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African regional organizations and environmental security

Gregory W. Myers

The purpose of this chapter is to review the role that African regional organizations have played in addressing environmental issues, particularly land and natural resource degradation. The chapter will draw lessons from three organizations: the Inter-State Committee for Drought Control (CILSS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Each organization represents countries in three different regions of the continent with unique environmental concerns, objectives, and strategies for addressing them.

Following this introduction, the chapter examines the role of property rights in land degradation, and particularly how land tenure policy can be used to address environmental concerns as well as other social problems. As such, the focus on land tenure reform is used as a criterion to determine the efficacy of regional organizations in dealing with transboundary environmental concerns. The next section reviews efforts of the CILSS, IGAD, and the SADC in addressing environmental regional concerns, particularly noting the ways, if any, in which they consider property rights and resource tenure security as variables in achieving their objectives. The chapter will conclude with a brief discussion of lessons learned.

In all three regions land degradation, desertification, and deforestation are critical issues. There are more than 2 billion hectares of arid land in Africa. More than two-thirds of the continent's land is desert or dry

zones, and becoming increasingly degraded and unusable. Aside from climatic variations, much of the continent's land degradation is due to deforestation and other types of resource misuse as a result of social problems or policies.

Deforestation in Africa is caused by a number of factors, including land clearing for agriculture and cutting trees for fuelwood and other uses. The FAO estimates that approximately 13,000 square kilometres of African forests disappear each year (FAO 1985; 1995). Since 1960 it is estimated that 18 per cent of African forests have disappeared (WRI 1997), and in many locations the process is accelerating. This is of course exacerbated by official population growth rates for the continent that average at least 3 per cent per year.

In addition to deforestation, other social forces contribute to degradation. Numerous pre- and post-Cold War conflicts in Africa have had either a direct or indirect impact on the environment. Wars contribute to environmental damage as much as, if not more so than, natural disasters. Over the last few decades conflicts have occurred or are taking place in a majority of countries, involving a majority of the continent's populations. These conflicts have been in the Horn of Africa (Somalia, the Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea), southern Africa (Mozambique, Angola, parts of South Africa, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly known as Zaire), West Africa (Liberia and Sierra Leone) and East Africa (Rwanda and Burundi), to name only a few. This list does not include major civil disturbances in Algeria, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, and most recently Guinea-Bissau.

Wars destroy fragile ecosystems, wildlife populations, forests, and farmland. Wars also destroy economies and infrastructures, and displace populations. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that there are currently at least 8 million displaced people in Africa (UNHCR 1997). Unofficial estimates of displaced populations in Africa are remarkably higher. For example, in Mozambique during the civil war in that country, estimates of internally and externally displaced populations reached as high as 4 million people, or better than 25 per cent of the population (Drumtra 1993; Myers 1994). In several countries, displacement continues beyond a single generation so that displacement becomes a way of life.

Displaced populations have an impact on resource use and conservation. First, humanitarian efforts following or during conflicts frequently take precedence. Prevention of starvation and genocide is paramount over resource conservation. Populations are often settled or self-settle in areas that are perceived to be secure. These areas are frequently already overpopulated. The increased burden on the environment usually results in resource mining of trees, land, and wildlife. Typically, once the conflict

ends displaced populations are reluctant to return home, and when they finally do, permanent residents left behind are faced with an over-exploited environment. It is not uncommon in recent African conflicts for there to be post-war waves of displaced populations as people and communities seek to capture new economic opportunities or abandon areas that are no longer sustainable.

In many African countries, as a result of wars, poor economic and social policy, overpopulation, and many other factors, standards of living have decreased significantly, while hunger, misery, and population displacement are conditions that have become the norm. These stresses often force rural communities to abandon ''traditional'' or ''customary'' resource conservation practices and overexploit resources for survival.

Beyond these causes, market globalization may also have mixed consequences for political stability and environmental sustainability. Globalization is creating opportunities for many states to capitalize on new economic opportunities, and focus on broader political and social issues. For example, processes of globalization have given some former economic ''basket cases'' in Africa, like Uganda, access to new markets and technology. Along with market and political reforms this has helped to promote dramatic economic growth and market efficiencies in this country over the last few years.

At the same time, market globalization may also created economic and political pressures in many emerging economies, as well as some established or developed ones, which could negatively affect resource use and conservation, leading to resource mining. There is greater pressure than ever for the emerging markets in Africa to open their doors to trade regionally and internationally. This will increase with the US government spearheading programmes like ''Trade not Aid.'' While this may have many benefits, many African countries only have natural resources to trade in exchange for the commodities that they purchase. This often leads to resource mining in timber and forest products, wildlife and fish, and minerals.

