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NATIONAL REPORTS

No sustainable development without peace and security



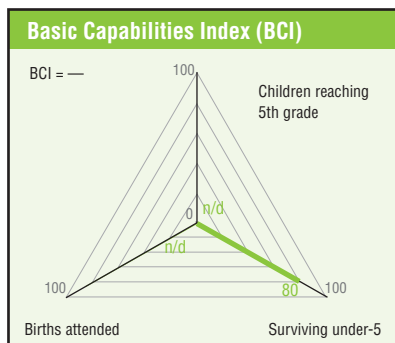
Decades of armed conflict and unrest have almost destroyed Afghanistan's institutions and territory. Although the country has a new Government and a new Constitution, it faces major challenges in terms of sustainable development. One of these is how to ensure the right to education for both females and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

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

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

Advances in education

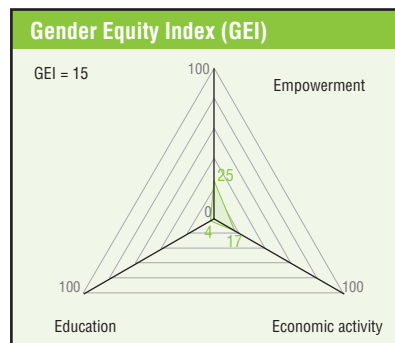
For a long time Afghanistan had very low rates of school attendance and high percentages of illiteracy. This situation became worse under the Taliban rule: schools were closed and destroyed, curricula were restricted and women were banned from education. Between 1996 and 2001 women and girls were excluded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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

2 Ibid.

3 BBC World Service, *Case study: education in Afghanistan*, <www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/ihavearighttofour_b/casestudy_art26.shtml>.

4 American Institutes for Research with Hassan Mohammad, *Education and the role of NGOs in emergencies, Afghanistan 1978-2002*, (US Agency for International Development, 8 August 2006), <pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADG858.pdf>.

5 BBC World Service, op. cit.

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

7 The Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium, *Report card: Progress on Compulsory Education grades 1-9*, (March 2004), <www.oxfamamerica.org/publications/afghanistan-education-report-card>.

8 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Education, *1388 (2009-10) school attendance*, (2010), unpublished spreadsheet.

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

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

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

Education and gender equality

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

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

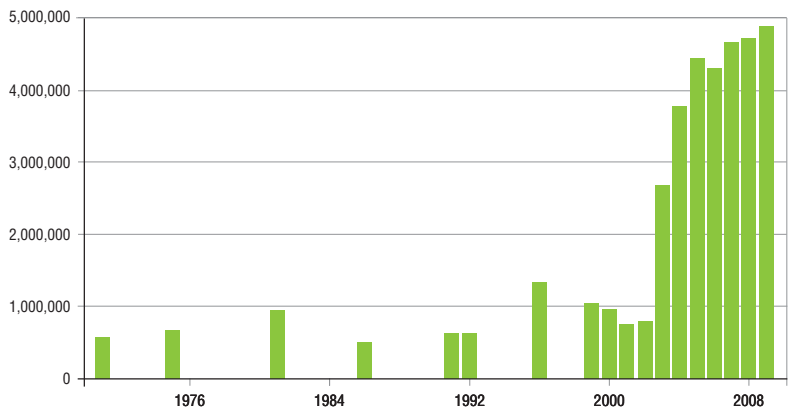
Lack of security, female seclusion, religious biases, household chores and threats from the insurgents are key factors for girls abandoning schools. Acid and gas attacks on girl students in 2010 caused a number of dropouts; however new hope for an increase in girls' enrolment emerged after the Taliban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

Environmental issues

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

FIGURE 1

Number of children (female and male) attending primary education



Source: Trading Economics

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

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

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

again if precipitation – as forecast – drops below normal parameters.²²

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

Conclusion

A new approach is urgently needed from both the Government and donors if the gains made in education are to be maintained. Decision-making around whether or not girls should go to school is based on a variety of factors that differ from province to province and even from household to household. There is also a complex relationship between demand factors (e.g., community attitudes and economic constraints) and supply factors (e.g., school buildings and qualified teachers). All these issues need to be addressed in order to increase girls' attendance in school.²⁵

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

12 Oxfam International, op. cit.

13 Ibid.

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

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

16 Afghanistan online, *Environmental facts and issues concerning Afghanistan*, <www.afghan-web.com/environment>.

17 Wikipedia, *Environmental issues in Afghanistan*, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_issues_in_Afghanistan>.

18 UNEP, *Afghanistan: Post-conflict environmental assessment*, (Nairobi, Kenya: 2003), <postconflict.unep.ch/publications/afghanistanpcajanuary2003.pdf>.

19 Ibid.

20 Wikipedia, op. cit.

21 US Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, *Afghanistan: Severe drought causes major decline in 2008/2009 wheat production*, (12 August 2008), <www.pecad.fas.usda.gov/highlights/2008/08/Afghanistan Drought>.

22 M. Ryan, "Hungry Afghanistan faces prospect of drought in 2011," Reuters, (11 February 2011), <www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/11/us-afghanistan-drought-feature-idUSTRE71A2Y820110211>.

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

24 Ibid.

25 Oxfam International, op. cit.

26 UNEP, *Afghanistan's environmental recovery: A post-conflict plan for people and their natural resources*, (Geneva: UNEP Post-Conflict Branch), <postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP_afghanistan_lr.pdf>.

The long road to lasting development



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

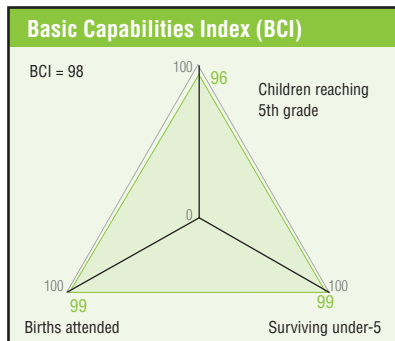
Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN)

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

Loss of biodiversity

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

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

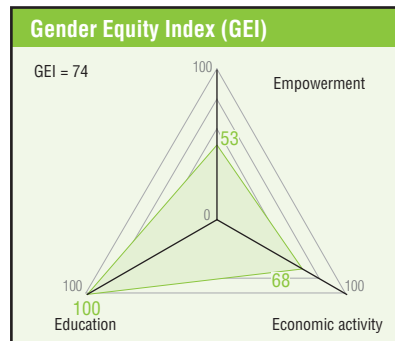


establish legal frameworks that foster sustainable development.

Agriculture's negative environmental impacts

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

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



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

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

Progress in legislation

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

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

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

2 UNDP, *El desarrollo humano en la Argentina (1970 – 2010): una mirada más allá de la coyuntura*, (Buenos Aires: 2010).

3 Greenpeace, *Un arduo camino a la Ley de Bosques*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Matanza-Riachuelo Basin

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

A paradigmatic example that illustrates the difficulties involved in tackling pollution and overcoming obstacles to careful management of the country's water resources is the case of the Matanza-Riachuelo Basin.

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

The conflict over the Matanza-Riachuelo Basin - regarded as among the 30 most polluted places in the World¹² - exemplifies the weakness of Argentina's institutions and the lack of political will of its politicians. The matter has gone all the way to the Supreme Court of Justice, the final guarantor of the Constitution, and this body has had to take control of draining and repairing the damage to the Basin.

Conflicts over mining

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

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

- There are no prior agreements with local communities and no broad-based participative processes to debate the development model to be implemented or how the ecological impact will be tackled.
- Governmental institutions that should enforce mining regulations and compel mining enterprises to comply do no evaluation or effective environmental monitoring of the environmental impact.
- There is no adequate public access to information which would reduce uncertainty and enable informed citizens' groups to become involved.

11 See A. Nápoli, "Recomposición Ambiental De La Cuenca Matanza-Riachuelo" in M. E. DiPaola and F. Sangalli (eds.), Informe Ambiental Anual 2010 (Buenos Aires: FARN, 2010).

12 See: <www.blacksmithinstitute.org>.

13 Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN) and Fundación Cambio Democrático, Ciudadanía Ambiental y Minería: herramientas para la transformación democrática de conflictos socioambientales (Buenos Aires: FARN, 2010), pp. 11-20.

14 P. Lumerman, et al., "Análisis de la conflictividad socio ambiental en Argentina. El conflicto minero: emergente de la nueva conflictividad socioambiental en Argentina.", in Informe Ambiental Anual 2009 (Buenos Aires: FARN, 2009).

Protection for the glaciers

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

What must be done

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Undermining the environment



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

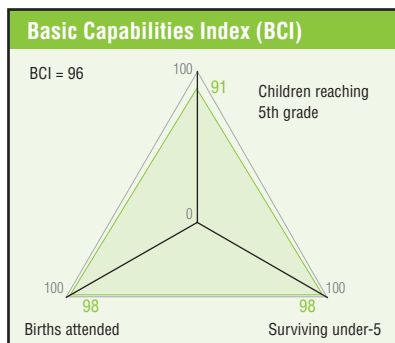
Center for the Development of Civil Society, CDCS Armenia
Dr. Svetlana Astanyan

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

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

Environmental issues

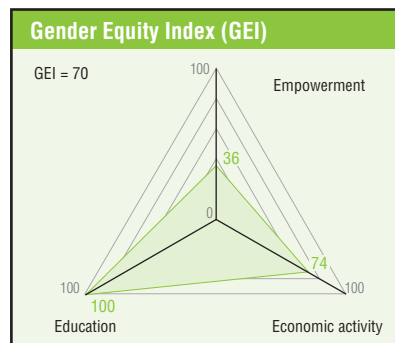
One of the country's most pressing environmental concerns is limited access to clean water.⁵ In many cases, aging and corroded infrastructure allows sewage to seep into freshwater pipes. Yerevan,



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

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

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



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

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

Corruption and the environment

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

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

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

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

3 Ibid.

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

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

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

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

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

10 Marianna Grigoryan, "Armenia: Environmental Change Spurs Respiratory Diseases," (19 October 2006), <www.eurasianet.org/departments/environment/articles/eav102006.shtml>.

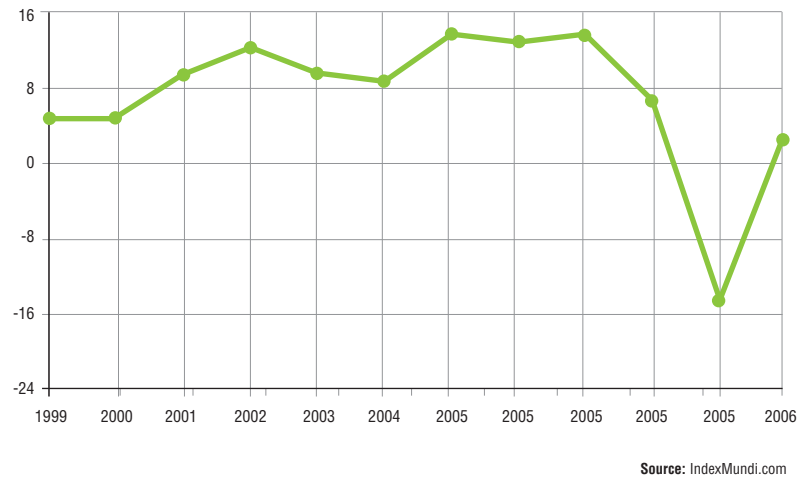
11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 See: <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corruption_in_Armenia> and <www.armeniatree.org/envirnnews/enews_hakobyan070707.htm>.

