

**Towards improved  
policy making for  
natural resources  
and ecosystem  
management in  
sub-Saharan Africa**

edited by  
**Frank Place**



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**TOWARDS IMPROVED POLICY MAKING  
FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND  
ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

**Results of a consultation meeting held at the  
International Centre for Research in Agroforestry  
2-6 October 1995**



Edited by Frank Place

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## Acknowledgments

The participants of the workshop reported here were the generators of the material in this book. They are all listed in the Appendix, so please take the time to view their names. The synthesis and editing tasks were borne by myself. Thanks to all participants, especially those who returned valuable comments on the previous draft. Not all participants were able to review this document prior to publication. Thus, the responsibility for any errors in the text lies with me.

Frank Place  
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## Preface

This workshop proceedings is rather unlike most others. Instead of finding relatively polished presented papers, readers will find summaries and syntheses of discussions that took place throughout the workshop. Although there were many presentations, including case studies from the participants, it was the working group discussions that produced the important results we want to share with readers.

The presentation that follows draws heavily upon discussions around selected case studies. As with almost any policy anywhere in the world, there are some aspects that could have been improved either in the formulated policy or in its implementation. This report does NOT attempt to be critical of specific policy interventions, but rather uses them as illustrative examples of policy interventions in natural resource management from outside the countries attending the workshop. It is important to be as specific and direct about the policy weaknesses as possible so that we can learn from them and improve the next generation of policies.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1. General

This report documents the results of a workshop held at the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) in Nairobi 2–6 October 1995 on Policies for sustainable integrated ecosystem management. The workshop, which was sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), aimed to improve the ability of governments to develop policies and programmes for the sustainable use of natural resources as part of integrated ecosystem management, and to stimulate dialogue among the sectors to help bridge the gap and resolve conflict. Among the results hoped for were mechanisms to harmonize national policies for the implementation of integrated natural resource management. To emphasize the concepts of integration and harmonization, the number of countries invited was deliberately limited so that several participants from each country could attend. Sixteen participants attended from Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and Cameroon. Participants were drawn from ministries of agriculture, planning, lands and scientific research, a forestry department, national research organizations, universities, non-government organizations (NGOs), farmer groups, and local government.

Participants recognized that more integration of policy makers and stakeholders was needed to achieve better natural resource management policies. Integration encompassed horizontal aspects (e.g., inter-sectoral integration) and vertical aspects (e.g., national, regional and local integration), and these were discussed as they related to the different stages of the policy process—diagnosis, formulation, implementation, monitoring.

Rather than considering all issues pertaining to ecosystem management, limited resources required that some focus be adopted. ICRAF decided to limit the focus to land management issues such as soil erosion, soil nutrient management, deforestation and fallow management where there would be considerable emphasis on rural agricultural producers (the focus of ICRAF's activities). This did not put limits on the breadth of the discussion, but was used to identify participants and assist them in the preparation of case studies.

The structure of the workshop was designed to maximize the participation of policy makers from the same country. The main vehicle for this was the inclusion of two sets of simultaneous working group sessions, one of which was entirely formulated by the participants. Intra-country discussion was promoted in the first working group session, which included case study presentations, while cross-national interaction was encouraged in the second set. The main points highlighted below derive mainly from the working group sessions and the plenary sessions that followed.

## 2. Major Themes of Discussion

The issues that emerged from the discussions were launched by a series of policy case studies presented by participants. The topics of the case studies were varied, but mainly pertained to land management issues:

- Deforestation (Malawi, Cameroon)
- Forestry sector policy (Uganda)
- Land fragmentation (Uganda)
- Land productivity (Kenya)
- Soil erosion (Kenya, Uganda, Malawi)
- Grazing land productivity (Cameroon)
- Introduction of new crop variety (Uganda)
- Water quality (Cameroon).

The group focused on institutional integration much more than on policy harmonization. It was clear that institutions were perceived as having weaknesses (e.g., poor management) that needed to be rectified before moving on to the problems of policy harmonization. Because of this, many of the issues and recommendations are not unique to ecosystem management issues but are applicable to policy making in general.

The topics discussed were many and could be broadly classified into two categories: one being institutional structure and the other being institutional function. Within institutional structure were sub-topics such as overarching structure, rationalization of institutional structure, devolution of power and legal aspects. For institutional function, issues such as accountability, local community participation and human capacity were debated.

While the terms of reference emphasized horizontal (or sectoral) integration, the group appeared more concerned with vertical integration, especially the participation of local stakeholders. Further, the group emphasized that this local participation should be promoted at the diagnosis and formulation stage.

### **3. Major Areas of Concern**

#### ***Arrangement of Institutions***

Until the past decade, there has been little integration among institutions involved in natural resource management. Two main factors behind the relatively poor record of integration are the sectoral structure of ministries and a tendency for new institutions to proliferate when new issues arise. Corresponding to this has been a muddling of distinctions among institutional mandates.

#### ***Lack of Coordinating Mechanisms***

Prior to the implementation of the National Environmental Action Plans (NEAPs) and the establishment of their structures, there were few mechanisms in place to provide a needed coordination role. In some countries, the NEAP has assumed the role of coordinator, and in some cases that of implementing agency at a very broad level (for all environmental issues). There have been significant improvements in integrating institutions in the policy process through the NEAPs and other cross-sectional institutions, but the need for improved horizontal and vertical linkages remains.

#### ***Lack of Accountability***

Lack of accountability of activities, performance and finances is not only detrimental to individual institutional performance, it also jeopardizes improvements in integration



and harmonization. When institutions are not accountable to stakeholders, there is little incentive to involve them in the policy process. This is particularly harmful to vertical integration with locally-based stakeholder groups.

#### ***Poor Functioning of Individual Institutions***

One clear impediment to better integration is the weaknesses found in individual institutions. These include poor wages leading to low motivation and performance by employees, lack of financial resources with which to undertake effective policy-making steps, and lack of management skills. It is difficult for institutions facing these constraints to actively pursue links with others, from both logistical and technical standpoints.

#### ***Lack of Knowledge/Poor Dissemination of Information on Ecosystem Management***

Lack of basic understanding of important ecosystem management aspects, through lack of research or dissemination, also hinders efforts towards more integrated approaches to policy making. Lack of understanding by national politicians may incorrectly lead them to feel that the issue cannot be left to local institutions. It also means that the determination of important stakeholders/interest groups is obscured. Lastly, it reduces the confidence levels of local institutions in their ability to become more involved in natural resource management.

### **4. Major Recommendations**

#### ***Rationalization of Institutional Structure***

The group felt that there needs to be a review of existing institutions dealing with natural resource management with the view of eliminating redundancies and clarifying the distinctions among mandates. The participants felt that greater efforts need to be made to strengthen or modify existing institutions before creating new ones. Where new ones are created, as in the case of recent natural resource coordinating institutions, their mandates vis-a-vis those of existing institutions need to be reviewed.

#### ***Devolution of Natural Resource Management to Local Levels***

There was a strong belief that greater participation of local communities in policy making would be an important step towards effective ecosystem management. However, it was also recognized that this would not be a quick or easy step to take. Thus, there were strong recommendations for capacity building and dissemination of information at local levels. Capacity building would be needed in management, policy making and technical levels so that the local community could increase its share of the skilled labour required in effective policy making. The group also felt that there was a need to increase research on the social, economic and ecological implications of ecosystem management. Dissemination of information on different types of local institutional approaches to natural resource management from around the world would also be useful to local communities.

### ***More Accountable Institutional Structure and Function***

To improve accountability through institutional structure, it was recommended that development of new government institutions be under the auspices of elected officials who are as closely linked to the population as possible. Greater functional accountability can be achieved through greater efforts at including stakeholders in all stages of the policy process. Special emphasis should be placed on involving local communities at early stages and on improving communication to all stakeholders. Accountability needs to be institutionalized across policy-making bodies and one possible mechanism for this could be the National Environmental Action Plans. Accountability requires effective communication and more effort needs to be made in identifying low-cost strategies that encourage multi-directional communication.

### ***Strengthening of Individual Institutions***

The scope for increased integration among institutions is limited to some extent by weak individual institutions. The group made several recommendations to improve institutional performance. They recommended that management training at all levels be of high priority. The training would address project management, policy development and personnel management. The group also recommended that wages and benefits be raised to retain and motivate staff. Motivation could also be increased by providing necessary equipment and operating funds with which to undertake effective policy research and development activities.

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION AND WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

### 1.1 Introduction

There has been a growing awareness of natural resource degradation and ecosystem disturbance over the years. In the developing world, these concerns have been largely overshadowed by social and economic human development needs and conflicts. While this remains largely true today, there is an increased recognition on the part of governments of the importance of ecosystem health to human development. For example, in many regions of sub-Saharan Africa, land degradation due to soil erosion and nutrient depletion has led to declining crop yields, lower incomes and lower nutritional levels. The World Bank cites studies that indicate that as much as 0.5% to 1.5% of annual gross domestic product is lost due to erosion in Mali and Malawi (World Bank, 1992). There are numerous other ecosystem disturbances whose effects on human welfare are not fully known, such as forest and species loss.

Ecosystems are resources that are formed by a combination of interacting living and inanimate, but biologically active, components. They can be changed by a large number of human activities. When ecosystems change, their products and services change and this in turn will affect other humans. Those who modify ecosystems and those affected by the modifications define the group of stakeholders. The net effect on society from ecosystem change (from a short- or long-term perspective) may be positive or negative, even if changes are irreversible. Ecosystems themselves can recover their original functions if the changes are modest and of short duration. However, even if ecosystem change is irreversible it may be viewed as beneficial if the new ecosystem can provide for greater sustained productivity (measured by human values). Unfortunately, human understanding of ecosystems is not complete and often the effect of ecosystem change on long-run productivity cannot be predicted with accuracy.

Human demands and activities in ecosystems are, in turn, influenced by institutions and policies. It is obvious that forestry and agricultural policies, for example, will affect ecosystems, but so will policies from many other sectors such as transportation, education and planning. In fact, the broad macro policies that establish overall economic incentives (e.g., on short-term versus long-term investment) can have the most far-reaching impacts on natural resource management. Because of this, sustainable and productive ecosystem management can succeed only if the different institutions approach policy in an integrated and harmonious manner.