In southern Africa there are already concerns that South African businesses, in some cases in partnership with Mozambican operations, are over-hunting wildlife reserves and fishing grounds in Mozambique. South Africa's need to compete in a broader international economic arena, let alone within the region, may lead to both economic and environmental shocks in many of its trading partners. This imbalance between South Africa's commercial power and the strength of the comparatively poorer nations in the region may facilitate resource mining by South African businesses in the region. There is already evidence that South African businesses are exploiting weak regulatory structures in neighbouring countries to acquire and exploit massive tracts of land and other resources.

As a result of these numerous pressures – social and climatic – resource degradation is increasingly problematic for many communities in Africa. Global and regional organizations have focused on environmental concerns in Africa for nearly three decades, with varying degrees of success. Before turning to a discussion about the ways in which the CILSS, IGAD, and the SADC have focused on resource degradation, brief criteria for analysis must be established.

Property rights and natural resource management

A premise of this chapter is that land and natural resource tenure security is an integral part of sound land-use management and natural resource conservation. Land tenure or property rights that are inappropriate for a given economy or social structure will lead to overexploitation of resources and contribute to resource degradation, among other outcomes (Thiesenhusen 1991; Southgate, Sanders, and Ehui 1990; Black 1994). This is particularly so if the tenure rights are viewed as weak, discouraging long-term investment and local-level management decisions. Conversely, where policies for use of land and natural resources are relevant to economic and political structures and conditions, and are participatory in nature, investors and other resource users tend to make long-term and efficient investments that promote sounder resource use and higher levels of production. In addition, clear tenure rules that are understood by all tend to reduce the chances of mismanagement of resources, corruption, and resource conflict.

In many developing countries, the balance between the objectives of the state and those of private interests or civil society are not always even or congruent. The state and élite bureaucrats are often predatory, restricting popular decision-making about resource use and downstream benefits accrued from the exploitation of resources. Further, the state's capacity and will to enforce national regulatory laws in the face of private predators are not always evident. States have vested interests in maintaining control over valuable natural resources. These ''national interests'' often lead them to construct or enforce tenure systems that are not always in the best interests of the economy or the environment.

Most countries in Africa nationalized control over land and other natural resources following independence. This was done in the name of nationalism or progressivism, or in reaction to colonialism. Laws were also often enacted as a reaction to national political struggles between old and newer power structures: urban educated élite versus rural chiefs, to name one example. In some countries, such as Mozambique, post-independence land reforms were a rejection of all the old ways, colonial

and pre-colonial. Despite these nationalization campaigns, or as a result of them, resources were misused and mismanaged, and economies suffered. Environmental degradation continued at an alarming rate throughout the continent. At the same time, these policies contributed to political instability.

In the last few years policy-makers have increasingly become aware of the problems and limitations of the nationalized economies and property systems – recognizing connections between property rights, economic growth, and conservation. As a result a number of African countries have begun to discuss or experiment with different property rights systems that permit greater transparency, market interaction, and popular participation in decisions about resource use and management. Consequently, property rights reforms, particularly for land, water, and forestry, have become part of national and regional-level discussions about conservation programmes in Africa. The CILSS, IGAD, and the SADC have, to a lesser or greater extent, included tenure reform issues as part of their objectives. The analysis that follows looks at the way the CILSS, IGAD, and the SADC have focused on land and natural resource tenure issues as part of their efforts to address resource degradation within their respective regions

Land tenure reform (including secure access to, and decentralized control of, resources) is also seen increasingly as relevant to political stability in many countries. There is a growing discussion focusing on the causal linkages between environmental degradation and civil conflict. Evidence from numerous countries suggests linkages on the one hand between subnational and international conflict and, on the other hand, resource scarcity and insecurity of resource tenure. Numerous cases from Africa demonstrate this relationship, including Rwanda, Somalia, the Sudan, and Ethiopia (Homer-Dixon 1991; 1994; Myers 1997b; African Rights 1993; Besteman and Cassanelli 1996).

A second premise of this chapter is that there are significant connections between property rights, sound resource management, and stable political structures. The more regional organizations link environment, resource access and security, and governance issues, the more they will enjoy more stable and robust economies and political institutions. This chapter will also look at the way the CILSS, IGAD, and the SADC have, if at all, focused on resource tenure security as a variable in conflict or conflict prevention, and by extension environmental degradation.