FIGURE 1

GDP - Real growth rate (%)



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

The Teghut mountains: a case study in unsustainable exploitation

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

The village of Teghut, located in the Lori Region in the northeast has 3,600 residents, many of whom rely on subsistence agriculture. The surrounding forest is home to many rare and endangered plants and animals; species found there

include 260 insects, 86 birds, 55 mammals and 10 reptiles.¹⁵

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

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

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

where numerous downstream communities get their drinking water.

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

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

Conclusions

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

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

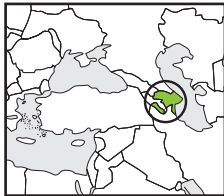
15 Ibid.

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

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

17 Ibid.

The demise of the extractive economic model



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

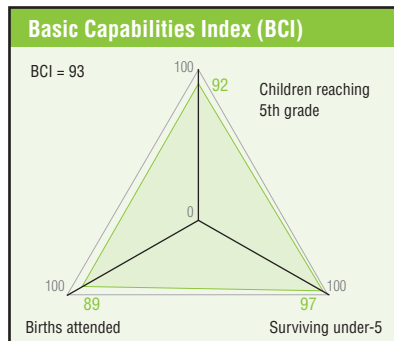
Public Finance Monitoring Centre
 Kenan Aslanli¹
 Environmental Law Centre "Ecoler"
 Samir Isayev²

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

Serious environmental challenges

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

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



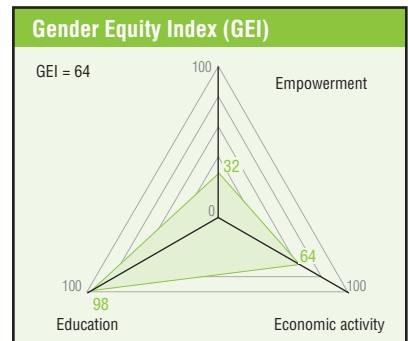
is evidence that petroleum was used for trade in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, and refining activities in Baku are mentioned in the writings of 17th century Turkish scientist and traveller, Evilya Celebi. A proper oil industry was established in the late 19th century with the emergence of the so-called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

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

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

Switching models

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



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

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

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

1 Senior economist.

2 Senior research fellow

3 Instituto del Tercer Mundo, *Guía del mundo 2011-2012*, (Madrid: 2010).

4 Super Green Me, *Sumgayit, Azerbaijan: The Most Polluted City in 2007*, <www.supergreenme.com/go-green-environment-eco-1--Sumgayit--Azerbaijan--The-Most-Polluted-City-in--2007->; Nationmaster, *Environment Azerbaijan*, <www.nationmaster.com/country/aj-azerbaijan/env-environment->.

5 T. Luck, "The world dirtiest cities", *Forbes*, (New York: 2008), <www.forbes.com/2008/02/26/pollution-baku-oil-biz-logistics-cx_tl_0226dirtycities.html>.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

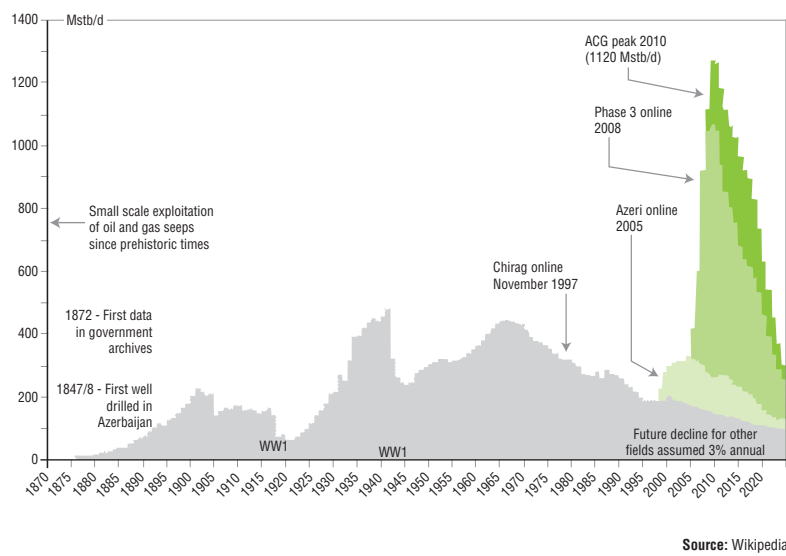
A disheartening record on human rights

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

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

FIGURE 1

Azerbaijan long-run Production Profiles 1870-2024



more than 50 people were considered political prisoners.¹¹

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

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

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

Civil rights organizations and other NGOs have been closed or denied registration. Amendments to a 2009 law have allowed the Government to put

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

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

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

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

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

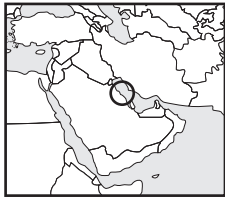
12 Ibid.

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

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

15 Ibid.

Two vital resources exhausted: a degraded future



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

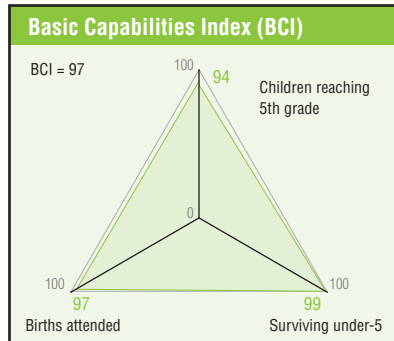
Social Watch Bahrain
Abdulnabi Alekry

In February 2011, as part of the so-called "Arab Spring," demonstrators took over the Pearl Roundabout in the capital city of Manama; some time afterwards Government security forces repressed them with extreme violence. The protesters were calling for political and social change and an end to the monarchy, but their demands did not include a call to tackle a problem that is a matter of life and death in Bahrain: the need for strict controls to manage the country's very limited natural resources. In a ranking of countries by the British risk analysis firm Maplecroft in 2011,¹ Bahrain ranks as the most water-stressed country in the world, followed by Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Libya. This means it is most at risk of exhausting its water supply completely in the short or medium term.

A looming catastrophe

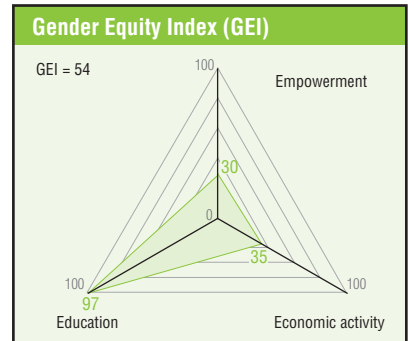
The country's biggest problem – and also the main obstacle to sustainable development – is the shortage of water. According to the International Water Poverty Index,² a county is in a water scarcity situation if its supply is less than 1,000 cubic metres per capita per year; in 2007 Bahrain's supply was only 470.3 cubic metres per person.³ The total surface area of the kingdom is just 665 square kilometres (smaller than King Fahd airport in neighbouring Saudi Arabia) but it has a population of more than 1.2 million, half of whom are foreign residents.

Almost all the fresh water consumed comes from three non-renewable aquifers that lie under the main island (Bahrain is made up of 32 islands). On World Water Day in 2010, Rehan Ahmed – an environment expert from the Public Commission for the Protection of Marine Resources, the Environment



and Fauna – admitted that average water consumption per person was around 400 litres per day, which is far above the world average of 256 litres; Japan, for example, consumes only 60 litres per person per day. He noted that the water consumption rate is rising by 8–10% per year and underground reserves are running low.⁴ In 1998 the amount of water from the main aquifer used just for crop irrigation came to an estimated 204 million cubic metres, but environmentalists consider it is unsafe to extract more than 100 million cubic metres per year because Bahrain's average annual rainfall is less than 80 millimetres,⁵ which comes nowhere near replacing what is being consumed.

Since the 1970s one of the main strategies to slow down the depletion of Bahrain's aquifers has been to build desalination plants to process seawater. This plan went into operation in 1974 and by 2000 there were four plants that produced a total of 73 million gallons of potable water per day.⁶ When this is added to the yield from the country's aquifers and to what is recycled for irrigation, current total production per day is 142 million gallons. Daily consumption however is 140 million gallons, which means there are no reserves of potable water. The Government is currently im-



plementing plans to build nine new desalination plants and increase production to 242 million gallons by 2030. The goal is to build water reserves up to 420 million gallons, which would provide three days' supply in case of emergency.⁷ There is a suggestion that wind energy could be used to power the new plants.⁸

Over the years the Government has made other attempts to tackle the water scarcity problem, including campaigns for households to re-use unpolluted waste water, but the results have either not come up to expectations or created new problems. An ambitious project was initiated in 1977 to recycle water from sewage treatment plants, and for decades the population was warned that this water was only for watering parks and gardens and was not suitable for human consumption. In 2006 Samir Abdullah Khalfan, the Director of Public Health, issued a warning that children or people in a delicate state of health should not be taken to parks that were irrigated in this way because there was a danger of contracting hepatitis A.⁹ This announcement led to the temporary closure of the treatment plant, but it

1 Maplecroft, *Maplecroft index identifies Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as world's most water stressed countries*, (25 May 2011), <[www.maplecroft.com/about/news/water_stress_index.html](http://maplecroft.com/about/news/water_stress_index.html)>.

2 Peter Lawrence, Jeremy Meigh and Caroline Sullivan, "The water poverty index: An international comparison", *Keele Economic Research Papers* 2002/19, <www.keele.ac.uk/depts/ec/kerp>.

3 ChartsBin, *Total Water Use per capita by Country*, <chartsbin.com/view/1455>.

4 TradeArabia News Service, *Bahrain Water Consumption Soars*, (23 March 2010), <www.tradearabia.com/news/env_176867.html>.

5 A. Bashir et al, *Development of water resources in Bahrain*, <www.emro.who.int/ceha/pdf/proceedings17-water%20resources%20in%20Bahrain.pdf>.

6 Global Water Intelligence, "Bahrain to Scale up Desalination Capacity", (October 2000), <www.medrc.org/old_site/new_content/industry_news/sep00/story3.htm>.

7 E. Baxter, "Bahrain plans to double water production by 2030," *Arabian Business*, (30 May 2010), <www.arabianbusiness.com/bahrain-plans-double-water-production-by-2030-271618.html>.

8 WaterLink International, *Wind-powered Desalination for Bahrain*, (8 February 2011), <www.waterlink-international.com/news/id1687-Windpowered_Desalination_for_Bahrain.html>.

9 S. Hamada, "Dependent on Desalination, Bahrain Faces Water Conflicts," *The WIP*, (2 March 2009), <www.thewip.net/contributors/2009/03/dependent_on_desalination_ba.html>.

was re-opened shortly afterwards with no research at all into the risks.¹⁰

The irresponsible way that Bahrain is using up its non-renewable water reserves is like the developed world's attitude to the indiscriminate consumption of the planet's oil reserves.

Oil and food

Some 92% of the archipelago's surface area is desert and only 2.82% is cultivable land. The people's main food is fish, which is abundant in the Persian Gulf. However the area's marine ecosystem is being degraded by oil pollution, which means people are growing increasingly dependent on imported food. For an economy based on a non-renewable resource, oil, this is yet another warning sign that sustainable development may be out of reach.

The oil comes from extensive deposits that stretch from the middle of the main island nearly to the southern tip. Bahrain produces 22,400 barrels of crude per day, the resulting income accounts for 60% of GDP. In 2009 its oil reserves were calculated at 124 million barrels.¹¹

These large oil revenues have served to raise the people's general level of well-being considerably, although there are still pockets of poverty and serious inequities in society. Nearly 90% of the adult population can read and write and life expectancy at birth is 76 years. In 2002 women were given the right to vote and to stand as candidates for election, although no woman actually did so in 2002 and even today they participate little in politics. In 2008 the unemployment rate was under 4%, of which 85% were women.¹² In 2007 Bahrain became the first Arab country to institute an unemployment benefits system.