### 1.2 Terms of Reference

UNEP has been engaged in several activities with the overall objective of implementing the contents of Agenda 21, the document produced at the UN Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, to improve global management of the environment. The workshop is a part of this process and addresses the following overall need identified by UNEP:

“...to build capacity of governments in policy diagnosis, formulation, and implementation in sustainable use of natural resources as part of integrated ecosystem management. To stimulate dialogue among the sectors to help bridge the gap and resolve conflict”.

The key outputs emanating from this workshop were to be the following:

1. Mechanisms developed to harmonize national policies leading to implementation of integrated management of agriculture, forestry and environment.
2. Basis created for the development of new policy framework to harmonize implementation of integrated management.
3. Plan of action developed at the national level to apply the framework.

The workshop adopted a consultation approach in which these issues could be seriously raised, debated and agreed upon. A seminar or colloquium format was ruled out as it was perceived that approaches to ecosystem management policy were still undergoing testing and it would be premature to deliver messages to high level decision-makers.

### **1.3 Major Workshop Themes**

As per the terms of reference above, the workshop focused on the concepts of integration of institutions and harmonization of policies with respect to sustainable management of ecosystems. Furthermore, the concepts were debated in view of the four major steps in the policy process—identification, formulation, implementation and monitoring.

Rather than broadly considering all issues pertaining to ecosystem management, limited time and resources required that some topics should be emphasized over others. ICRAF decided to narrow the focus of the workshop to land management issues such as soil erosion, soil nutrient management, deforestation and fallow management, where there would be considerable emphasis on rural agricultural producers (the focus of ICRAF's activities). This did not put limits on the breadth of discussion, but was used as a basis for identifying participants and providing guidance for the preparation of case studies.

The word integrate means to incorporate parts into a whole, while to harmonize is to bring into agreement or desirable arrangement. The ultimate goal for governments is to have in place a set of policies that are sufficiently harmonious so that natural resource management objectives can be met. It is unlikely that harmonious policies can be developed and maintained without integration of policy-making bodies. Hence, identifying mechanisms to bring about institutional integration is considered important. On the other hand, integration of institutions does not guarantee harmonization of policies or approaches. Therefore, attention also needs to be paid to types of integration and institutional function. These conceptual points are developed further in Chapter 2.

### **1.4 Overall Project Structure**

This section discusses the key pre-workshop and workshop activities of the project. These activities had significant implications for the types of discussions, as well as the

results of the workshop. They are discussed below under the following steps: participant identification, pre-workshop survey, case study preparations and workshop programme.

### ***Participant Identification***

The first important decision, after the narrowing down of themes, was to identify the target audience. It was decided that the most appropriate persons would be those involved in the key policy-making activities of diagnosis, formulation, implementation and monitoring. The main targets were high and middle level advisers to decision-makers in ministries, policy researchers, local level policy makers, and policy implementers at both national and local levels.

The participants were drawn from four countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and Cameroon. The number of countries was limited in order to invite policy stakeholders from diverse organizations within the same countries. This was to fulfill the need to stimulate dialogue among different sectors, to help identify action plans at the national level, and to ensure a diverse mix of participants both horizontally and vertically.

In all, there were 17 national participants. The number of outside participants was purposefully limited so that national participants could be allotted a large share of the time for presentations and discussions. There were representatives from ministries of agriculture (4), planning (1), lands (1) and scientific research (1), and from one forestry department. In addition, there were representatives from national research organizations, universities, NGOs, farmer groups and local government. As one participant later suggested, it would have been useful to have even wider representation and future workshops of the kind should plan to do so. A complete list of all participants, including those outside of national policy making activities, is in the Appendix.

Participant identification was hindered somewhat by lack of lead time to the workshop. The assistance of ICRAF field scientists was of great value as were personal contacts. Priority was placed on persons who were knowledgeable about policy formulation or implementation and who could make a significant contribution to this participatory workshop.

The mix of participants was sufficiently diverse so that a great number of issues emerged in the discussions. However, the level of discussion varied among topics in accordance with the expertise of the participants.

### ***Pre-Workshop Survey***

After the list of candidates was drawn up, a needs survey was sent along with the workshop application. The survey was intended to help identify possible areas of focus for material display, presenters, presentations and discussions. It also helped to determine the structure of the workshop, that is, the amount of time to be devoted to presentations versus working groups.

The survey contained the following questions.

1. What land-use management policy issues are of most concern to your institution at the moment?

2. Please comment on your needs concerning improved integration/communication of land-use policy efforts with other ministries and administrative levels.
3. What types of information or methodologies would be most useful to you in identifying land-use management issues for policy interventions? Which types of information or methodologies are currently inadequate?
4. What information or methodologies would be most useful to you in the formulation of appropriate land-use management policy interventions?
5. What types of information or methodologies would be most useful to you in the implementation of land-use management policy interventions?
6. What types of information or methodologies would be most useful to you in the monitoring of land-use management policy interventions?
7. Concerning the information mentioned above, how would you prefer it be assembled and presented in order to make it more useful to you?

As for key land management issues (question 1), we found a variety of responses. Some pertained to a resource problem, some to a constraint of land users, and some to a policy or governmental issue. The most common responses were:

- Land resource problems: Land degradation, deforestation
- Land user constraints: Land tenure
- Policy responses: Overall land policy, resource use monitoring

A large variety of responses were received on the questions pertaining to identification, formulation, implementation and monitoring needs. The fact that so many responses were given helped confirm to the organizers that a workshop emphasizing the role of 'expert' presentations would not be advisable. Rather, it was deemed more important to allow the participants to discuss and prioritize the many issues. The most commonly cited needs, after combining some similar topics, were: baseline data, creation and dissemination of clear legislation and policy, methods for involving local users during the policy process, coordinating structures for implementation of policy, and methods for analysing impacts of policy and other factors.

It is worth noting that these same topics were raised in the workshop as important themes.

### ***Preparation of Case Studies***

Before the workshop, all national participants were requested to discuss policy responses to land management issues that they or their institution were directly involved in. The land management issues and policy responses were selected by the participants. For each issue selected, the participants were requested to respond to the following items:

1. Description of issue
  - (a) description of the issue (what resource, where, since when, why important)
  - (b) what is/was the outcome that policy makers want changed
  - (c) what is/was the outcome that policy makers would like to see

- 2 Description of process of policy/institution response
  - (a) groups/individuals involved in the policy process (diagnosis, formulation, etc.)
  - (b) what steps were taken to involve the different actors in the policy process
  - (c) what types of institutional reform, if any, were necessary
  - (d) how was the issue identified by policy makers (e.g., information used)
  - (e) how was a policy response formulated/agreed upon
  - (f) which policy tools were selected, why, how
  - (g) how were policies implemented (e.g., commitments from various actors)
  - (h) how were implemented policies monitored, what types of indicators were used
  
3. Analysis of policy/institution response
  - (a) major positive/negative aspects and outcomes of the policy or institutional responses to the land management issue
  - (b) was the policy or institutional change a success
  - (c) which aspects would you have changed to improve the outcome
  - (d) which other policy changes, if any, should also have been made to lead to greater achievement of the goal
  - (e) has the process evolved within your institution and your country
  - (f) what improvements in the policy process have been made compared to the past

The land management issues selected for presentation in working groups were: deforestation (Malawi, Cameroon), forestry sector policy (Uganda), land fragmentation (Uganda), land productivity (Kenya), soil erosion (Kenya, Uganda, Malawi), grazing land productivity (Cameroon), introduction of new crop variety (Uganda) and water quality (Cameroon). Hence, degradation and deforestation, the two most common responses to the survey question on important land management issues, were also the major topics of the case studies.

### ***Workshop Programme***

The four-and-one-half-day workshop was held at ICRAF headquarters beginning on 2 October. The schedule was devised to maximize the time allocated to national policy makers to discuss major points. Hence, three full days were devoted to working group discussions and presentations. Furthermore, participants were able to influence the workshop schedule and content to some degree. For instance, participants selected key themes for thematic working group discussion on Wednesday and more time than planned was granted to the working groups, following their requests. The programme was as follows:

- **Day 1** - Opening Statements by ICRAF Board of Trustee Member, UNEP Representative and ICRAF Director General. Background talks on workshop schedule (ICRAF), technical overview (ICRAF) and new institutional approaches to land management (FAO).
- **Day 2** - Presentations of country-based working groups' case studies and discussion of policy response process in terms of successes, failures and recommendations for improvement. Identification of key areas (themes) requiring further attention from the participants.

- **Day 3** - Plenary presentations by working groups and identification of key themes for further discussion. Cross-country working group discussions of key issues in order to make progress on problem identification, resolution of problems and recommendations for future action.
- **Day 4** - Plenary presentations of thematic working groups and discussion of follow-up activities.
- **Day 5** - Informal exchange of information accumulated by ICRAF and discussions of future communication strategy.

The first day was devoted mainly to the presentation of concepts that would be required for the working group discussions. FAO was invited to participate in the discussions because of its experience in the development of land resources evaluation systems such as the Agro-Ecological Zones methodology and the Framework for Land Evaluation. Moreover, as UN Task Manager for Chapter 10 of Agenda 21, the organization is actively developing an improved integrated approach to land-use planning. This activity is closely related to the subject matter of the workshop and is also supported by UNEP.

During the first working group session, members from the same country met to discuss and achieve the following objectives:

1. To encourage dialogue among different policy-making bodies within the same country.
2. To analyse successes and failures of policy / institutional responses to selected land management issues.
3. To identify improved policy / institutional responses or procedures to the listed shortcomings.
4. To prepare an action plan for implementing 2 or 3 above.
5. To identify thematic issues for which information or understanding is lacking and worthy of further discussion during the thematic working groups.

Following discussions and plenary presentations, the participants then debated the topics for further discussion in thematic working groups. The participants decided to form two working groups, each of which would tackle one rather broad issue. The first was institutional rationalization, including problems of overlapping responsibilities and clarity of jurisdiction. The second group addressed the issue of participation, specifically the topic of expanding the role of various stakeholders in the policy-making process.