Regional organizations and the environment

Beginning in 1972, the UN Conference on the Human Environment focused world attention on global environmental concerns. Africa was par-

ticularly singled out as a potential ''hot-spot.'' The 1972 conference was followed by numerous other environmental forums and treaties. It also led to the development of UNEP, which has itself created numerous other global and regional programmes, conferences, and forums. Many of these also focused on environmental issues, and many others that were created for other purposes have, over the years, modified their foci to include environmental concerns.

One organization created by the United Nations, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), argued in 1987 that a concept of ''sustainable development'' was needed. This position was quickly adopted by regional organizations, particularly those in the developing world, and later followed by discussions about greater popular participation by target populations in regional organization management.

In 1987, the WCED recommended a second UN-sponsored global conference on the environment, which would more broadly address environmental issues and include wider participation. This recommendation eventually led to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, also know as the Earth Summit) in Rio de Janeiro.

Despite these numerous forums, international and regional bodies have had limited success in addressing national and transboundary environmental problems. Indeed, in many instances the overall global environmental picture is significantly worse than it was in 1972 (Halpern 1992). For example, despite massive bilateral and multilateral assistance, environmental destruction has not been halted in many African countries. In the Sahel, desertification continues, and has become worse as a result of natural and manmade disasters over the last two decades (Bohrer and Hobbs 1996).

This apparent gap between global conservation objectives and continued environmental degradation suggests that past strategies have not been successful. It may not be that more financial and ''expert'' human resources are required to mitigate these trends, but rather a rethinking about the role that global and regional organizations should play in addressing this concern. Experiences from three African regional organizations are revealing.

The CILSS

The Inter-State Committee for Drought Control was formed in 1974 and is composed of nine countries (Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and the Gambia). The Committee's functions are many and have changed over time, but focus largely on natural resource management and conservation. The CILSS is

an interesting example of a regional organization that has continued to evolve over the years since its establishment.

The CILSS has three characteristics that set it apart from other regional organizations. First, it was formed specifically in response to an environmental crisis, the 1968–1974 Sahelian drought and famine. Second, the CILSS began operations by concentrating on rural and "least-developed" sectors of the economies in the region, as opposed to most other regional organizations that are established to promote trade and commercial development. And third, the CILSS has a unique relationship with the donor community via a sister organization, the Club du Sahel.

The Club du Sahel, which is part of the OECD, was approved by member states in 1976. In addition to Sahelian representatives, the Club is composed of bilateral and multilateral donors including the World Bank and the UNDP. The Club's main functions are to coordinate policy dialogue and assistance between donors and recipients (mainly the CILSS), and to prevent overlapping and competing programmes and objectives.

Despite years of substantial financial assistance from the Club (and other bilateral and multilateral assistance), and work within the organization and between it and member states, the region is nowhere near its initial goals of achieving self-sustaining economic development, food self-sufficiency, and desertification control. But this does not mean that the organization has not seen success, nor that it does not have the potential to achieve success in the long term. Indeed, thus far some of its greatest accomplishments have been to refocus the way it looks at environmental issues, particularly linking resource security and conservation, and how it strives to make discussion more participatory and decentralized. This success has been predicated on a series of moves within the organization that began following its inception.

This CILSS process, particularly with regard to resource management and control, has evolved over many years. As stated above, beginning with its inception in 1974 it focused on rural issues, and particularly environmental degradation as a result of drought. For 10 years following inception the organization had some success (increased donor assistance and more focused attention, better knowledge about environmental issues affecting the region, and regional institution-building). But the organization also realized that, despite these efforts, conditions were worsening. Hence, member states began to focus attention on developing greater understanding of linkages between factors in complex environmental problems.

In 1984, with the Nouakchott Conference in Mauritania, the CILSS recognized the need for greater community participation by emphasizing increased involvement of local populations in development projects. In

1989 the CILSS moved a step forward with the Segou Round Table on Local-Level Natural Resource Management in the Sahel, held in Segou, Mali.

This meeting focused greater attention on land tenure security as part of the overall environmental problem faced by the region, and for the first time really began to expand participation in the discussion process. Segou brought together representatives from government, rural communities, donors, and NGOs. The main premise of this meeting was to begin a discussion about the need for a shift in the locus of power among Sahelian states to achieve sustainable development (Freudenberger 1994). The Segou Declaration recognized the necessity of decentralization, but stopped short of recommending specific mechanisms for achieving this.