The effects of increased tourism

In 1986 the King Fahad Bridge linking Bahrain's main island to Saudi Arabia was inaugurated. Since then tourism has become a big source of foreign currency and contributes 10% of GDP.¹³ Manama has become a major entertainment centre in the region thanks to relatively more relaxed Islamic legislation than in neighbouring countries, livelier night life and more liberal cultural standards. The impact of this invasion of visitors seeking a good time has provoked

10 Ibid.

11 GlobalEDGE, *Bahrain: Statistics*, <globoledge.msu.edu/countries/Bahrain/statistics/>.

12 Khaleej Times, *85pc unemployed in Bahrain are females*, (4 August 2008), <www.khaleejtimes.com/darticle.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2008/August/middleeast_August80.xml§ion=middleeast&col=>.

13 Yaroslav Trofimov, "Upon Sober Reflection, Bahrain Reconsiders the Wages of Sin," *The Wall Street Journal*, (10 June 2009), <online.wsj.com/article/SB124450701841896319.html>.

EQUALITY MUST COME FIRST

Although the majority of the people in Bahrain are Shia Moslems, the ruling family and the political elite are Sunni Moslems who control the State because the executive power has more administrative muscle than the legislative, which is freely elected. Under the prevailing system Shia Moslems cannot hold government positions and Parliament can do nothing to remedy this situation. The Sunni minority works actively against the Shia community and makes it very difficult for them to access the best paid jobs, decent housing, State services or any position of influence except what they can obtain in popular elections.

In an effort to redress the imbalance in the population, the ruling minority is even trying to encourage Sunnis from other parts of Southern Asia such as Baluchistan and Syria to settle in the country by offering them very attractive terms.

The social injustice and inequities erupted in February 2011 with demonstrations in Manama. While these began as an apparent show of support for the popular uprising in Egypt and took place in front of the Egyptian embassy, they later moved on to the Pearl Roundabout where demonstrators called for an end to the regime of King Hamad bin Isa al Jalifa, which has been in power since 1999. After several days of tension the army moved in on 15 February and opened fire on the crowd, killing one person and wounding 50,¹ but the demonstrators did not give up. Despite protests from the international community the violent repression went on. The Government had the Pearl Roundabout demolished on 19 March and even went so far as to call in foreign security forces from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to help put down the demonstration.

The protest movement eventually unravelled without obtaining significant concessions. According to the novelist Fareed Ramadan, a Sunni Moslem who supports the demonstrators' cause, many mistakes were made by the Government, by the Sunni community leadership and by the protesters as well.² The human cost of this State repression has been 24 demonstrators dead, more than 500 injured, hundreds imprisoned – many of whom have presumably been tortured – and an unknown number of non-Sunni foreigners deported.³

1 Euronews, *El Ejército de Baréin dispara contra la multitud*, (19 February 2011), <es.euronews.net/2011/02/19/el-ejercito-de-barein-dispara-contra-la-multitud/>.

2 C. Murphy, "Why the protest movement in Bahrain failed," *Globalpost*, 5 April 2011. Available from: <www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/middle-east/110404/bahrain-protests-unrest>.

3 A. Sambidge, "Bahrain minister says 24 people dead in uprisings," *Arabian Business*, (29 March 2011), <www.arabianbusiness.com/bahrain-minister-says-24-people-dead-in-uprisings-390813.html>.

a reaction, and in 2009 the laws regulating the consumption of alcohol and other recreational activities were made stricter. Adel Maawdah, a Member of Parliament who supported the imposition of tighter controls, commented that "Bahrain has become the brothel of the Gulf and our people are very angry about this. We are against the consumption of alcohol but we are also against all the things it brings with it like prostitution, corruption, drugs and human trafficking."¹⁴

This tourist boom has paid for an array of extravagant projects such as architectural follies in the capital city, a Formula One racetrack for the Bahrain Grand Prix and, astonishingly in a country where widespread drought is just round the corner, a large number of water parks.

Conclusion

Bahrain will be plunged into crisis in the near future when its water and oil reserves are exhausted. To quote Waleed Al Zubari of the University of the Persian Gulf: "We are using up most of our water and we do not know what will happen when it runs out. We must weigh the immediate benefits of using this water against the long term impact."¹⁵

Yet when the Arab Spring wave of protests broke out in February 2011 the demonstrators were not demanding better environmental controls or that the Government should make coherent plans to safeguard the country's future; they were demanding greater social and political freedoms and in particular an end to discrimination against the Shia majority by the Sunni minority (see box). ■

15 TradeArabia, *Water demand 'threatens Bahrain's future*, (9 February 2010), <www.tradeArabia.com/news/ENV_174596.html>.

14 Ibid.

Unsustainability increases vulnerability



Although it discharges a minimal quantity of carbon emissions into the atmosphere, few other countries are more severely affected by climate change. Government efforts to approach sustainability have been insufficient. Environmental issues such as overpopulation and deteriorating living conditions in the principal cities are not being addressed. Climate migrants are disrupting an already untenable economy, which makes the country one of the most vulnerable to food shortages and natural catastrophes.

Unnayan Shamannay

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EquityBD

Rezaul Karim Choudhury, Chief Moderator
Shamannay

Suzana Karim, Research Associate

Nineteen years after the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development it is time to revisit its principles. Its second proposition reads: “States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.” The impact of climate change on Bangladesh is clear; since it is ultimately caused by developed nations’ misuse of natural resources, it is up to them to provide compensation.

Proposition 8 states that “to achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people, States should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies.” However, developed country lifestyles are heavily based on fossil fuels, and thus clearly an “unsustainable pattern of production.” Not only are hydrocarbon resources limited, they are also one of the main causes of environmental degradation and climate change. Policy makers in developed countries have failed to limit emissions and also to propose viable alternative patterns of production and ways of life that support equal environmental rights for all global citizens.

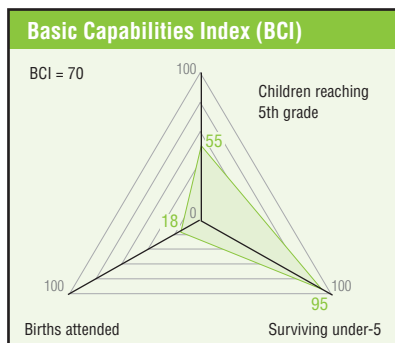
An unsustainable economy

The country has achieved many development goals in recent years. For example:

- Per capita income has increased, reaching USD 780 in 2011.¹
- Primary school enrolment has expanded in recent decades to around 90%.²

1 Priyo, *Per-capita income rises to \$780 as GDP growth defies recession*, (1 July 2011), <www.priyo.com/story/2011/jan/07/17004-capita-income-rises-780-gdp-growth-defies-recession-pm>.

2 Trading Economics, *Total enrollment, primary (% net) in Bangladesh*, (2011), <www.tradingeconomics.com/bangladesh/total-enrollment-primary-percent-net-wb-data.html>; Trading Economics, *School enrollment, primary, female (% gross) in Bangladesh*, (2011), <www.tradingeconomics.com/bangladesh/school-enrollment-primary-female-percent-gross-wb-data.html>.



- Infant mortality rate has been reduced from 71.66 in 2000 to 50.73 in 2011.³
- Life expectancy has climbed from 50 years to over 65 in the last two decades.⁴
- Exports more than tripled between 1998 and 2010, rising from USD 5.1 billion to USD 16.24.⁵

That said, the caretaker Government of Fakhruddin Ahmed (2007-09) pursued a non-sustainable model that failed to improve food security. For example, its food adulteration measures led many food importers and food merchants to cease importing and distributing food.⁶ In addition, the Government made the paramilitary force, Border Guard Bangladesh (then Bangladesh Rifles), the sole distributor of subsidized food among the poor, despite its long history of corruption (especially smuggling) and lack of experience in the field.

After subsidies provided for pesticides and fertilizers made them widely available, overuse not only diminished soil fertility but also has posed a threat to human health.⁷ The Government’s policy is clearly non-sustainable, since it violates the dictates of long-term planning and ignores the well-known link between

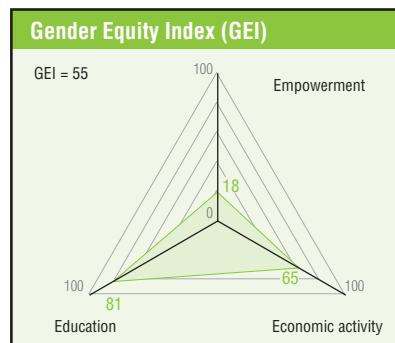
3 Index Mundi, *Demographics: Infant mortality rate Bangladesh*, (2011), <www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?c=bg&v=29>.

4 Trading Economics, *Life expectancy at birth; total (years) in Bangladesh*, (2011), <www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?c=bg&v=29>.

5 Ibid.

6 Anonymous, “The impending food crisis in Bangladesh,” in D. Hulme, *Food insecurity in Bangladesh: the other crisis*, (University of Manchester, Ending world poverty, 2007), <povertyblog.wordpress.com/2007/11/22/food-insecurity-in-bangladesh-the-other-crisis>.

7 Ibid.



fertilizers and soil depletion and erosion. This misguided approach is particularly egregious in a country as vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change as Bangladesh. If they are not changed in the next few years, these policies will make the already poor living conditions of the Bangladeshi people even worse.

Environmental threats

Overpopulation is the main cause of environmental degradation⁸ and resource depletion.⁹ Threats include deforestation and soil erosion; a paucity of potable water, mostly due to the size of the population, inadequate purification, and the spread of untreated contaminants.¹⁰

Even Dhaka, the capital, does not have an uninterrupted water supply. In some municipalities, water is only available two to four hours a day; major shortages are common during the dry season, between January and March.¹¹ In 1993 researchers discovered that the country’s groundwater (the source of drinking water for 97% of the rural population) was naturally contaminated with arsenic; despite Government efforts, even in 2008, up to 70 million people still drank water that exceeded permitted levels.¹² Surface

8 Encyclopedia of the nations, *Bangladesh – Environment*, (2011), <www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Asia-and-Oceania/Bangladesh-ENVIRONMENT.html>.

9 DiscoveryBangladesh, *Bangladesh: Environmental Issues*, (2011), <www.discoverybangladesh.com/meetbangladesh/env_issue.html?id=13>.

10 Encyclopedia of the nations, *Bangladesh – Environment*, (2011), <www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Asia-and-Oceania/Bangladesh-ENVIRONMENT.html>.

11 Wikipedia, *Water supply and sanitation in Bangladesh*, (2011), <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_supply_and_sanitation_in_Bangladesh>.

12 Ibid.

waste water is often polluted by human excreta, as well as urban and industrial waste. The sewerage system remains inadequate; the country has only one treatment plant.

An urban inferno

Rural to urban migration is one of the country's biggest concerns; each year, 500,000 more people arrive in Dhaka. The city lacks the infrastructure to accommodate its current residents, almost 45% of whom live in informal settlements and neighbourhoods with substandard living conditions.¹³ The major causes of this migration include natural catastrophes such as droughts, floods, cyclones; the loss of farm land due to river erosion; and the absence of a viable job market in rural areas.¹⁴ Few migrants find better living conditions in the cities: the average family income in urban areas is roughly USD 1 a day.¹⁵

This untenable situation is rooted in the historical absence of long-term planning and sustainable development efforts. Governments over the last two decades neglected agricultural production and introduced few measures to plan or regulate urban growth. Moreover, they encouraged centralization, neglected rural development and failed to increase opportunities in cities other than the capital. As a result, the geographical imbalance in income has been accentuated: Dhaka controls about 70% of the country's money supply and attracts almost 60% of total investment.¹⁶ The present Government has introduced some measures to boost agricultural production, but has not yet addressed urgent urbanization issues. Dhaka is becoming an urban inferno. Air pollution mostly from buses and trucks, is increasing. Crowds of people walk the streets in a human sea. Crime and violence are escalating.

