Many forward-looking businesses, governments, and non-governmental groups are already reorienting tourism activities to make them more socially beneficial and environmentally sound. The challenge, however, is making sure that this activity translates into measurable progress.

A force for development?

As global interest in tourism surges, tourists are trading in over-commercialised mass tourism for more “exotic” destinations – most of which are in the developing world. Countries like Cambodia, Cuba, Egypt, Vietnam, and South Africa have seen huge jumps in visitor numbers in recent years. Overall, tourism growth rates in developing countries are expected to exceed five per cent a year through 2020, outpacing the world average as well as anticipated growth in industrial countries.

Across the developing world, governments are pouring money into tourism marketing, infrastructure projects like roads and hotels, and

both large and small-scale tourism businesses. By luring tourist dollars, they hope to diversify their economies and attract the foreign exchange needed to reduce heavy debt burdens, pay for imports, strengthen domestic infrastructure, and boost social services like education and health care.

In gross economic terms, these investments are beginning to pay off. In a survey of the world's 100 poorest countries done for the UK Department for International Development, researchers found that tourism is “significant” – that is, it accounts for at least two per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) or five per cent of exports – in nearly half of the countries in the lowest income range, and almost all in the lower-to-middle income range. In the 49 so-called least developed countries, most of which are in Africa and Asia, tourism is now the second largest source of foreign exchange after oil.

But whether this tourism boom actually brings widespread development benefits is open to question. The World Tourism Organisation estimates that, on average, as much as half of the tourism revenue that enters the developing world ultimately “leaks” back out – in the form of profits earned by foreign-owned businesses, promotional spending abroad, or payments for imported goods and labour. In Africa, foreign operators dominate the tourism industries of popular destinations like Kenya and Tanzania.

Many hotels and other tourism businesses in the developing world rely heavily on foreign inputs either because the host country lacks the luxury goods and services that many tourists demand or because the tourism sector is so poorly linked with other sectors like fishing, agriculture, manufacturing, and transport that it is difficult to procure local supplies. But this rising presence of international hotel chains, tour operators, and airlines threatens to crowd out smaller, local operators who are unable to compete.

Unfortunately, the leakage problem will likely only intensify as more and more governments privatise national airlines and other state

services, reduce domestic subsidies, and embrace international trade and investment policies that give greater advantage to foreign investors. For example, the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), a 1994 multilateral trade agreement aimed at liberalising service industries, requires governments to remove subsidies and protections on local enterprises and makes it considerably easier for foreign businesses to establish franchises, transfer staff, and repatriate profits.

The employment benefits of tourism are also mixed. Roughly 65 per cent of the new jobs created by tourism annually are found in the developing world, including positions in restaurants, tour companies, and construction. On small islands like the Bahamas and the Maldives as many as 45 per cent of jobs are tourism-related. For women in particular, working in tourism provides a welcome alternative to unemployment.

Yet more often than not, foreign or city-based workers hold the more lucrative management positions in tourism, leaving other residents with low-wage service jobs – porters, maids, or labourers – that offer little opportunity for skill-building. The International Labour Organisation reports that tourism workers earn 20 per cent less on average than workers in other economic sectors. And many of these positions do not meet international labour or other standards: some 13-19 million children under the age of 18 now work in tourism, roughly two million of whom have been lured into the booming “sex tourism” industries of Southeast Asia and Latin America.

The presence of tourism also has impacts on local cultures. On the one hand, it can heighten respect for minority groups, helping to revive languages, religious traditions, and other practices that might otherwise be lost. Many indigenous communities favour increased tourism because they see greater economic and cultural opportunities. But the industry can also be highly exploitative, with promoters reducing entire cultures to brochure snapshots. In extreme cases, native populations have been forcefully evicted from their homelands to make room for tourists, as occurred in Kenya’s game parks in the 1950s, and more recently in the Burmese city of Pagan.

Environmental impacts of tourism

As soaring air travel brings many of the earth’s most ecologically fragile destinations within easy reach, concern about tourism’s environmental impacts is rising as well. Travelers from industrial countries often try to replicate their own high consumption lifestyles abroad, increasing pressures on ecosystems and resources. Yet few developing-country governments have the capacity to protect their attractions adequately.

Across the developing world, natural and rural landscapes are rapidly being converted to roads, airports, hotels, gift shops, parking lots, and other tourist facilities. Unregulated beachfront construction in places like southeast Asia and the Caribbean has destroyed dunes and wetlands, caused groundwater supplies to become brackish, and stirred up nearby waters – choking coral reefs and diminishing fish populations.

The world’s hotels and their guests use massive quantities of resources, including energy for heating and cooling rooms, lighting hallways, and cooking meals, and water for washing laundry, filling swimming pools, and greening golf courses. Resource over-consumption by visitors can divert scarce supplies from local residents, exacerbating shortages and raising utility prices. Tourists in Grenada

are said to use seven times as much water as local people. In the Philippines, the diversion of water to tourist lodges and restaurants threatens to destroy paddy irrigation at the 3,000-year-old Banaue rice terraces, a cultural heritage site.

Golf courses, swimming pools, marinas, and other tourist facilities also generate a wide variety of harmful wastes, including synthetic chemicals, oil, nutrients, and pathogens. Yet many destinations in the developing world fail to treat their waste adequately, in part because of weak environmental legislation or a lack of money, monitoring equipment, and trained staff. A 1994 study for the Caribbean Tourism Organisation reported that hotels in that region released some 80-90 per cent of their sewage without adequate treatment on beaches and in coastal waters, including around coral reefs and mangroves.

Tourism’s presence can be especially damaging at ecologically sensitive destinations, such as small islands or mountain areas. In one Nepalese mountain village, an estimated hectare of virgin rhododendron forest is cut down each year for fuelwood to support the country’s booming trekking industry, causing the erosion of some 30-75 tons of soil annually. In many national parks, plastic water bottles and other forms of garbage are an increasingly common sight.

The irony is that the environmental damage caused by tourism can ultimately hurt the tourism industry – destroying the very reefs, beaches, forests, and other attractions that lure visitors in the first place. If the damage is significant enough, a destination may begin to lose visitors, as has already happened at many popular sites in the industrial world. Meanwhile, environmental deterioration continues to impede efforts to boost tourism to many cities in the developing world: Cairo’s urban sprawl, for instance, often alienates visitors, as does the growing gridlock and pollution in places like Bangkok and Beijing.

“In many national parks, plastic water bottles and other forms of garbage are an increasingly common sight”



Toward a sustainable tourism industry

What, then, can be done to lighten tourism's impact on local communities, cultures, and environments? In large part, hope for the future lies in the development of a more sustainable tourism industry. The World Tourism Organisation defines sustainable tourism as activity that leads to "the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems."

Making tourism more sustainable requires careful planning at all levels and the involvement of all stakeholders, including the local communities that will be directly affected by tourism's presence. At the international level, three main groups – the tourism industry, governments, and non-governmental players – can play a critical role in the transition to sustainable tourism. Working together, these groups must balance the ultimate goal of satisfying tourist demand with key environmental and social objectives, such as reducing resource consumption, eliminating poverty, and preserving cultural and biological diversity.

The role of industry

Long-term sustainability will require deep changes in the way the tourism industry operates.

Already, many hotels, tour operators, and other businesses are taking important steps to become more environmentally and socially responsible. Arguably, much of this effort is out of self-interest: declines in environmental quality can hit industry pocketbooks directly, whereas evidence is accumulating that adopting more sensitive practices and helping to make destinations more attractive can lower costs and boost profits over the long term. Priorities for action include:

- Restructure management and operations along environmental lines, including reducing consumption of water, energy, and other resources and improving management, handling, and disposal of waste.

- Accelerate the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, practices, and management tools to the developing world, including desalination plants and other water-saving systems, renewable energy technologies, and ecologically sound chemical management practices.
- Embrace voluntary "codes of conduct" to regulate the environmental and social impacts of staff and clients, and ensure that compliance with these codes is adequately monitored.
- Adopt and participate in voluntary certification schemes that grant a seal of approval to companies or destinations that demonstrate environmentally or socially sound practice.

The role of governments

Governments will also need to play a more active role in supporting the growth of sustainable tourism, in part to keep the industry in check. Regulatory and policy frameworks can be altered to support key environmental and social goals, without stifling incentives for investment. Priorities for action include:

- Encourage tourism planning authorities at the national, regional, and local levels to incorporate key social and environmental goals.
- Integrate the development of sustainable tourism projects and facilities into overall land-use plans.
- Develop regulations and policies that support smaller-scale tourism initiatives that are actively planned and managed by local communities, such as family-run lodges or informal craft cooperatives. For example, governments can boost local land and resource ownership and market access by offering incentives like tax breaks, special interest rates, or micro-enterprise loans, providing low-cost licensing, or offering training in languages, small business development, and marketing.
- Impose tourist quotas or encourage the use of taxes, entry fees, and other economic instruments that reflect the environmental and social costs of tourism services.

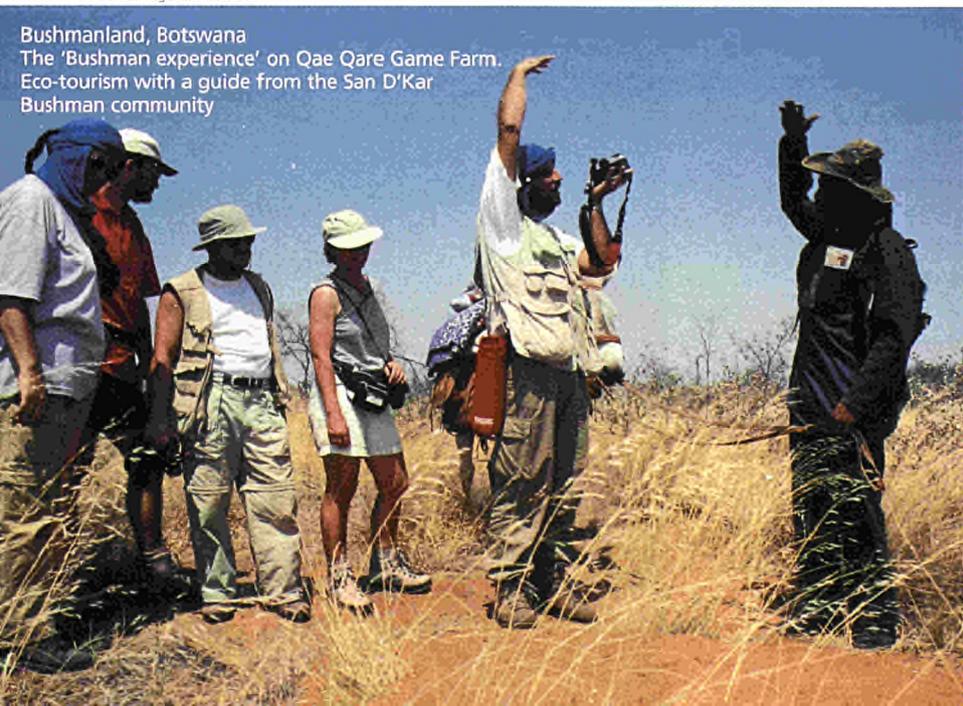
The role of non-governmental actors

Non-governmental players – such as citizen groups and grassroots activists – have played an important role in generating much of the pressure for more sustainable tourism. International institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations have also stepped up their support for sustainable tourism. Priorities for action include:

- Discourage unsustainable and inappropriate tourism developments, including through the use of information campaigns and tourist training.
- Encourage tourists to engage in environmentally and culturally sensitive behaviour, including supporting businesses that are locally run and staffed, that seek to minimise their environmental and cultural impacts, or that give to local community or conservation efforts. ■

©Paul Weinberg/Panos Pictures

Bushmanland, Botswana
The 'Bushman experience' on Qae Qare Game Farm.
Eco-tourism with a guide from the San D'Kar
Bushman community



* Worldwatch Institute

Global rights for people

Global rules for big business

A global framework for binding corporate accountability must be agreed at the Johannesburg Earth Summit, says Craig Bennett* of the environmental organisation Friends of the Earth.

Over the last century, there has been a massive increase in corporate power. For instance;

- 500 companies now control almost two-thirds of world trade¹;
- over half the top 100 economies in the world are now multinational corporations²;
- the five largest companies together generate annual sales greater than the combined incomes of the 46 poorest countries³.

Over the last century, we have also seen unprecedented degradation of the global environment. For example:

- up to one third of the natural world has been despoliated in the last 30 years⁴;
- half of the world's forests have now been destroyed⁵.
- half of the world's rivers are seriously depleted and polluted⁶.

So, while the corporate world has grown, the natural world has shrunk.

This is strongly related to the legally binding rights that corporations have been given (such as rights to trade, and access to markets), which have not been balanced by legally binding responsibilities (such as protecting the environment, safeguarding vulnerable communities). Nor have they been balanced by legally binding rights for citizens or communities (such as the right to a clean and healthy environment).

Given the power and influence of corporations, it is clear that sustainable development will remain a distant concept as long as it is not embraced by the corporate sector. This will not happen vol-

untarily. The voluntary guidelines and initiatives that do exist are generally weak, unenforced and ignored by the vast majority of companies.

For Friends of the Earth (FOE) the Johannesburg Summit represents a key test: will the world's politicians deliver an international framework to control corporations, or will the corporations control the politicians?

What happened at Rio?

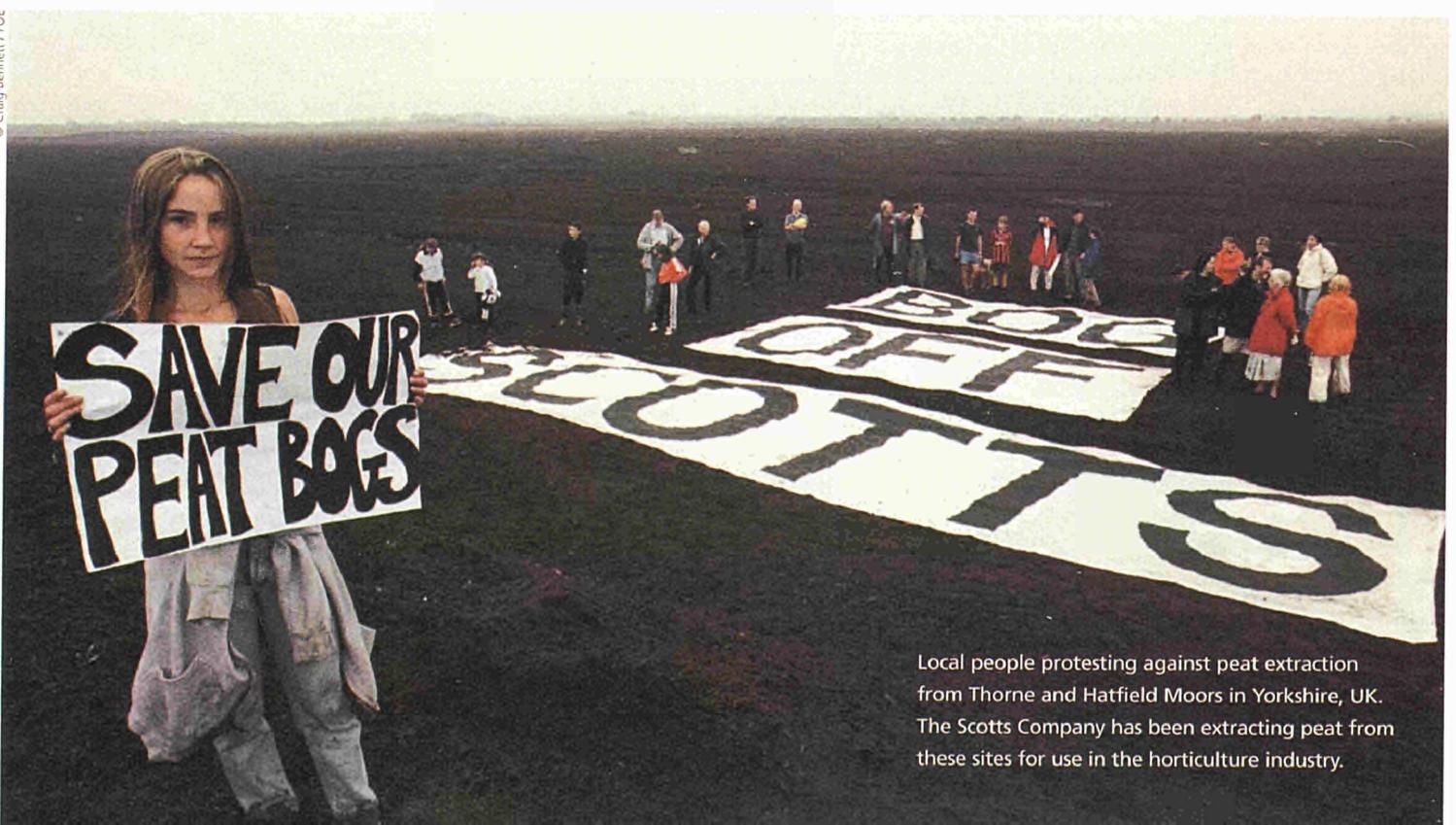
A major failing of the Rio Summit in 1992 was the abandonment of the UN Centre on Trans-national Corporations (TNCs) and the UN Code on TNCs. This regulatory shortcoming has been recognised by a number of international institutional fora and commentators. For example:

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) concluded in its 1999 Human Development Report that: "multinational corporations are too important and too dominant a part of the global economy for voluntary codes to be enough. ... They need to be brought within the framework of global governance, not just the patchwork of national laws, rules and regulations."