The next steps came in 1994 with the Praia Regional Conference on Tenure and Decentralization, held in Praia, Cape Verde. Conference delegates noted that between the conferences in Segou and Praia, environmental conditions had continued to deteriorate and desertification was worse in the Sahel. Delegates in Praia noted that past declarations had not gone far enough to achieve national-level reforms. Not surprisingly then, conference organizers subtitled the conference, ''to achieve democratic, participative and decentralized management of natural resources in the Sahel'' (cited in Freudenberger 1994). As with Segou, rural resources users were not only considered as the main target beneficiaries of policy reform, but also as participants in discussion about the nature of reforms and how they should be implemented.

The successes of these conferences (Nouakchott, Segou, and Praia) were supported by nine different national-level activities from 1991 to 1994. These ranged from technical assistance and research focusing on desertification and other environmental issues to conferences and seminars in the nine CILSS countries.

Praia, like preceding conferences, created opportunities for cross-sectoral and cross-boundary discussions, as well as for donor, NGO, and government coordination. It did not attempt to set national-level objectives. It ended without a clear mandate, or even a strategy for addressing the multifaceted problems faced by the members regarding natural resource management and decentralization. A follow-up meeting was scheduled for later the same year to take place in Kenya. This meeting, attended by a few ''key'' people from the CILSS and the Club du Sahel, developed a three-year action plan for the CILSS.

Clearly, the push to slow and eventually reverse environmental degradation must come from a number of directions. It might be facile to suggest that the regional organization should push harder to encourage reform that will lead to faster changes, ensuring environmental security and

reducing desertification. Indeed, one might ask why Praia ended without a clear mandate? Or better still, why after all these years the CILSS is no closer to achieving its target objectives than it was when it first began operation.

The answer is that environmental transformation and reform of natural resource management in the CILSS must not only come from within each member country, but also from rural dwellers who themselves use the resources. This would then suggest greater participation in the discussion process, and eventual decentralized and democratized control over resource management and the benefits that accrue from exploitation and conservation. In this regard, the CILSS has best helped by coordinating actions, creating opportunities for discussion among members, and giving rural groups and individuals opportunities to confront national political structures; but it has not dictated or enforced "decisions" made at the regional level. To do so would probably have undermined goals and marginalized rural voices. Further, members have used the CILSS to initiate discussion of problems and solutions that are often not politically acceptable (at least initially) in their own countries. A prime example is the discussion about the relationship between environmental conservation and land tenure reform.

Members have also used the forum to judge, and in some cases follow, the experiences of other member states. For example, Senegal's decentralization (and democratization) efforts to transfer control over resources to local and more democratic institutions have been a long process, marked by political tensions and setbacks within Senegal that continue to this day. Nevertheless, Senegal has achieved a remarkable degree of success, beginning in 1964 with its programmes to develop locally elected councils which have responsibility for, among other duties, managing resources.

It is clear that other countries in the region have watched and learned from Senegal's experiments. Guinea and Niger have enacted (or are in the processes of enacting) forest legislation that grants increased rights to local populations living in the area of forests. Chad, Burkina Faso, and Mali have also engaged in constructive environmental policy reform programmes based upon examples derived from other members. Most notably, the development of forest codes has included the opinions of local populations, as well as facilitating the participation of local populations in the management of forest resources and the benefits from the exploitation of those resources. In conjunction with the CILSS, almost all member states have begun national-level dialogues about property rights reform and more localized participation in resource management.

In addition, the organization has been more successful than others in creating options for member consideration, rather than strict-rule guide-

lines at the regional level that cannot be followed. For example, the 1990 CILSS Food Aid Charter promotes food security among member states. However, as the past Executive Director of the CILSS, Brah Mahamane, states, ''the Charter does not seek to force member countries to follow a strict 'modus operandi'. Each country operates within its own political, institutional and economic constraints'' (CILSS and OECD 1993, 4).

The first premise articulated in the introduction of this chapter is that environmental degradation is related to, in part, the nature of property rights systems and the degree to which these systems secure tenure rights and democratize control over resources and the benefits from resource exploitation and conservation. In this case, the CILSS has made important forward progress in generating discussion among member states about these linkages, thus the organization may yet achieve its initial and refined objectives to reduce desertification and achieve economic self-sufficiency in the future.