Recommendations

It is imperative to address the rights of climate migrants spelled out in the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC). A new UN body should be formed to manage their rehabilitation. The 13th point of the Rio Declaration spells out the obligation to provide compensation for damage due to pollution and environmental damages; the new body can act as a coordinator to manage the compensation fund.

If we believe that every citizen of the world has a right to food, a new global food order must be devised to replace the current market-based global food order, which is actually increasing hunger. For example, an international court of justice on food rights should be established to rein in the monopolistic behavior of the market and political manipulation. This would be one way to help the developing and least developed countries achieve sustainable development at the global as well as the local level.

Developed countries are historically responsible for climate damages; this is particularly apparent in Bangladesh's case, as it is responsible for a minuscule

CLIMATE CHANGE: WHOSE BILL IS THIS?

Bangladesh is responsible for less than one fifth of 1 percent of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions.¹ However, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), it is also one of the countries most vulnerable to its deleterious effects.² In the coming decades these are predicted to include extreme weather (e.g., tropical cyclones), increased precipitation, sedimentation and average temperature; overflowing rivers; coastal erosion; melting of the Himalayan ice cap; and rising sea levels. Bangladesh would be threatened by every one of these disasters.

UNDP reports Bangladesh is already the country that is most subject to tropical cyclones. The cyclone Aila, for example, which hit the country on 25 May 2009 displaced more than 400,000 people.³ It washed away a vast amount of land, particularly from islands near the coastline. According to the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), about 40,000 people were forced to migrate from the Khulna district, 30,000 from Paikgacha, 18,000 from Dacope and 12,000 from Batiaghata apazila. Some people from the coastal areas migrated to neighbouring countries, such as India.⁴

Climate change will reduce agricultural production and lead to a shortage of safe drinking water, thus challenging the country's ability to increase economic growth and eradicate poverty.⁵ In the worst case scenario the rise in sea levels will displace millions of people, unless existing coastal polders are strengthened and new ones built. It is essential for the Government to prepare for these challenges and engage in long-term thinking and planning.⁶

1 M.A.Hossain, "Bangladesh: more poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity," *Social Watch Report 2010*, (Montevideo: 2010), p.66.

2 M.L.Parry et al. (eds), *Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), <www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg2/en/contents.html>.

3 See: <wopedia.mobi/en/Cyclone_Aila>

4 P. Gain, "Aila, Shrimp and failed mud walls," *The Daily Star* 3, no. 1 (January 2010), <www.thedailystar.net/forum/2010/January/aila.htm>.

5 Hossain, op cit.

6 Ibid.

part of global carbon emissions, yet suffers far more damage from climate change than countries that make a much greater contribution to the greenhouse effect. As Principle 9 of the Rio Declaration makes clear, developed countries have an obligation to mitigate the negative impact of climate change by developing sustainable and environment-friendly technologies and transferring them to developing and least developed countries.

Climate change funds

The government of Bangladesh established two funding entities to support implementation of Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP 2009) that is focused on medium and long-term actions. The two funding entities are the Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund (BCCRF) and the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund.

The BCCRF is resourced with the contributions from four main donors: the UK (with a contribution of USD 94.6 million); Denmark (USD1.8 million); Sweden (USD13.6 million) and the EU (USD11.7 million). Switzerland has subsequently contributed USD 3.8 million. The governance arrangements of the BCCRF were finalized in an Implementation Manual following an open and intense debate and discussion between the Government and Development Partners. The government of Bangladesh wanted its major role in fund management, while the development partners wanted the World Bank to manage the fund. The World Bank receives 4.5 per cent of the fund towards a service charge. The major decision on fund mana-

gement of BCCRF lies with the Governing Council and the Management Committee, which are represented by the government of Bangladesh in majority.

On the other hand, the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund is a 'block budgetary allocation' of USD 100 million each year for three years (2009-2012, totaling up to USD 300 million), in the form of an endowment. The governance mechanism of the Trust Fund is totally different from that of the BCCRF.

Financing climate change is very challenging for a country like Bangladesh, which has such a low economic base. The funding the Government has allocated to the BCCRF has come out of investment in other important sectors, such as health, sanitation, education and poverty.

In conclusion

From severe flooding to a rapidly melting Himalayan ice cap, the threats Bangladesh faces from climate change are dire and imminent. Mitigating them and promoting sustainable development will require decisive Government action informed by a long-term plan. While these efforts will be costly, particularly for such a poor country, developed countries, which have been primarily responsible for climate change, have an obligation—expressed in the 1992 Rio Declaration—to assist countries such as Bangladesh in coping with its effects. The Government's formulation of a credible long-term sustainable development plan should make it more difficult for developed countries to continue to ignore this obligation. ■

13 A.Khan, "Migration to Dhaka," *The Daily Star*, (September 26, 2009), <www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=106930>.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

A call for climate justice for everyone



Current environmental policies in the country are far from satisfactory. Belgium will face major challenges related to climate change in the immediate future, including rising temperatures and severe disruptions in the annual distribution of rainfall. However it is not putting into practice the commitments made by the international community. The dialogue among the different regions of the country, the industrial sector and civil society has become paralysed, and this can only be overcome through massive campaigns raising public awareness of the urgent problems threatening the environment and endangering the welfare of society.

CNCD-11.11.11
Nicolas Van Nuffel

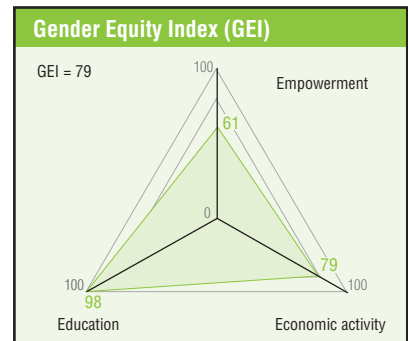
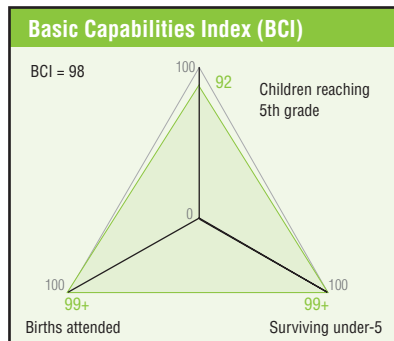
Between 1993 and 1997 Belgium established a Federal Council for Sustainable Development. This is made up of representatives of employers, unions, various NGOs and the scientific community, while all the federal ministers and the various regional governments are represented as observers.¹ In the context of a strong tradition of social dialogue, however, Belgium is missing the step between institutional mechanisms and effective implementation of a proactive policy towards sustainable development.

A clear example of this is the challenge posed by climate change, which brings social and economic repercussions of significant environmental importance. While one could argue that the impact of global warming will affect Belgium to a lesser extent than developing countries or countries with weaker economies, it is undeniable that the consequences will be far from insignificant. These will, in fact, depend on the extent and orientation of measures to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and combat the effects of ongoing changes and the speed with which they are implemented.

Heat, rain and social inequality

According to a report co-directed by Professor van Ypersele, Vice-President of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and Philippe Marbaix, temperatures in Belgium could increase by up to 4.9°C in winter and 6.6°C in summer during the twenty-first century.² This will have important consequences for the environment, including a significant loss of biodiversity.³ In terms of the impact on water resources, “projections of the evolution of precipitation, by the end of the century, show an increase between 6 and 23% for winter and a (decrease) for summer (...) that would reach 50%.”⁴

These disrupted rainfall patterns, and the resulting rise in more extreme phenomena such as



floods and droughts, could have serious effects on the country's economy. Furthermore, the negative impact of rising temperatures will have profound impacts on the health of the population, with heat waves likely to lead to increased mortality and morbidity.⁵

Belgium has the necessary means to address these negative consequences, especially since other effects of a positive nature could in part compensate for the magnitude of the damage. For example, an increase in agricultural productivity is expected – especially for some crops (including wheat) – provided that temperatures do not rise by more than 3°C.⁶ However not everyone has the same ability to deal with these changes: “The real impact of climate change on the health of a population depends largely on its vulnerability, which in turn depends strongly on the level of life, access to health and the ability of that population to adapt to new climatic conditions.”⁷

Moreover global warming is not the only environmental challenge that Belgium will face in the near future. Since domestic energy resources are limited to nuclear energy and the small (though growing) sector of renewable energy, the country has become extremely dependent on imported fossil fuels such as natural gas from the Netherlands, Norway and Algeria.⁸ For this reason, the impact of depletion of these resources may make energy prices soar and become unaffordable for less affluent populations.

The obstacle of institutional complexity

Sustainable development cannot be analysed outside an international context. The 1992 Rio Summit on Climate Change established the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities between the most industrialized and contaminating countries and the less developed countries. Belgium, which is on the list of countries that must reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases, has not stopped producing alarming amounts of these gases nor has it instituted programmes to reduce emissions. In fact, in the European debate on reducing emissions of greenhouse gases after 2012, Belgium seems to be paralysed by the challenge. While a number of countries in the EU voted to move unilaterally to a 30% reduction of greenhouse gases, Belgium has not yet made any clear decision.

In this respect the institutional complexity of Belgium is not a positive factor. Since the environment is a theme shared between the federal State and the regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels), these four entities must reach agreement in order to take a position in international discussions. However, in terms of the specific problem of reducing emissions, a lack of agreement results in the implementation of de facto vetoes exercised against the proposals needed to at least advance in the debate and take on commitments seriously.

Unfortunately Belgian civil society is not unanimous in demanding the acceptance of the EU recommendations. Thus the Federation of Enterprises in Belgium (FEB) is mounting a strong lobby against any unilateral attempt to bring about an increase in Europe's commitments and therefore those of Belgium. In a notice published shortly before the Cancun climate change conference in 2010, the FEB considered that

1 See : <www.belspo.be/fr/doc/fdd/FR/conseil.html>

2 P. Marbaix and J.-P. van Ypersele, *Impact des changements climatiques en Belgique*, (Brussels : Greenpeace, 2004), <www.astr.ucl.ac.be/users/marbaix/impacts/docs/GP-rep04-Sum_2-EN.pdf>.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 European Commission, *Belgium Energy Mix Fact Sheet*, <ec.europa.eu/energy/energy_policy/doc/factsheets/mix/mix_be_en.pdf>.

“Europe is alone with its unilateral commitments to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Obviously this has a negative impact on competitiveness. (...) At this point, the Belgian business world does not favour continuing the reduction target of -30% because the conditions defined by the EU are not yet in place.”⁹

But is it true that these conditions do not exist? A study by Climate Action Network-Europe published in February 2011 shows that Belgium could lose significant sums if Europe refuses to move to a 30% reduction in emissions: USD 2,800 million in revenues from the auction of emission rights, as well as USD 1,260 million in savings in health care could be lost.¹⁰

Furthermore, investing in the transformation of the Belgian economic and energy model would also have a long-term positive impact on the country's economy. It is clear that this transformation would require adjustments to some sectors that emit a great deal of greenhouse gases, such as the steel and auto industries, and that such adjustments should be accompanied by strong social measures, particularly in terms of job losses.

