



The World Bank's Common Property Resource Management Network

The World Bank's CPRNet Newsletter

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In this issue

This issue is a bit delayed because of the long holidays we have just been through in this part of the world. In this issue, read about new land titling and land administration, a request for information on community-based natural resource management (CBNRM), as well as a review of a new publication. I would like to use this opportunity to wish you all the best for the coming Year.

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Networking

Mongolia: CBNRM and best practice. CPRNet member Bob F. Buzzard, International Representative for Southern & Eastern Africa, Office of International Research & Development, Oregon State University, has sent the following request for help (contact information below, please respond directly to him):

"I am involved in CBNRM in Southern Africa and have just returned from Mongolia where I was working with UNDP and the Protected Areas Bureau. The Mongolians are just starting to take a look at the concept of CBNRM, under the initiative of UNDP and GTZ. But on the whole, they are quite unfamiliar with it. I would like to facilitate their exposure to CBNRM by presenting some case studies to policy-makers in the Ministry of Nature & Environment and in the PA Bureau.

"I am quite aware of the strides which have been made in CBNRM in southern Africa, particularly where communities have access to valuable wildlife and 'scenic' resources. Unquestionably, the Mongolians could learn much from what is going on down here. However, it would be nice to present them with examples of work a bit 'closer to home' in Asia.

"Are you aware of CBNRM initiatives in Asia, focusing on wildlife utilization (consumptive or otherwise) and eco-tourism, which could serve as suitable examples of effective CBNRM? In my mind, a suitable example would have the following attributes: (1) the natural resources have high economic value; (2) they have high appeal to the potential visitor; (3) the legal/policy setting has been sufficiently established so that communities are empowered with some measure of natural resource control; (4) communities are, in fact, realizing tangible benefits from their involvement in CBNRM and can demonstrate this to the visitor; and, (5) mechanisms have been established and are operational to monitor and document the impacts of CBNRM in terms of economics and bio-diversity conservation.

"There are sites in southern Africa (Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe) which 'fill this bill' and are already being used as 'learning' sites. Is there any in Asia? And if so, can you put me in contact with workers who are implementing the programmes and who would share their experiences?"

Contact: Robert F. Buzzard, Jr. – Buzzard@info.bw

West Africa: CBNRM workshop, Niamey, Niger, 12-17 October 1998. This was the fourth in a series of workshops organized by and for staff in the World Bank's West Africa sub-region. Participants have traditionally been project staff in the several community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) projects in the sub-region, supported by the World Bank as well as other donors. For project staff these workshops have arguably been the most important activity of the year because of their role in presenting and discussing CBNRM issues across sectors and countries, and they have in this way contributed in a major way to capacity building among the staff that has participated.

The 1998 workshop departed from earlier workshops in three important respects: (i) senior policy makers – including Ministers – from several countries participated; (ii) participants from both French-speaking and English-speaking countries participated; and, (iii) it was supported by the “CBNRM Initiative” of the World Bank’s Economic Development Institute. All three had important implications for the way the workshop was structured, the overall workshop processes, and the proposed follow-up activities.

The objectives of the workshop were to: (i) exchange CBNRM experiences among practitioners regarding the existing development strategies, as well as impacts on local populations and the environment; (ii) identify the constraints existing on the regional level, and present their possible solution to the senior policy makers participating in the workshop; and, (iii) engage senior policy makers in a dialogue on the importance of CBNRM issues.

The following key issues were identified early on in the workshop, were focused upon throughout the workshop, and provided a structure to the final document: (i) guarantee of access and use rights; (ii) decentralization of natural resource management; (iii) cooperation and partnerships; (iv) research on natural resource management; (v) monitoring and evaluation; and, (vi) the role of NGOs.

One of the most important outcomes of the workshop, in addition to the final document, was that it contributed in large measure to set in motion processes that are continuing after the workshop itself. The workshop gave a major emphasis to the need for creating strategies for policy reform, of policy dialogue, on various levels, and the participants collectively contributed to a process that hopefully will lead to the formulation of such strategies within the region as well as in individual countries.

Information about the proceedings and outcome of the workshop will be made available on the web. Further sub-regional workshops will be organized.

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CAMPFIRE. Mr. Stephene Kasere has been appointed the new CAMPFIRE Director, taking over from the late Taparendava N Maveneke.