Where the CILSS has been most criticized is in the workings of its national-level coordinating committees (CONACIL). The Club du Sahel has been critical of the way member states control the committees, particularly their attempts to silence national committees' public discussions. On the other hand, member states have argued that the CONACIL are disruptive and interfere with national-level objectives and politics. These criticisms explain potential tensions between regional ''goals'' and regional ''needs,'' and further illustrate that regional solutions will not necessarily come from regional organizations, but from the people who live within these regions themselves.

IGAD

The Inter-Government Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) was formed in 1986. Comprised initially of six countries in the Horn and eastern Africa (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan, and Uganda), its initial focus was on food security, drought, desertification, and other transboundary environmental issues. In 1993 Eritrea joined the group and in 1995 the body was ''revitalized'' and renamed the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Like West Africa, this region has experienced severe climatic conditions that have led to famine, death, and population displacement of several hundreds of thousands of people in the last two decades. Perhaps more importantly, the region has been home to some of the worst and longest-running civil violence on the continent. These wars have also contributed to population displacement, death, and environmental destruction.

IGAD differs from the CILSS in several ways. First, it is substantially younger. Second, IGAD has more provisions that focus on economic and commercial linkages throughout the region, mirroring other African regional organizations. Third, it has far fewer financial resources than the CILSS. Fourth, the member states are not as homogeneous as are those in the CILSS. Finally, it faces a number of ongoing civil battles within and between member states that undermine its work.

Between 1986 when IGAD (IGADD) was formed and 1995 when the body was revitalized, IGAD accomplished few of its central tasks. The high number of armed conflicts in the region and the massive number of displaced people forced the organization to become more involved in conflict resolution and humanitarian efforts as prerequisites to achieving any of its other environmental or economic growth objectives.

The second premise presented in the introduction to this chapter is that there is a relationship between property rights, resource management, and political stability, or in the case of the IGAD countries, violence. Conservation and sustainability cannot be achieved without proper resource rights, and as long as wars continue in the region, populations are killed and displaced and financial resources are focused on humanitarian efforts. IGAD has apparently begun to move in this direction, as it has increasingly sought help from bilateral and multilateral donors to mediate ongoing conflicts in the region.

The new 1995 charter authorized the body to promote economic integration in the subregion, in accordance with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the African Economic Community. More importantly, the revitalized group recognized the relationships between environmental issues, particularly environmental security and sustainability, economic development, and peace. The new charter included two key provisions on capacity-building for conflict prevention, resolution, and management; and the alleviation and mitigation of refugee problems.

Just as it was reviewing its agenda, in 1994 IGAD adopted the Declaration of Principles for the Settlement of Conflict in the Sudan. The government of the Sudan rejected IGAD's initial offers to mediate the conflict and pursued a separate track of "peace within." In 1997 the Sudan finally agreed to participate in an IGAD discussion on peace, but has failed to implement human rights guarantees in the southern part of the country – a minimum requirement in the peace process. Nevertheless, IGAD has continued to provide a forum for discussion between combatants and between donors and member states. IGAD has also been involved in attempts to mediate the conflict in Somalia, which have also been supported by major bilateral and multilateral institutions. IGAD

has recently become involved in the latest round of violence between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

While none of these efforts thus far has resulted in complete success, they have moved the conflicts to the forefront of the agenda of an organization that was created to address regional environmental and food security concerns. They have also helped to focus global attention on resolution of the conflicts as part of any other work in the region.

Again, in defence of IGAD, regional organizations historically have had little success in preventing or stopping inter-state conflicts once they begin, particularly in Africa where institutions are relatively poor and weak. Perhaps more importantly, there is a strong bias against inter-state interference by other African countries. This is institutionalized in the terms of the OAU. Nevertheless, until the violence issues are resolved in the Sudan, Somalia, and now between Ethiopia and Eritrea (let alone smaller conflicts that are brewing elsewhere in the region), IGAD's effectiveness to address regional environmental concerns, particularly transboundary issues such as desertification and deforestation, will remain limited.

Despite its limited successes thus far, IGAD, like the CILSS, has worked diligently in the last few years to decentralize its approach and the programmes that it recommends. The Sahara and Sahel Observatory has provided linkages between the CILSS and IGAD, hosting conferences and seminars for members and specialists from both organizations. The Observatory has been particularly keen on helping IGAD to study the land tenure lessons learned by the CILSS over the past few years. Studying the ''successes'' of the CILSS and other organizations, IGAD has attempted to develop a better understanding of the region's environmental problems through research and dialogue, and it has worked to be more inclusive in seminars and conferences.