Resistance to change

While climate changes and measures to address them are good indicators of Belgium's commitment to the path of sustainable development, they are by no means the only ones. Measures to help improve access to housing and the redevelopment of public transport are also badly needed. Suggestions have been made by both the social and environmental movements, but the political decision-makers are slow to come forward with answers. These measures would also contribute to the collective welfare of humanity by reducing pollutant emissions, especially greenhouse gases, and would help combat inequality by reducing costs for low-income users and developing quality alternative transport other than cars.

LESSONS FROM FUKUSHIMA

The nuclear disaster at Fukushima in Japan caused by the earthquake and tsunami on 11 March 2011, was the most serious accident since Chernobyl and caused some governments around the world to re-think their nuclear power policies. Following in the steps of Germany, which decided to phase out its nuclear power stations between 2011 and 2020, the Belgian Government announced that it would significantly reduce its own nuclear programme by 2015.

This policy includes closing two reactors in the city of Doel and a third at the Tihange nuclear station. These are three of the oldest reactors still in operation in the country. The other reactors will be progressively shut down over the next ten years and the nuclear energy programme will cease completely in 2025.

However, the current administration has said these closure dates are “flexible”, and in the interim the Government will consider the nuclear programme as a “provisional” source of power. It also reaffirmed its commitment to make every effort to develop alternative energy sources and put them to work. It has also been suggested that nuclear power could be taxed more heavily as a way of bolstering research into alternative energy technologies.¹

¹ Jonathan Benson, “First Germany, now Belgium: nuclear energy to be phased out by 2015”, *Natural News*, (November 4, 2011), <www.naturalnews.com/034059_nuclear_energy_Belgium.html>.

Proposals are not what is missing on the desks of those responsible for decision-making, and Belgium is the site for many collaborations between North-South movements, environmental NGOs, peasant movements and trade unions that could develop alternatives to the current model. However it should be noted that resistance to change is still strong in many sectors of society. This is why it is not enough to question those responsible for decision-making but it is also necessary to launch campaigns targeting the general public. These should raise people's awareness of the social and environmental impact of their behaviour and show them that an alternative model of development is possible.

Conclusion

Belgium's attitude in international and European discussions on the reductions of greenhouse gas emissions contributes to keeping the whole of Europe below the commitments recommended by the scientific community. While the alternative model of development is still to be defined, it is clear that it should be more respectful of the rights of the population as well as of those of the populations of the least well-off countries. For this reason a campaign that brings together NGOs and trade unions to reinforce this awareness in all sectors of society will be launched in 2011 under the slogan “climate justice for all!” ■

⁹ Federation of Enterprises in Belgium, *European and international climate policy: state of the art and current challenges*, (Brussels: 21 October 2010), <vbo-feb.be/media/uploads/public/_custom/NoteClimatCA_21102010.pdf>.

¹⁰ Climate Action Network Europe, *30%. Why Europe Should Strengthen its 2020 Climate Action*, (Brussels: February 2011).

Without dialogue or planning there can be no sustainable development



The country has been unable to implement a development model based on long-term planning. The economy is shrinking and inequality is worsening at an alarming rate, but the Government is squandering the budget on propaganda and creating yet more jobs in the bureaucracy. The country has been badly hit by natural disasters that have caused havoc in agriculture, health and education, and it is only too evident that the Government had no contingency plans in place. There has been some progress (though not enough) in improving health care and access to potable water, but overall the country's most pressing need is for a sustainable development model that works.

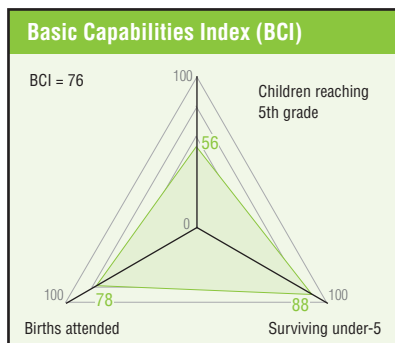
Social Watch Benin
Dieudonné Houinsou
Huguette Dossa
Hyppolyte Fallade

The Government has been unable to implement a workable sustainable development model. It has refused dialogue with the different sectors of society and shown a complete lack of commitment to transparency or eradicating corruption. Its strategies to tackle economic and environmental problems not only reveal a lack of long-term planning but also cannot lead to sustainable development because they do not consider environmental or social problems. To put it bluntly, these policies have failed utterly.

For example, the economic growth rate fell from 5% in 2008 to 3% in 2010.¹ The world financial crisis has hit hard, especially in terms of reduced exports and falling incomes, and Benin has serious problems in that its departments (or provinces) are very unequal, with a particularly marked difference between the poorest, Alibori, and the richest, Littoral.²

Public employees

In recent years there has been a marked increase in the number of public employees.³ This is partly because there is no adequate pay policy outside the public sector, but another reason is that the State apparatus has returned to how it used to be, with party politics heavily involved in public organizations. The Government has not stimulated the creation of new jobs in the private sector. This emphasis on the public sector has made for increased State expenditure and the Government has no compunction in using State funds for propaganda purposes and to create more jobs in the ministries.

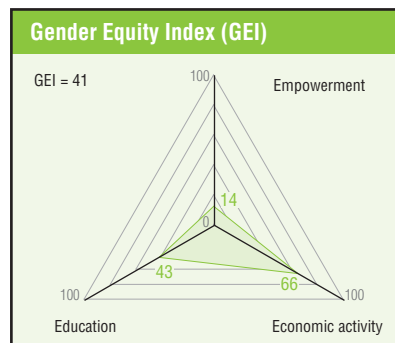


No planning for natural disasters

The Government has also failed to make adequate plans or take contingency measures in environmental matters such as natural disasters. Between July and October 2008 heavy rains caused the rivers to rise and there was flooding in West Africa. Benin was one of the countries that suffered most: at least 150,000 people were displaced and there were outbreaks of cholera, meningitis and yellow fever.⁴ The floods also ruined crops, leading to food insecurity.

In 2010 this happened again when the Quémé and Niger Rivers rose much more than usual, causing major floods that damaged hundreds of houses and schools, left thousands of people homeless, destroyed large areas of crops, killed livestock and again led to disease outbreak. The flood victims were given shelter in schools, where they remained until November when the waters finally subsided and they were able to return to their homes.

These disasters had a very serious negative impact on education, for example, because access roads to education centres were washed away or simply remained under water. According to a November 2010 report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) Benin, the floods damaged more than 425 public schools throughout the country and more



than 91,000 schoolchildren were affected as their schools were wrecked and/or teaching materials were washed away.⁵

The Government's response to this disaster was to allocate funds and emergency supplies to the value of CFA 20 million (USD 42,944) for the victims, including mosquito nets impregnated with insecticide, medicines and clothing, but this was simply not enough and the country subsequently had to appeal for international aid to help the displaced people. It was made apparent that the Government had neglected to provide many essential supplies, and the consequences of this failure were so serious that many of the victims were forced to sell the goods they received under the rescue plan to meet their most basic survival needs. To make matters worse, the distribution of aid that had been donated by the private sector, in addition to Government aid, was entirely in the hands of the authorities while civil society organizations, including Social Watch, were excluded from the process.

Climate change

There is general agreement in the scientific community that climate change has increased the risk of this kind of natural disaster. It has also been established beyond doubt that human activities are a factor in global warming. Benin is among the countries that release the least greenhouse gases

¹ Index Mundi, *Benin Economy Profile 2011*, <www.indexmundi.com/benin/economy_profile.html>.

² Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), *Benin*, <www.sdc.admin.ch/en/Home/Countries/West-Africa/Benin>.

³ BBC News, "Public Sector Growth Accelerating".

⁴ World Health Organization, "Floods in West Africa raise major health risks," (19 August 2008), <www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2008/pr28/en/index.html>.

⁵ UNOCHA Benin, "Benin Floods Situation Report," 8, no.4 (November 2010), <reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A793C314A84DD041852577D1006AB93F-Full_Report.pdf>.

into the atmosphere, with emissions of only 0.3 to 0.6 tonnes per person in 2005 or a total of less than 2.6 million tonnes that year, compared to the industrialized countries that cause the most pollution of this type and reached totals as high as 7,200 million tonnes.⁶ Countries with the most precarious economies, such as Benin, are suffering the consequences of the pollution the more developed world is pumping out.

As the climate change situation worsens, flooding will become a chronic problem and Benin will have to make an increasingly intense long-term prevention effort. However one of the Government's main shortcomings is precisely that it does not plan for the future or take precautions, so the problems stemming from climate change are likely to be particularly serious for Benin. In addition, there will have to be new strategies that improve agricultural production and at the same time reduce this sector's ecological and social impact.

The allocation of resources to reconstruction work after the ravages of the flooding will inevitably hinder and delay development programmes. Funds that could have been invested in research, development and the implementation of more efficient production models will now have to be diverted to rebuilding the country.

“Circular agriculture”

In the last ten years the agriculture sector's contribution to Benin's economy has amounted to 35% of GNP, second only to the services sector, and agriculture employs some 45% of the total labour force.⁷ Agriculture is facing serious problems including the fact that productivity is low, a high proportion of agricultural workers are living in poverty and large swathes of the available land are not used.

Over the last ten years the Government has launched three development plans that affect this sector. From 2003 to 2005 it implemented a poverty reduction strategy, and from 2007 to 2009 implemented a growth strategy to reduce poverty, but both of these initiatives tackled agricultural problems in a non-specific way. This changed with the 2008 Strategy to Reactivate Agriculture (PSRSA),

which was designed not only to ensure food security by 2015, but also to restructure the sector so it could contribute to Benin's economic and social development.

The PSRSA has various drawbacks, including the fact that the extensive use of fertilizers, which are needed if the programme's production targets are to be attained, might seriously damage the environment. Moreover the plan's agriculture growth model will seriously damage the soil. One of the consequences of soil erosion is that it reduces the ground's capacity to absorb water and this increases the risk of serious flooding. It is evident from this analysis that there are long-term defects in the strategies the Government is implementing and these are so serious that the policy cannot be considered a model for sustainable development.⁸

It has been suggested that the “circular agriculture” system, which was developed in China at the end of the 1990s, might be suitable for Benin (ibid.). This system is based on the so-called “circular economy,” which in broad outlines involves the efficient use not only of resources but also of waste. Recycling is an important part of the process, and thus a circular flow of materials is set in motion. For example, the heat that some processes generate can be used to activate other processes that require lower temperatures. The aim of this system is to create an economy that is more efficient and generates less polluting agents. The cornerstone of the proposed model in the sphere of agriculture is the efficient use of biomass resources, which includes energy sources.

Implementing a circular agriculture system in Benin calls for in-depth research into the natural resources available and a reformulation of the prevailing laws and regulations governing environmental protection and the use of resources. Another aspect to consider is the cost of acquiring the necessary technology, which could be an obstacle to adopting this production model.

One positive consequence of these circumstances is that the Government is gradually coming to recognize the importance of the agriculture sector. The plans implemented up to now have fallen

short of what is needed and have lacked a long-term perspective, but at least they have been steps, however faltering, in the right direction.

Progress in other areas

Despite the development models being far from satisfactory, there has been some progress in terms of meeting people's basic needs. For example, a considerable effort has been made to improve the potable water supply in rural areas and as a result in 2009 some 55.1% of the rural population had access to this resource, a big increase on the 2003 figure of only 36%. However, it has been pointed out that greater growth could have been achieved if State planning in this respect had been more efficient.