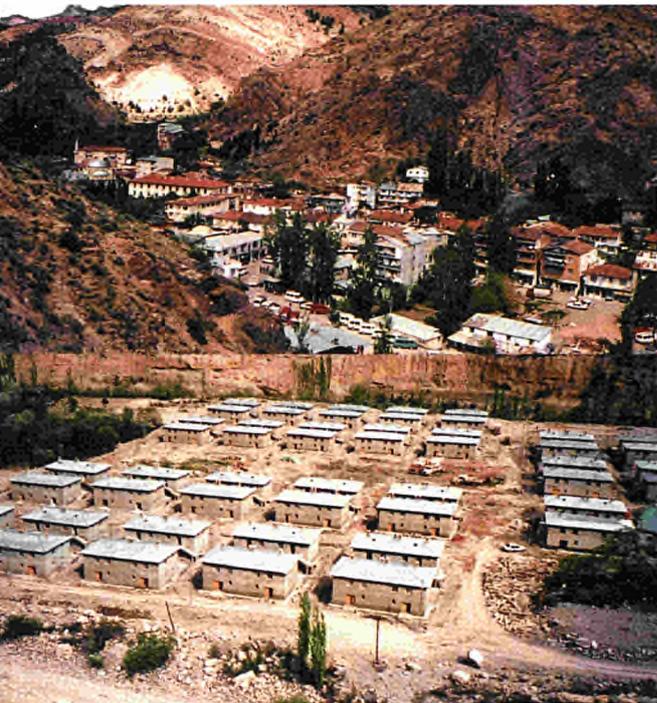
The failure of the voluntary approach

In May, the United Nations Environment (UNEP) published a hard-hitting report on the state of the world's environment. It warns that "the planet is at a crucial cross-roads". Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of UNEP, says "We need concrete actions, we need concrete timetables and we need an iron will from all sides"⁷.

Business associations often like to argue that action is best delivered through voluntary initiatives, a plethora of which have come into existence since Rio.



Local people protesting against peat extraction from Thorne and Hatfield Moors in Yorkshire, UK. The Scotts Company has been extracting peat from these sites for use in the horticulture industry.



© Hannah Griffiths / FOE

Above, the historic and picturesque town of Yusufeli in Turkey would be completely flooded by a major dam project that SPIE, a French based construction company, is hoping to build. Below, citizens displaced from Yusufeli will be "compensated" by being moved into a new resettlement town similar to this one under construction in northeast Turkey. Campaigners claim there is insufficient budget to properly re-house and compensate people.

Also in May, UNEP published another report which concluded that "there is a growing gap between the efforts of business and industry to reduce their impact on the environment and the worsening state of the planet". This "is due to the fact that in most industry sectors, only a small number of companies are actively striving for sustainability". At the report launch, Mr Toepfer noted that "the majority of companies are still doing business as usual"⁸.

In other words: the voluntary approach of business to sustainable development is failing to deliver.

In October 2000, in a keynote address to the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Prime Minister Tony Blair told business leaders: "I am issuing a challenge, today, to all of the top 350 companies to be publishing annual environmental reports by the end of 2001"⁹. More than three-quarters of the top British businesses ignored Blair's "challenge". UK Government figures indicate that only 79 of the top 350 companies (23 per cent) produced substantive reports on their environmental performance by the deadline, and only 24 (seven per cent) of the other companies in the top 350 had indicated their intention to do so. Ten per cent of the remaining top 350 companies mentioned the environment in their annual reports, but in many cases it was given only a few short paragraphs¹⁰.

FOE's proposal for a corporate accountability convention

FOE believes that corporations could represent a creative, economic force to help deliver sustainable development. But this

can only be done through a new legally binding international framework.

We have put together detailed proposals for a framework which should apply to all publicly traded companies. It would:

- place duties on companies and directors, such as a duty to take social and environment matters into their decision-making, to ensure effective prior consultation with affected communities, and to report fully on social and environmental impacts.
- guarantee rights for citizens and communities, such as the right to a clean and healthy environment, and the right of redress (eg compensation) when corporations cause social and environmental damage.
- establish high standards of social, environmental, labour and human rights behaviour by corporations.

The convention would also establish sanctions when corporations do not come up to scratch. These might include fines, withholding access for such companies to public subsidies, guarantees or loans, and in extreme cases, suspending national stock exchange listings and withdrawing limited liability status.

Full details of our proposal are available at: www.foei.org/publications/corporates/accountability.html

The business case for corporate accountability

Most large companies claim to be striving to reduce their environmental impact. Those that are sincere about sustainability have everything to gain from our proposal. They will surely welcome action against those competitors who are not concerned about their social and environmental impacts. In our experience, there are many corporations engaging in "greenwash" (PR exercises giving the impression of a greener company but with little real change to corporate activities). The political failure to force these corporations to improve their operations effectively rewards bad corporate behaviour and penalises good corporate behaviour.

Time for action at the Johannesburg Earth Summit

Friends of the Earth, along with many other NGOs, is worried that Johannesburg will only produce a list of voluntary initiatives that fail to bind countries or corporations into concrete action.

It is crucial that agreement is reached at WSSD to balance the power and influence of large corporations with a framework that will oblige big business to act in the interests of sustainable development.

If not, it will be clear that is the actions of governments that are now being regulated by the corporations.

What hope then for sustainable development? ■

* Corporates Campaigner for Friends of the Earth (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

1. UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development World Investment Report 1995)
 2. S. Anderson, J. Cavanagh and Thea Lee. "Field Guide to the Global Economy". The New Press: New York.
 3. *ibid.*
 4. WWF "The Living Planet Index" 2000
 5. World Resources Institute - www.wri.org
 6. "The State of the Environment: Past, Present, Future?", UNEP 2002. See www.unep.org
 7. "The State of the Environment: Past, Present, Future?", UNEP 2002.
 8. "Industry and Environment - Achievements, Unfinished Business and Future Challenges" - published by UNEP 15th May 2002. For more information, see www.unep.org
 9. "Richer and Greener" - Speech by The Prime Minister, to CBI/Green Alliance Conference on the Environment, Tuesday 24th October, 2000.
 10. UK House of Lords written answers, 4th December 2001. Col. WA132.

Contacts: In London: Craig Bennett, Tel: 020 7566 1667 Email: craigb@foe.co.uk

South Africa's water supply and sanitation programme

South Africa is a land of contradictions and extremes. Nowhere is this clearer than in the distribution of basic services. In a country with nuclear power, cell phones and vast water transfer schemes, more than 12 million people did not have access to an adequate supply of drinking water and nearly 21 million lacked basic sanitation in 1994. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has said that water and sanitation should be one of the five specific areas where results are both essential and achievable at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Dr Charles Reeve*

In 1994 the South African government's white paper on water supply and sanitation laid the groundwork for its subsequent work in this field. Since then the number of people without access to the most fundamental of human rights – safe, drinkable water – has halved to seven million. So South Africa has already met the millennium water supply target set by the first meeting of heads of state at the United Nations in 2000. President Thabo Mbeki was among those who made a commitment to halving the number of people without safe water by 2015. South Africa is therefore 13 years ahead of target.

The focus of South Africa's water supply and sanitation programme has been meeting the water security needs of the poor. The country has one of the most advanced constitutions in the world in

terms of the protection of human rights and the promotion of human dignity. It provides explicitly for "access to sufficient food and water" as a social right. In terms of water supply, a policy of "free basic water" aims to give practical fulfilment to this right. The policy recognises the necessity of meeting basic water and sanitation needs if poverty is to be eradicated.

Sustainability through local partnerships

The provision of a safe, sustainable water supply is already reducing the vulnerability of the poor to disasters and improving their capacity to generate sustainable livelihoods. The programme aims to ensure that the benefits of the systems delivered reach those most in need. Identifying the areas of greatest need is achieved through a process of consultation with local communities and local government. Given the important role that women play in rural water supply, there is also strong focus on gender equality. This is reflected in the fact that nearly 50 per cent of the jobs generated by South Africa's programme have gone to women.

Sustainability is a pillar of the South African water supply and sanitation programme, and the key to sustainability is decentralisation. Strong, effective local government will ensure that clean water continues to flow and that, in the long run, sanitation systems and education lead to health and hygiene. The programme therefore incorporates elements of local government capacity building in many areas where local government structures and administration are currently weak.

The department of water affairs and forestry (DWAF) cannot tackle alone the mammoth tasks associated with sustainable water supply



Given the important role that women play in rural water supply, there is also strong focus on gender equality. Nearly 50 per cent of the jobs generated by South Africa's water supply and sanitation programme have gone to women.

and sanitation. This is why partnerships have formed such an important part of its programme. The department actively engages with NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs), the private sector, other national departments and different levels of government, in order to plan and deliver water and sanitation systems. So programmes such as "Build, operate, train and transfer" have provided opportunities for the skills and capacities of the public, private and civil society sectors to be brought together with a unified purpose: to deliver sustainable services.

Support from the European Union

The EU has supported the South African government in addressing the water services backlog. This support has been provided through both non-governmental organisations and the government itself.

With EU funds the "rural services development network" (RSDN) of non-governmental organisations has implemented a total of 65 water and 37 sanitation projects serving 188,000 and 65,000 people respectively. The water projects were geared to meet a standard of 25 litres per head per day within 250 metres of a homestead. They were constructed using labour-intensive methods, with attention given to the training of construction workers.

The sanitation projects involve building a ventilated pit latrine and include a significant amount of health and hygiene education. The programme contributed to national policies by producing a manual on institutional and social development for the department of water affairs and forestry. The RSDN and its affiliates were also involved in lobbying for free basic water – which became government policy in 2000.

The "sector support programme for community water supply and sanitation in the Limpopo Province", another governmental programme, has extended water supply to 720,000 people, with bulk infrastructure touching a further 1.4 million people. It has provided sanitation infrastructure to 10,000 households and reached more than half a million people with health and hygiene education. It has trained 200 DWAF staff to operate schemes, improved environmental management processes and established a monitoring and evalua-

tion unit and an information management unit. The NGO "rural water supply programme", implemented by the Mvula Trust, has completed a total of 47 infrastructure, training and pilot projects. Nearly 1.5 million people have benefited from them.

Working towards better health and hygiene

The water services sector support programme (Masibambane), which started in April last year, is a three-year multifaceted support programme to the government of South Africa in the water and sanitation services sector. Its objective is to provide basic water supply and sanitation services through a variety of activities. These include supporting strategic policy development, providing water and sanitation services to selected poor rural communities in three provinces (Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape) and giving institutional support to public sector institutions at various levels.

The main results are expected to be:

- a reviewed and updated policy and legislation for the water and sanitation services sector in South Africa;
- a water and sanitation services sector oriented towards the consumer;
- a sustainable water infrastructure for some 2.4 million people in Limpopo Province, KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape;
- the inclusion of health and hygiene education in all infrastructure projects;
- improvement of the technical, managerial and administrative capacity of key players; and
- stronger integrated planning and coordinated management within the sector.

The programme involves a variety of government departments at all levels, together with the private sector and NGOs. It is co-financed by the South African Government, the EU and the bilateral cooperation programmes of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Ireland and France. The total costs are in excess of 3,000 million rand (€301 million). The EU contribution will be a grant amounting to €75 million in the form of a direct contribution to the South African government budget. ■

* Project Officer, Water and Sanitation Delegation of the EU in South Africa

The governmental "water development programme in the Eastern Cape" has implemented the following activities:

- Water systems have been designed and constructed to improve the health and hygiene conditions of some 192,500 people in 166 villages.
- Health and hygiene awareness campaigns were successfully conducted at community level, from which communities developed sanitation action plans that will ultimately benefit approximately 30,000 households through household self-help schemes.
- The department of water affairs and forestry regional office was reorganised to integrate former homeland water supply institutions into the department.
- The Amatola Water Board was established in 1998 and took over operational responsibility for schemes formerly operated by the department.
- New "social consultants", who carry out institutional and social development at community level, were trained and provided with tools and manuals.
- A unit to monitor and evaluate the water supply and sanitation projects was funded by the department.
- A "geographical information system" unit was established to obtain, document and make available for use by the department all existing water services databases.
- "Environmental impact assessment" guidelines were developed and distributed to ensure that environment regulations were met and environmental considerations taken into account in the development of all projects.

Arts and culture: Africa rediscovers the cartoon strip

Turning the humble cartoon strip into an instrument of development, whilst giving the cartoonist a chance to make a living – that is the aim of BÉDAFRIKA, a cartoon network in central Africa, supported by the European Union.

Moussa Sawadogo

“The cartoon strip tells the story of society in pictures,” says Barly Baruti, head of BÉDAFRIKA. His network wants the cartoon strip to become “a vehicle for development” in Africa. Indeed, Africa has a strong oral tradition and cartoon art could act as a link between the spoken and the written word, between tradition and modernity. Its visual, aesthetic and playful nature means that it could be used to reach those who cannot read – for instance, in awareness-raising campaigns for diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria or for promoting hygiene. In Africa, where over half the population is illiterate, this means that cartoon art is not only an effective means of conveying messages to a vast population, but also a particularly valuable tool for reconnecting the continent and its people with their traditions.

Although the cartoon strip as we know it today originated in Europe, it appears that another form of comic art also existed in traditional Africa. It is a part of African custom, says Barly Baruti, pointing out that traditionally, African hunters would carve their exploits onto the walls of their dwellings, with depictions of the animals they killed. Royal palaces and sacred places were also decorated with figures and drawings, all of which told their own stories.

Making a career from art

Today, however, the African artists who have chosen cartoon art as a profession are faced with many obstacles, due to the lack of adequate training, publishing and distribution. The situation in Cameroon is a fairly good example of the difficulties encountered by this art form as it tries to establish itself in Africa. According to the Cameroon Comic Artists' Movement, “the primary

hurdle is the lack of training for artists, most of whom have taken refuge in drawing and cartoon art after abandoning school. Those who remain in education face the objections

of their parents or, in other cases, draw to amuse themselves, as a distraction and a way of partaking in a cultural activity. Very few see comic art as a full-time job.”*

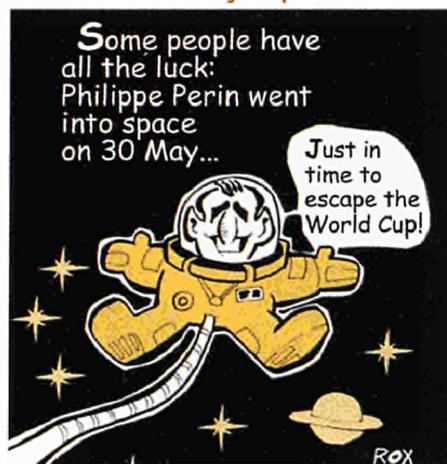
Despite this, in Africa cartoon art is blossoming. Famous cartoon strip characters such as Tintin, Lucky Luke, Spirou, Mickey Mouse and Superman can be seen everywhere. But these are imported products. BÉDAFRIKA wants to change this and make Africa a “producer” of comic art, not merely a consumer. In January 2002, at a seminar in Douala, Cameroon, the members of the network agreed that it was necessary “not to forget the authenticity of African production”. For them, this authenticity is the platform for African cartoon art.

The network has also decided to use new technology, especially the Internet, to achieve wide distribution while still promoting local publishing: hence the need to work with local publishers and distributors. In the long term, they hope to make cartoon art a profession in Africa, so that it becomes a trade in itself, creating employment and allowing artists to make a living through their art.

BÉDAFRIKA – cartoon network

BÉDAFRIKA was set up in 2001. The headquarters of this African cartoon art network is in Libreville, and its members include many artists, scriptwriters and graphic designers from central Africa, including Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. According to Barly Baruti its aim is

How to escape the World Cup? 1. Get as far away as possible

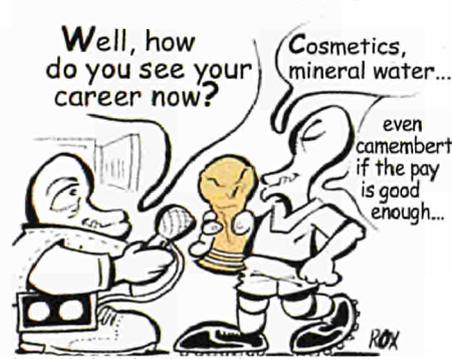


2. Imagine that Senegal has won and it's all over...

World Cup 2002, El Hadj Diouf's analysis



3. Shut yourself away and wait for it to be over



Source: Marabout <http://www.marabout.net>

to “spark a movement to turn cartoon art into a profession” for the benefit of artists, scriptwriters and graphic designers. The network is focusing on five major areas of action; identifying and raising awareness among African artists, improving their training, organising production and stimulating demand. The network is planning, in the near future, to launch a publication of African cartoon art, urban cartoon art workshops and an African cartoon art festival. It is also aiming at a regional centre of African cartoon art in Libreville, Gabon.

EU support

The cause of cartoon art has been taken up by the European Union, which has agreed to support it as part of a wide-ranging programme called “Proculture”. Financed under the European Development Fund (EDF), Proculture is a regional cultural programme covering 2001-2003. Its main objective is to aid regional integration in culture in



central Africa (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon). It concerns network projects that cover several African countries, such as the cartoon art project.

With a provisional budget of €1.98 million Proculture is aiming for five main achievements, ranging from developing the regional aspects of culture in central Africa to initiating a lever for financing culture.

This means that greater considera-

tion has to be given to the economic aspects of cultural activities and, equally, better conservation of existing cultural heritage and a better understanding of the links between sociocultural issues and social development.