In addition, IGAD has decentralized other environmental programmes as they evolve. For example, following the 1994 IGAD Eleventh Session of the Council of Ministers, the organization has sponsored two regional programmes in response to the 1994 UN Convention to Combat Desertification. These programmes supported environmental education and enhanced public awareness across the region. Not only did they recommend a new school curriculum focusing on environmental education, but more importantly articulated the need for greater local community participation in the management of resources and conservation efforts.

As in the discussion on the CILSS, it is problematic to assume that IGAD will or should resolve regional environmental problems. It may be more effective to consider the ways that IGAD can provide forums for members to come together and discuss ways that these issues should be

addressed at a more localized level and in a more participatory and democratized way.

At the end of the day, environmental concerns such as land degradation, desertification, and deforestation in the region will continue so long as the fighting continues and rural dwellers themselves do not have the chance to assume ownership responsibility for the changes that must take place. But more importantly, IGAD has an opportunity to help members and member populations to see that when discussion about natural resources and participation is truly localized and democratized, the fighting may well stop. In effect, IGAD must help members to see the connections between the two premises articulated in the introduction to this chapter.

The SADC

The SADCC, the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference, was established in 1980. Initially it was a ''front-line'' organization for states bordering on South Africa during apartheid and that country's destabilization campaign. Its objectives were primarily to reduce economic dependence on South Africa by its members.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) was formed in 1992 and comprises 14 states: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The reformation came as the civil war in Mozambique was coming to a close, and both Mozambique and South Africa were headed toward reconciliation and democratic elections. In 1997 the Seychelles and the Democratic Republic of Congo joined the organization. The SADC is now, theoretically, an economic alliance, fostering regional economic development and integration.

The SADC is significantly different than the other two regional organizations discussed, and these differences colour the way in which it operates and its likely success as a regional organization, particularly its success in addressing regional environmental concerns. First, as noted above, the SADC (as the SADCC) was initially created as a buffer organization against South African commercial (and political) domination. Second, when it was formed the region was experiencing severe violence, much of it perpetrated or instigated by South Africa. Third, the region is composed of countries with great economic and commercial potential, and significant differences among members. The South African economy alone is larger than many of the combined economies of the region, and is viewed by many policy-makers as the engine of regional growth. Fourth, the private sector plays a much larger role in many SADC economies,

and participates in or influences SADC discussion and objectives. Fifth, where the SADC was formed to focus on commercial concerns, both the CILSS and IGAD were formed largely to address environmental issues. In many ways, the SADC appears to operate as a collection of disparate countries with unequal objectives that are located in the same region, whereas members of the CILSS and IGAD are relatively homogeneous and have come together to address significant environmental and political threats.

The SADC region has one of the fastest-growing urban populations in the world. The region suffers from intense land pressures, particularly on rangeland. Deforestation, soil loss, increased use of marginal lands, and land degradation are a few of the more severe environmental problems facing the region. In addition, many countries (including Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, and recently the Democratic Republic of Congo) have experienced widespread violence over the last two decades that has resulted in massive displacement of local populations and concomitant environmental abuse.

The organization does aspire to address regional environmental issues, including pollution, soil erosion, desertification and drought, water conservation, and wildlife management and protection, but it does so more with an eye to the commercial impacts of good resource management and conservation. Many, if not all, of its environmental programmes contain objectives which promote commercial growth of resource use.

The SADC created an Environment and Land Management Sector which integrates environment, land management, conservation, and production. This programme focuses on resource management, soil conservation, training, education, and extension. In addition it focuses on marketing services, incentives, and financing. As water is a scarce commodity in the region, and unevenly distributed, the SADC also created a Water Sector. The SADC has an Early Warning System and a Food Security Unit to monitor weather and food production respectively. The SADC developed a Wildlife Sector programme, based on the premise that sustainable exploitation of wildlife and wildlife products will contribute significantly to regional economic growth. In addition to being an important supplement to human nutrition, wildlife exploitation can (and already does in some member countries) provide considerable income generation through eco-tourism, safari hunting, and game ranching. Finally, the SADC developed a Forestry Sector to promote regional self-sufficiency in forest products; protect, manage, and control forest resources; and enhance productivity and the commercial value of trees.

As in the CILSS, the SADC has attempted to provide a forum for studying and discussing the individual and collective environmental problems and programmes of member countries that, theoretically, im-

pact on the region. Successful programmes in individual countries have become models for other members. South Africa has recently launched several new local-level initiatives to bring rural farmers and herders into the management structure of the country's natural resources. This programme may have been in part influenced by the success of the Land Board system in Botswana. Many countries, including Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, and South Africa, are talking about the Campfire programme in Zimbabwe, a programme for community-based wildlife management.