## **1.5 Layout of this Report**

Four chapters and an appendix follow this introductory chapter. Chapter 2 is a brief summary of the content in opening day presentations, the case studies presented the following day and the working group themes of Wednesday. Chapters 3 and 4 cover the main points that emerged from the working group discussions and plenary sessions. The layout for these chapters was a difficult choice due to overlap of problems and solutions.



Chapter 3 focuses on issues relating to institutional structure, including rationalization of structure and legal implications. Chapter 4 focuses on institutional function, including the issues of participation and communication throughout the policy process. The topics presented in Chapters 3 and 4 were not predetermined by workshop organizers nor did they appear as agenda items. The topic headings were identified following the workshop as useful categories within which all the important points could be incorporated. The sections synthesize points and arguments made throughout the week on a particular topic and thus do not pertain to single debates or discussions.

Chapter 5 presents a brief summary of issues and recommendations. The Appendix contains the list of participants at the workshop.

## CHAPTER 2

### PRESENTATIONS AND KEY WORKING GROUP THEMES

This chapter summarizes the presentations that formed the basis for much of the discussions, as well as the major topics of the thematic working groups. This information will provide an important background to Chapters 3 and 4, which synthesize the discussions into distinct topics.

#### 2.1 Invited Presentations

Presentations were made by ICRAF and FAO on the first day of the workshop. The presentation by ICRAF was intended to define some important terms and outline a conceptual framework within which subsequent discussions could be organized and directed.

The initial section of the presentation dealt with placing natural resource policy in the overall perspective of national government policy objectives and responses. The major points made here were that 1) natural resource management goals are but one interest area of governments and can be competitive with others; 2) there remain wide gaps in knowledge about the functioning of natural resources and links between their sustainability and growth and poverty alleviation; and 3) some technologies designed for better natural resource management are available but policies and institutions are needed to alleviate some of the constraints to their adoption. This section of the presentation was based on a few key documents: Vosti, Reardon and von Urff (1991), Scherr and Hazell (1994), Pretty (1995), and Vosti (1995).

The remainder of the presentation focused on defining policies and institutions, reviewed the steps in the policy process, and presented the concepts of integration and harmonization within the process. The policy process, as is customarily done, was split into four stages: problem identification or diagnosis, policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring. It was stressed that this process should be dynamic and thus emphasis was placed on improved monitoring and feedback mechanisms. Some of the activities that should take place at each stage were mentioned, such as identifying who should participate in the policy process during the first stage. This section of the presentation was largely drawn from Dalal-Clayton *et al.* (1994) and Carew-Reid *et al.* (1994).

The topics of integration and harmonization were then introduced. Integration and harmonization can be viewed from four angles. The first is horizontal integration (heretofore encompassing harmonization), which is highlighted in the terms of reference. This applies to inter-sectoral integration between institutions and other stakeholder representatives at the same level (e.g., national). A second type of integration is vertical, in which institutions from different administrative levels might be involved in the policy process. An example would be district, provincial and national officers within the same ministry (e.g., agriculture). Where national policy makers from a ministry interact with a local community group, there is both horizontal and vertical integration. A third type of integration is temporal. This type of integration is important because the sequencing of institutional or policy responses matters; a better

outcome might be observed, for example, if the implementation of policy X follows that of policy Y rather than vice-versa. Lastly, the degree of integration can differ significantly, ranging from very weak levels (e.g., irregular information exchange) to very strong levels (e.g., regular inter-sectoral meetings).

The concept of analysing the need for integration at different stages of the policy process was introduced as well. Generally speaking, the type and degree of integration required may change depending on the stage of the policy process. Hence there are no blanket rules and policy makers need to continuously debate the costs and benefits of integration throughout the policy process.

The presentation from the Food and Agriculture Organization explained how its Land and Water Development Division has evolved to meet changing needs of member governments, including a recent emphasis on increased integration of all concerned stakeholders in land and water management. Up to the time of the UNCED Conference in 1992, the division concentrated on the creation of improved methods for carrying out resource surveys, storing and analysing the resulting land resources information, and supporting land and water use decisions. Technical assistance in these areas was provided to member countries through field projects. After UNCED, FAO was given the responsibility of implementing Chapter 10 (Integrated Approach to Planning and Management of Land Resources). Chapter 10 calls for development of effective policies to support the best use of land, improved planning and management systems, strengthened institutions, and active participation of land users in the planning process.

In early 1995, the first report of the UN Secretary General to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, prepared by FAO, identified the lack of an integrated approach to land resources management as the major factor leading to the poor management of natural resources. This includes a failure to integrate objectives, policies, programmes and activities; insufficient contact and exchange of information between institutions and disciplines; and failure to satisfy the objectives of land users and those of the government and community. It is usual for responsibility for land, water and related resources to be split among many different institutions, resulting in the absence of an overall integrated development or conservation plan.

During the second half of 1995, the Land and Water Development Division gave a high priority to development of an integrated conceptual framework as the basis for an improved approach. It postulated that if the necessary information to make informed decisions is available to all stakeholders, if stakeholders are involved in management, and if an institutional structure to support the necessary negotiating process is in place, then satisfaction of stakeholder objectives will be optimized. In practical terms, the three major components of the new framework are 1) a land resources information system that is accessible to all stakeholders, 2) local area resource management groups consisting of stakeholders and 3) inter-institutional land resources planning groups at national and sub-national level.

## **2.2 National Participant Cases**

All national participants in the workshop were requested to prepare brief case studies (see Chapter 1) and to make short presentations during the Tuesday working group

sessions. Not all participants did so due to some confusion in communication. Most prepared one, but some prepared two; hence, in total, there were 14 case studies with 3 from Kenya, 2 from Malawi, 4 from Cameroon and 5 from Uganda. These were by no means the only examples discussed. Many participants talked at length about other issues and policy interventions. The following paragraphs briefly describe the formally presented cases on a country-by-country basis.

### **Kenya**

The three case studies were the Swynnerton Plan of 1954, Kenya's fertilizer policy since 1980 and Kenya's soil erosion policy since 1974. The Swynnerton Plan was aimed at improving agricultural production in the African farming areas during colonial occupation. The most well known feature of the plan was the call for systematic land registration of the smallholder sector. Other components of the plan involved improved credit facilities and infrastructure. The presentation on the Swynnerton Plan comprehensively reviewed the objectives, formulation process, implementation, and resulting successes and failures.

The development of a fertilizer policy dates back to the early 1980s, when the Government of Kenya desired to increase fertilizer use overall and realized that existing fertilizer recommendations were outdated. This set in motion a series of projects leading to policy guidelines. The presentation detailed the evolution of policy, from the view of the Ministry of Agriculture, from a top-down, single institution approach, to a more participatory encompassing approach. For soil erosion management, the National Soil and Water Conservation Programme was launched in 1974. It continues to evolve today under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock Development and Marketing. One of the interesting aspects of the policy, which was the subject of more discussion later in the workshop, was the empowerment of the local community with respect to key aspects of the programme.

### **Uganda**

The five topics presented for Uganda were: forestry policy, land consolidation in Kabale District, women's access to land and land tenure policy, coffee variety improvement, and soil erosion and policy. The forestry policy presentation addressed the issue of the current institutional structure that administers and governs forestry resources. One of the key issues raised was the fragmentation of forestry mandates into different ministries. Another important topic addressed was the lack of inclusion of communities and non-gazetted tree resources among policy priorities for forestry. Also discussed was the effect of this fragmentation on the valuation of forest resources and significance in the policy debate.

The land consolidation programme in Kabale began in the 1990s and was launched by the district level government in response to extremely high levels of land fragmentation. The study examined some of the responses made by the local government and the difficulties it faced in implementation (e.g., lack of financial resources, lack of control over key components of the response plan). The case study on land tenure and women's access to land was an historical overview of customary law in eastern and southwestern Uganda and key legislation affecting the Buganda Region in central Uganda. This presentation

discussed some of the recent policy developments related to women's tenure over resources and indicated remaining weaknesses and suggestions for improvement.

The coffee improvement case study was related to a specific donor-funded project that was implemented in the early 1990s. The presentation examined the process involved from the research stage through the dissemination and monitoring stages. It highlighted the research-dissemination process and demonstrated how lack of farmer involvement ultimately had negative consequences on the impact of the project. The final case study was about soil erosion and a general soils policy. To date, there are no general guidelines on soil management. Here the focus was on the need for coordination in view of the fact that soils are of interest across many ministries and institutions.

### **Cameroon**

The four Cameroon case studies focused, respectively, on improved grazing systems, encroachment in forest reserves, selective logging and water quality. Each policy intervention arose within the past ten years.

The improved grazing system was a donor-funded project that aimed to improve the productivity of pastures in northern Cameroon. The presentation not only covered the stages of project development and implementation, but also addressed issues of sustainability when the donor financing dried up and the activities ceased. One of reasons for this was the poor interaction between the expatriate and indigenous components of the project. The encroachment issue relates to the discovery of, and response of the government to, significant encroachment of people onto gazetted forest lands. The government's responses were directed towards the activities of the squatters and towards preventing additional encroachment.

The selective logging issue related to the problem of purposeful harvesting of specific tree species that are in demand due to commercial potential. Policies were developed to address the pursuant problems of loss of biodiversity and difficulty in reforestation. Lastly, water quality policy is a very recent initiative, which has taken place under the *Plan National de Gestion de l'Environnement*. Since it is at an early stage, the presentation focused on activities under problem diagnosis and policy formulation. The process of involving a wide array of stakeholders was described in detail and showed a marked contrast with earlier policy interventions.

### **Malawi**

There were two case studies from the two Malawian participants: tree planting to combat deforestation and the issue of soil erosion. The tree planting programme was a donor-funded project during the 1980s that aimed to reverse the significant loss of forest resources. The presentation showed that there was a significant degree of horizontal collaboration at the national level, but little local level participation. This weakness led to problems in several aspects of the project and hampered overall project success. The soil erosion policy initiative was only recently launched under the National Environmental Action Plan; it addressed technical and policy obstacles to better management of soils in fragile land areas. It involved a wide range of stakeholders and led to the development of research projects aimed at better defining and understanding of key issues.