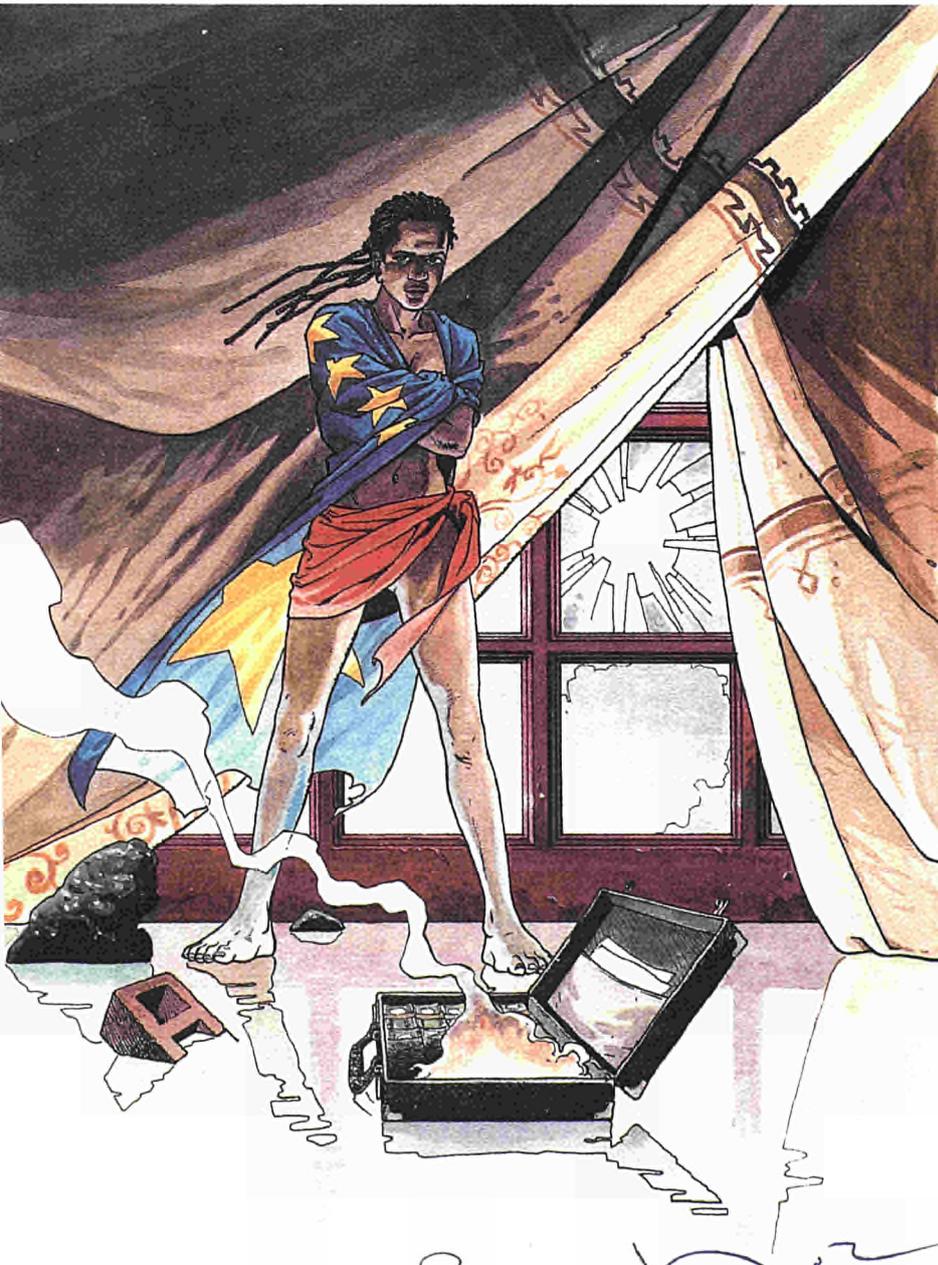
The idea of having a partner framework devoted to cartoon art goes back a few years. In October 1998 the first *Journées africaines de la Bande dessinée* (African Festival of Cartoon Art), took place in Libreville, Gabon, jointly organised by the Libreville French Cultural Centre, the EU regional programme, Bantu, and the Gabonese cartoon art

association, BD Boom. During the festival participants discussed how to encourage the production and spread of cartoon art in Africa and the role that this art could play in development.

The second staging of this festival was in November 1999, again in Libreville, and further discussion took place. The organisers would like it to become a world festival along the lines of MASA (Market for African Performing Arts in Abidjan) and FESPACO (Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou). BÉDAFRIKA could play a part in realising this dream: its leader certainly has the necessary professional abilities.

Congolese Barly Baruti was born into a family of painters in Kisangani (Democratic Republic of Congo) in 1959. From a young age he devoted himself to artistic activities like cartoon strips, painting and music. In 1986 Bob de Moor accepted him at Studios Hergé in Belgium, welcoming him into the *grande famille* of Franco-Belgian cartoon art. Later on, this experience was further enriched when he met scriptwriter Franck Giroud in Dakar. Since 1980 Barly Baruti has hosted several graphic art workshops and training courses both in Africa and abroad, and has produced several comic strips which have sold in many European countries. Since Proculture is planned for an initial three-year phase, continuation of financing will undoubtedly depend on what is achieved. Barly Baruti has three years to make cartoon art a reality in Africa. ■

* Report from the Douala comic art seminar (Cameroon), 17-19 January 2002





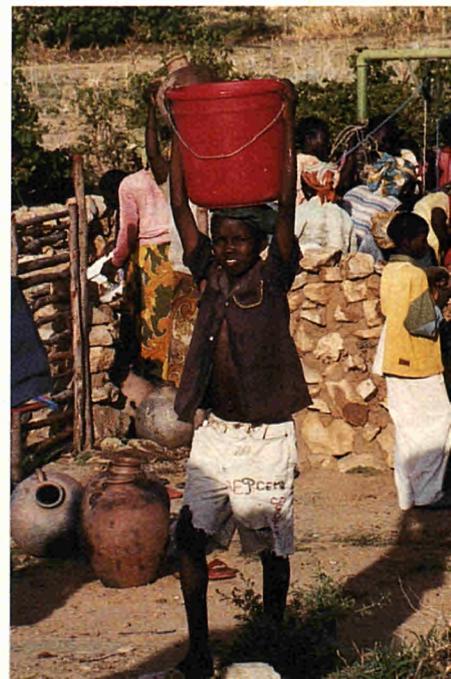
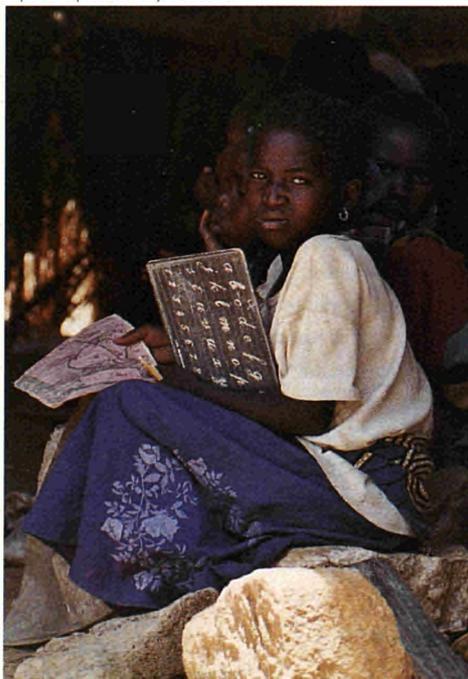
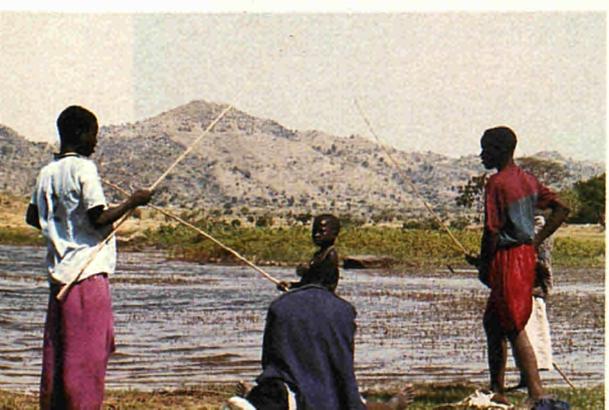
Cameroon



Dense, humid forest, semi-deserted savannas, plains bordering the Atlantic, and all capped by a mountain chain whose summit rises to more than 4,000 metres: it is no surprise that Cameroon is known as "Africa in miniature". The country occupies a central position in the sub-region, bordered to the east by the Central African Republic, to the west by Nigeria, to the south by the Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, and to the south-west by the Atlantic ocean. The country enjoys an almost unique degree of stability, and contains on its territory all the natural resources which are dispersed throughout the rest of the continent. This horn of plenty is not everlasting, as the threat to Cameroon's forests and the gradual exhaustion of its oilfields demonstrates. Since 1996 the country has been suffering from a severe economic crisis. It has had to undergo an IMF-imposed structural adjustment, and in 1994 took the full brunt of the CFA franc devaluation. Street protests forced the country to undertake democratic reforms.

Today although growth is resuming in Cameroon, 50 per cent of its population is still below the poverty line. The country, where 200 ethnic groups co-exist peacefully, has just experienced its third set of multiparty elections. This marks a further step in a democratisation process which is gradually taking hold, since it was launched 10 years ago.

Report and photos : François Lefebvre





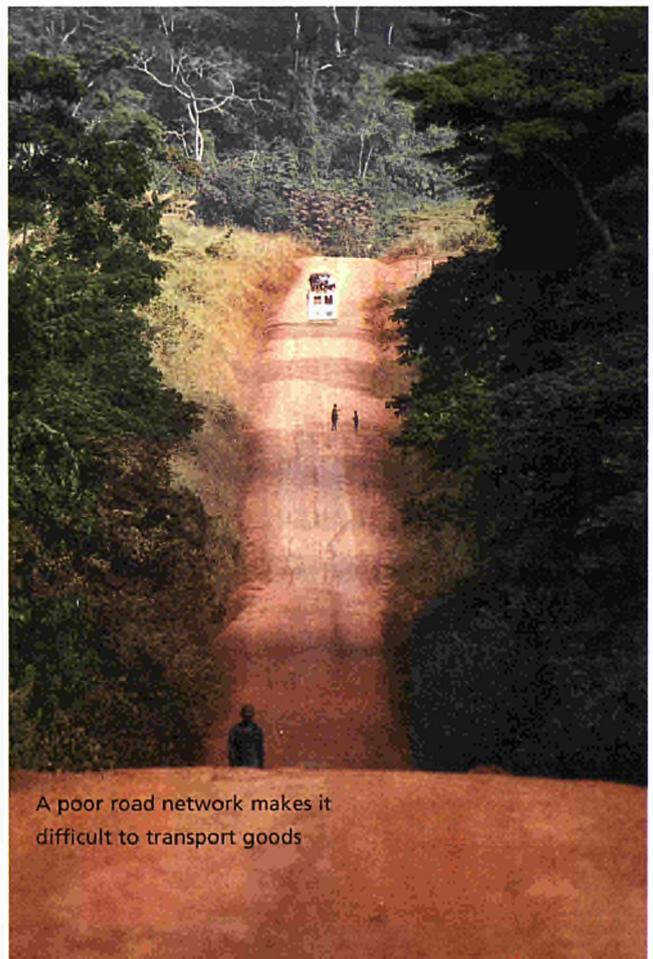
Cameroon: the bright side of the moon?

With its 475,000 square kilometres crammed with natural wealth, skilled human resources, as well as economic growth and a level of stability that is unusual in the sub-region, Cameroon "Africa in miniature", holds all the cards to guarantee its development. Almost all, that is. The country is slowly emerging from the economic crisis of the 1980s and is at a crossroads in the democratisation process. Cameroon is placed in 125th position out of 162 countries classified in the UNDP's 2001 Human Development Index. Half of its population lives below the poverty line. Major reforms are being implemented – the success or failure of these will be decisive in whether Cameroon looks at the bright side or the dark side of the moon.

From independence until the first half of the 1970s, Cameroon enjoyed regular growth, based on the development of the principal economic sectors and on the maintenance of major internal and external balances. However, the late 1970s saw a break in this almost constant progress: oil production was fuelling the national economy and growth accelerated; the country benefited from large trade surpluses thanks to exports of petroleum products and agricultural produce. Nonetheless, debt increased and only the inward flow of foreign currency offset increasing public expenditure. Despite this, the deficit grew.

Crisis

In 1986, the machinery broke down, and Cameroon experienced the full impact of the oil crisis and the collapse of the price per barrel. Between 1985 and 1993, GDP fell by 30 per cent, and public spending was no longer covered by foreign-currency income. The crisis prevented the State from redistributing resources, directly affecting the middle classes who were threatened by the closure of the public enterprises. At the same time, farmers saw the collapse of cash-crop prices. Forced to make policy adjustments, the State could no longer assume the role of principal employer/protector, and the split between the government and the people was consolidated. Added to this was the accumulation of a sizeable foreign debt, the depreciation of the



A poor road network makes it difficult to transport goods

CFA franc, the failure of autonomous adjustment measures and the corruption of the democratic process. All the ingredients for popular discontent were there. Strike upon strike took place in public undertakings, in academia, amongst taxi drivers and street traders. This was the boost that the democratisation process and economic recovery needed. Cameroon's growth progressively resumed, and was estimated at 5.4 per cent in 2001/2002. In 1999/2000, the trade balance was in surplus and the inflation rate below two per cent. According to projections, the agricultural and industrial sectors should continue to experience growth.

Assets

Cameroon is at the crossroads of the sub-region and is the principal point of access to the sea for Chad and the Central African Republic. In addition to its strategic geographical location, the existence of a class of dynamic entrepreneurs and very high skills level, Cameroon's economy has significant agricultural (bananas, cocoa, coffee, cotton, fresh produce, etc.), forestry and petroleum resources. The agricultural sector, on which Cameroon relies, employs the majority of the country's working population and still represents 40 per cent of export income. However, production is now becoming geared increasingly towards fresh produce at the expense of cash crops, which are suffering from the fall in world prices, combined with a poor road network which makes it difficult to transport goods, problems in supplies of inputs and a lack of quality control, training and credits for small producers.

Exploitation of Cameroon's forests is threatening sustainable development in the country. Almost 80 per cent of its tropical forest is now exploited (much of it on the margins of legality), and forecasts indicate that, within ten years, the forests will have been destroyed if forestry methods are not modified. Despite a forestry policy implemented in 1994 and reviewed in 1999, the resource is still at the mercy of the logging companies, due to a lack of monitoring and control, a genuine desire to comply with the law and a lack of human and financial resources.

The oil industry, the driving force of the economy prior to the crisis in the mid-1980s, is inexorably turning in upon itself, and this trend will be reversed only by the discovery of further deposits. However, the construction of the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline provides a great deal of work for the local labour force and the construction sector. The tertiary sector is also developing, promoting new investment – private and public – and an increase in the purchasing power of households, although at too slow a rate in relation to its potential. Such is the case, for example, of the transport sector, where maintenance policy and network protection are lacking. Nonetheless, this sector accounts for six per cent of GDP and the road “sub-sector” represents over 60 per cent of the volume of transport activity in Cameroon. With the support of several donors and the setting-up of a road fund to pay for recurring costs, the road network is being expanded and its management taken in hand.

Currently, increased private investment is supporting growth, but any such investment remains closely linked to the national environment and to improved infrastructure and basic services. Better tax coverage and an increase in domestic demand also looks set to provide further fuel for



Above: forestry resources are one of Cameroon's principle resources, but the forests are threatened by over-exploitation
Below: more than 50 per cent of the population lives below the poverty threshold

Cameroon's development. According to IMF projections, private consumption is likely to account for 4.5 actual growth points out of the estimated 4.9 for the year 2002/03, thereby supporting public consumption and investment.

A succession of reforms

Since July 1997, when a triennial reinforced structural adjustment facility was signed with the IMF, Cameroon has been implementing an adjustment policy. A new growth and poverty reduction facility signed with the IMF in December 2000, covering a period of three years, and a third structural adjustment credit from the World Bank should enable support for growth and structural reforms, aimed at combating poverty, to continue. The country also benefits from debt alleviation through the HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries) initiative. Debt servicing should thus fall to 12 per cent of State resources by 2008. Finally, liberalisation is continuing, although somewhat more slowly than the IMF would like.

Nevertheless, despite growth and the reforms that are being implemented, the bitter truth remains: half of Cameroon's population lives below the poverty line. The government, benefiting from significant support from donors, recently set up a poverty-reduction strategy and is the first ACP country to have signed up to the National Indicative Programme under the 9th European Development Fund (EDF). Although Cameroon undeniably has the assets required for poverty alleviation, the success of its reforms and initiatives aimed at global, sustainable development largely depends on the level of genuine involvement of civil society and on the country's political ability to curb corruption and promote good governance. ■

A country of paradoxes

Yaoundé, Cameroon's administrative capital: yellow taxis zigzag and jostle for position, a noisy swarm that vibrates to the sound of car horns and omnipresent music. It is afternoon and the bars are full. Conversation is dominated by the shattered dreams of the "indomitable lions" in the World Cup and by the elections. Cameroonians went to the polls in municipal and legislative elections on 30 June, in what was their third wave of multi-party elections. Most observers were satisfied that the double election passed off without trouble, though one party called for the legislative poll to be annulled on the grounds of massive fraud. First indications were favourable to the Democratic Rally of the Cameroon people (RDPC), the party of President Biya (complete results were due by the end of July).

The president's party has benefited from a divided opposition, among other factors, and a strong coalition which recreated the previous north/south alliance on which the former president, Ahmadou Ahidjo, built up the country's stability. Such stability is all the more surprising in this sub-region, given that it was accompanied by an opening-up to democracy, regarded as too timid by some but by others as having taken account of reality in Cameroon. The country set off down this sometimes-bumpy road some ten years ago.

A single-party regime had been installed in the early 1960s in the wake of independence and the reunification of Cameroon's French-speaking and English-speaking parts. But this had to give ground to street demonstrations after the general public had borne the brunt of the economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s. The politics of hunger and vote catching had caused the country to stagnate, while the state had frequently responded with repression to attempts at liberalisation and pluralism. Finally, following pressure both from the people and from donors, elections were announced. Between 1992 and 1997 a series of ballots confirmed the RDPC and President Biya in power (with 92.54 per cent of the vote in 1997).