The SADC has proved to be a relatively open and democratic institution, focusing resources on discussion about critical regional problems, including environmental and ecological concerns. It has incorporated the views of member states and has worked to include the views of some subnational groups. In addition, the SADC has included the private sector as an important focal point, demonstrating linkages that the private sector should/could play in regional economic growth and transboundary environmental issues.

For all these positive accomplishments, there are some serious real and potential problems in the way this organization addresses environmental and other social problems which set it apart from the CILSS and IGAD. First, there are obviously vast differences in wealth and economic potential between member states (as well as within some). The economic power and potential of South Africa outweighs the economic and commercial capacity of many members combined. The difference between South Africa and Malawi or Mauritius, for example, is enormous. Even with good intentions, South Africa has the potential to drive development (including natural resource management) in a way that may be more beneficial to South Africa and its citizens than to other countries in the region. Moreover, as South Africa is the economic driving force in the region, its own domestic economic objectives will greatly influence the SADC's objectives. South Africa's economic objectives focus on job growth and business expansion. Environmental affairs are not a national priority. One could conclude that the SADC is not truly a regional organization, but simply a front for advancing South African commercial interests (Holland 1995). This degree of economic difference and power between members does not exist in CILSS or IGAD.

Second, while South Africa has worked hard in the post-apartheid period to develop regional-friendly policies, South African businesses and entrepreneurs have the potential to undermine fragile economic and social programmes elsewhere in the region via aggressive attempts to capture markets and access to resources, and this can have severe negative environmental repercussions. For example, in the last few years South African entrepreneurs have moved north into Mozambique,

Angola, Tanzania, and Namibia seeking access to markets and to land and other natural resources at vastly discounted prices. Many of these forays have already resulted in distorted markets and in displaced or marginalized populations (see Myers and Meneses 1995; Myers, Eliseu, and Nhachungue 1998 for discussions of South African investments in Mozambique).

Land markets, both legal and illegal, are springing up all over the region. This is taking place in countries that do not have a history of market liberalization, particularly the marketing of land or other natural resources, or strong regulatory institutions. Resource abuse in these cases is not uncommon.

It remains to be seen how the members of the SADC will capitalize on opportunities created by the new wealth unleashed in the post-apartheid period, while preventing the goals of the organization from being hijacked by one member's needs or objectives, or being overrun by South African capital. At the same time, policies or programmes that work in South Africa, as the dominant member, may not necessarily be appropriate to the needs of other member countries with far weaker economic and political structures. The commercial sector should play an important role in any programmes addressing environmental and other social concerns, but government should ensure that the real cost of resources is accurately reflected in their prices, and be wary of ways in which unregulated businesses may undermine weak political institutions and lead to overexploitation of resources, among other abuses.

And finally, it is clear that the SADC has not encouraged or insisted that regional discussions should include rural or community participants from member countries in the same way that the CILSS has or that IGAD is trying to do. To be more than just a regional business association, the SADC will need to focus more attention on inclusion and participation, as the CILSS has done.

Lessons learned

Environmental issues are often low priorities in many countries in Africa. Ministries or other government agencies dealing with environmental issues (including land and water) are often the weakest politically, with little or no clout to influence national policy. Staff training and human resources are either non-existent or extremely weak. Frequently, African governments have little knowledge of their country's resource base and limited experience in managing it.

Moreover, weak states are often unable, or unwilling, to implement decisions made at international, regional, or national levels, particularly

if they affect an already fragile political structure. In other instances, national governments benefit from internal weaknesses or confusions, manipulating their own economic systems to satisfy short-term objectives. At the same time, urban-based élites can often gain access to resources cheaply through exploitation of weak or accommodating political structures.

Throughout Africa the phenomenon of land concessions or grants by the state to élites has exploded, resulting in massive, or potentially massive, population displacement and landlessness. Displacement often leads to overcrowding in other areas and overexploitation of scarce resources. For example, in Mozambique, recent research has revealed that the state in the post-war period following 1992 has granted concessions, or is in the processes of granting concessions, that total at least 25 per cent of the country's land space. In some areas of the country marked by rich and fragile resource bases, concessions cover more than 50 per cent of the total land space, and in a few extreme cases, more than 100 per cent of the total land area (Myers 1997a). This type of cronyism takes place to the disadvantage of long-term growth, political stability, and environmental sustainability.