As regards health, there has been a significant improvement in maternal and infant mortality in recent years. Maternal mortality fell from 474.4 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2002 to 397 per 100,000 live births in 2007 and infant mortality decreased from 86 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003 to 63 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2010⁹. The HIV/AIDS situation is not as bad as it could be: the estimated rate is 1.8%, which is among the lowest in West Africa (in Ivory Coast, for example, it is 7.1%, in Nigeria 3.9% and in Togo 3.2%). Despite such hopeful trends, however, most health indicators are below what they should be in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Conclusion

Sustainable development must inevitably be based on long-term planning and must involve consideration of the relations among the various actors in society, but as things stand, the Government's vision is not just limited but is actually responsible for the impoverishment of the people and the slowdown in economic growth. There is little dialogue between the Government, civil society organizations and other social sectors. Organizations such as Social Watch that are working actively to point out the Government's mistakes have made some progress in this regard but all too often they are blocked and intimidated by the powers of the State. ■

6 World Resources Institute, “Climate Analysis Indicators Tool (CAIT)”, <cait.wri.org>.

7 C.N Gangnibo et al., “Sustainable agriculture in Benin: Strategies for applying the Chinese Circular Agriculture model,” *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 3(1): 69–80, <www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/jsd/article/view/5354/4462>.

8 Ibid.

9 Index Mundi, Benin Mortality Rate, (2011), <www.indexmundi.com/benin/infant_mortality_rate.html>.

Progress and setbacks in the defence of Pachamama



The Government has made an explicit commitment to a coherent policy to combat climate change, but the current development model in the country is built around the extractive sector. The economy and the strategies to overcome poverty are based on oil and gas production and mining. The Government is opting for the carbon credits system and the REDD initiative, but this has raised serious doubts about the development path the Morales administration is taking.

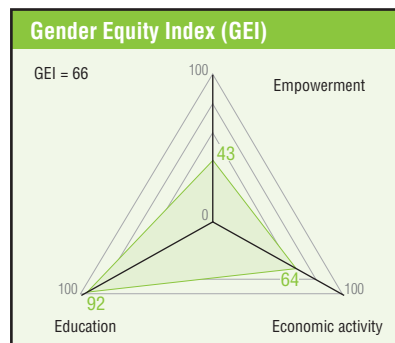
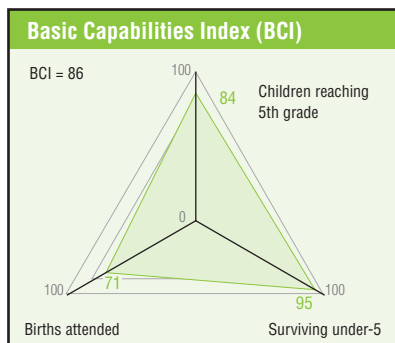
Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario (CEDLA)
Wálter Arteaga

Bolivia enjoys an extraordinary wealth and diversity not only of plant and animal species but also, with its 36 indigenous peoples, of human culture. It ranks sixth in the world in extent of tropical forest and fifteenth in wooded cover.¹ Around 80% of its forests are in a region called the flatlands or lowlands, which comprises three sub-regions, Amazónica, Platense and Gran Chaco, and includes the areas reserved for indigenous peoples.

In its public policies, the administration of President Evo Morales recognizes that the forests are strategically important ecosystems, and since the end of the last decade, under his guidance, Bolivia has become one of the leading countries in the world in urgently insisting upon holistic, integrated development in harmony with nature. This means, in effect, that Pachamama, the Andean indigenous peoples' mother goddess who is a combination of the earth and nature, is regarded as having rights.

An uncertain policy

However, in spite of the Government's explicit commitment to a climate change policy in line with its environmentalist stance, the development model that it is actually implementing is an extractive-lead one, and this casts doubt as to how far it is really committed to the principles of sustainable development. In other words, the Government's policy is very uncertain as there is a marked discrepancy between its public pronouncements about defending Mother Nature, along with the pursuit of the "*buen vivir*" (living well) philosophy, and the promotion of extractive-led growth. Oil production and mining have become the mainstays of the country's economy, the basis of public finances² and the crucial element in



Bolivia's attempt to overcome the severe poverty that 60% of the population is living in.³

Official data processed by the Centre of Studies for Labour and Agrarian Development (CEDLA) show that in the last five years the economy has become more dependent on the export of prime materials. Foreign sales of primary products from the oil, gas and mining sectors now account for no less than 69% of total export revenues, in contrast to the previous five-year period when there was a more balanced distribution and these sectors only had a 47% share.⁴

The CEDLA analysis also shows that the growth in national product in the last ten years has gone hand in hand with the resurgence of the hydrocarbon and mineral extraction sectors. GDP growth in the period 2001-2005 was largely due to increased production of hydrocarbons, especially natural gas. Then, in the 2006 to 2009 period, mining came to the fore; it increased by an annual average of just over 20% and became the biggest factor in national production.⁵

In addition to these violations of Mother Nature's "acquired rights", the Government is also putting the country's environmental and ecological balance in danger by plans to build hydro-electric mega-dams in the Bolivian Amazon to export electric power to Brazil, by subscribing to the inter-oceanic highway project that is part of the Initiative to In-

tegrate Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) and by pressure to cash in on the forests by exploiting them for timber.

The expansion of extractive activities, with their inevitable environmental damage to the land and negative socio-economic impact on indigenous and peasant communities, shows how easy it is for Government pronouncements about ecology and protecting indigenous people to become empty rhetoric or, on the contrary, to make its own economic development policies completely unworkable.

The carbon market

One of the most difficult problems the Morales administration is facing is that it has to develop an institutional structure in the framework of the new State Policy Constitution that respects the rights of autonomous indigenous communities in the plurinational State. This will enable Bolivia to qualify for economic incentive mechanisms that have been set up for countries that preserve their forests and make them sustainable. This is particularly important now that there is general recognition of the key role forests play in reducing carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, an effect called "carbon sequestration" (also "carbon capture and storage" or "carbon capture and sequestration").⁶

1 FAO, *Global Forest Resources Assessment. Progress towards Sustainable Forest Management*, (Italy: Forestry Paper No. 147, 2005).

2 Official data show that more than a third of the income of the department (province) governments comes from hydrocarbon profits (35.6% in 2005, 43.3% in 2006 and 43.2% in 2007), according to CEDLA, *Las Prefecturas no usan la renta de los hidrocarburos para el desarrollo*, (La Paz: 2010).

3 Fundación Tierra, "Cifras macroeconómicas no resuelven pobreza en Bolivia", *El Diario*, (6 June 2011), <www.ftierra.org/ft/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6267:rair&catid=98:noticias&Itemid=175>.

4 CEDLA, *Análisis del gasolinazo y de la política energética boliviana*, (La Paz: 2011, unpublished).

5 Ibid.

6 Kanninen, Markku, "Secuestro de carbono en los bosques, su papel en el ciclo global", FAO documents: <www.fao.org/DOCREP/006/Y4435S/Y4435S09.htm>.

The Kyoto Protocol includes an anti-pollution mechanism known as “carbon credits”, which is a measure to reduce or counteract the greenhouse gas emissions that are a direct cause of global warming. One credit is given for each ton of CO₂ that is no longer emitted or that is absorbed by plants due to reforestation or reforestation development, and because a monetary value is assigned to these measures the credits can be traded.⁷ With this policy, the key to the design and scope of the ecological initiatives lies in defining how the economic incentives to capture and store carbon will be distributed. This system could benefit the indigenous peoples and their environment, or alternatively it might tend to feed into the capitalist market. The crucial questions here are: who pays the subsidies, who holds the rights to these “carbon credits”, and who will be the direct beneficiaries.

According to the Government’s stated vision, these payments should go directly to the indigenous people and peasant communities in the framework of a plurinational State. Of course, this incentive system does not mean the industrialized countries escape the obligation to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, although unfortunately many companies today opt to deal in carbon credits instead of making an effective reduction in CO₂ emissions.

To make this line of action feasible, Bolivia will have to adopt a new national policy to tackle the causes of deforestation and forest degradation, and it will also need a specific strategy for these incentive mechanisms known as REDD (reducing carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation).

In constructing a specific public policy for REDD, Bolivia will have to overcome institutional, legal and political barriers and other obstacles including the need to develop the capabilities of national Government, local government and civil society organizations.

A vital component of the Government scheme will be to strengthen the National Climate Change

Programme in terms of capabilities and financing. A stronger programme will make it feasible to establish a system to monitor forests and the use of soils. In addition, bringing the reference levels for greenhouse gases up to date will make it possible to formulate an action plan to reduce emissions caused by deforestation and forest degradation.

An analysis of the Government vision shows this strategy entails other problems and challenges. The Government will have to:

- Involve indigenous communities and peoples and incorporate them into these initiatives.
- Open up this area for other actors to participate.
- Take advantage of the knowledge and experience gained from past REDD initiatives in the country.
- Promote land organization and the official registration of rural land.
- Design and implement mechanisms so the economic benefits of the scheme can be managed and administered as public investment resources and used to improve conditions of life in the indigenous communities in areas where these initiatives are in operation.

All in all, this strategy would show how near or how far the Bolivian Government is from putting into practice its stated aims of working towards establishing a harmonious relationship with nature and the real possibilities of “living well”.⁸

Prospects and questions

A detailed examination of the REDD initiatives shows that in some ways they would support an ideological perspective and a sustainable development model based on indigenous practices and knowledge, and in some ways they would not. The positive points are as follows:

- The REDD initiatives would foster the sustainable management of forests.

- They would be an opportunity for indigenous communities to consolidate their rights to their land.

Two of the negative points are as follows:

- The REDD initiatives would have no effect on the direct causes of forest degradation or deforestation.
- They would cause conflicts about who would be entitled to the carbon credits.

The REDD initiatives also have a spatial dimension insofar as they involve public policies that would govern access to and the use of forest resources. In fact, these initiatives are a way of analyzing how the Government intends to handle the whole matter of the rights indigenous peoples and communities have to their lands and their natural resources. Therefore it is important to ask how far the REDD initiatives will contribute to the development of indigenous communities in three crucial aspects: the recovery of control over their ancestral lands through autonomy and self-government, the redistribution of resources and the means of production in the indigenous lands, and the administration and exploitation of natural resources.

Some other arguments against implementing the REDD have been put forward. For example, it has been said that this initiative is a mechanism that would stimulate a move towards cutting down native forests and replacing them with monocultivation plantations and even bringing in transgenic trees. Thus the REDD would not only be promoting the privatization of the atmosphere⁹ but would also make the forests of the South vulnerable to new kinds of exploitation by polluters or speculators in the carbon or environment services markets.¹⁰

This argument is based on the possibility that the developing countries might be compelled to adopt this mechanism and so the developed countries would not have to make a serious reduction in their own greenhouse gas emissions. ■

7 Sanz, David, “Créditos de carbono”, *Ecología verde*, (10 July 2010), <www.ecologiaverde.com/creditos-de-carbono>.

8 “Living well” is a philosophy related to sustainable living and sustainable development based on indigenous traditions and beliefs. See <www.decrecimiento.info/2009/02/el-buen-vivir.html>

9 For the concept of “Privatizing the atmosphere” see: Barcena, Iñaki, Miñambres, Ignacio, “Copenhague-2009, ¿fracaso de quién?”, CONGD, <www.cvongd.org/showNews/52/244>.

10 ALAI, *REDD: Premio a la deforestación y usurpación masiva de territorios*, (2010), <alainet.org/active/41263>.

■ BRAZIL

The rape of the Amazon



Brazil is a mixture of great prosperity and terrible deprivation. If it is administered in the right way its potential for development is almost unlimited, but the inequalities in society are so vast that it seems they will never be overcome. For the country to achieve sustainable development it will have to tackle many obstacles, and the biggest of these, which affects not just Brazil but the whole world, is the indiscriminate destruction of the Amazon jungle, mainly through logging. This large scale attack, which is being promoted and driven by interest groups of landowners, livestock enterprises and international companies, and facilitated by very poor environmental protection policies and rampant corruption, is well on the way to destroying “the lungs of the world”.