According to reports by international observers, certain constants emerge from these first two waves of elections: a virtually systematic boycott by the opposition, low voter registration, estimates of population and electoral registration figures, bias in the public media and intimidation of independent newspapers, targeted arrests, electoral fraud¹, and increasing apathy on the part of the people². According to the researcher Dr Mamoudou Gazibo, "the democratic process in Cameroon is terribly fragmented and riven with conflicts between the dominant party in power and an opposition divided by leadership disputes". Furthermore, the absence of a wide-ranging debate and clearly presented opposition policies saps interest in electoral contests.

Yet, President Biya is repeating official calls for a peaceful democracy, and liberalisation has made some headway. In the run-up to the recent poll, electoral law was supplemented by a text on the public financing of parties and campaigns. Furthermore, in response to calls for the creation of an independent electoral commission, a National Election Observatory (ONEL) has been set up. However, that body's powers are limited to "observation" of the organisation and running of elections. Moreover, its members have been appointed by the President and the majori-

ty of them are close to the RDPC. Only Vice-President Diana Acha Mofor, an attorney, human-rights campaigner and founder of the Cameroon branch of the NGO, Transparency International, constitutes any form of opposition.

Redistribution?

The country of origin of the musician, Manu Dibango, and the tennis player, Yannick Noah, rarely occupies the world's headlines. A recent exception was when the German NGO, Transparency International, placed it at the head of the world's most corrupt countries. Although the government's official line is to take offence at this kind of judgement, it nevertheless acknowledges the far-reaching nature of the phenomenon and has implemented measures to combat it. Corrupt practices are not, however, exclusive to the Cameroonian people. Some foreign companies operating in the country seem happy to go along with them.

In parallel with these practices, a system of redistribution of positions of responsibility has been set up, apparently, until recently, defying any attempts at reform. The share-out is based on ethnic origin, with beneficiaries then acting as the link between their group and the authorities. This method allows the entire country to be kept under tight control and provides a balance on which Cameroon's stability is partly founded. Each "placement" generates an upward and downward flow of various forms of reward and subsidy. This pyramid of corruption promotes the downward percolation of wealth, but at the same time distances the broad masses from the upper echelons, as redistribution is neither equal nor equitable.

To combat embezzlement in public life and to boost the country's prestige in the mind of donors and investors, the president has dismissed some office-holders. In addition, an agency for regulating public procurement contracts has been set up, and an ad-hoc committee to combat corrup-

tion. In the wake of this, the majority of ministries are now bristling with anti-corruption units, but the powers and the role of such units are still extremely vague. Although Transparency International and numerous other observers welcome the efforts undertaken to combat the effects of bad management, they still regard them as insufficient.

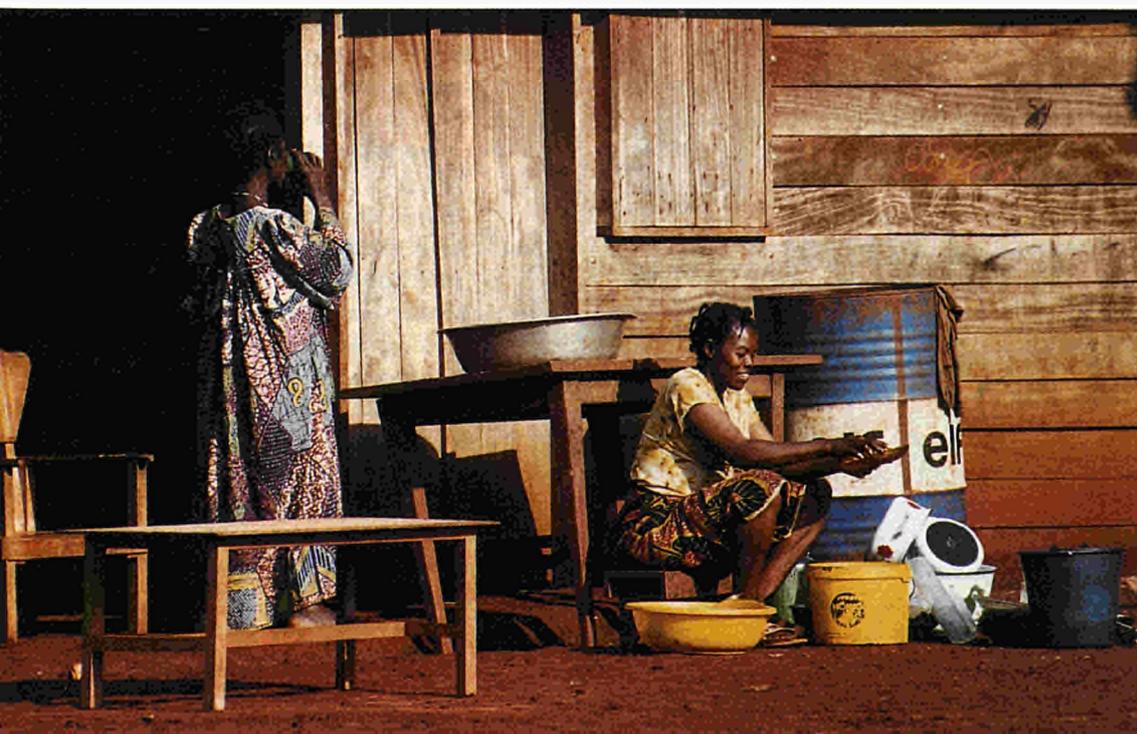
According to the organisation, Governance Alert, one solution would be to speed up administrative decentralisation, particularly in taxation, and to hold fair elections. Decentralisation of the country, instigated in particular contain the English-speaking population's leaning towards independence, is still in effect thwarted by extremely centralised management. Everything is decided in Yaoundé, and such a concentration of powers paralyzes communal services, generates cumulative wage arrears and means that debts go unpaid. Such shortcomings make corruption commonplace. However, according to Governance Alert, financial corruption is congenitally linked to political corruption, and consequently political measures are obviously an essential supplement to administrative decentralisation.

Human rights: laws and facts

For Dr Gazibo, the human-rights situation in Cameroon "wavers between official supplementing of the system of protection and the weakness of protection mechanisms". Admittedly, Cameroon recently ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the United Nations Convention on Torture. A national committee was also given the task of monitoring the implementation of international undertakings in this sphere. Nevertheless, the new rights and freedoms thus enshrined are insufficiently respected or simply ignored. For its part, the Cameroon Human Rights League (LDCH) denounces Cameroon, in a report sent to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, as a state in which human and civil rights are not respected. The country's authorities refute this alle-

gation but, although the process of democratisation is accompanied by a strengthening of protection for human rights, a number of problems persist. Amnesty International, Reporters Without Borders and the LDCH regularly point to the existence of prisoners of conscience, particularly journalists, human rights campaigners, members of opposition parties and trades union representatives.

ACAT (Christian Action for the Abolition of Torture) is concerned about the mentality of impunity that seems to prevail, despite the high number of acts of violence committed by the



very “special” forces of the “commandement opérationnel”. Created in 2000 to curb high levels of crime in Douala, the country’s financial capital, commandement opérationnel unfortunately gained notoriety after the discovery of mass graves and reports of torture, inhumane treatment, extra-judicial executions and collusion between its members and gangs.

Officially, “commandement opérationnel” has been dissolved, and is currently being prosecuted, but, according to the ACAT, “the principal officers have simply ignored the measures taken against it. Although less numerous, abuses continue.” Moreover, the UN special rapporteur on torture, Nigel Rodley, the International Prison Observatory (OIP) and Amnesty International are united in their criticism of prison conditions in Cameroon.

All this does not escape the government, which has set up a human-rights commission as a potentially significant protection mechanism. Yet, although it is a potentially significant protective mechanism, according to Amnesty International it is insufficient and cannot alone ensure respect for fundamental rights without the guarantees inherent in an independent judicial system and disciplined law enforcers.

Links past and present

Cameroon is one of the world’s “grey areas”, and is the stage for a struggle for influence between France and the United States. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, France, Africa’s policeman, had no intention of relinquishing its presence in the region. For its part, the US wanted to take over where the Soviet Union had left off. According to President Bill Clinton, “the defence of liberty and the promotion of democracy throughout the world not only reflect our most heartfelt values but are also vitally important in terms of our national interests”.

Where the United States are concerned, Cameroon represents a major commercial partner: not only does the US

import massive amounts of raw materials from Cameroon, notably oil, but there is also a strong American presence in oil exploitation and in the construction of the Chad/Cameroon pipeline, a project costing US\$3 billion. Furthermore, Cameroonian society is bilingual, giving rise to cultural differences which express themselves in support for different political parties.

Located at the heart of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community and the Equatorial Customs Union, Cameroon is a key link in the zone of French influence in Africa. A number of military agreements link the two countries, and their leaders are on courteous terms and in frequent contact. Furthermore, France is the largest private investor in Cameroon, whose economy is linked to the former colonial power through the franc zone.

“Africa in miniature” is thus sometimes the subject of competition between France and the US. As Dr Martin Dieudonné Ebolo, an international relations specialist, points out, “their involvement in the process of democratisation in Cameroon generates not only the spread of an economically, politically and culturally ‘homogeneous’ model but also the consolidation of their national interests”. Although the political grammar adopted by the two powers is substantially identical, the “conjugation” is different. For example, in the wake of the controversial results of the 1992 elections and the announcement of a state of emergency in the North-West Province, the US congress suspended bilateral aid to Cameroon. France, on the other hand, was the first western country to give official recognition to Paul Biya’s victory.

In response to this rivalry, the Cameroonian government sits on the fence. Bilateral aid and trade relations are essential to the economic survival of a country that continually seeks international legitimacy. Confirmation of this can be seen in the numerous visits of government officials abroad and the recent accession of Cameroon to the Commonwealth.

This is not the least of the paradoxes of a country where stability reigns, where growth is picking up, where natural wealth is abundant, where human resources possess remarkable levels of skills, where ingenuity prevails, where civil society enjoys a high profile, and into which international aid flows,³ but where economic, social and human development are still below their potential, and where the absence of good governance risks squandering a bright future – a future that is within the country’s grasp. ■

1. Including the use of counterfeit polling cards, organised transfer of foreign electors to Cameroon’s constituencies, the setting-up of illegal polling stations, etc.
2. According to estimates, 25 per cent of the population is thought to have taken part in the 1997 presidential elections.
3. Cameroon is the first ACP country to have signed up to the 9th EDF.



Climbing out of poverty

Can Cameroon realise its true potential?

Cameroon has the potential to join the club of the African continent's richest nations. It has gradually pulled itself out of an unprecedented economic crisis and is now enjoying a period of growth (4.8 per cent in 2000). Cameroon is a key player in the sub-region of Central Africa, accounting for 45 per cent of its total GDP. Nevertheless, half its population lives below the poverty line, debt continues to accumulate and regional disparities are becoming more deeply entrenched. We talked about these issues to Martin Okouda, minister for public investment and regional planning, and National Authorising Officer (NAO) of the European Development Fund.

Cameroon's economy was driven by coffee and cocoa until 1977, oil until 1985, and then timber. After the deep crisis of 1980-90, the devaluation of the CFA franc, followed by difficult structural adjustments, the country escaped wholesale bankruptcy and has now seen a return to growth. What is the situation in the region now?

We are a key player in CEMAC (Central African Economic and Monetary Community). We have common borders with Chad, the Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea [of the CEMAC countries]. This hub position gives us a particular responsibility in the sub-region. Integration has already been launched with the Equatorial Customs Union (UDEAC), and this process continues despite a number of constraints that slow down the process. These stem from the relative political instability of the region, the feeble political commitment of CEMAC's member states, the narrowness of the national and regional economic areas and difficulties in the free movement of people, goods and services. But despite these limitations, progress has been made thanks to solid EU involvement in funding major regional communications infrastructure projects. Furthermore, it is expected that all the capitals of the sub-region will be connected by road links by 2007.

How do you see the economic partnership agreements with the EU?

Next September, the CEMAC countries and São Tomé and Príncipe will start to negotiate an economic partnership agreement. The negotiations should give the countries of Central Africa the opportunity to come closer together and become more aware of their interdependence.

Despite a healthy economic recovery, more than 50 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line and nearly 57 per cent of poor households are in rural areas. In addition, as with healthcare, the education sector has suffered from the crisis to the extent that, whereas primary education was almost universal at the end of the 1980s, today the rate of

primary school education is down to 65 per cent, and 13 per cent of all adults are illiterate. How do the people of Cameroon perceive poverty?

For them, poverty means first and foremost not having the material or financial resources to satisfy their basic needs (food, housing, health, etc.). The lack of these essential services in some localities makes not only the individual poor, but also households that would

otherwise be able to afford them. Other aspects of poverty include social problems such as the loss of moral values, lack of social concern, loss of family unity, witchcraft, hoarding material property, and prejudice against certain groups. For certain regions, being land-locked has also increased poverty and it should also be said that the liberalisation of the agricultural sector is felt to be a major cause of poverty. There is a feeling amongst people that liberalisation has not been adequately prepared, and that it should not lead to a total absence of state support for the rural world. Lastly, there is bad governance, which people put down to corruption, to siphoning off public money, to impunity, to milking public services, to the lack of decentralisation and the unequal distribution of the fruits of growth. I should add that the situation can differ considerably from one area to another, from rural areas to urban areas.

In July last year Cameroon and the EU signed a framework strategy document for cooperation over the period 2001-2007. It includes a financial envelope of €230 million and also contains Cameroon's national indicative programme under the 9th European Development Fund. What are your priorities?



Martin Okouda, minister for public investment and regional planning, and National Authorising Officer (NAO)

Half of Cameroon's population lives below the poverty line



Cameroon is the first ACP country to sign a national indicative programme under the 9th EDF. The programme focuses on two main intervention areas: transport and macro-economic support to reduce poverty. With regard to transport, we have pushed ahead with construction of the road from Garoua Boulai [on the border with the Central African Republic] north via Meiganga to Ngaoundéré, in order to provide a connection between two regional roads: Bertoua north to Garoua Boulai and Ngaoundéré via Touboro to Moundou [in southern Chad] as well as the link between the north and south of the country. With regard to macro-economic support, we intend – in order to improve management of public finances – to reform the legal framework for public finances and draft a new law on the financial system of the state; to successfully install a Court of Auditors; to reorganise and enhance control procedures and the internal audit; to reform the Public Procurement Code; to fight corruption; more generally, to implement a national programme of governance, and much more besides. In this respect, specific attention will be paid to forestry management, in order to ensure sustainable exploitation that can profit the state as well as the general population.

In the UNDP's Human Development Index, Cameroon is 125th out of 162 countries. How are you progressing with the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) initiative?

The level reached by the Index makes Cameroon a poor country, but it should be emphasised that the Index situation has been improving since 1990. As regards the HIPC initiative, it should be said that only CFAF 30 billion [€45.7 million] of the first 37 billion [€56.4 million] instalment of a 214 billion [€326.2 million] three-year programme, from October 2000 to October 2003, has been earmarked. There is, then, some delay in implementing the HIPC programme. The government is doing all it can to speed up the release of funds and the results will not

be slow in coming. The problems we have had are due, on the one hand, to disbursements being held up by red tape and, on the other, to the requirement for the Treasury to pre-fund HIPC operations. Discussions have highlighted the need to speed up the process by creating a suspense account at the Treasury to enable it to fund directly the HIPC operations ordered by the various government departments. This suspense account, sourced at first from the Central Bank special account, will be topped up only after a committee has authorised documents confirming correct use of resources. Although there have been some problems, we should be pleased with the current level of the separate account, CFAF 88 billion [€134.1 million], which shows that the method of feeding the account through debt release is working properly.

What are your expectations of NEPAD and, more specifically, of its funding arrangements?

Like the majority of the countries of the continent, Cameroon has great expectations of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The Cameroonian head of state was among the African leaders who attended the February 2002 African Summit held in Paris to relaunch the development of Africa. With regard to funding, it is clear that it cannot be taken from existing cooperation programmes. It must come from additional resources provided by the international community and/or a new phase in world economic relations, to enable African countries to reap the benefit from their exports and the processing of basic commodities. NEPAD funding calls for imagination and generosity in order to set up specific funding machinery or structures. In this respect, the role of the private sector has been stressed in particular. Our countries must therefore provide an attractive environment for private investment. Moreover, in Cameroon, we have recently adopted a new investment code. Other initiatives are in hand, such as the fight against corruption, and changes to the legal system and the legal framework for business. ■

The Dja Reserve

Encircled by a loop of the Dja River, the reserve of the same name covers an area of more than 5,000 square kilometres. But its wildlife is in danger. Gorillas, chimpanzees and elephants are among the animals falling victim to poachers. The whole reserve is in need of protection, but a number of conflicting interests make this a major challenge. These conflicting interests extend beyond the usual quarrel between commercial hunting and conserving species.

Jean Dieudonné Emané steps forward to lead a group into the secondary forest. The line of people shadows the curves of the old pygmy track. In a few seconds they will be out of sight amid the thick vegetation, but suddenly the column halts. A footprint – that of an elephant. “It’s two days old at the most”, says Jean Dieudonné. He pulls out his GPS (satellite navigation system) and records the details of the print on his microcomputer. The Dja Reserve eco-guards and their bearers set off again. The path bends sharply and they find themselves in semi-darkness. Using machetes they cut a path through the dense undergrowth and begin their search for traps.

After a few hours in this immense humidity, they see some rocks from which they will be able to look out over the tree canopy and part of the savannah. Today there are no buffalos, only a few flickering shadows moving from tree to tree: chimpanzees. The eco-guards – a cross between policemen, environmental leaders and tourist guides – watch over the reserve, catalogue the animals and keep track of poachers. They are trained by ECOFAC – part of the EU-funded regional programme for the conservation and rational use of the forestry ecosystems of Central Africa.