While national governments may adopt or agree to global or regional objectives and treaties, they do not always abide by these decisions once they return home. For example, in 1995, two years after the Earth Summit, 12 ministers of environment and other senior government officials from 17 eastern and southern Africa states called upon member governments to ratify environment-related conventions and agreements. They identified eight global, regional, and subregional treaties that had not been effectively implemented or had been ignored altogether. One group convened by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and UNEP focused on the Convention on Biological Diversity. In this group, as a subset of the Earth Summit group, numerous biological diversity zones were recognized and participants agreed to protect certain fragile ecological areas. Nevertheless, member states routinely violated the provisions and spirit of this and other environmental treaties after the conference.

A blatant example took place in southern Mozambique, in Matatuine District along the border between Mozambique and South Africa, in 1995. Parts of an area stretching along the coast from south of Durban in South Africa up north through southern Mozambique were declared a biological diversity zone. This area includes Matatuine District in southern Mozambique, and is home to thousands of hectares of pristine forest and bush land, a natural elephant corridor, fragile wetlands and riverine areas, and other scarce flora and fauna (Myers and Meneses 1995). Despite the fact that both countries were signatories to the Convention on

Biological Diversity, Mozambique facilitated land ''distributions'' to dubious South African and other foreign investors that have challenged the ecological integrity of the zone on the Mozambican side of the border.

Despite these weaknesses at the national level, or as a result of them, regional organizations do have an important role to play in the area of resource management and conservation. However, observers must be clear on what they can be expected to accomplish successfully and, moreover, what they should be expected to do.

If national governments are unable or unwilling to resolve serious environmental problems, protecting their own heritage and the environmental integrity of their region, why not rely on regional institutions to encourage or ''force'' changes in policy and practice among member states? For example, why not rely on regional organizations to use market restrictions or benefits as a tool to enforce member compliance?

The experiences of the CILSS, IGAD, and the SADC demonstrate not only that policy changes cannot be forced on member states from above, but more importantly that the drive for change must come from local communities and civil society. Consequently, the more regional organizations are able to create ''enabling environments'' where governments and civil society come together on relatively neutral grounds to discuss politically sensitive issues, the more they will be able to address issues that broadly affect the region. At the same time, the more regional organizations are able to act as conduits for information and ideas, particularly involving rural resource users, the more there will be a ''democratizing effect'' which will eventually force change from the ground up.

If a central criterion for addressing land degradation in Africa is the nature of property rights systems – that is if communities and individuals have clear, defensible, and transactable rights, which are appropriate to their specific economic and political structures – then a test for the success of a regional organization in addressing environmental concerns would be the degree to which it supports or promotes discussion about land policy and property rights within the region.

Clearly, the CILSS meets this criterion by promoting both land tenure discussions among members and decentralized participation in that discussion process. IGAD has also moved in this direction, but has also been forced to focus more on the role of subnational and inter-state violence as an inhibitor to sound regional environmental management. It remains to be seen if IGAD will be able to link environmental sustainability successfully with regional peace through a more elaborated discussion of land policy issues. And finally the SADC, which appears to least meet the criteria established in the introduction to this chapter, has focused more on the role of the private sector in addressing environmental concerns.

While the market may well be the best determinant in how resources are managed and exploited, it remains to be seen if all partners within the SADC may equally benefit from this perspective.

In summary, while regional organizations cannot be expected to cure regional problems, they can be expected to do the following.

- Create opportunities for dialogue among member states about environmental issues that are often politically, economically, and culturally sensitive within member states.
- Create opportunities for more localized (and democratized) participation by groups that are normally disregarded or marginalized in public discussions about the environment and other issues held within member states. These groups include NGOs, women's groups, and minority political and social groups.
- Create opportunities for similar or like-minded transborder groups with similar objectives to define common interests and strategies.
- Foster environmental policy and practice transformation within and across member states through long-term educational, research, and dialogue processes that create demand for change from the ground up.

In conclusion, policy affecting transboundary environmental issues, particularly land use and degradation, will only come from a long-term process of dialogue, negotiation, and education in which civil society and government participate. The role of regional organizations should be to provide information, policy options, and a forum for participatory discussion. Multilateral and bilateral institutions can facilitate the success of regional organizations by developing programmes that are more regional in nature, cutting across boundaries, and by creating a level arena in which political discourse can take place.

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