## 2.3 Thematic Working Group Topics

Following the discussions of the case studies in working groups and in a plenary session, the participants debated which of the issues were most important and required additional brainstorming. About 10-12 topics were offered and eventually the group decided that many were related and could be grouped into broader classifications. In the end, many of the topics were placed into either of two broad categories and the participants decided that these would be discussed in two relatively large working groups. Representatives from each of the four countries self-selected into both working groups.

The first topic was that of rationalization of institutional structure (structure here refers to relationships among institutions, not within individual institutions). This included the specific issues of multiplicity of institutions, overlapping mandates, fragmentation of institutions and jurisdiction of institutions. The working group began by listing all the problems associated with existing institutional structure in the four countries, grouped them together, and then sought improvements to each of the concerns.

The second topic selected was that of participation. This included the concepts of stakeholder identification, local community participation and communication. In contrast with the first topic, this was related to issues of function rather than structure. The working group analysed the issue in a matrix format by addressing the questions of who, what, when, why and how. They then selected a particular issue, soil erosion, and went through an exercise of completing the matrix more concretely.

## Chapter 3

### ISSUES OF INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

It is a difficult task to describe the many important discussions on institutional structure that took place at the workshop while at the same time ensuring that the highlights clearly emerge. The option selected is to first describe the discussion, emphasizing the salient points along with supporting evidence, in a series of focused topics. The order of presentation does not reflect order of priority nor does, in all cases, the length of the section. Following the focused topics, a conclusion section prioritizes the main issues raised and recommendations on institutional structure.

#### 3.1 General Discussion

##### *Structural Framework for Environmental Policy*

A common framework for sectoral integration is the National Environmental Action Plans (NEAP) that have been adopted in all four participating countries. The NEAPs usually provide for a coordination mechanism (e.g., a steering committee) and this type of overarching structure was endorsed by all participants. It removes some of the burden formerly borne by the Office of the President for coordination activities. In Malawi, it was noted that one of the chief benefits of the NEAP process was the prioritization of land and other natural resource management issues. The NEAP steering committee can then approach the president or parliament with consensus policies, which may carry more weight than those emanating from individual ministries.

The NEAP has also institutionalized desirable approaches and methodologies, such as participatory methods, in collaborating institutions. In Uganda, the NEAP led to the formation of the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). The bill authorizing the establishment of NEMA was a result of consultations with numerous types of stakeholders in all parts of the country, with technical experts, foreign consultants and donors, and following lengthy debates by parliament. In all countries, task forces had been established within the NEAP to conduct diagnoses, formulate policies and eventually implement the policies. It is too early to evaluate the success of this framework, but the participants cited a number of cases where the NEAP has led to highly integrated approaches to problem identification and strategy formulation (e.g., soil erosion policy in Malawi and water quality improvement in Cameroon).

National plans and the resulting coordinating bodies face several obstacles, however. First, they can be very slow and costly to initiate. NEAPs in some countries have taken several years to complete (over four years in Uganda). The costs of completing the diagnostic and formulation elements of the NEAPs are also high and all have relied heavily on external support. Second, the coordinating body must be given a high degree of authority. Without this, there is little incentive for collaborating institutions to commit significant financial or human resources.

However, the participants debated whether or not the coordinating body should be housed in a ministry or be given its own authority. Placing it in a ministry could lead

to bottlenecks owing to lack of political will of the hosting ministry or lack of power to secure contributions of other ministries. A concern about this was raised over the placement of the National Environment Management Authority within the Ministry of Natural Resources in Uganda.

### ***Vertical Integration***

#### *Government Institutions*

In terms of structure (see Chapter 4 for functional issues of vertical integration), there is considerable scope for conducting natural resource policy utilizing vertically integrated institutions. All countries have formal government institutions at the district level, if not lower administrative units. For example, Kenya has a sub-location level of administration that is twice removed from the district level. Village committees are the lowest formal link to the population in Malawi. In each country, these bodies are involved in planning and implementation exercises (if not always at the policy formulation stage).

Local officials from national government institutions are not always elected or employed by the local population. Thus the structure does not foster accountability to the local population, but only to the central government. These same local administrative offices often lack sufficient resources with which to carry out the most basic functions. An example cited was the provincial administration level in Kenya, which is granted powers to implement national policies but has very few resources at its disposal. Furthermore, some administrative levels experience expansion in numbers due to population increase or political gerrymandering. Some 20 new districts have been created in Kenya in recent years, for instance. These increases, of course, place demands on scarce national government resources. In Cameroon, new districts may be formed by local population demand, but then the local population is obligated to provide sufficient resources for the administrative costs.

The vertical structure in Uganda was highly touted by participants as promoting demand driven (i.e., by the local populations) government responses. While there are district level central government appointees, there are more powerful locally elected officials at five levels ranging from village to district level. Equally important is the devolution of power from the centre to the local levels, giving the local officials significant ability to meet local demands (see below for more on this). In other countries, local elections are limited to the national parliamentary representatives.

Of all the ministries, the agricultural ministry is usually the most vertically extended if not integrated. This is largely due to the common feature of extensive networks of local agricultural officers and extension agents. However, it is well known that in all countries lack of resources severely limits the ability of these networks to function properly. Other ministries with interests in ecosystems are normally less well placed at the local level and find vertical integration more difficult.

#### *Non-Government Institutions*

There are many examples of vertically integrated institutions outside the government that are involved in issues of ecosystem management. Non-government organizations are prominent among them. Several have national headquarters with local sites. Normally, integration and harmonization between the different levels are high. Policies



and projects increasingly encourage the formation of local non-government institutions to help on implementation and monitoring. One example mentioned was the local conservation committees established in Kenya under the National Soil and Water Conservation Programme. Other examples of vertical integration are farmer groups (Uganda), private sector firms and parastatals (cereals marketing board in Kenya, ADMARK in Malawi).

Non-government institutions are often useful at local levels to serve as forums for information sharing and discussion. The challenge for them is to integrate as quickly as possible into formal government channels so that their views can be heard. It is important that the recipient government institution be accountable to the local population—that is, elected or employed by the local population.

### ***Horizontal Integration***

The group recognized that one of the chief impediments to improved horizontal integration in natural resource management has been the legacy of an executive branch structure whose interests cut across resources (e.g., agriculture, forestry and tourism all have interests in land). Each ministry still prepares sectoral plans, and while they are becoming increasingly consultative with other ministries (e.g., planning activities within the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock Development and Marketing in Kenya), there is still considerable scope for improvement. Participants noted a growing trend towards horizontal integration at the national ministerial level, although many times this corresponded to functional rather than formal institutional integration. The number of inter-ministerial bodies has grown in recent years, the most important being the steering committees and task forces established under the NEAP process in all four countries.

There are many other examples of issue oriented, horizontally integrated institutions. Participants generally felt that coordination and collaboration activities were increasing in number and improving in quality, at least at the national level. In Malawi, the former Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources had taken leading, coordinating roles in addressing the issues of deforestation in the early 1980s and soil erosion in the 1990s.

Comparing the ministry's two interventions, it is evident that learning had occurred. The soil erosion response included increased participation at early stages of stakeholders such as other ministries, the private sector, parastatals, NGOs and community representatives. In Uganda, horizontal integration at the district level is also taking place. For instance the District Council is directed in part by the District Development Committee, which comprises local representatives of ministries.

It was noted by participants that inter-ministerial bodies do not always have 'home' ministries as a base. Also, each ministry tends to participate only to more or less represent its views. This leads to difficulties in raising adequate resources to carry out mandates. It is important that such bodies have clear political and financial support from existing authoritative institutions, whether attached to a ministry or not.

### ***Rationalization of Institutional Structure***

The participants cited numerous examples of duplication or overlapping of mandates, jurisdictions or functions of institutions. The group generally felt this was brought about by a tendency for a proliferation of institutions, even at the ministerial

level, instead of modifying or strengthening existing institutions. For example, jurisdiction over forestry resources in Uganda is scattered across the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Wildlife, Tourism and Antiquities, and local district governments. In some cases, there is too much fragmentation and efficiency might be gained through consolidation. Examples of fragmentation include the separation of agricultural marketing from production at the ministerial level in Uganda and the creation of a separate Ministry of Irrigation in Malawi.

One observer pointed out that while structural adjustment policies reduced the numbers of employees in government, they did not address the institutional structure *per se*. This oversight may have actually strained institutional capacity even further, given that personnel reductions did not free any financial resources for the institution. The larger the number of institutions with overlapping interests, the more difficult it becomes to bring them together to work in harmony. In addition to logistical difficulties, there are increased chances of battles over control of issues and resources and thus increased need for coordination or facilitation.

However, it was pointed out that a simple reduction in the number of institutions is not a panacea. Integration and harmonization within institutions are not guaranteed and are equally weak in certain cases. Furthermore, new institutions might be called for in some cases. For instance, Ugandan soil policy is of interest to many ministries (Environmental Protection, Agriculture, Animal Industry, Local Government, Lands, Natural Resources) but there is presently no institutional mechanism for bringing them together.

### ***Devolution of Power***

The group reached a consensus that local communities need to be given more control over resource and ecosystem management as central government does not have the capacity to undertake this role by itself. Moreover, empowering local groups has additional advantages. First, the structure can overcome ethnic, cultural and ecological disputes that take place at the national level and tend to block progress. Second, because the local users often have the greatest interest in local resources, they have greater incentive to use them efficiently and to devise appropriate institutions and policies to ensure this. Third, local empowerment is likely to lead to a higher allocation of labour and capital to ecosystem management than if the function is left entirely to central government. Fourth, local communities have detailed knowledge of the natural resource base.

There are three caveats to this. One is that some issues lie outside the jurisdiction of a community (e.g., management of rivers) and thus co-management solutions will remain important. Second, cohesive community structures may not be in place everywhere. Some communities may lack institutional maturity simply because they are newly settled or have experienced heavy migration flows. Third, some resource issues will have highly technical components that may require expertise beyond the current capability within the community. As the word implies, devolution is likely to be a slow process in order to enable the local community to acquire the necessary expertise for ecosystem management.

Devolution experiments and even more fundamental processes are occurring within the participating countries. Kenya has launched a new pilot scheme to give some local communities a share of benefits from wildlife. This provides the community with an

incentive to manage animal populations in a more sustainable way. Local councils and collectivities have been planned to undertake most water management activities in Cameroon under the water quality task force of the National Environment Management Plan.