The team spends a few days in the forest and then heads back to base camp in Somalomo. At the bottom of a potholed track that has taken a battering from the rain, they see a truck – apparently transporting coffee. Jean Dieudonné decides to take a look at its load. Just a routine check. Under the bags he finds a bucket filled with bushmeat and a dead monkey. A commotion ensues. Then a decision. “These are not really poachers. The bucket belongs to the child, who uses it to go into town to get petrol and soap. The monkey, well, it’s not from a wholly protected species. Considering the quantities, you can see this is subsistence hunting. We’ll do a bit of awareness-raising and leave it at that. But it’s not always like this,” explains Jean Dieudonné.

“Sustainable” destruction

The Dja Reserve is covered by low-lying tropical rainforest and is part of the Cameroon-Congolese forest estate. Created in 1950, it became a UNESCO world heritage site in 1987, and has been properly managed since 1992. It is a haven for more than 1,500 plant species, about 100 mammals and some 320 kinds of bird. But according to estimates by Etienne Niegue, the reserve

conservator, nearly two thousand animals are being killed every month. He adds: “Since game is becoming scarce around their villages, people have to push further into the reserve.”

Commercial hunting has grown exponentially with the arrival of forestry development. A new forest road and campsites have increased demand for bushmeat and made it easier to transport to the towns. There was already considerable pressure on wildlife in the 1980s, but the collective impact of an economic crisis, an impoverished population and population growth has increased this pressure dramatically over the past decade.

While subsistence hunting has only a limited impact on the environment, commercial poaching poses a serious threat to elephants, large monkeys, apes and duikers. These animals are hunted either by professional poachers or by local people armed by outside agents or by local elites “The meat is then smoke-dried, cut up and transported by timber lorry or some other vehicle travelling in or near the reserves,” says the conservator. The chain of responsibility extends from the authorities to shopkeepers, taking in the forest owners, the catering industry and a number of rangers who turn a blind eye.

Cameroon, and in particular the ministry of the environment and forestry, has an imposing array of legislative and institutional weaponry. Unfortunately, this arsenal remains impotent in the face of staff shortages and legal loopholes. The Dja Reserve has barely 60 staff to cover more than 500,000 hectares. The guards, armed only with old First World War rifles, have to deal with a sometimes-hostile local population and also come under pressure from above.

Eco-guards getting ready to camp in the reserve



“Often”, says eco-guard Charles Ndoumou “we come across poachers who show us what they claim is a hunting permit, saying, it’s ‘from higher up’”. Classified information.

The Dja conundrum

The conservation challenge is not just ecological, legal and administrative, but also human. When the reserve was being set up in 1950, many pygmy villages were moved from the centre to the edge of the park. This had a huge impact on their economic system since it is no longer based solely on hunting and gathering. The pygmies now live by agriculture, hiring out their labour and commercial poaching. Nevertheless, these villages still get almost all their protein intake from a forest that they still regard as part of their own territory.

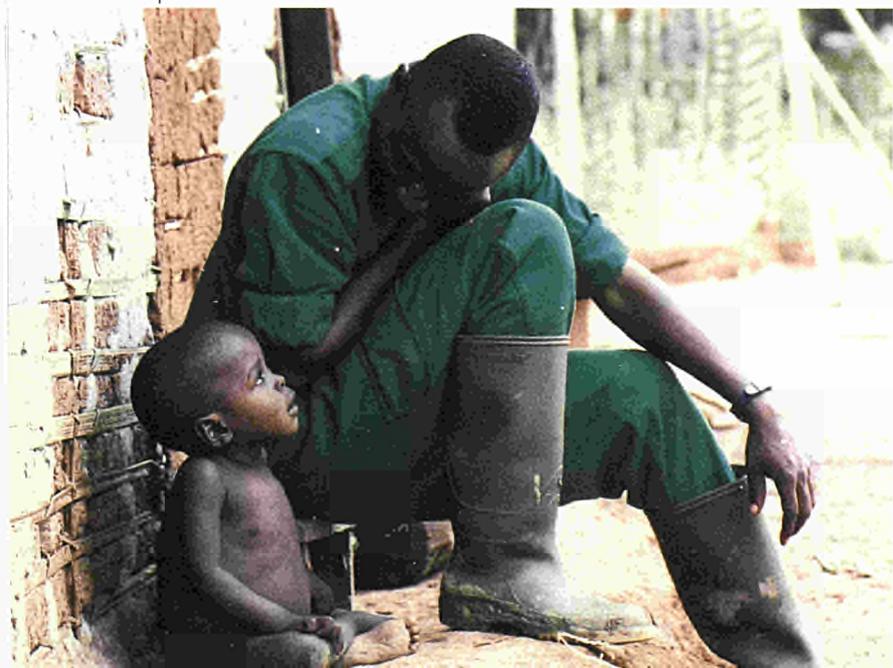
Since they were neither involved nor consulted in planning the reserve, hunting lies at the heart of a legitimacy dispute, compounded by the conflict between biodiversity guardians and forest users. To the local population, an elephant can mean food, income from the sale of the meat and ivory, and a threat to plantations and to the villagers themselves. On the other hand, some ecologists see the animal as a protected species of scientific interest and a factor in promoting eco-tourism, but not as an immediate danger.

New roads and greater access make poaching an increasingly viable option. Protecting the reserve therefore calls for a certain degree of enclosure. This is detrimental to local communities as they are unable to get their products to market or to supply their basic needs. In addition to these conflicting interests, there are disputes between reserve managers and local elites, conflicts of responsibility between the various administrations concerned, and inter-ethnic clashes. Successful conservation therefore calls for regular, effective awareness campaigns, competent administrative staff in adequate numbers, the creation of alternatives to poaching and the involvement of local communities.

Getting the human-wildlife balance right

In an effort to achieve a balance and to encourage alternative sources of income, ECOFAC involves local communities in wildlife conservation and helps them develop their natural environment, in order to help them find alternative sources of income to poaching. The programme has identified and observed a number of associations that could work in partnership. This is tricky, because interest groups do not necessarily

Eco-guard with a pygmy child



Eco-guards enter the forest for a patrol of several days

come together spontaneously. They might be external creations, set up by urban elites looking for additional income. In a situation like this, when confronted with the ecological message, attitudes remain unchanged.

Nevertheless, on the outskirts of the reserves some village farms have branched out into agro-forestry, replanted perennial crops such as coffee and cocoa or have become involved in the sustainable management of subsistence hunting areas. By developing resources and local materials with the support of ECOFAC and other projects, they have been able to re-open some small roads and acquire the infrastructure needed to build up the area (schools, health centres, meeting places and so on). This has been done using labour-intensive techniques.

Despite a permanent human presence on both sides of the river, Dja has a natural potential that justifies its status as a biosphere reserve and world heritage site. Human pressure must, of course, be kept in check, but this can only be done in partnership with local people. The Dja Reserve benefits from the stability of the country and from its wealth. With some upgrading of its infrastructure and a genuine commitment to closing the routes used by poachers, it has the potential to become the jewel in the crown of Cameroon’s eco-tourism. ■

Alternative management for Cameroon's communal forests

Cameroon has some of the most biologically diverse and also most threatened forests in the Congo Basin. In recent years, forestry activities have moved eastwards, to the very margins of the Dja Wildlife Reserve, and it is these areas that are currently suffering the highest rates of exploitation. Since 1994, a new forest law has been in force in Cameroon, which recognises the right of village communities themselves to manage and exploit a part of the forest. As a result, a number of villages have been able to acquire their communal forest¹, sometimes after a veritable obstacle course. Such an experiment is unique, and puts the very concept of a communal forest to the test.

The combined pressures of agriculture and industrial logging are posing an increasing threat to Cameroon's forests. At the present rate, the greater part of forest cover will have disappeared within a decade. Nowadays, felling affects almost 80 per cent of the country's forested land (both protected and non-protected), of which over half is of dubious legality² and without regard for sustainability. The sale of felled wood³, the least monitored of the various exploitation rights, is also the right most frequently granted. Global Forest Watch estimates that, in 1998 and 1999, such a system covered 200,000 of the 350,000 hectares earmarked for logging. Foreign, mostly French, companies have a monopoly over exploitation activities and, according to Global Forest Watch, in 1998 and 1999 held 50 per cent of concessions and controlled other assets indirectly by means of subcontracting.

Cameroon's new progressive forestry legislation was welcomed by the World Bank, as full implementation could lead to reasonable management of the resource. However, corruption and illegal practices account for the majority of the profits, since compliance with the new regulation is not the general rule, the licences granted are often irregular and reports are not followed up by a fine or penalty. One out of five violation reports has been dropped in the wake of interventions by influential figures, according to Global Forest Watch. Nonetheless, the last two years have seen positive developments, although the rate is relatively slow. An additional benefit of the new legislation is that State income has substantially increased.

Kompia makes the most of the new law

Kompia is a small village in the Haut-Nyong district in Eastern Cameroon. Here, the Badjoué community has been implementing a successful experiment in communal-forest management. The Badjoué currently manage their



Often, communal foresters have just rudimentary equipment; in Kompia, there is just one chainsaw

1,600 hectares of forest with assistance from the Communal Forest Project, financed by the EU through the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Nature+. The objective of the project is to assess Cameroon's new forest as it is applied on the ground. Initially, the villagers got permission to gather windfall wood and rough lumber that had been abandoned by logging companies. Now, they themselves are able to fell trees, in accordance with a forest-management plan approved by the Environment and Forests Ministry.

"In the beginning, this forest contained a lot of abandoned timber", explains François David Pevoh, the village leader. "After meetings and discussions with the local population, the project captured people's imagination. In order to bring in the whole community, a common initiative group (CIG) was created, and all families are represented in it. A work team was quickly set up, with someone in charge of equipment to manage stocks of fuel, lubricants and spares for the chainsaw, a tallyman to evaluate the number of planks transported according to distance, a negotiator

responsible for client relations, to take orders and negotiate prices, and a project leader to supervise activities. The sawing team was initially made up of two sawmen recruited outside the community, but it has now been supplemented with three local sawmen trained with the assistance the project receives. The people who transport the product are recruited in the village, with no limit on their number”.

Sold at a good price, the planks produced by the Kompia team quickly find a buyer. Money earned from sales is then distributed in accordance with preestablished percentages: 25 per cent for the sawmen, 50 per cent for the plank transporters, 20 per cent for the community’s coffers and five per cent for forest administration, under the heading of sundry expenses.

According to François David Pevoh, the profits from sales of wood will, in the long term, be channelled towards social works, such as the development of a well. But to achieve this objective, the village is looking for new partners, as the current profits are insufficient. In the meantime, the Badjoué community has opted to enlarge the village store and repair the CIG’s straw hut. “The rest of the money has been put by to relaunch our forestry activities, but not just on an experimental basis. This time we are looking to the long term”, explains François David Pevoh.



Above: Planks are transported manually
Below: Communal forester cutting down a tree

Issues to be ironed out

Despite a few start-up problems, management at Kompia village now appears to have reached cruising speed. Yet this is not always the case elsewhere. Setting up and managing a communal forest generates a breakdown in social cohesion in some villages, for example when certain villagers feel the process has been taken over and monopolized by just one group. Conflict can also arise from the appointment of leaders: families do not always agree on the criteria for selection of the CIG manager: those who are most numerous and/or the most powerful often believe that this post should fall to them as a right.

In addition, the forest zoning plan does not always live up to the expectations of village communities, which sometimes incur hostility from neighbouring populations. Communal forests may not exceed 5,000 hectares in area, too limited for communities with a nomadic lifestyle, such as the pygmies. There may also be conflict between the forest management plan and customary law. Furthermore, the only forest available in the region may also already be classified or belong to a specific community.

Local populations also have to deal with competition from logging companies interested in sales from felling. Frequently, also, the zones sought by local communities have already been allocated to these companies. If that were not enough, these “communal foresters” work with rudimentary, small-scale equipment (there is just one chainsaw in Kompia), and experience great difficulty in exporting their production without any means of transport.

The creation of a communal forest is governed by a series of procedures of reasonably specific duration. Compiling the relevant dossiers generates significant expenses and the high number of people involved makes the task no easier: the Environment and Forest Ministry, various administrative levels, NGOs, project leaders, the CIG, etc. For the time being, the number of communal forests is relatively low, since the State can derive more profit from sales of felled trees. Nonetheless, procedures will have to be decentralised and measures set up to facilitate the creation of communal forests, including a right of first refusal on the part of local communities over forests in the non-permanent forestry field. This type of measure could have the consequence of ending the preferential treatment currently given to those in the business of selling felled trees.

The idea of enabling local communities to manage forest resources has been welcomed by all sides, and a number of national and foreign partners have put a great deal of effort into ensuring that this political will is translated into action. Kompia is proof that satisfactory and non-industrial exploitation of communal forests is possible, and all hope now rests with the communities themselves. Will they be able to take on the role of the NGOs who are currently assisting them and not give in to the inducements of the logging companies that are always lying in wait? ■

An Overview of Logging in Cameroon, Global Forest Watch www.globalforestwatch.org/english/cameroon

1. Under the law, “communal forest” is defined as a forest in the non-permanent forest area, the subject of a management agreement between a village community and the Forestry Authorities. Management of such forests is the responsibility of the village community in question, funded or assisted technically by the Forestry Authorities. The agreement signed therefore confers no property title, but merely a right of enjoyment.
2. Despite a number of improvements in the recent past, corruption is still widespread, promoted by insufficient monitoring. Compliance with the rules is regarded as a competitive disadvantage by logging companies and deprives the State of significant revenue. Amongst the most frequent corrupt practices are illegal felling (outside stipulated areas, without authorisation, of under-size trees, of protected species), false declarations, false inventories, illegal recovery of seized timber and contracts that are fixed when exploitation of an area is allocated.
3. Sales of felled wood: this covers relatively small areas of forest (2,500 hectares max.), where a specific theoretical volume of timber may be felled.



A land that time forgot

Developing the Mandara Mountains region of Northern Cameroon

This region, a barren landscape of craggy peaks, appears to have been forgotten by time and by nearly all except those who live here. Against a desolate background, the Project for Development of the Mandara Mountains Region (PDRM) has been working to give people a better life by supporting the building of basic infrastructures and by involving the beneficiaries as much as possible.

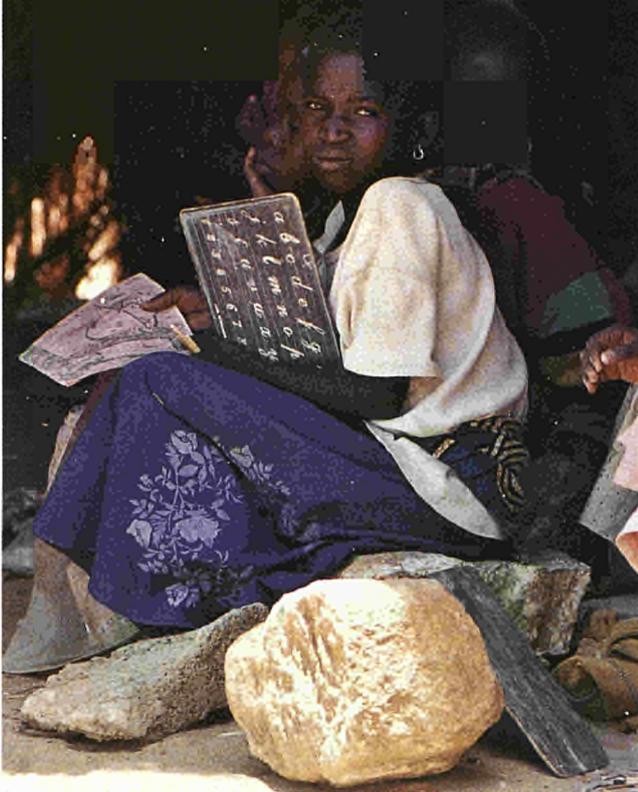
Finding themselves in Mokolo, a stone's throw from the Nigerian border in the very north of the country, few would believe they were in Cameroon. The arid terrain is scorched by the sun and scoured by the wind. The thermometer rarely goes below 20°C and often hovers around 45°C. Mokolo is the gateway to the Mandara Mountains and the lands of the Mafa, Mofu, Mandara, Daba, Podokwo, Kapsiki, Mada, Kanuri, Gisiga and more. These ethnic communities form a patchwork that covers a variety of landscapes and territories over which traditional chiefs like the Lamido still wield great power. Situated in a part of the Sudan-Sahel with a fragile ecology, the Mandara Mountains offer their dense population very little cultivatable land and not much socio-economic infrastructure.

According to the World Bank, the poverty index here is higher than anywhere else in the country. The infant death rate is above the national average and food security is still precarious – the result of unstable agricultural production, which is regularly threatened by drought, with rainy interludes. For its part, the non-agricultural production sector is underdeveloped and rural populations generally have no independent income. In 1999, 70 per cent of the population was living on less than

CFAF 20,000 (€30) per month. It would all be doom and gloom if it were not for a hard-working people who have done more to aid their own development than the state has.

Traditional Mafa dwelling





Money from the PDRM has also made it possible to construct classrooms

Subterranean water, a rare and precious commodity

The odd dilapidated school, often completely in ruins, poor or non-existent roads, a scattering of dispensaries, hostile surroundings, droughts, water shortages... it was a people largely abandoned to their fate who welcomed the creation of the PDRM in 1994. The project, which is run jointly by Cameroon and the EU, has been going since 1996. Already extended twice, it is due to come to an end in 2004. Over the whole period, it has received funding of nearly €13 million from the EU's European Development Fund (EDF) and Stabex fund.