Source: Nils D Cristoffersen, Africa Resources Trust USA – Nilsatart@aol.com

Projects

[Ed. comment: Land titling and land administration are, in the context of regularizing and increasing land security, traditionally considered to be the key approaches in the World Bank’s operational work in this area, from the standpoint of management regimes and sustainable natural resource management. Two pieces, from Guatemala and India, that portray various aspects of this, are presented below. These are issues that will be given further attention in future issues of the Newsletter.]

Guatemala: Land Administration Project. By increasing the legal security of land tenure, the Guatemala Land Administration Project is expected to help mitigate land conflicts, alleviate poverty, reduce environmental pressures, and improve prospects for peace in the Petén region.

Bibliographic Reference: World Bank, Guatemala Land Administration Project, PID
Contact: World Bank, Public Information Center – pic@worldbank.org

India: Poverty alleviation woes blamed on lands reforms implementation. The Planning Commission has blamed the multiplicity of poverty alleviation programmes on the haphazard implementation of land reforms in the country.

According to its Sub-Committee on land reforms, the major focus of all the land reforms programmes should be on bringing about structural transformation in the rural areas since increases in rural incomes are not self-sustaining over time. “The reforms must therefore form an integral part of the strategy of poverty alleviation. But they have not been implemented on a systematic basis at all,” it said.

It points out that even the experience of the Asian tigers showed that the redistribution of land was an important prerequisite for development. It said that the strategy for poverty alleviation must consist of redistribution of assets particularly in the rural areas.

The Committee pointed out that the latest estimates of distribution in terms of the ownership and operational holdings showed that the status of land distribution continued to be broadly the same as in 1952, except that the marginal and small farmers had increased in numeric terms.

Among its various recommendations, the Committee noted that the redistribution of the ceiling surplus land among the poor is required to be pursued with greater political and administrative commitment. "Of the 74.87 lakh acres of land declared surplus, 65.61 lakh acres have been taken possession of and only 51.79 lakh acres have been distributed among 50.51 lakh landless and semi-landless rural poor," it points out.

It felt as undesirable the trend among several States to relax ceiling limits to enable private sector to participate in commercial farming in the wake of economic liberalisation. "This trend is undesirable particularly when the opportunities for non-farm employment for the landless are inadequate."

The Committee therefore suggested a special drive to detect benami, farzi transactions of land. "Nearly 11 lakh acres of ceiling surplus land are involved in litigation. The State Governments have to constitute land tribunals under Article 323B of the constitution and set up special benches in High Courts for quick disposal of ceiling cases," it points out.

Adding that reselling of land should be discouraged. However in exceptional cases land could be purchased by the Government for further redistribution among the landless poor.

The Committee also notes that agricultural tenancy had been abolished in most States but concealed tenancy still exists almost everywhere. "A blanket ban on tenancy has not helped either the rich or the poor. Therefore agricultural tenancy should be opened up within the ceiling limits," it says.

Another of its recommendations is that maintenance of updated land records is crucial for effective implementation of land reforms. Updating of land records should be therefore expedited through involvement of PRIs and the local revenue functionaries.

For efficient land and water management for productivity growth, the Committee has called for efforts to enforce consolidation of land holdings. "Efforts should be made to determine the actual area of wastelands for reclamation and redistribution," it points out.

Sources: Business Lines, 19 November 1998 & ASIA INTELLIGENCE WIRE

Literature

Burger, J and M Gochfeld. 1998. The Tragedy of the Commons 30 years later. *Environment* 40, no 10 (December 1998), p 4-13, 26-27.

Review: This important article starts off as follows: "How do we manage resources that seem to belong to everybody? Fish swimming in lakes, game mammals wandering the open plains, and birds migrating overhead belong to everyone and yet are protected by no one. Today, protecting such common-pool resources has become a challenge, not only on the local scale but on the national and global ones as well." With this as a backdrop, the article proceeds to present and discuss the importance of Garrett Hardin's now famous 1968 article, where he invoked the analogy of a "commons" in support of his thesis that as human population increased, there would be increasing pressure on finite resources at both the local and particularly the global levels, with the inevitable result of overexploitation and ruin. He termed this end result the "tragedy of the commons". In its discussion of the legacy of the article, it points out the misconceptions upon which the argument is based, but, more importantly, it points out the enormous importance it has had in spawning new analyses, in particular in environmental management and analysis. For this reviewer, Hardin's thesis has possibly had its most useful role in illustrating the importance of integrating social and political theory with biological and environmental data. To quote the article: "The traditional theory of regarding resource users as unbridled appropriators is being replaced by the recognition that users can communicate and cooperate when it is in their interest to do so and when the resources at their disposal and the sociopolitical context permits it."