The most far-reaching devolution of power has taken place in Uganda. Devolution of power from national to local governments has been accepted and promoted by the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government. Local populations elect chairs from village, parish, sub-county and district levels. The district chair oversees a district council that consists of the sub-county representatives. The Ugandan government has been experimenting with 13 districts to assess their ability to absorb increased management and financial responsibilities. So far, according to one source, the districts have performed well. Districts are now in position to pass and enforce natural resource by-laws. In Kabale District, the local government has spearheaded an initiative to reduce the level of land fragmentation in the district.

### ***Role of Private Sector***

The important role of the private sector as a stakeholder in the policy process was acknowledged by the group. The sector's role in policy implementation was particularly highlighted. This was no surprise given the fundamental transformation from heavy government involvement in economic functions to greater liberalization. This transformation has been fueled by the realization that the private sector can accomplish many activities with greater efficiency than can the government. One type of efficiency of private organizations is the speed at which they are able to act. Government organizations tend to be bureaucratic and intra-government collaboration can become ineffective.

The participants also felt that the government must continue to play an important role with respect to certain land management issues. The criteria for determining the extent of government involvement was not debated owing to lack of time. However, several examples were given that indicate the types of issues the private sector may be better placed to handle.

In Kenya, it was noted that fertilizer provision had undergone a dramatic transformation from being the exclusive domain of the state to becoming completely liberalized. The impetus for this came from structural adjustment conditions that held that fertilizer was largely a commodity benefitting individuals and should not be subsidized. On the other hand, the Government of Kenya has remained an active participant in soil erosion control, citing externalities of erosion that go beyond farmers' perceived costs and benefits. The Kenyan government remains involved in credit to smallholders as well through the Agricultural Finance Corporation.

In Uganda, the National Farmers' Association (UNFA) has started a fee-for-service farmer extension programme. The rationale for this venture is that government extension is severely hampered by lack of funds and is not responsive to farmer needs. Another interesting experience from Uganda involved the production and distribution of a new coffee variety. At the programme's inception, these functions were given to the government. However, the government could not meet the high demand for seedlings that accompanied the introduction of the new variety. After a couple of years, it was decided to hand over these functions to the private sector. The private enter-

prises set a cost-based price that was considerably higher than the price charged by government. At the same time, early results of the coffee variety were negatively viewed by farmers and demand fell. Consequently, the number of seedlings distributed to farmers tapered off dramatically and the project has virtually collapsed as farmers are returning to the old varieties.

The effect of the NEAPs, with their adherence to consensus building through stakeholder participation, is likely to increase the role of the private sector in the policy process. This seems to have been the case in the proposals put forth in Cameroon concerning the management of drinking water and water quality control.

### ***Conflict Resolution***

The topic of conflict resolution surfaced on a number of occasions. Conflicts naturally arise among stakeholders (and institutions) due to differing needs, interests and pursuits. This is certainly true with respect to ecosystem management because the use of one type of resource by a user group necessarily affects the quality of the other ecosystem resources. Although the group could not describe the ideal solution, it was felt that a conflict resolution institution should be a forum that facilitates discussion among interest groups. These are needed at various administrative levels. Given the concurrent calls for increased integration among stakeholders, it is hoped that conflicts will surface at planning stages rather than later. In these cases, negotiation and compromise would be the key activities at the forum rather than enforcement and compensation. Much conflict resolution certainly will take place within existing inter-institutional structures.

### ***Institutions and Externalities***

There was not sufficient time to discuss all the special circumstances in which institutions were needed. Hence, the issue of externalities and jurisdictional requirements of institutions was only briefly mentioned. Here, some participants noted the extra problems in designing institutions in which all affected stakeholders could be represented. For example, deforestation affects the global community since forests are major carbon sinks. The group struggled with how to prioritize stakeholders by their interest in order to make decisions on who should participate in the different stages of the policy process (more on this under functional issues).

### ***Regional/International Institutions***

The group recognized that several issues related to ecosystem management are transnational. Examples include carbon sequestration in forests and migratory species. There are already examples where national governments have come together to address particular issues. The Southern African Development Committee (SADC) was specifically noted as trying to improve information flows and catalysing regional policy research and development.

However, the group strongly felt that before attempting to strengthen these types of institutions, there was a more urgent need to address national institutional structure. Many of the general weaknesses discussed during the week pertaining to the national policy process would also need to be rectified prior to the creation of and commitment

to new regional initiatives. One participant stated that there also is need for issues to be viewed by politicians as 'affecting humanity' rather than 'affecting a nation' before required political commitment for regional action would be forthcoming.

### ***Legal Implications of Institutional Structure***

Institutions are born either from other institutions or through collective action on the part of individuals. The power and authority of the new institution depends upon the legal, cultural and moral backing it receives from society. Institutions that are formed informally or on an ad hoc basis are precarious in that their collapse cannot be prevented by legal procedures. Hence, institutions for ecosystem management that are expected to persist in the long term should have some type of legal backing.

The major institutional need in ecosystem management appears to be in a coordination role. There are at least three types of coordination needed:

- 1) Coordination for policy harmonization
- 2) Coordination for implementation
- 3) Coordination for acquiring technical inputs

It is most important that some formalized arrangement be in place to ensure the coordination of policy harmonization. Coordination of implementation and technical input acquisition can be on a more flexible, ad hoc basis depending on the nature of the resource issue and solution. At a very broad level the NEAP structure has played this role of coordinator. As described above, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) has been created in Uganda to provide this function from within the Ministry of Natural Resources. Participants agreed that whatever the resulting institutional structure, *it must be given authority and capability to implement its mandate.* This is especially crucial for issues of ecosystem management, which may not enjoy the degree of priority and political backing of other issues.

However, while the mandates for these new institutions may be clearly specified, mandates of other existing institutions may not have changed in response, leaving a great deal of overlap in many instances. In general, participants were very concerned about conflicting or unclear legislation and policy pertaining to certain resources. This is compounded by the very slow process of changing legislation that in many cases still reflects conditions in colonial times.

### ***Accountability***

Accountability and transparency issues were raised on numerous occasions, but relate mainly to functional issues and are thus found in Chapter 4. However, there was one pertinent point concerning institutional structure. It was noted that at the national level there is a reliance on executive branch institutions (e.g., ministry-created) that are accountable to the central government and not to local people. Participants felt that *parliamentary bodies or institutions could play a more prominent role since they are likely to be more accountable to local populations and needs than those of the executive branch.* There are already examples of such institutions, in the form of committees, but they often have few resources. For example, the Kenyan parliamentary committee

to oversee government spending lacks resources and has only recently completed its review of the 1992 fiscal year. Over time, democracy and devolution of power, such as is taking place in Uganda, should lead to institutions that are more responsive and accountable to local populations.

### 3.2 Summary of Main Points

#### *Weaknesses in Institutional Structure*

Major weaknesses related to institutional structure were the following:

- *Traditional sectoral division of ministries:* This pattern was observed in all four participating countries and little action has been taken to improve the situation.
- *Proliferation of national institutions resulting in overlapping mandates or otherwise overly fragmented institutions:* New institutions were often created for political reasons and without sufficient regard for policy effectiveness or budget limitations.
- *Lack of coordinating mechanisms for inter-institutional activities:* There was virtually no institutionalization of integration procedures in natural resource policy. However, this is being changed by the National Environmental Action Plan process.
- *Inattention to local institutional development:* National governments have traditionally paid little attention to local institutions and in fact retain exclusive powers of taxation in most countries.
- *Lack of direct accountability of institutions to the citizenry:* In the past, democratically elected officials of institutions were few, leading to poor accountability. If democracy continues to spread, this situation is likely to improve.

#### *Improvements in Institutional Structure*

A number of recent improvements achieved in institutional structure were noted:

- *Increase in the number and scope of horizontally integrated structures:* Many examples of horizontally integrated institutions at the national level, often involving several ministries, were cited as relatively new.
- *Introduction of National Environmental Action Plans:* Initiated by the World Bank, these plans are providing a structure within which a number of stakeholders can prioritize natural resource management issues, diagnose underlying problems, and formulate, implement and monitor policy changes. While very promising, it is too early to tell how effective and sustainable this approach will be.
- *Spread of democratically elected officials:* Multi-party democracy and/or fairly contested elections have been introduced in all four countries. Local level elections and local institutional power over budgetary and natural resource management issues are also expanding.

#### *Recommendations*

Given the major points above, the following broad recommendations were proposed by the group:

1. *Rationalize institutional structure, which in many cases would result in decreasing the number of institutions at national level; in some cases, new or improved institutions would need to be fostered.*

It was generally felt that too many institutions with interests in natural resource management existed at the national level. This applies even to the ministerial level where 'specialty' ministries have been created and separated from seemingly appropriate ministries. The group suggested that a review of the existing institutional structure be made, although the specifics on how this would be conducted were not given. For the future, the participants felt that greater efforts need to be made to strengthen or modify existing institutions before creating new ones. Where new ones are created, as in the case of recent Ministries for Environment or Natural Resources, the mandates of existing institutions need to be reviewed.

On the other hand, it cannot be said that in all cases the number of institutions needs to be reduced. In fact, there were examples of vacuums, often in circumstances where a new issue is identified. Moreover, it was recognized that there may well be need to increase the number of local level institutions dealing with natural resource management issues. The group did not have sufficient time to explore the types of institutions nor the composition of those that would be needed at the different levels.

*2. Devolve power to local levels where feasible while maintaining a degree of vertical integration.*

The group agreed that capacity constraints in national government institutions were likely to persist in the future and that greater participation of local communities in policy making would be an important step towards effective ecosystem management. However, it was also recognized that this would not be a quick or easy step to take. Thus, there were strong recommendations for capacity building and dissemination of information at local levels. Capacity building would be needed in management, policy making and technical levels so that the local community could increase its share of the skilled labour required for effective policy making. The group also felt that there was a general lack of understanding of complex ecosystem functions and their management, among local communities and national institutions as well. Better dissemination of information would likely increase the willingness of national institutions to cede power to local levels and would undoubtedly improve the performance of local communities to confront natural resource management issues at the local level and those that cross into other jurisdictions.