"The PDRM covers 7,660 square kilometres, including the departments of Mayo-Sava and Mayo-Tsanaga and the district of Meri, an area which is home to 830,000 people in total," explains Alphonse-Marie Takougue, head of the project. "At the beginning of the programme, we started off with information

PDRM's achievements

- 420 wells
- 2600 small dams
- 1200 people trained to construct wells and small dams
- 420 management committees set up
- 13 health centres rehabilitated
- 16 classrooms and a nursery school rehabilitated
- 140 classrooms built and equipped
- 60 km of roads repaired
- 35 km of roads opened
- 34 raders
- 510 businessmen trained
- 3,372 voluntary teachers trained
- 512 sites reforested
- 9,100 fruit trees replanted
- 283 nursery workers trained
- 168 potato production groups monitored
- 12 grain mills installed
- 69 grain stores built
- 12 multi-activity centres constructed
- 14 barns set up
- 19,000 people taught to read and write

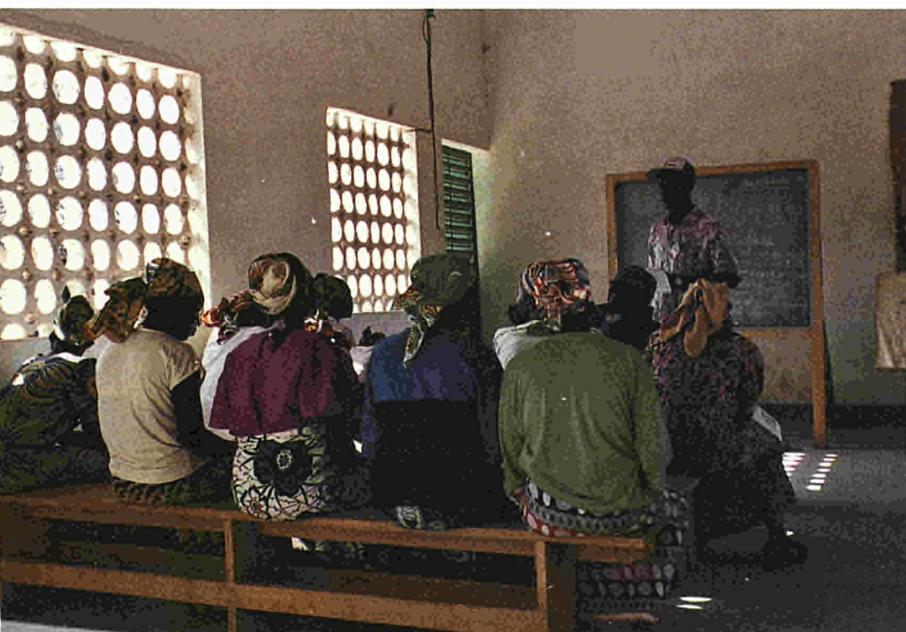
and awareness campaigns aimed at traditional local authorities and then extended these to all village organisations. We discussed with them the project's principles and methods. At the end of these information and awareness meetings we explained the areas that would be affected by the project and the opportunities for receiving our help."

The crux of the PDRM's work is water: searching for it and gaining control over it in a region that does not see a single drop of rain for six months of the year. "The village has too many inhabitants for just one well and we do not have enough money to buy water in," Walva Tchéné tells us. "So we tried to drill another well ourselves, and we heard that the PDRM could help us. We fought for this new well." The new well is not like the others. It is surrounded by a low wall, closed off by a barrier and covered to prevent accidents and so that animals cannot drink from it. The water is drawn only at certain times. It must be prevented from drying up at all costs.

In addition, people must take off their shoes before entering the concrete enclosure – a matter of hygiene. The PDRM is adamant about compliance with these rules and project leaders know that they must be obeyed if this construction is to last. The same goes for the artificial ponds erected for irrigation purposes, the reaches (small dams that slow down the water currents, helping penetration of the water into the soil and the feeding of wells located downstream) and the raders, a kind of submersible pathway or bridge that allows people to ford water courses during times of flood.

Division of labour

Once the communities have identified their primary needs, they must fill out an application form and submit it to the PDRM. Throughout these preparatory stages they are helped by leaders, who provide the link between the villages and the project. The PDRM analyses the application and ensures that the project is feasible. Once it has been selected, a local operator is appointed,



through a tender system, to carry out the work. This operator – the “interface”, to use PDRM terminology – signs a draft agreement with the project and the community. The work of the community does not stop there.

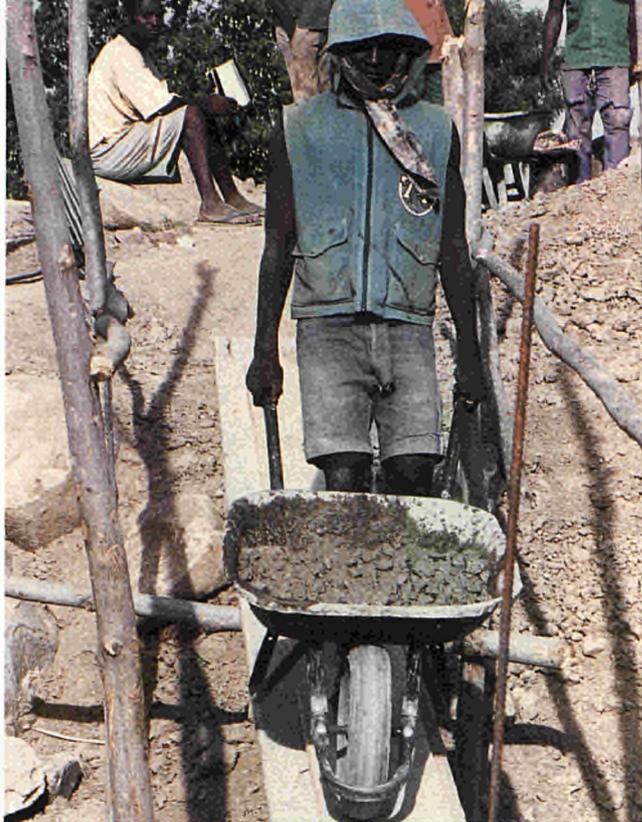
Alphonse-Marie Takougue emphasises: “In the early stages, the community’s involvement centres around identifying the worst problem areas. We cannot tackle everything, so we have to prioritise. Then we sit down together and determine how we are going to solve the problems. The project thus requires the participation of the community as regards what means should be used. This participation may be in the form of manpower, the supply of local materials, or it could be financial.”

This is a point on which the PDRM will not compromise. As Mamtchai Moustéha, head of the Mokolo II School, explains, “It took a long time before our new classrooms project met the PDRM’s requirements. We had not managed to assemble the sand, gravel and rubble needed for the work. It is not easy to motivate people who spend every day fighting for survival, especially as many believe that the state has forgotten about them and that school infrastructures should be dealt with by the government. But now everything is in place, and the work will begin shortly.”

The interfaces who carry out the work are also monitored by the PDRM. “One of the aims of the project is to ensure that good practices are respected, at all levels, and that we can expect the work we do to last,” Alphonse-Marie Takougue says. “We can only do this by regular monitoring. The project has the technical capacity to monitor the work while at the same time training local people how to recreate these achievements after we are gone. Another aim, then, is to strengthen competitiveness between small businesses through the interfaces and to raise the standard of living of the people outside of agricultural activities.”

Construction the PDRM way – independence and local participation

Alongside the construction of wells and classrooms, money from the PDRM has also made it possible to renovate health centres, to open or repair roads, to train businessmen, school-teachers and literacy teachers, nursery staff and rural organisation managers, to reforest the land and plant fruit trees, and to build grain stores, barns and multi-activity centres. All this is done with a close eye on finances and strict, even stern monitoring of activities to ensure the viability of village projects, to avoid



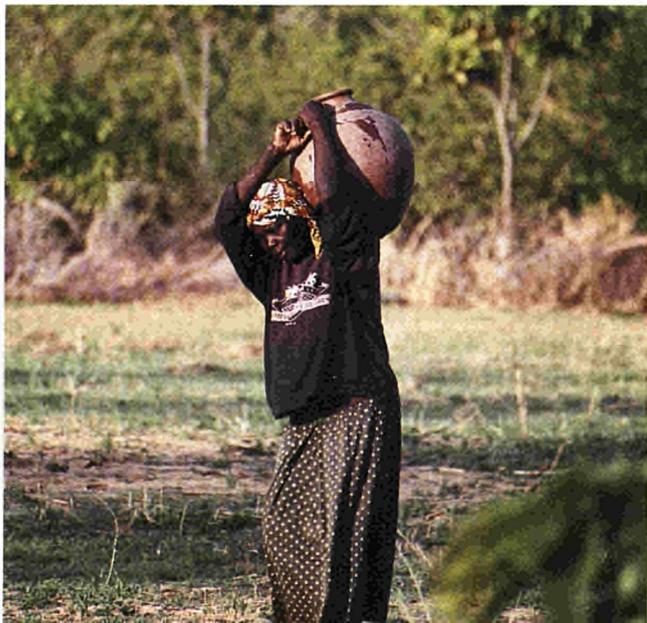
Building a radier

any misappropriation of funds and to provide a pressure valve.

“Relations between the project and existing public structures are sometimes strained. Some believed that the project was set up to finance or supplement the state’s operating budget,” says Alphonse-Marie Takougue. “However, we got through to the authorities, in the main, with our awareness campaigns and got them to understand that they would have to work as independent agencies and that any cooperation would have to take place at technical level. I would say we have had difficulties there but so far we have been able to overcome them.”

In 2004, the PDRM will be handing over the reins to the leaders, interfaces and communities themselves. In the time that remains, the promoters are trying to extend their activities and work to areas that have not seen as much of the project, in an attempt to make its impact more evenly felt over the whole territory. The pathways to development, opened by the PDRM, should then be kept open by the local people. This is the ultimate goal of the project’s participative approach. ■

The crux of the PDRM’s work is water: searching for it and gaining control over it in a region that does not see a single drop of rain for six months of the year.



Driving down the cost of medicines

An interview with Cameroon's national supply centre

Accessibility, affordability and generic products – CENAME, a structure devoted to the purchase and sale of drugs, is built around these three concepts. They form the basis on which this non-profit but private organisation has managed to bring down the cost of tritherapy in Cameroon. CENAME's director, Dr Oussoumou Taoussé, and his deputy, Dr Mohamed Dico, gave this interview to *the Courier*.

How and why did CENAME come about?

Dr Taoussé: CENAME came into being, at least on paper, in 1996. It became effectively operational in 1998 and is the long-awaited result of a three-party agreement between Cameroon, the EU and Belgium. It was set up to deal with the huge problem of accessibility, both financial and geographical, of drugs in Cameroon. We set up a purchasing centre which, as its name suggests, imports, and therefore purchases, pharmaceutical products and resells them at an affordable price throughout the country.

We know who the ultimate beneficiaries are, but who are your customers?

Dr Taoussé: We cover almost all sectors: public sector, selling to provincial centres, denominational, health centres run by churches, and the non-profit-making private sector, partly financed by donors. The profit-making private sector has come knocking at our door and we are currently negotiating the margin which could be applied to ensure that drugs remain accessible.

Agence France Presse report in March this year:

YAOUNDE, 23 March (AFP) – 12.21 a.m. – AIDS victims in Cameroon could henceforth have access to drugs at a cost of less than CFAF 70,000* (FRF 700) per month, a reduction of 72 per cent on prices charged hitherto, an official source told us on Friday. This reduction has come following the conclusion of negotiations between the National Centre for the Supply of Essential Drugs and Medical Consumables (CENAME) and American laboratories.

Until now, Cameroonian AIDS victims were prevented from having tritherapy by the high cost of the treatment. According to figures from the Cameroonian Public Health Ministry, 21,000 people were infected with the AIDS virus in 1996, rising to 35,000 in 2000. The rate of infection has jumped from seven per cent to almost 12 per cent in just a few years.

* € 106.7

So, are you a public or private enterprise?

Dr Dico: In accordance with donors' requirements, which are entirely justified, we are not a state enterprise with prebendary management, but rather a private non-profit-making enterprise, equivalent to a Belgian ASBL [non-profit-making association]. To avoid political pressure, our director, Dr Taoussé, was recruited through a competitive entry examination process. He is Cameroonian whereas I, his co-director, am Malian.

Dr Taoussé: At first nobody believed we would last, simply because we had an apolitical structure. On the contrary, our turnover has tripled...

How do you manage to sell drugs at a price well below that charged by pharmacies?

Dr Dico: A purchasing centre can only be viable if it purchases, and purchases wisely; in other words, if it procures quality drugs without being overcharged. It works like this: we draw up a precise list of requirements containing all of the technical specifications. All of our products are bought on the basis of international tenders. Before making our selection, we firstly ensure that the list of requirements has been met. We check out the manufacturer, the products and even the supplier. If, during these checks, we discover that the requirements have not been met to the letter, the candidate is eliminated. We then carry out a price comparison, using software, and choose the best bid. It is a commission, representing all of the parties, who analyse the bids. In addition all of the bids are opened in public.

Is this procedure truly fraud-proof?

Dr Dico: Fraud is made difficult, but the possibility of it happening could never be ruled out. However, it is all completely transparent and, during the three weeks following examination of the bids, suppliers may lodge a complaint.

Who are your usual suppliers and manufacturers?

Dr Taoussé: We have many, from France, Denmark, the Netherlands, India...

Why not favour African candidates, or at least those from the southern hemisphere?

Dr Taoussé: We do try to. African manufacturers are preferred over others in the bidding process. The Europeans



Fifty per cent of the population did not have access to basic health care as recently as 2000

are aware of this and tailor their bids accordingly. Also, African manufacturers are less competitive. They have higher production costs (we are talking drugs, not sewing) and they are still burdened by tax barriers between countries. This is also why Western firms are not relocating activities to Africa. Regional integration is not yet a reality.

With prices approaching the level of those on the black market, illegal trading in drugs has declined

rest themselves. So it is true that, at first, we had mainly managed to increase accessibility of drugs in geographical terms, to a level of 92 per cent. Now, thanks to the ministry of health, the price of drugs has come down to a level people can afford. But another problem has arisen in that the reduction in price has not been accompanied by compensatory measures for the centres, which are always chronically short of funds.

By using a tender system and choosing generic drugs you can buy goods at competitive prices. Logically therefore, and in line with CENAME's objectives, the people should benefit from these prices. Why then has the health ministry had to impose a reduction of prices at the points of sale?

Dr Dico: Yes, it is true that, before, the people were not benefiting from the prices at which CENAME was buying the pharmaceuticals. We import drugs and sell them on to provincial supply centres, which are independent bodies. They then resell the products to health centres scattered all over the country. Before the government ruling, these various bodies were adding on huge margins, as high as 1,500 per cent. Let me give you an example: CENAME would sell an anti-diarrhoea drug to provincial centres for CFAF 2,900 [€4.42] per 1000 tablets, but at the end of the chain the patient would pay CFAF 90 [€0.14] for a single tablet! You can imagine the profits: 90 multiplied by 1,000 is 90,000, whereas we were charging CFAF 2,900.

However, you must also understand that following the economic crisis and the failure of the welfare state the centres had to pay their own structural costs, salaries and the

Have you noticed an improvement in the health of the population and an increase in the consumption of drugs?

Dr Taoussé: Our health indicators took a turn for the worse in the 1990s. Now the trend is in reverse, except in the case of HIV. We actually recorded a very marked increase in the consumption of drugs, resulting from better access to the products and, with prices approaching the level of those on the black market, illegal trading in drugs has declined. We are now seeing a real demand. However, it must not be forgotten that according to estimates, 50 per cent of the population did not have access to basic health care as recently as 2000. In theory, it takes CFAF 65,000 [€99] per household per month to gain access to this care and half the population does not have this kind of money. ■



Joséphine Kamgang at work in the Women's and Girls' training circle (CEFIFE), an NGO she herself founded eight years ago

Strengthening civil society – Fourmi II

A positive side to the decade-long economic crisis experienced by Cameroon is the emergence of civil society. Having to count on themselves, people sought solutions to problems in their immediate environment, and there is now a profusion of civil society associations and organisations active in both private and public domains both in the economic and social fields in order to reduce poverty. But, although civil society exists, it is still fragmented and disorganised, and this is why the Fourmi II Programme is concentrating on giving civil society a formal structure and strengthening its capacities.

Joséphine Kamgang proudly surveys the 20 or so women hard at work in her workshop. Buzzing with activity, the air is filled with the whirr of sewing machines, the sound of scissors snipping and pencils scratching away. With much determination, Joséphine manages the Women's and Girls' training circle (CEFIFE), an NGO she herself founded eight years ago.

"I set up my own workshop and then it occurred to me to get together and help young women suffering hardship". Today, the CEFIFE has official recognition, trains about 50 apprentices and employs 10 people. Sewing, dyeing, IT skills, hairdressing, catering, reception skills, listening and socio-professional integration all come under the centre's remit. The range of subjects on offer is wide, and it is constantly seeking new resources. Soon, this initiative should be able to receive support from Fourmi II, and Joséphine will be able to open a section devoted to pygmy woman in distress in the capital. Fourmi II is the successor to the first programme of the same name and operates mainly in Cameroon's two principal cities, Douala and Yaoundé.

The programme's concentration in urban areas does not mean that rural sectors are ignored, but is simply a response to the evolution of Cameroonian society. Despite recent improvements in the country's economic performance, the

standard of living shows little improvement. Poverty is rife throughout the country: although previously found primarily in rural areas, it now increasingly affects the towns and cities, generating insecurity, poor standards of health, an ever-expanding informal sector, unemployment and the deterioration of urban services and amenities. This destruction of the urban fabric is all the more serious given that 50 per cent of the Cameroonian population is concentrated in urban centres.