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Alessandra Cardoso

Alexandre Ciconello

In recent years Brazil has established and expanded a development model in which income and power are increasingly concentrated in the hands of political and economic elites with links to big agro-industrial and financial capital. One of the main foundations of this model is agrarian exploitation, especially the mono-cultivation of crops like soybean and sugar cane (for producing sugar and ethanol), which use genetically modified seeds and agro-toxic products purchased from transnational enterprises. The country is also implementing big infrastructure, energy and mining projects in the Amazon region. Another aspect of this macroeconomic model is high interest rates, and this is a problem for the Government because in the 2000 to 2007 period, for example, amortization and interest payments on the public debt came to around 430,000 million dollars, which was an average of 30% of the State budget per year.

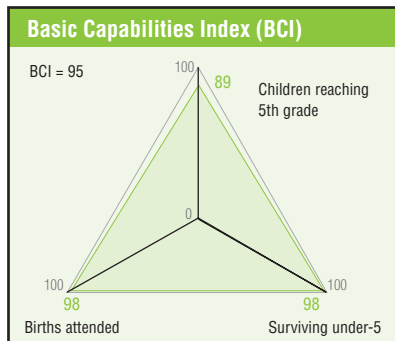
This development model is predatory and unsustainable. Brazil is on the point of making big changes to its environmental protection legislation and it has already relaxed some regulations in the Forest Code.¹ These amendments are geared to protecting the private interests of rural landowners and the big estates, groups that are over-represented in Parliament because the political system is weighted in their favour.

The cornerstone of the Government's current development policy, which is exactly in line with the strategies of transnational enterprises, is to exploit the Amazon basin and accumulate capital by implementing energy, mining and agro-industrial projects and paying for environmental services. In the period 2000 to 2010, exports from the states that make up Legal Amazonia² increased by 518% (from USD 5,000 million to 26,000 million),³ which is a much higher growth rate than the 366% of the country's exports as a whole.

1 See: <www2.camara.gov.br/agencia/noticias/MEIO-AMBIENTE/197556-INFOGRAFICO-VEJA-AS-MUDANCAS-NO-CODIGO-FLORESTAL-APROVADAS-NA-CAMARA.html>.

2 The administrative area in Brazil made up of nine states in the Amazon basin.

3 Source: Ministry of Industry and Trade. Nominal values, in dollars.

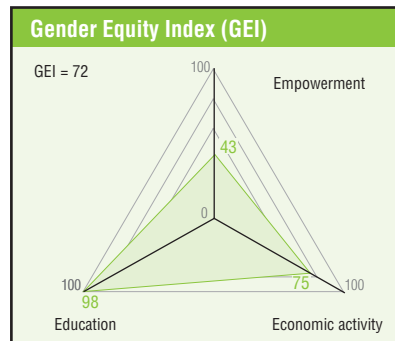


In 2010 the state of Pará alone was responsible for 48% (USD 12,8 billion) of the value of exports from this region. In the export pattern, mineral products are by far the biggest item on the list followed by agricultural produce, particularly meat. In the case of Pará, exports by just three enterprises, Vale, Alunorte and Albrás (iron and aluminium) accounted for 78% of the total value sold abroad (USD 10 billion).

The apparent wealth now flowing from the Amazon area is going straight into the pockets of the transnational enterprises' shareholders, and what is left behind is a legacy of inequality and unsustainability. The production of aluminium alone consumes nearly 6% of the electrical power generated in the whole country. According to the specialist Celio Bermann, “Aluminium is selling at a low price on the international market and it generates few jobs. Seventy times fewer workers are needed for this product than in the food and drink industry, for example, and forty times fewer than in the textile industry.”

The logic of regional integration

Another aspect of this extraction-for-export model is that the Government is allowing Brazilian and international companies to expand their operations in the Amazon basin. This is bringing about accelerating changes in the environment there and in how people live not just in the Brazilian part but in the Pan-American Amazon as well. In a series of steps, the Federal Government has increased investment in logistics infrastructure including ports and land and waterborne transport systems. Most of these funds have gone to pay for big construction projects like the huge hydroelectric dams at Jirau, Santo Antônio and Belo Monte (in Brazil) and Inambari, Sumabeni, Paquitzapango and Urubamba (in Peru),



and highways like the controversial Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos in Bolivia, which cuts right through indigenous peoples' lands in the Isiboro Sécur National Park. These large scale works were carried out by Brazilian firms and financed with public money from the country's National Economic and Social Development Bank.

The Government is also providing more tax and credit incentives to attract the private sector to the region, in particular with projects to generate and distribute electrical energy. This has opened up the Brazilian Amazon even more to public and private enterprise involving international as well as domestic firms, which is making this predatory model of natural resource exploitation even stronger.

Climate change and agriculture

Deforestation in the Amazon and the rearing of livestock are the two main causes of CO₂ and CH₄ gas emissions in Brazil (67% and 70% of total emissions, respectively).⁴ There is a strong connection between logging (and burning off vegetation) and the fact that land in the area is concentrated in very few hands, and this is clearly connected to the dynamics of the expansion of agricultural land. This concentration of land ownership increases the risk that the country's climate change policies will mainly benefit the big landowners because it is them that will receive the various kinds of subsidies, and rural communities and the indigenous population will find themselves more excluded than ever.

4 Ecoportal.net. “Cultivando el desastre. Agricultura, ganadería intensiva y cambio climático”. <www.ecoportal.net/Temas_Especiales/Cambio_Climatico/Cultivando_el_desastre_Agricultura_ganaderia_intensiva_y_cambio_climatico>.

However, the Government has not taken any effective action that goes to the heart of the problem. What is needed is agrarian reform whereby a new model for the use of land and its resources can be implanted in the Amazon, based on the sustainable use of natural resources and respect for the traditional communities' and indigenous people's different ways of life. Bear in mind that these people have been living in harmony with their jungle environment for many centuries.

In a recent Social Watch study⁵ a Basic Capabilities Index rating was calculated for the various states and municipalities in the Amazon taken separately, like the analysis for the country as a whole. This report confirmed that there is a vast gulf between the prosperous regions of Brazil and the poor ones, and the poorest of all are in the north of the country. At the bottom of the list for satisfying the population's basic necessities we find the states of Pará, Acre and Amazonas. When we consider each indicator in isolation it emerges that inequality between the different regions is even worse in the sphere of education and Pará is in the worst situation of all.

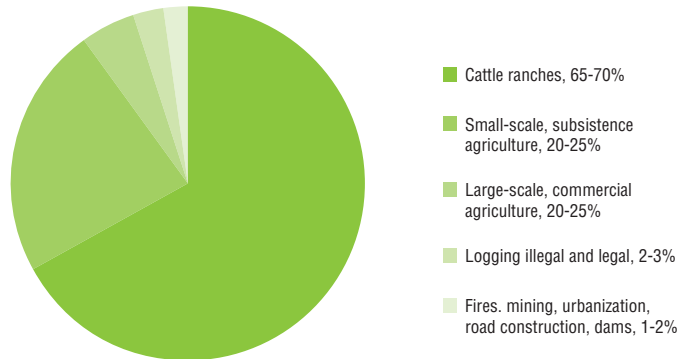
Changes in the legal framework

There have been many attempts to make the prevailing legislation about the environment more flexible. The outstanding example of this campaign to relax environmental controls was when the Forest Code was weakened as a result of pressure from powerful interest groups representing the agriculture sector, whose overall strategy is to expand the agricultural frontier further and further into the Amazon. Rural landowners are pressing for a range of measures and one of these, which is contained in a bill currently before the Chamber of Deputies (the lower house in Parliament) is to reduce from 80% to 50% the proportion of land that all rural holdings in the Amazon must maintain as native forest.

The Government regards the Rio Madeira hydroelectric complex as a crucial component in its plans to meet the country's energy needs as of 2010 - 2012, and it considers the generation and transmission of electric power as the cutting edge of the "advance of the electric frontier". But in fact the increase of 6,600 MW of installed power (3,150 MW in Santo Antônio and 3,450 MW in Jirau) will be used to satisfy a demand the Government and the electric energy sector have themselves created artificially. The power generated at the Madeira complex will be supplied to the

FIGURE 1

Causes of the deforestation in amazonian rainforest



Source: Mongabay.com

FIGURE 2

Share of deforested land ultimately converted for extensive agriculture



Source: Mongabay.com

economic centre of the country, which is the south west, and a lot of investment will be required to build the 2,375 km of power lines and stations needed.

It has been estimated that USD 21 billion⁶ will have to be invested in the group of projects connected to the Madeira complex, but up to now only USD 9,3 billion⁷ has been approved. Of this total some 8,6 billion is from the BNDES, including direct and indirect operations, and another 700 million is from the Amazon Bank (BASA) using public finance from the Constitutional Fund of the North and the Amazon Development Fund.

Data from investment reports on the Amazon show that, because of the risks involved in the project, the construction work and the process of obtaining environmental authorization, there is strong pressure from the public as well as the private sector (which includes banks, public bodies, companies, lobbyists, managers and agents) that nothing should be allowed to interfere with the timetable of the projected works,

and nothing should delay the start. It is being argued that the economic feasibility of the Madeira complex depends on the hydroelectric system going into operation as soon as possible, and therefore the process to obtain authorization is being rushed through without due consideration of the social and environmental impacts the mega-project will have in the area.

Workers on these projects are being exploited (the Ministry of Labour has detected more than 2,000 infractions), the murder rate in the area has gone up by 44%, the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents increased 18% in the period 2008 to 2010, and the number of rapes went up by 208% in 2007 to 2010. These are the effects of the development model financed by public funds, and Brazil is exporting this same model to other South American countries and to African nations like Angola and Mozambique. It is a model that serves the elite but destroys the environment and violates human rights on a large scale. ■

6 Bank Information Center "The Madeira River Hydroelectric Complex" <www.bicusa.org/es/Project.Financing.10138.aspx>.

7 See: <wnotes.furnas.com.br/Administracao/fonline_Internet2.nsf/viewTodosDestaque/BC1A3E8903174A58832573AD003673C7?OpenDocument>.

5 Social Watch, *Basic Capabilities Index – BCI Brazil*, (2009).

The environment is back on the agenda



Environmental issues were extremely important in the country's struggle for democracy. Now, after years of increasing apathy, more and more people are becoming involved in environmental issues. The introduction of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in the market and several flaws in the implementation of the NATURA 2000 program for conservation of natural areas have become two of the biggest challenges facing the country. Implementing sustainable development will require that the Government safeguard the environment while meeting the country's energy and infrastructure needs.

Ecoforum for Sustainable Development
Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation
Vladimir Gorbunov

The process of democratic transition in Bulgaria could begin with the words "in the beginning there was Ecology." The environment was the issue that energized Bulgarians more than any other in the 1980s. Its key role in the country's civil struggle began with what first appeared to be a relatively localized issue: rampant gas pollution in the border city of Rousse, caused by effluent from a chemical factory in the Romanian town of Giurgiu.

The "Civil Committee for Environment Protection of Rousse" was the country's first major dissident organization since the establishment of Communist rule. For the first time in four decades, ordinary citizens, joined with intellectuals and leadership members of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) in an independent mobilization.

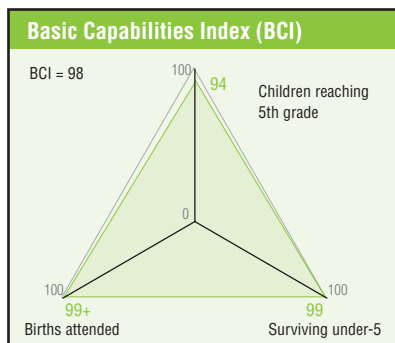
This campaign infused the Bulgarian transition with a strong environmentalist sensibility; the main topic of the so-called "Big Change" was precisely the air we breathe. Environmentalism also became a catalyst for a proliferation of Green parties and movements.