*3. Assure that institutional structure is more accountable to the population as in the case of institutions under control of democratically elected officials.*

This recommendation puts teeth into previous ones by emphasizing that a new institutional structure must not only involve a change in name but in the very nature of its existence. While accountability surfaced mainly as a functional issue, the group felt that structure was an important determinant of functional accountability. There would be little or no change in institutional incentives if a new executive branch institution assumed the mandates of an existing one. In general, it would be preferable to focus the development of new government institutions under the auspices of elected officials who are as closely linked to the population as possible. At the national level this implies more emphasis on parliamentary institutions. At the local level, it favours institutions under the direction of locally elected officials rather than officers appointed as representatives of the national government.

## Chapter 4

### ISSUES OF INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTION

Like Chapter 3, this chapter is organized into two main sections. The first describes the workshop discussion, emphasizing the salient points along with supporting evidence, in a series of focused topics. The order of presentation does not reflect order of priority nor does, in all cases, the length of the section. The second section follows the focused topics and prioritizes the main issues and recommendations on institutional structure.

#### 4.1 General Discussion

##### *External Influence*

There was significant discussion about the role of external organizations, principally donors, in national policies for ecosystem management. Because the donors themselves lack coordination, participants noted that the types of programmes and projects funded can be somewhat haphazard and not reflective of national priorities. One suggestion was that the donors instill in their procedures mechanisms to ensure that supported programmes are participatory, so as to include a variety of national and local stakeholders.

Several participants felt the influence of donors was too strong on both directional and technical issues. In the case of Malawi and deforestation, there was too much external emphasis on exotic trees (e.g., eucalyptus), which turned out to be inappropriate in many regions and had other deleterious consequences on the ecosystems in which they were placed (e.g., removal of undergrowth and associated fauna). One participant suggested that it wasn't always that donors imposed projects but that ministries actively sought funds to bring in needed resources and publicity. However, all agreed that some degree of external finance is necessary for policy support. In turn, it was understood that this would necessarily imply technical involvement as donors would insist on accountability of funds.

##### *Horizontal Links*

Horizontal collaboration among institutions at the national level appears to have become more commonplace in recent years. Thus, policy makers have been at least partially successful in overcoming the inherited obstacle of a fragmented sectoral structure of the executive branch. However, sectoral planning remains an important activity and it is more or less the will of individuals to ensure that inputs from other sectors are solicited. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock Development and Marketing in Kenya holds regular consultations with other ministries. Nonetheless, there remain problems in collaboration. Often, a single ministry will 'control' the policy progress on an issue that is of interest to many institutions. For instance, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) in Uganda has been given the lead on soil policy and other institutions are unable to act until the MNR promulgates its policy guidelines. Many well intended inter-sectoral institutions fail due to lack of interest or will by all



participants. This occurs sometimes due to irregularity in communications and to lack of mandatory attendance or participation.

Greater horizontal integration is all the more hastened by the NEAP process undertaken in all participating countries. This is evidenced by the wide participation in two examples cited by participants—water quality in Cameroon and soil erosion policy in Malawi.

### ***Vertical Links***

Examples of functional links along administrative levels follow closely the structural links mentioned in Chapter 3. For example, ministries with personnel at different levels normally involve the different levels in policy formation. District level plans in Kenya are fed up to the national level to generate a national plan. In Uganda, the national government plan is passed down to the local government institutions so that they can use the information in planning their annual strategies. In ministries of agriculture, where national officers are linked to local populations through extension agents, there is considerable vertical integration of activities. For example, fertilizer policy recommendations were formulated, tested and implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock Development and Marketing in Kenya.

Vertical integration was deemed to be very important by the group. Thus, two subsections of the topic, stakeholder participation and local participation in particular, are treated in separate sections below.

### ***Stakeholder Participation***

The degree of stakeholder participation is uneven across land management issues. One difficulty noted is that identification of stakeholders is itself not simple and may be beyond the capacity of a single institution. It is important to incorporate different viewpoints on an issue in order to properly identify stakeholder interests.

From the case studies presented and the ensuing discussions, it was evident that stakeholder participation in the policy process has increased significantly in recent years. Policy interventions as late as the mid 1980s were characteristically led by one ministry, perhaps in collaboration with one other and a donor organization. Where others were involved it was strictly for information extraction, with no allowance for input on substantive issues.

But this situation is changing and some demonstration examples were provided. With the change to fertilizer market liberalization in Kenya, private firms are now linked to government fertilizer research, and parastatals, NGOs and various local representatives of ministries are participating in the dissemination of fertilizer use recommendations. The NEAP process helped to bring together eight ministries, five international organizations, several NGOs, local councils, universities and parastatals to discuss the issues and policy directions to improve water quality in Cameroon. Similarly, the establishment of NEMA in Uganda (see above) followed a series of participatory exercises with stakeholders.

There was overwhelming agreement that greater participation of stakeholders was necessary, especially at diagnostic and formulation stages. The group emphasized participation by local communities in ecosystem management and this is given an individual

section below. It is fair to say that the workshop did not reach precise recommendations on which types of stakeholders and how many should be included at various stages of the process. It was noted that direct participation was costly and some prioritization of stakeholder interests had to be made. Decisions to include or exclude stakeholders would have to be based upon this prioritization. Another view held that the important result was the airing of stakeholder opinions rather than formal presence during meetings.

Special concern was raised about the ability to coordinate the recommended increase in stakeholder participation. This requires management skills, which were identified as one of the glaring weaknesses within institutions. Further, many felt that incorporation of important stakeholders at the diagnosis and implementation stage was relatively easy (as evidenced by numerous examples from the participants), but that the real challenge was to involve them during the formulation stage.

### ***Local Participation in Particular***

So far, quite a bit has been said about participation and in particular that of local communities. It was so important to the group that we devote a separate section to it. The participants cited many negative results that stemmed from poor or absent participation of local populations. The Swynnerton Plan in Kenya, of which land registration was one component, failed to understand the cultural background of the various ethnic groups and tried to implement a standard package everywhere. The result has been uneven acceptance and impact. A grazing management project aimed at preventing deforestation in Cameroon was completely annulled by the local chief when the donor supported phase ended. A huge tree planting project in Malawi did not consult the local population on wood product needs and species preferences. As a consequence, many planted trees failed due to incompatibility or neglect. Lastly, the introduction of a new coffee variety in Uganda was launched without involving farmers in the development process. Consequently, some negative aspects of the variety were not discovered until after it was extended and came into disfavour with farmers.

It is easy to recommend greater local participation, but putting words into practice is difficult. For instance, what is meant by local participation? Certainly, among the local population, there are distinct interest groups who may hold conflicting views on major issues, for example, subsistence farmers, cash crop farmers, large farmers, traders, artisans, landless persons, NGOs, government. Also, communities differ from one another in terms of resources, needs and activities. It would certainly be an expensive undertaking to incorporate all interests of all distinct communities in all stages of the policy process. The group did not have enough time to exhaust this issue. However, one promising suggestion was to utilize existing local institutional structures to filter and send messages up to higher administrative levels.

This leads into the question of how local participation is to be used. Clearly, local communities have expertise in understanding locally-based resource issues and in identifying appropriate implementation strategies. However, it is not clear that they can always identify the best solution by themselves, since innovative ideas may have been developed elsewhere.

Above and beyond their knowledge base, the ability or power of the local community to make its opinions known and to negotiate where necessary is important. Special interests or national institutions can possess the skills and resources to have their own

way, *unless* local communities are sufficiently empowered with respect to decision taking *and* their decisions are respected and enforced by higher authorities. None of this is likely to happen unless higher administrative institutions are made accountable to local populations. If this does not happen, there is little incentive for the institutions to respond to local needs.

Some examples of positive local participation were mentioned during the course of the workshop. One example was in the formation of NEMA in Uganda, in which a widespread local consultation process was implemented at the identification and formulation stages. Another has been with respect to water quality issues in Cameroon, where local groups participated in identification and formulation activities.

### ***Human Capacity/Incentives within Institutions***

There was significant representation in the workshop from governmental institutions; perhaps because of this, one problem emphasized was that of poor staff performance due to lack of incentives. This clearly affects policy making for ecosystem management, although it is not unique to this issue. Poor incentives arise mainly from low pay and poor operational support for employees. As a result, there is high staff turnover in public institutions, especially of skilled personnel who can earn much more in the private sector.

There was widespread agreement that pay needed to be raised in general. One suggestion was that promotions ought to be based somehow on 'team play' rather than individual performance. This would seemingly be more in the spirit of integration and harmonization. There was equal consensus that management skills in the same institutions were lacking and that this was also reducing institutional performance. These may be compounded by incentive problems at the managerial level, but participants urged strongly that more management training was needed at all levels within institutions.

### ***Institutional Objectives***

Chapter 3 highlighted the lack of clear jurisdictions across institutions as being harmful to the development of appropriate policies. Sometimes, even within individual institutions, there is a lack of focus or clear mandate. Some participants noted that the incentive structure of political institutions is skewed towards the short term over the long term in order to produce results quickly. That being the case, and with high level political support often lacking, policies and projects aimed at improving sustainable use of natural resources are undervalued. Also, because urgent political items arise frequently, staff can be moved from one policy issue to another, disrupting continuity of projects. The tree planting programme in Malawi had a high turnover of project leaders and monitors in a short period of time. A short-term focus can plague projects funded by donors who also must demonstrate project impact on a relatively short time horizon.

With the increasing awareness of the importance of natural resource management, the level of clarity of mission may even worsen in the near term. Institutions may add sustainability or participatory guidelines to their mission statements, while at the same time leaving in place existing statutes that grant authoritative powers to the institution. This seems to have happened in the case of NEMA with regard to forestry policy in Uganda, where its charter simultaneously refers to increased local participation but grants paramount authority in all matters to national authorities.