A three-level approach

Assistant project manager Léonard Ntonga Mvondo explains, "Fourmi II aims to strengthen civil society's capacities. It is out of the question that we should set up new organisations. Our work takes place in three stages. First, we compile a register of organisations that already exist and identify what they do. This phase is important because it has enabled us to set up a complete database for Yaoundé and Douala, where we also looked into the social and environmental factors (education, water-supply points, prostitution, commerce, delinquency, insecurity, flood risk, poor standards of health, etc.) which have a great effect on the viability of a project. This register also meant that we could target the people and resources capable of supporting particular activities. Often, the skills are there, but no one knows about them. Stage two

consists of communicating, circulating information on existing support possibilities. The third stage consists of helping the NGOs to obtain the aid available and supporting them in their activities. The final phase is currently being implemented, beginning with a number of pilot projects such as the installation of a well or waste recycling in two areas of Yaoundé”.

While it may seem a relatively opaque concept, strengthening of civil society’s capacities is essential. There is no doubt that civil society exists in Cameroon; because of the State’s withdrawal from certain areas, some of its duties have been taken on by stakeholders in civil society, in fields as diverse as child protection, the promotion of women’s rights, primary healthcare, community development, environmental protection, the socio-professional reintegration of marginalised groups, education, literacy, access to basic requirements, etc. Now that it has official recognition, civil society is also supported by the government and donors. However, as Pauline Biyong from the League for the Education of Women and Children (LEFE) notes, “the emancipation of civil society still faces a number of hurdles, such as the heterogeneous nature of the social structures, with conflicting activities, authoritarianism on the part of the government which gives civil society little opportunity to express itself, and the impoverishment of the people, which dulls citizens’ campaigning spirit, and forces them to break up into smaller groups and become more introverted”. Consequently, civil society’s organisations have difficulty in gaining a foothold in the social fabric and cannot escape political pressure, ethnic or religious influence, or dependence on donors. Pauline Biyong adds that “they are evolving within a narrow framework, in the absence of a national network capable of coordinating wide-ranging actions”.

Complying with complex rules

With an EDF budget of approximately €90,000, Fourmi II is attempting to remedy the shortfalls currently suffered by civil society in Cameroon’s two principal cities. “After completing the stage of identifying and communicating, we

are continuing with the networking of civil-society stakeholders and what I would call ‘indirect’ aid”, explains Léonard Ntonga Mvondo. In fact, the programme does not take on ideas in order to convert them into projects and pass them on to donors, but helps organisations to comply with the often over-complex rules set by donors. Léonard adds: “that’s also why we started with pilot projects, to see how we could make procedures more flexible and speed up access to financial support”.

Problems do not end with the drafting of an application dossier. Often



Part of Fourmi II’s work consists of helping the NGOs to obtain the aid available and supporting them in their activities

set up instinctively, local NGOs have to learn the rules of the game, have a bank account, comply scrupulously with accounting rules, mobilise the necessary resources, manage tranche-based income, etc. These conditions, Léonard stresses, “force us to take account of exclusive criteria in selecting which projects to support. For example, a district where extreme poverty is endemic will not be adopted. The same applies to a region dominated by a particular ethnic group. In these cases, the minimum conditions necessary for the setting-up of a viable project are not met. Not at first, at least. Later on, we rely on the contagion effect to enable us to give assistance to interesting initiatives, wherever they might originate”.

Conceived as a temporary, experimental programme, Fourmi II also has to analyse its real impact. Its results will form the basis for the definition of future schemes whereby non-state players can be supported. A watchdog organisation will also be created to measure the degree of civil society’s organisation, the actual level of representation it offers through its projects, given people’s aspirations, and its ability to make a positive change to the living conditions of those in urban areas. If the results are conclusive, the ball will be in the State’s court, and the government will have to create a suitable legal structure to enable this disparate, unwieldy structure to become a full partner in the anti-poverty campaign in towns and cities in particular and in Cameroon in general. ■



The government of Cameroon and the EU have made “decentralised development of local communities” one of the pillars of their cooperation. The resources allocated to this sector represent more than a quarter of the total amount available under the current National Indicative Programme. Part of this allocation has been used to finance FOURMI II, a programme focusing on developing and strengthening participation in urban areas. It is based on the principal of empowering stakeholders in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It follows on from FOURMI I (1995-2000) which had the objective of improving disadvantaged urban environments in five towns.

The Bertoua-Garoua Boulai road

A lifeline for regional integration

With 80 per cent of goods to and from Chad and the Central African Republic passing through, Cameroon's geographical location places it at the hub of the sub-region. The road network is a key factor for regional integration, opening up entire regions. The Bertoua-Garoua Boulai road has progressively grown to cover 247 km, replacing one of the most difficult sections of the 1,422 km journey.



There used to be nothing here except a track riddled with potholes that regularly deteriorated into a mud bath. During the rains, it could take weeks to dislodge trucks that got stuck in the mud, only to seize up a bit further down the road, their axles scraping the ground and wheels choked with mud. Yet this is a major route used by hauliers travelling between Bangui and the Cameroonian city of Douala, the main port of access to the sea for Chad, the Central African Republic and northern Cameroon.

The hellish situation between Bertoua and Garoua Boulai prompted the launch of a regional project devised by

the countries of the sub-region. This €98 million initiative is the EU's largest road-building project in sub-Saharan Africa. The central section of the main road, which is seven metres wide and 247 km long, took two years to build and will one day connect Douala with Bangui.

Respecting the environment

Work began in April 1999 and wrapped up in July 2001. To minimise both unnecessary purchases and environmental impact, the new road follows the path of the old one. Instead of being laid in a series of straight sections, the tarmac criss-crosses the ridge. Before the surface was asphalted, the handful of affected villages received compensation, which also served as a way to discourage a rural exodus.

As many trees as possible were saved, and those that had to be cut down were given to local people. Along the verges, plant regeneration and replanting activities have begun. In addition, turf has been laid along the embankments to prevent erosion and gullyng. Areas with washing, oil recycling and waste incineration facilities as well as a water purification station are located along the road, together with bridges and signposts.

Social and cultural aspects

During the construction phase, campaigns were launched to raise awareness of the risks of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS among the road workers, hauliers and people living in roadside villages. As the land was cleared, objects of archaeological interest, including articles made of stone, pottery, clay and iron – were discovered, bearing witness to the presence of humankind on the site 2,000 years ago.

Now that the route is open, the issue of maintenance must be addressed. This is critical if the road is to endure. Electronic weighbridges at Bertoua and Garoua Boulai control the tonnage of heavy vehicles to avoid overloading that would damage the road surface.

The Bertoua-Garoua Boulai road should help develop the economic potential of Chad, the Central African Republic and Cameroon by bringing markets physically closer together and cutting both costs and transport times. The route also facilitates North-South communication in Cameroon, while reaching areas in the East. As well as the exchange of goods and services, the road also encourages the intermixing of people, a stepping-stone towards regional integration. ■



The “Cameroonian condition” Seeking national identity in a unitary state

For the whole of Cameroon’s “coexistence” as a nation, Cameroonians have struggled to achieve the most basic standards for themselves and their country. In their diversity they have also sought a sense of national identity under contrasting models of government.

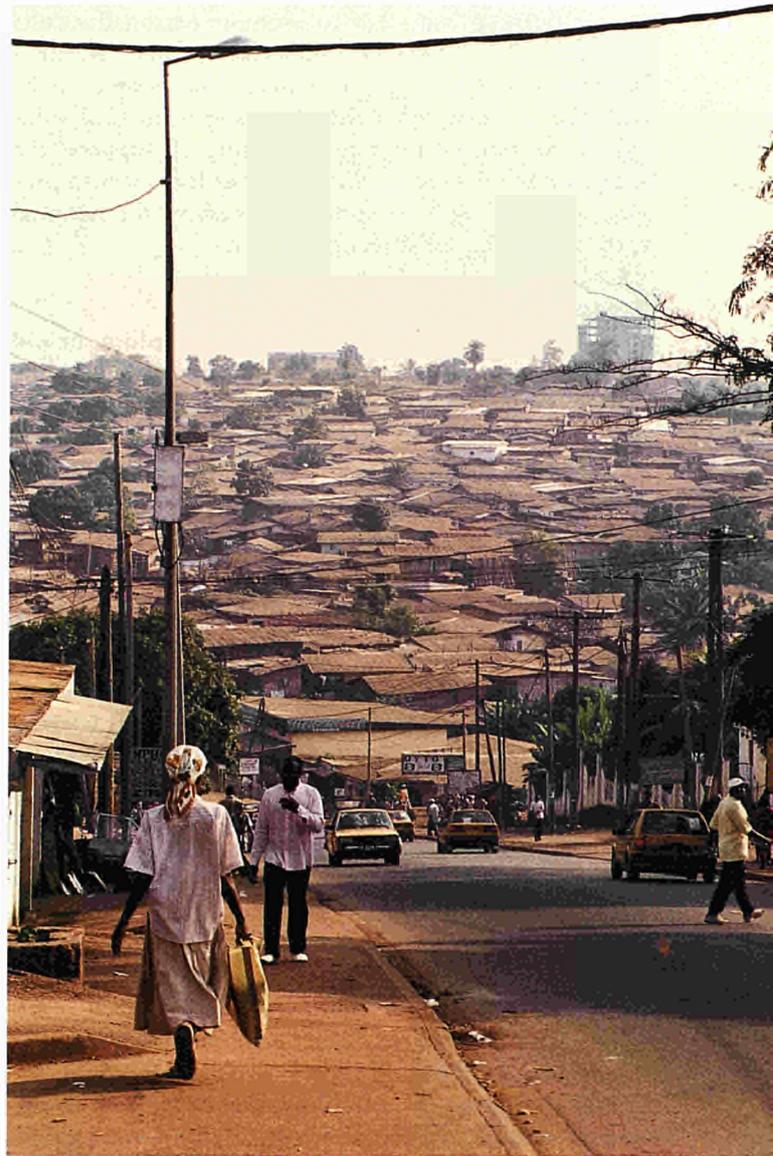
Mwalimu George Ngwane* gives here a personal view of the politics and economics of post-colonial Cameroon.

Following the plebiscite in 1961, Cameroon subjected itself to an innovative model of governance by setting up a federal state. This brought together two nations that had carried from their colonial pasts the burden of divergent linguistic heritages. In Cameroon we can ask the question: “Why did the two Cameroons decide to reunite on 1 October 1961?” At the time President Ahmadou Ahidjo had this to say: “After more than forty years of separation, we are today reconstituting one family, one nation and one state. I express the wish that this reunification of the national territory should be the gauge and symbol of the unity of our hearts and minds.”

Cameroon had taken a major step in discarding its neo-colonial robes (German, French and English) to put on a new Cameroonian outfit. The Reunification Pact was the condition under which its politicians had vowed to live. Barely three years later (in 1964), the politician and philosopher, Bernard Fonlon, noticed the cracks in the wall. Our newfound political merger had been built “upon sand”. Logic and reason demanded that we consolidate the “Cameroonian condition” by building its foundation “upon a rock”. Was the decision to change Cameroon from a federal to a unitary state in May 1972, an attempt to build this nation on a rock? Let me attempt to answer this question by surveying three areas of our national life over the past 30 years.

Political freedom

Enough has already been written and said about Ahmadou Ahidjo’s authoritarian and authoritative rule. But Ahidjo only seems to have followed the pattern of governance across Africa – of immediate post-independ-



ent rulers who saw the one-party system as a *sine qua non* for nation-building and stability. The Ahidjo years were marked by too much government, which led to a perception of tyranny.

President Biya is credited with having opened the floodgates to political freedom with the presence of political parties and civil society organisations. Apart from the constitutional grievance of the former West Cameroonians, there is also a social grievance among some Cameroonians who see a class divide between a predatory minority and an impoverished majority. Indeed multi-party rule has favoured more elite competition than mass mobilisation. It has weakened government authority to the point of state lethargy. It has provided many voices but fewer choices. This state of anarchy has not augured well for the goals of political freedom, because whenever a model of democracy goes unchecked and unbalanced, sooner or later it hits the rocks of national disintegration.

For the first time in its history, Cameroon’s political freedom has given rise to unscientific and anti-historical arguments by an elite whose purpose is not to help

resolve burning issues but to promote personality cults and ensure self-preservation. Even under Ahidjo's benevolent despotism, lone rangers like Fonlon spoke with the authority of patriots wishing to make a valuable contribution to nation-building. I suppose the intention of "Biya-stroika", initially at least, was to provide an enabling environment, necessary for national catharsis and national reconstruction.

Economic theories

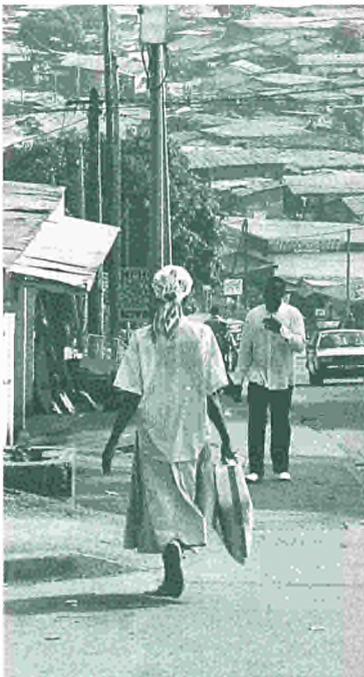
Where Ahidjo failed to give political freedom, he did provide economic development. Under the one-party system, he shifted his policy from political planning (an electoral calendar) to economic planning (a five-year development plan), embedded in what he called African Socialism. Ahidjo's five-year plan was a country-driven economic theory based on putting the country's resources at the disposal of the people. For all his political sins, his five-year development plan saved him from national damnation.

Should Ahidjo therefore not be given a hero's burial in his home country? Biya's book "Communal Liberalism" suggests that he also believed in economic self-determination. He writes: "Cameroonians have to preserve the prerogative of initiative in the running of Cameroon's economy by determining priorities and expressing the real needs of the nation". Well, political thought and practical implementation have often been at loggerheads.

It did not take long before foreign capitalists started knocking at our doors in the form of the IMF and the Structural Adjustment Plan (SAP). After initial resistance, Biya bowed to their economic advice. The Cameroonian elite told us our redemption was in the hands of Bretton Woods. This was the economic balance sheet: salary cuts, unemployment, a brain drain, inflation, the folding up of local companies, Western privatisation of our patrimony and so forth. As if that

was not enough we were told that the Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative and African Growth Opportunities Act (AGO) would undo what SAP had done.

The people of Cameroon are the victims of both economic exploitation (corruption, bribery, embezzlement, capital flight and a crime wave) and economic decay (poverty). The IMF's prescrip-



tion led Senegal's President, Abdoulaye Wade, to say: "The current situation in Africa is proof of the failure of the logic of loans and aid." This failure gave rise to the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

NEPAD is about economic ownership, making government clean, efficient and accountable to the people. Can the Cameroonian leadership privatise the positive economic theories embedded in NEPAD? Until Cameroonians begin to challenge the dangerously utopian ideas of the IMF and World Bank, and opt for sustainable, human-centred and holistic development, we will never bridge the gap between the excesses of a luxury-oriented minority class and the hunger of a necessity-oriented majority.

Media pluralism

The one-party system did not make room for other voices. There was only one voice – Ahidjo's. It was the voice that gave us the order to rally round the Cameroonian flag. Biya has provided different voices, different views and different visions. But the symbol of a national voice remains the Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV). Around the world, state-owned media are the custodians of national interest and national identity. But not in Cameroon, where the state-owned television has become insensitive to equitable language programme use. When the national media cease to be a source of national division and to beat the drum for cultural imperialism, Cameroonians will begin to find their national identity.

Towards a "Pax Cameroon"

There have been attempts to restore democratic sanity and national unity in many African countries recently through national fora. It is often said that most African countries plunged into independence and democracy without adequate planning. So social dislocations are symptomatic of a continent in search of restructuring (what Ali Mazrui calls "Afro-stroika"). Most African countries have attempted – through National Conferences, Truth and Reconciliation fora and so on – to address important national issues in a way that their citizens can have both meaningful political freedom and control of their own economic development.

Perhaps by so doing, these countries will build upon a rock. In Cameroon I doubt very much if electoral calendars will allay fears and inspire confidence in those who still think that the "Cameroonian condition" is built upon sand. Maybe we can now pause to revisit a proposal by Professor Ndiva Kofele Kale for a process that re-examines and redefines the fundamental political premises of the "Cameroonian condition" today. ■

* Mwalimu George Ngwane is a Cameroonian writer and pan-Africanist. He is the head of the civil society organisation AFRICaphonic. (Box 364, Buca, SWP, Cameroon. Tel 2377668479; Fax: 2373322936. Gngwane@yahoo.com) He is the author of a forthcoming book, "Way Forward for Africa".

Republic of Cameroon



General Information

Area:	475.442 sq km
Population:	15.2 million (2002)
Capital:	Yaoundé
Other main towns:	Douala, Garoua, Bamenda, Maroua
Languages:	French and English (official languages), more than 200 local languages are also spoken
Religion:	Christians 40%, Muslims 20%, indigenous beliefs 40%

Political structure

President:	Paul Biya (since November 1982) Elected by universal suffrage. The next presidential elections will take place in October 2004.
National Legislature:	National Assembly with 180 members elected by universal suffrage; members sit twice a year and serve a five-year term. Local and legislative elections took place on 30 June 2002.
Main political parties:	<i>Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais</i> (RDPC), Social Democratic Front (SDF), <i>Union nationale pour la démocratie et le progrès</i> (UNDP), and <i>Union démocratique du Cameroun</i> (UDC).