## ***Accountability***

Accountability surfaced in two respects: 1) monitoring within the project or policy to provide feedback and improve the process, and 2) dissemination of information to other stakeholders and interest groups. As for the first item, most participants felt that monitoring is weak and insufficient to improve policy. Hence, policies seemed to be static rather than dynamic. Indeed, there were only a few examples cited where monitoring was stressed in a policy formation exercise. For instance, a Kenya soil erosion policy begun in 1974 did not implement a monitoring and feedback mechanism until 1990—16 years after inception! Many new initiatives (e.g., those under NEAPs) may well overcome this deficiency as they have improved on other aspects of the policy process; however, it is too early to evaluate this.

More discussion took place concerning accountability to those external to the project or policy. First, accounting to stakeholders is costly; the question was raised of who should be accountable to whom. Different stakeholders require different accounting information (perhaps even in different languages) and so some prioritization of target audiences is required. Second, it was felt that ex-post accountability, while certainly welcomed and needed, might not be sufficient since there may be little stakeholders could do with the information.

It was suggested that accountability begin during the policy formulation stage so that inputs could be solicited and policies improved prior to implementation. Third, participants felt that to improve accountability, cost effective disseminating was needed (see communications section below for more on this). One recommendation that addresses each of the concerns above is to have greater participation of stakeholders in the policy process. This will lead to direct accountability to stakeholders.

An issue was raised specifically in light of other recommendations that more control be devolved to local institutions. There was a concern that some local institutions may not have the technical means to fully implement accountability mandates. Technical assistance in financial matters and communications may be required.

## ***Communication/Information Dissemination/Education***

Developments made during the policy process are poorly communicated to those outside the inner-circle of policy makers. Some of the reasons are mentioned under other headings—lack of political will, motivation or financial resources. However, it was also the opinion of some participants that communication skills and infrastructure are constraining. Institutional capacity to communicate with the public is lacking simply because this function was not emphasized in the past.

The participants suggested that brief summaries of reports, meetings and other important steps in policy formation could become more routinely prepared and distributed. Of course, communication infrastructure is also lacking. Whereas in many developed countries information flows cheaply through electronic mail systems, these are still rare in the developing countries of Africa. More effective use of locally organized workshops and seminars (perhaps as part of other regularly scheduled meetings) could be highly useful in this respect. These were done in Kabale, Uganda, as part of a campaign to promote land consolidation.

There was a major concern that not all the expected role players in ecosystem management were sufficiently informed to accomplish their tasks. For many technical

matters, more research needs to be undertaken to improve basic understanding. For others, it is more a matter of disseminating known facts. The groups emphasized the importance of educating rural communities on technical matters so that they could play a greater role in ecosystem management. This would involve education of young children in public schools and informal training of adults. Many participants also noted that more education or awareness was needed for all levels of society. A great deal of false or unproven information is spread, which can lead to bad policies. One example of misinformation cited was the undervaluation of forestry resources in Uganda, mainly because fuelwood values were not included. One result is the marginalization of forestry in the political debate.

### ***Financial Resources***

Institutions often lack resources to accomplish their mandates. National institutions are particularly strained when attempting to implement and enforce policies across the entire country. The cost of the Swynnerton Plan in Kenya was enormous and whereas it was originally thought to have been fully implemented within a few years time, some land areas had not yet been registered 30 years after its inception. Many other examples were given that showed how lack of resources slowed or even halted the progress of projects or policies. Often, successful projects such as the new grazing regime in Cameroon are not pursued owing to lack of funds. One issue that was raised but not fully discussed was the role of extension. In most sub-Saharan Africa countries, extension agents are expected to implement a variety of cropping, input, livestock and natural resource policies, yet they lack basic operating funds with which to visit farmers. To what extent such a structure could support any additional mandates is uncertain.

The devolution of control to local communities was seen as a way of reducing the financial burden of policy implementation. Rather than having to pay for administrative structures from the centre to the local communities, the communities would themselves develop and implement policies. If the community 'owned' the strategy, it was also felt that more labour could be of a voluntary nature rather than having to be paid for.

### ***Legal Implications of Institutional Function***

Many policies and projects can be carried out without the need for legal change. However, legal clarity or backing is required under a number of conditions. Unfortunately, while policy change can take place with relative speed, legal change is almost always slower. Legislative (or executive) procedures are governed by constitutions and are normally intended to prevent hasty changes to law. The incongruence of speed of change between policy and law can certainly limit the effectiveness of policy. For example, the tree planting programme in Malawi that began in 1980 could have benefitted from modifications to the Forestry Law, but these never came about (and have not been changed today).

Some participants noted that national law was often rigidly interpreted or applied throughout the country. As a result some sections were inappropriate in certain areas. For instance, it is doubtful that the Swynnerton plan could have been expected to function smoothly in all areas of Kenya because it hinged upon certain assumptions (e.g., sufficient infrastructure) that were not valid in many areas.

Several suggestions to speed up the legal process were made. The first was for institutions to acquire more in-house legal capability. Currently, legal changes are often handled by the Justice Ministries, which have little incentive to work on sectoral issues when they are overburdened by criminal and financial investigations. The second recommendation was to gain high level political support early in the process so that bottlenecks due to lack of motivation can be avoided. Third, collaborating with legislative committees on legal changes could also help reduce time spent in parliamentary debates. Time will tell how effective the NEAP structure can be in facilitating legal change.

## 4.2 Summary of Main Points

### *Weaknesses of Institutional Functions*

The major weaknesses related to institutional function were the following:

- *Stakeholder participation is too low:* Although there is increased collaboration among public institutions, non-governmental stakeholders are still largely left out of the policy debate.
- *Community participation remains weak, especially at early stages of policy process:* Vertical integration was noted as particularly weak and local participation prior to the implementation stage was lacking in most cases.
- *Management skills within institutions are lacking at all levels:* Public institutions lack the capacity to oversee increasingly numerous and complex tasks.
- *Motivation is weak in public institutions:* Lack of pay and other incentives have clearly affected the motivational levels and performances of personnel in government institutions.
- *Knowledge gaps in ecological management exist at all levels but within local communities in particular:* A key obstacle to effective ecosystem management is lack of knowledge and poor dissemination of scientific knowledge about ecosystem function and management.
- *Communication of policy process to stakeholders is weak (i.e., accountability), especially at early stages of policy process:* Information regarding the progress of the policy debate is rarely shared with stakeholders outside the policy circle and there are also difficulties in disseminating the contents of enacted policies to the general population.
- *National governments are plagued by lack of resources to undertake natural resource management policy:* Chronic government budgetary constraints limit the effectiveness with which policies can be formulated and especially implemented.
- *Lack of donor coordination contributes to natural resource management strategies that may lack attachment to national priority:* There is a heavy reliance by African countries on donor funds to develop and implement policies and the resulting policy agenda may appear more donor-driven than national-driven.

### *Improvements in Institutional Function*

Improvements noted in institutional function were:

- *Increased horizontal collaboration between institutions, governmental and non-governmental, at both national and local levels:* The participants provided many

cases of good linkages among institutions, notably government institutions, at the same administrative level.

- *Improved vertical harmonization within ministries:* Many ministries are structured with personnel at various administrative levels and seem to be making better use of this structure in terms of diagnosis and formulation than in the past.

### **Recommendations**

Three recommendations relate to improving collaboration between and among stakeholder groups in the policy process. Others are concerned with the development and dissemination of information and institutional capacity development.

#### *1. Develop methods for stakeholder identification and inclusion.*

One constraint to improved stakeholder participation in the policy process is the uncertainty about how to do it. Unfortunately, the group did not have sufficient time to devote to this important and complex topic. It was clear that more resources need to be put into increasing stakeholder participation, and the group mentioned seminars, consultations and committees, among other mechanisms for bringing interest groups together. However, it was not possible to define an 'acceptable' or cost-effective level of participation. This is something that would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. One general point that emerged was that policy issues need to be identified by a group with diverse interests. This will help promote the proper identification of stakeholders.

#### *2. Institutionalize a participatory approach to ensure that all activities address priority issues.*

The use of participatory methods will need to be increased throughout policy-making bodies. In the past it has been more or less up to the initiative of the lead policy-making institution to adopt such an approach. One possible forum for institutionalizing these methods is the National Environmental Action Plans adopted in each country. They in fact are already advancing this concept mainly in terms of horizontal integration. But even the NEAPs could be strengthened by adding a task force on policy approaches and methodologies that could then provide services to other task forces oriented to resource issues.

#### *3. Develop and institutionalize cheap methods for communicating progress of policy process to stakeholders and the general public.*

It was recognized that not all relevant stakeholders would be able to attend key policy debates in person. Hence, there is a need to establish a communication strategy to disseminate policy progress and to serve as a means to elicit input into the debate. This is a function that is seemingly absent in the policy process. One suggestion was for brief summaries of key reports, meetings or decisions to be generated and distributed to key stakeholder groups. At the same time, costs could be saved by restricting the number of copies of full reports, meeting minutes and policy background statements.

There was also a felt need to improve communication to the general public, perhaps not throughout the policy process, but at least following policy formulation. This could

be done through existing organized local meetings (e.g., with extension or district officers) where two-way communication can be established. This of course will require better dissemination and education of local level officials regarding policy changes and implications. Lastly, the group felt institutions had to take monitoring more seriously and implement feedback mechanisms.

4. *Disseminate information on ecosystem management especially but not exclusively to local communities.*

The problem of lack of understanding of complex ecosystem functions and management was deemed to be pervasive at all levels of society. It was felt that the problem was more acute at the local level, which was recommended to have a greater responsibility over natural resource management. Part of the lack of understanding relates to lack of dissemination of known facts and relationships. Often, the material is available in scientific format and European languages and not accessible to different stakeholder groups. Thus, there is an urgent need to make this information more user friendly to stakeholder groups, especially those at local levels. This would involve rewriting of material for specified target groups and translation of critical information.

5. *Fund and conduct research to address information gaps in ecosystem management.*

Related to recommendation 4, the second reason for lack of understanding about ecosystems is that much more research needs to be undertaken on the topic. Thus, the recommendation is made to maintain or increase funding levels for research on natural resource management issues. The research would encompass social, economic and ecological implications of ecosystem management and should address aspects that would be internal to a local community and those with wider jurisdictions (e.g., migratory species or water uptake from rivers).

6. *Compile and disseminate information about innovative local institutions involved in natural resource management.*

As a third aspect of providing local communities the necessary tools to manage their resources, it was recommended that information about different types of local institutional approaches to natural resource management from around the world be disseminated to local communities. The group did not know of current publications that would be suitable for dissemination, but some may well exist. If not, the group recommended that this also be an urgent research item.

7. *Build capacity in management skills.*

To address the problem of management skills within institutions, particularly public institutions, the group recommended that management training be of high priority. The training would be directed to all levels of management as improvement was thought to be needed throughout entire institutions. The training would have at least two aspects. The first would be on the managing of projects and policy development.



The second would be on the management of personnel and enhancement of their productivity.

*8. Provide greater incentives to public employees.*

Lack of motivation of personnel in public institutions is clearly related, though not entirely, to poor remuneration packages. This is evidenced by high staff turnover of skilled employees who move to private sector jobs when they become available. The group recommended that wages and benefits be raised to retain quality staff. The group also felt that motivation could be increased by providing necessary equipment (e.g., computers) and operational funds with which to undertake effective policy research and development activities.

## Chapter 5

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 General

Before summarizing the important results of the workshop, it is illuminating to review the relationship between the terms of reference, the many topics implied by them and those topics on which the group focused.

The terms of reference called for the following expected workshop outputs: 1) mechanisms developed to harmonize national policies leading to implementation of integrated management of agriculture, forestry and environment, 2) basis created for the development of new policy framework to harmonize implementation of integrated management, and 3) national level plan of action developed to apply the framework. The terms of reference thus emphasize horizontal integration and harmonization, as well as policy formulation and implementation.

The group focused on institutional integration much more than on policy harmonization. It was clear that institutions were perceived as having weaknesses that needed to be rectified before moving on to the problems of policy harmonization. Because of this, many of the problems and recommendations are not unique to ecosystem management issues but are applicable to policy making in general.

While the terms of reference emphasized horizontal (or sectoral) integration, the group appeared more concerned with vertical integration, especially the participation of local stakeholders. Further, the group emphasized participation at the diagnosis and formulation stages. Pertaining to integration of institutions, the degree of integration was explored but not exhausted; there is need to go beyond the recommendations of the workshop. Among the four stages of the policy process, the group felt strongly that the monitoring stage was almost completely overlooked by policy makers and needed to receive much more attention.

Table 1 shows a matrix of the policy process along the columns and the different concepts of integration and harmonization along the rows. Each cell represents a potential area of emphasis of discussion with a 'general' category added to capture discussions that spanned more than one cell. The cells of Table 1 indicate which topics received attention. Those with a '●' were discussed and those with a '★' were priority areas of discussion. As can be seen, the priority areas were all related to vertical integration. There was little discussion of temporal integration of policies, and policy monitoring was not discussed with respect to implications for integration.

Many diverse items were discussed, and the group generally followed the format of identifying positive aspects of policy processes, negative aspects, and then solutions or recommendations stemming from them. This enabled the group to debate very specific topics. Taken together, the suggestions provide a very useful strategy for improving the way natural resource policies are made and implemented. On the other hand, the workshop did not produce a comprehensive mechanism for integrated ecosystem management since not all implied considerations were—nor could be—given adequate attention.

**Table 1: Matrix of Broad Discussion Categories**

Policy →	Diagnosis	Formulation	Implementation	Monitoring	General
Type of integration					
Horizontal	●	●	●		●
Vertical Temporal	★	★	●		★
Degree of integration	●	●			●

● = topic was an area of discussion

★ = topic was a priority area of discussion

## 5.2 Summary of Main Workshop Results

The workshop participants raised and highlighted numerous obstacles to the achievement of the goal of integrated policy making leading to harmonized policies for sustainable ecosystem management. Most of the problems and recommendations mentioned, however, are more widely applicable than the issue of ecosystem management. There seemed to be a sense that individual institutions require strengthening before effective integration can take place among different institutions. Likewise, improvements in integration among national institutions needs to occur before attempts are made to improve integration at an international level.

Chapters 3 and 4 highlighted the important points emerging from the discussion, according to whether they were issues of institutional structure or institutional function. These same points are raised here, but in synthesis form, grouping together common issues and recommendations.

### *Notable Achievements in Improving Integration and Harmonization*

There was a clear indication that horizontal linkages among institutions, e.g., inter-ministerial committees and local development committees, have increased in number and scope over time. Nonetheless, there is scope for improvement in the areas of including a greater number of stakeholder groups and to make the collaborative efforts function better (e.g., through better communication). One common feature that has advanced this process significantly has been the adoption of National Environmental Action Plans in each of the four countries. The plans have helped to standardize approaches to policy interventions on environmental issues. The NEAPs certainly provide an entry point for debating and implementing improved policy procedures.

A second positive trend has been increased use of the electoral ballot. Popular elections enhance the likelihood that governments will address the issues that concern the population and that they will offer appropriate responses. Policy making for all

sorts of issues will be affected, including ecosystem management. This change will not occur overnight, however, and considerable fine tuning of institutions will be likely.

### ***Most Significant Obstacles in Improving Integration and Harmonization***

#### *Existing Arrangement of Institutions not Conducive to Integration*

Two chief causes of the current arrangement of institutions that hinders integration are the sectoral structure of ministries inherited from colonialists (and their strengthening after independence) and a tendency for new institutions to proliferate when new issues arise. There is, moreover, a muddling of distinctions among institutional mandates. The larger the number of institutions with overlapping interests, the more difficult it becomes to physically bring them together to work in harmony. There are also more chances of battles over control of issues and thus increased need for coordination or facilitation.

#### *Lack of Coordinating Mechanisms*

Prior to the implementation of the NEAPs and the establishment of their structures, there were few mechanisms in place to provide a needed coordination role. Often, it was up to the initiative of the institutions themselves to coordinate activities. This generally resulted in low stakeholder participation, notably among local communities, and little effort at communicating policy developments.

Now, the NEAPs have assumed the coordinating role at a very broad level (for all environmental issues). The typical procedure has been to establish task forces on specific environmental issues to take the leadership role in the policy process. In some cases, permanent agencies have been established to oversee these activities. There have been significant improvements in integrating institutions in the policy process.

However, there are three concerns. The first is that while there has been considerable attention given to involving stakeholders at the national level, less attention has been paid to local community participation. The second is whether the concepts of integration will permeate through to the lower levels of policy making (e.g., departments within institutions) where specific issues will be defined and policies formulated. The third is whether this approach will be sustainable given that it is heavily supported by external funds.

#### *Lack of Accountability*

Lack of accountability of activities, performance and finances not only is detrimental to individual institutional performance, it also jeopardizes improvements in integration and harmonization. When institutions are not accountable to stakeholders, there is little incentive to involve them in the policy process. This is particularly harmful to vertical integration with locally-based stakeholder groups.

#### *Poor Functioning of Individual Institutions*

One clear impediment to better integration is the weaknesses found in individual institutions. These include poor wages leading to low motivation and performance by employees, lack of financial resources with which to undertake effective policy-making steps, and lack of management skills. It is difficult for institutions facing these con-

straints to actively pursue links with others, from both logistical and technical standpoints.

*Lack of Knowledge/Poor Dissemination of Information on Ecosystem Management*

Lack of basic understanding of important ecosystem management aspects, through lack of research or dissemination, also hinders strides towards more integrated approaches to policy making. Lack of understanding by national politicians may lead them to feel, incorrectly, that the issue cannot be left to local institutions. It also means that the determination of important stakeholders/interest groups is obscured. Lastly, it reduces the confidence levels of local institutions to become more involved in natural resource management.

***Major Recommendations of the Workshop***

*Rationalization of Institutional Structure*

The group felt that there needs to be a review of existing institutions dealing with natural resource management so as to eliminate redundancies and clarify the distinctions between mandates. The participants felt that greater efforts need to be made to strengthen or modify existing institutions before creating new ones. Where new ones are created, as in the case of recent Ministries for Environment or Natural Resources, the mandates of existing institutions need to be reviewed.

*Devolution of Natural Resource Management to Local Levels*

There was a strong belief that greater participation of local communities in policy making would be an important step towards effective ecosystem management. However, it was also recognized that this would not be a quick or easy step to take. Thus, there were strong recommendations for capacity building and dissemination of information at local levels. Capacity building would be needed in management, policy making and technical levels so that the local community could increase its share of the skilled labour required for effective policy making. The group also felt that there was a need to increase research on the social, economic and ecological implications of ecosystem management. Dissemination of information on different types of local institutional approaches to natural resource management from around the world would also be useful to local communities.

*More Accountable Institutional Structure and Function*

To improve accountability through institutional structure, it was recommended that new government institutions be developed under the auspices of elected officials who are as closely linked to the population as possible. Greater functional accountability can be achieved through greater efforts at including stakeholders in the policy process. Special emphasis should be placed on involving local communities at early stages and on improving communication to all stakeholders. Accountability needs to be institutionalized across policy-making bodies; one possible mechanism for this is the National Environmental Action Plans. Accountability requires effective communication and more effort needs to be made in identifying low-cost strategies that encourage multi-directional communication.

### *Strengthening of Individual Institutions*

The scope for increased integration between institutions is limited to some extent by weak individual institutions. The group made several recommendations for improving institutional performance. They recommended that management training at all levels be of high priority. The training would address the management of projects, policy development and personnel. The group also recommended that wages and benefits be raised to retain and motivate staff. Motivation could also be increased by providing necessary equipment (e.g., computers) and operating funds with which to undertake effective policy research and development activities.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The preceding pages attempted to summarize the efforts of a group of individuals who deal extensively with natural resource policy matters. The issues related to integration and harmonization in the policy process that were raised and debated are therefore very real. All the participants clearly benefitted from the experience. It is hoped that the material generated and summarized in this document will benefit other policy makers and stimulate thoughts and actions by researchers and decision makers.

One final point needs emphasizing. There was no doubt in participants' minds that there is an urgent need to improve institutional integration to achieve improved ecosystem management. Resources are rapidly being degraded in sub-Saharan Africa and past policies have met with mixed success at best. Given the current decline in donor funds, future policy errors will become more costly to national governments. Both the participants and the conveners are confident that appropriate policies can be formulated and implemented by policy makers within each country. The recommendations of this document are intended to help individual countries improve their chances of succeeding through improving the process by which policies are made.

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