Economy

Currency:	€1 = CFA franc 656
GDP per capita (purchasing power parity):	1573 (1999)
Real GDP growth:	4.8%
Total external debt:	9.3 billion dollars (2002)
Main economic sectors:	Agriculture: cocoa, coffee, cotton, bananas Timber Oil

Social Indicators

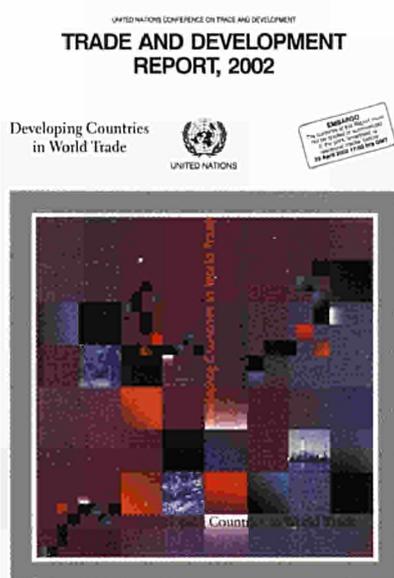
Life expectancy at birth:	50 (1999)
Adult literacy:	74.8%
Population using improved water sources:	62%
Annual demographic growth rate:	2.1% (1999-2015)
Infant mortality:	95‰ (1999)
Human development index rating:	0.506 (125 out of 162)

Sources: UNDP report 2001, World Bank, Economist Intelligence Unit

Developing countries in world trade Figures don't paint the full picture

The United Nations' *Trade and Development report 2002*, published at the end of April by UNCTAD (UN Conference of Trade and Development), is as always, a valuable basis for discussion and assessment of the world trade situation. In addition to a study of the global trends and prospects of the world economy, the links between trade and industry and the consequences of China's becoming a member of the WTO, the report deals with the very precarious situation of developing countries in the world trading system, revealing paradoxes at every turn.

Kenneth Karl



In theory, developing countries could benefit enormously from world trade in terms of economic growth and wealth, thus enabling them to meet their people's basic needs and combat poverty. This, of course, depends on liberalisation. This line of thinking, which has in recent years been increasingly promoted by many international institutions, is difficult to contradict. However, the harsher realities of world trade persist, meaning that now,

more than ever, in-depth analysis of the true situation of developing countries in world trade is necessary.

UNCTAD has once more applied itself to this task in its latest *Trade and Development Report*, which maintains that since the early 1980s, developing country governments have multiplied initiatives aimed at economic liberalisation. By opening up to world trade, to foreign direct investment and to international competition they are supposed to see an increase in their share of world trade and, therefore, an improvement in their respective economic situations. But the picture is not so clear. Many developing countries have seen their share of world trade increase without seeing a corresponding improvement in their economic situation.

The report points out that over the last two decades or so, exports from developing countries have actually grown faster than the world average and now account for almost one third of world merchandise trade. Much of that growth can be attributed to manufactured goods, which account for a large portion of developing country exports. In fact, several developing countries have successfully moved into exporting such goods. Yet the income earned from such activities by those countries does not share in this dynamism. On the other hand, the report points out that while developed countries now have a lower share in world manufacturing exports, they have actually increased their share in world manufacturing value added.

With the exception of a few newly industrialised countries (NICs) in South-East Asia, which have a significant industrial base and have been integrated into the world trade system for some time, developing country exports are still concentrated on products derived from the exploitation of natural resources, and these countries have limited prospects for productivity growth and suffer from a lack dynamism on international markets.

The report calls for a degree of caution in the analyses of data. Statistics pointing towards an increase in high technology and high-added-value products from developing countries should not be taken at face value. Although these goods do indeed come from developing countries, most of the technology and know-how and a large part of the added value comes either from developed nations where the components are manufactured or multinationals. Developing countries are involved only at low-skill assembly stages.

Although developing countries' share of manufacturing exports (including high technology goods) has markedly increased, their share of income from manufactured exports has not risen proportionately and their manufacturing added value/gross domestic product ratio has not perceptibly improved. By contrast, developed countries have seen their share in world added value in manufacturing increase over the last 20 years, while their market share in this area has remained low.

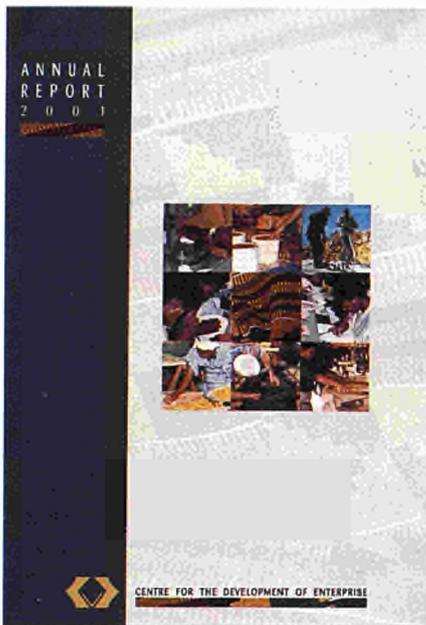
According to UNCTAD, it is no longer sufficient for developing countries to simply rely on exporting products, other than primary commodities, if they are to benefit fully from the world trade. As a result, the trends of the last two decades must lead to a re-examination of the conditions needed to foster better participation of these countries in the world trading system. The presumed effects of the liberalisation of economic policies have yet to be felt and the causal links between the recommended strategies and actual results achieved in developing countries do not automatically follow on from one another.

The issue for these countries is to know whether greater or lesser liberalisation is required, how to manage this, what products to export and how best to adapt to world trade rules. In the light of such analyses, which reveal stark contradictions in the world trade system, the search for solutions that would allow developing countries to be successfully and smoothly integrated into the global economy remains a subject of preoccupation for all concerned. UNCTAD's Richard Kozul-Wright, said he hoped the report would be used to help support developing countries in their efforts to trade on better terms in the current round of trade talks at the WTO. ■

Centre for the Development of Enterprise (CDE) Taking stock

The Centre for the Development of Enterprise (CDE), formerly the Centre for the Development of Industry (CDI) is an institution of the ACP Group of States and the EU. Under the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, the CDE has been given a more wide-ranging mandate than its predecessor, the CDI. Its activities focus on developing the private sector, and extend to enterprises engaged in the construction, tourism, telecommunications, transport and infrastructure management sectors and the support services underpinning them.

Alexis KELA



CDE's Director Fernando Matos Rosa presented the centre's 2001 report in May. The centre has had an active year, because of the implications of its extended mandate, and due to the European Commission's decision to put the centre in charge of implementing PRO€INVEST – the programme of support for the private sector.

Endowed with a budget of €25.5 million, the CDE's resources are mainly provided under the European Development

Fund (EDF, €24 million). The CDE's activities are directed primarily at SMEs.

There has been an increase in the number of projects and companies offered support. In 2001, the CDE was involved in 972 projects in ACP countries, compared with 949 in 2000, an increase of 2.5 per cent. The cost of these projects amounted to €33.7 million. The number of enterprises receiving CDE assistance in 2001 rose to 783, compared to 699 in 2000. The amount of new investment in the 783 enterprises amounts to €2112 million, including €657 million for the creation of enterprises and their expansion and €1455 million for consolidation and rehabilitation.

The CDE alone funded 44.6 per cent of projects, 36.2 per cent with the involvement of ACP enterprises, 9.7 per cent with donors, and 9.5 per cent with the participation of European companies. About 50 per cent of CDE's involve operations receiving less €5000 – funding that is very much appreciated by small enterprises. The remaining 50 per cent of projects consist of in-depth studies to promote enterprises, each entailing an average cost of about €20,000.

An overview of the types of projects shows that 45.2 per cent were for rehabilitation and consolidation, 38.1 per cent for expansion and diversification, and 16.7 per cent for enterprise creation. The two principal sectors are the agro industry, with 39.3 per cent, and construction (wood and metal) with 33.2 per cent. Leather and textiles account for 16.9 per cent of projects and other sectors for 10.6 per cent.

Last year, CDE implemented 22.6 per cent of its projects in Southern Africa, 21.6 per cent in East Africa, 20.7 per cent in West Africa and 16.8 per cent in Central Africa. The Caribbean accounted for 12.6 per cent and the Pacific 5.7 per cent.

PRO€INVEST, a new programme to be managed by CDE, is aimed at stimulating the private sector in ACP countries. With its multi-annual budget of €110 million spread over seven years, it aims to facilitate a regional and sectoral approach to promoting both investment and partnership agreements between North-South and South-South enterprises. The CDE has created a special programme management unit, PRIMS (PRO€INVEST Implementation Service). ■

CDE - focus 2002

West Africa

CDE provides support for the textile industries, which represent a market of more than 200 million consumers. Following a number of partnership meetings organised by CDE between 1999 and 2000, industrialists in the region set up a trade association – the Cotton and Textile Industries Trade Organisation (OPICT) – which, in collaboration with the Centre, mapped out the 2002-2003 action programme.

East Africa

CDE's programmes have two principal objectives: the improvement of spinning and weaving techniques and conditions in five continental countries in East Africa and support across all sectors, including produce in Madagascar and Mauritius.

Central Africa

CDE programmes in this region focus on the following areas:

- forestry resources, including exploitation, development and planning, and certification;
- training at all stages in the industry: felling, forestry development/planning, sharpening/grinding, seasoning, processing, finishing, industrial maintenance, the operation of machinery, and management;
- secondary and tertiary conversion.

Southern Africa

The programme for Southern Africa relates mainly to support for research and for the mobilisation of investment financing in the mining sector.

Other programmes currently being studied relate to timber in the Caribbean and the Pacific regions, fruit and vegetables in Central Africa, tourism in the Caribbean, leather and hides in East and Southern Africa, and poultry farming in West and Central Africa.

CDE, 52 av. Herrmann Debroux, 1160 Brussels, Belgium.
Tel (32 2) 679 18 11 - Fax (32 2) 679 18 31 - Website: www.cde.be

_Letters to the editor

IN RESPONSE TO THE ARTICLE "BASIC EDUCATION: A DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY", THE COURIER, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2002

To ensure that an early childhood basic education programme is effective, special programmes for disadvantaged young people should be implemented. To this end, the creation of reception and guidance centres for young people is essential. By initiating them with various agriculture, aquaculture and small livestock production work, we teach young people to become aware of their responsibilities towards employers, while developing an economically stable workforce for the country. In this way, we try to build self-confidence and give them hope for a better future.

However; if young people cannot count on concrete educational support, the programmes targeted at early childhood education will not solve the problem. Rather the most favoured students will benefit from the assistance. Because poverty is alarmingly widespread, the solution lies in long-term programmes designed to meet the needs of young people.

The funding of reception and guidance centres works towards eliminating poverty and is less onerous than launching information campaigns, which usually only reach about 20 per cent of the public. The centres have an added advantage because they are economically independent, which enables them to provide ongoing training, resulting in responsible young citizens.

But what organisations are making funding available to allow such projects to be launched? What are the EU and ACP states doing to support centres for disadvantaged young people? Don't they have the same rights as other youngsters? Your article concludes with the premise that to ignore basic education is "to tie children to a time bomb in the form of a destabilised world".

I say that it is high time to defuse the time bomb!

J.J. Van Elst - Suriname

Fondation "Travail-Avenir-famille"

B.P. 12021 - Paramaribo-Suriname - Amérique du Sud

Tel.: 597/47.75.15 - 08839341 E-mail: stgwtg@hotmail.com

G8 DEAL ON NEPAD

When the UK International Development Secretary, Clare Short, called for the need for "a massive international effort to reduce poverty and injustice, and to promote development, democracy and human rights", she was calling for a concerted effort by the advanced countries to greatly strengthen existing aid and trade relationships with African and other less developed countries.

Reflecting similar concerns, the UN mounted the ambitious International Conference on Financing for Development with the aim of finding ways to reduce severe poverty, stimulate economic growth, and promote sustainable development, as the world advances to an ever more interdependent and "global" economic system. A key test of their willingness to address such commitments was presented to the governments of the advanced countries at the G8 Summit held on 26-28 June in the Canadian Rocky Mountain resort of Kananaskis.

The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) calls for respect for the rule of law, enhanced transparency, and greater commitment to democracy on the part of African states. A key plan in the NEPAD initiative is the call on the G8 states to provide US\$25-\$35 billion of the US\$64 billion required annually for investment in Africa to ensure sustainable development. Not only do many African states remain heavily burdened by debt, but inequalities among African states - and between them and the West - have continued to widen at an alarming rate. The world's 25 richest people have income assets worth US\$474 billion - more than the entire GNP of sub-Saharan Africa. The African governments had high hopes that in return for their own commitment to improved governmental performance and democratic accountability, the developed world would give a sympathetic hearing to their pleas for more aid to effectively eradicate poverty and for sustainable development.

The British Prime Minister and Canadian President visited Africa to discuss the NEPAD plan. Using its "peer group monitoring" scheme, African leaders have formally undertaken to hold each other accountable for their achievements with much emphasis on good governance and human rights as necessary preconditions for Africa's recovery. The Presidents of Algeria, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa (led by President Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Mbeki of South Africa), and the Secretary General of the United Nations, were invited to the G8 summit to discuss the challenges faced by Africa and the G8's response to NEPAD. With such high hopes African leaders watched as leaders of the world's richest nations agreed to support Africa's economic and political development with a \$1 billion aid package which included support for a military "peace keeping" intervention force, a commitment to improve global market access for African exports by tackling trade barriers, and a commitment to eradicate polio by 2005. Although leaders of the advanced countries surprised the developing countries by increasing development aid at the International Conference on Financing for Development, there was little new at the G8 meeting.

In some quarters the G8 agreement is being labelled as disappointing. Others are more optimistic. President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, one of the authors of the NEPAD scheme, put it this way; "there is nothing... human that can be regarded as perfect". Kofi Annan went as far as saying the plan could be "a turning point in African history".

France is to host the next G8 meeting in June 2003. We will then be able to see whether President Chirac's upbeat remarks at Kananaskis will stand the test of time.

Benson Osawe

**Ph.D candidate (International Political Economy)
at the University of Manchester, UK**

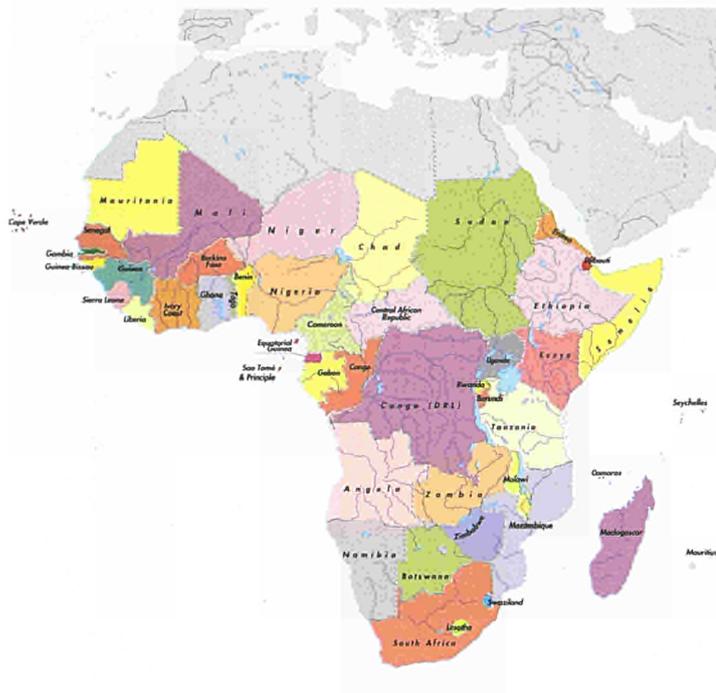


Austria
 Belgium
 Denmark
 Finland
 France
 Germany
 Greece
 Ireland
 Italy
 Luxembourg
 Netherlands
 Portugal
 Spain
 Sweden
 United Kingdom
France
Territorial collectivities
 Mayotte

St Pierre and Miquelon
Overseas territories
 New Caledonia
 French Polynesia
 French Southern and Antarctic territories
 Wallis and Futuna islands
Netherlands
Overseas countries
 Netherlands Antilles:
 Bonaire, Curaçao, St Martin,
 Saba, St Eustache
 Aruba
Denmark
Country having special relations with Denmark
 Greenland

United Kingdom
Overseas countries and territories
 Anguilla
 British Antarctic Territory
 British Indian Ocean Territory
 British Virgin Islands
 Cayman Islands
 Falkland Islands
 Southern Sandwich Islands and dependencies
 Montserrat
 Pitcairn Island
 St Helena and dependencies
 Turks and Caicos Islands

The European Union



The 78 ACP States*

Angola	Dominican Republic	Malawi	Senegal
Antigua and Barbuda	Equatorial Guinea	Mali	Seychelles
Bahamas	Eritrea	Marshall islands	Sierra Leone
Barbados	Ethiopia	Mauritania	Solomon Islands
Belize	Fiji	Mauritius	Somalia
Benin	Gabon	Micronesia	South Africa
Botswana	Gambia	Mozambique	Sudan
Burkina Faso	Ghana	Namibia	Suriname
Burundi	Grenada	Nauru	Swaziland
Cameroon	Guinea	Niger	Tanzania
Cape Verde	Guinea Bissau	Nigeria	Togo
Central African Republic	Guyana	Niue	Tonga
Chad	Haiti	Palau	Trinidad & Tobago
Comoros	Ivory Coast	Papua New Guinea	Tuvalu
Congo	Jamaica	Rwanda	Uganda
Cook Islands	Kenya	St Kitts and Nevis	Vanuatu
Cuba*	Kiribati	St Lucia	Zambia
Democratic Republic of Congo	Lesotho	St Vincent and the Grenadines	Zimbabwe
Djibouti	Liberia	Samoa	
Dominica	Madagascar	São Tomé and Príncipe	

* Cuba was admitted as a new member of the ACP group in December 2000, but is not a signatory of the Cotonou Agreement.



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