Unfortunately, soon after the 1989 democratic changes, the "old" dissidents were marginalized. The public became more concerned with the price of bread than a clean environment. This shift in popular attention quickly became evident in election results.

Environment back on the agenda

Only now, years later, has environmentalism enjoyed a resurgence in public consciousness. This time the initial focus was legislation on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO). As in Rousse, parents are taking a leading role, this time to ensure their children do not grow up on genetically modified food.

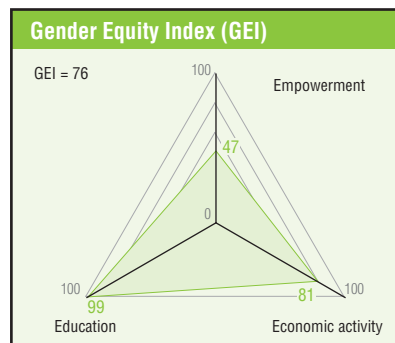
A bill liberalizing the production and release of GMOs on the market passed a first reading in Parliament in January 2010. This bill replaced a general prohibition of GMO products with a general authorization, although it made their release into the environment and the marketplace contingent on approval by the Minister of Environment and Water who then consulted with a panel of 15 scientists.



Less than a week later, on 28 February 2010, thousands of Bulgarians gathered for a rally and concert in front of the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia under the slogan "For a GMO-free Bulgaria! Let's Keep Our Land Clean and Protect Our Children's Health!" The parents who were the driving force behind this initiative were joined by organic and other farmers, beekeepers, scientists and environmentalists. Nevertheless the GMO Act was adopted, along with several harmful amendments in early March.

On 13 March 2010, scores of women, from the "Big-mama" web forum demanded the resignation of the Minister and Deputy Minister of Environment and Water and the Chair of Parliament. Four days later, activists mobilized in a "Nation-wide Protest against GMOs" in Sofia, Varna, Plovdiv, Pleven, Rousse and other cities. Two petitions were circulated throughout the country, one to ban the maize hybrid MON810, produced by the Monsanto Corporation, in Bulgaria,¹ and another against several amendments to the GMO Act.² Activists also created several anti-GMO groups on Facebook. These actions culminated in protests in front of Parliament, which won official promises that the GMO Act would be amended.

Within three months, the strongest, most successful civil campaign in Bulgaria's most recent history won over public opinion. Instead of the originally planned legislation opening the country to GMOs, on 2 February 2011, the Government enacted a total ban on the cultivation of genetically modified maize MON810. This law, passed at the



initiative of Agriculture Minister Miroslav Naydenov, made Bulgaria the seventh European Union (EU) member state – after Austria (1999), Greece (2005), Hungary (2006), France (2008), Luxembourg (2009) and Germany (2009) – to impose a total ban.³

Protected areas and Natura 2000

NATURA 2000 is the most significant EU initiative for conservation of the environment and sustainable development of regions with nature preserves. Each member State is obliged to establish its own network of protected nature zones that will protect land, plants and animals of European importance.

The criteria for inclusion in the network are laid out in the EU's two fundamental directives for the protection of environment: Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora ("the Habitats Directive") and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds ("the Birds Directive").

Unfortunately, in many cases the zones are only protected on paper. In more than 300 instances, departments of the Ministry of Environment and Water have failed to implement required environmental assessment procedures for projects in Natura 2000 zones, both along the coast and in the mountains.

1 See: <forthenature.org/petitions/12/>.

2 See: <grazhdani.eu/peticija.php?c=gmo>.

3 Derechos Humanos del Campesinado Nekazarien Eskubideak, *Bulgaria bans MON810 and will not support GM contamination of feed*, (february 2011), <www.derechoshumanosdelcampesinado.org/en/medioambiente/397-bulgaria-bans-mon810-and-will-not-support-gm-contamination-of-feed.html>.

One egregious example is the official response to the project for extension of the ski zone above Bansko in the Pirin Mountains. If completed, ski runs and facilities will occupy 11% of Pirin National Park, up from the 0.2% that it currently occupies. In addition to the new ski runs, the project, which was commissioned by the Municipality of Bansko, envisages more hotels, including some on the mountain, as well as an airport, spa complexes and roads.⁴

When the project was presented in February 2011, it was lauded by Tseko Minev, President of the Bulgarian Ski Federation, head of the First Investment Bank and a relative of the concessionaire of the Yulen Ski Zone. "Promoting Bulgaria as a ski destination is more important than the populist environmental arguments against winter resorts," he declared. "Any criticism of the ski zone pales next to the publicity for Bulgaria that we can make in two hours, two days in a row all over the world [in broadcasting the Men's World Cup for skiing]. And we have already heard all the threats of calling for infringement procedures by Brussels".⁵

Skiing their way out of responsibilities

In October 2009, the European Commission initiated proceedings against Bulgaria for allowing a ski road on the mountain, built by Yulen. The new project, far more ambitious and intrusive, includes two more ski runs and a second cable car lift. The Ministers of Regional Development and Economy have generally supported the development of the region and these investments, but "within sustain-

able parameters, respecting both regulations and the mountain."⁶ Given the scale of this project, the Government response is ambiguous at best, if not disingenuous.

The State is clearly supporting the initiatives of Mr. Minev, providing him with generous state subsidies in a period of economic crisis and massive cuts in welfare budgets. Support for the project among local citizens, backed by the local administration and corporate interests, also helps drown out the protests of environmental organizations.

Turbines vs. birds

In the Kaliakra region, wind turbines and vacation properties are proliferating within the boundaries of the approved NATURA zone, despite warnings from environmentalists that this construction is irreversibly destroying the last remnants of the Dobrudja steppe and its bird habitats, as well as threatening bird migration routes. Once again, the Government, in particular the Ministry of Environment and Water, as well as local municipalities, have chosen to sacrifice nature to investor interests.

So far, investors have proposed 340 projects in this zone; several have already been built in the protected zone. One of these is a wind farm, a joint project of the Bulgarian firm Inos 1 and Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries. Its value is about EUR 250 million, according to the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB). The 35 wind turbines disrupt the migration of birds and threaten their lives. The farm has also destroyed

the steppe in the area, resulting in a EUR 5,000 fine imposed by the Ministry of Environment and Water. More than 200 other wind farm projects are planned in Kaliakra; the Government's rationale for giving them the green light in a protected zone is a desire to adhere to the Kyoto Protocol and commitments to the EU to generate at least 16 percent of the country's energy from renewable sources by 2020.⁷

Environmentalists, in contrast, have for years demanded the adoption of a national strategy for the development of renewable energy sources, which would include a mandatory environmental assessment for all wind farm projects. So far, no such strategy has been proposed.

It is likely that the EU will launch two more infringement procedures against Bulgaria, one for the Kaliakra projects, and the other for failure to protect wild bird habitats. In fact, the Bern Convention has already opened a Kaliakra case file. Kaliakra is one of six designated NATURA zones (out of 114) which have suffered major damage. The others are Tsenralen Balkan, the Lom River Valley, Rila, Pirin and the Western Rhodopes.

At a "Sector Strategy to Attract Investments in Bulgaria" conference held in May 2011, the Government announced its priority sectors for economic development. Along with agriculture, the food and drinks industry, healthcare and the water sector, they included construction of roads and ski runs. The key question for the environment is whether the Government can successfully develop these sectors while promoting sustainable development. ■

4 Radio Bulgaria, *Pirin National Park is again at the crossroads*, (17 March 2011), <bnr.bg/sites/en/Lifestyle/MapOfBulgaria/Pages/1703PirinNationalParkisagainatacrossroads.aspx>.

5 Quoted in M. Enchev, *Dnevnik*, (28 February 2011).

6 Ibid.

7 Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich (OSW), *Bulgaria: the role of nuclear energy and renewable sources of energy emphasised in the country's energy strategy*, (2011), <www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/ceweekly/2011-06-08/bulgaria-role-nuclear-energy-and-renewable-sources-energy-emphasised->>.

Militarized development is always untenable



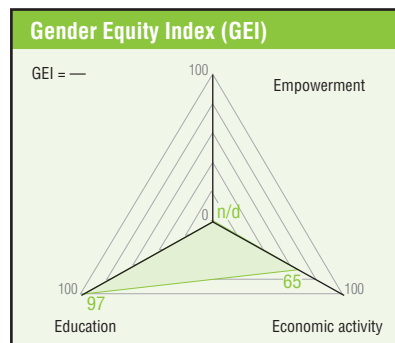
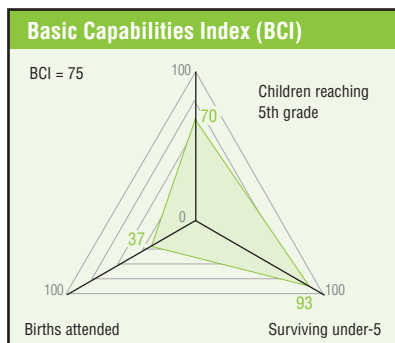
Decades of military rule have fostered a repressive political environment in which democratic principles are flouted, public resources are exploited for the benefit of the military elite and human rights and the rule of law enjoy little respect. Without basic rights, the voiceless people of the country suffer the consequences of economic mismanagement that undermines the environment and retards sustainable development. Burma urgently needs strong democratic institutions that promote sustainable development, public participation and accountability.

Burma Lawyers' Council
Leslie Choi

Despite the country's abundance of natural resources, a majority of the Burmese people face challenging life conditions as a result of governmental economic mismanagement. More than 32% of the population lives below the poverty line.¹ Burma ranked 132 out of 169 countries in the 2010 UNDP Human Development Index.² The lack of public participation in developing economic policies is reflected in the Government's allocation of only 0.5% of the gross domestic product (GDP) for health, and 0.9% for education.³ Meanwhile, the Government pours more than 60% of its spending into State-owned businesses.⁴

The lack of democratic institutions effectively bars the public from participating in decision-making on economic, social and environmental policies. Abuse of power is rampant. Development projects are used to line the pockets of military officials at the expense of citizens.

The military regime, known as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), organized a national election in November 2010 – the first in 20 years – but it was characterized by flawed election laws and repressive practices. The SPDC continues to hold the reins of Government in Burma and officials regularly abuse their power to further their own interests. They have little fear of the consequences since no means currently exist to hold such people accountable, they often face little to no repercussions for these abuses.



2008 Constitution and 2010 elections

The 2008 Constitution entrenched military rule by reserving a quarter of national parliamentary seats and a third of state and regional parliamentary seats for military representatives appointed by the Commander-in-Chief.⁵ The military appoints all of the members of the Union Election Commission (UEC), the government body responsible for ensuring that elections are free and fair.⁶ Election laws bar political prisoners from joining parties and place restrictions on campaigning activities of political parties. In response to the restrictive laws, the National League for Democracy (NLD), and other key opposition groups boycotted the elections, further delegitimizing the results.⁷

The elections were also marred by voter intimidation, electoral fraud and corruption.⁸ One of the most common complaints concerned the manipulation of voting results through the collection of votes in advance and vote-rigging.⁹ In some areas, villagers were threatened with land confiscation and the discontinuation of public services if they did not vote for the regime-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP).¹⁰

The military regime has further entrenched its position through laws that obstruct judicial independence.¹¹ The President has the power to appoint and dismiss Supreme Court Justices at his discretion.¹² The Supreme Court does not exercise jurisdiction over military or constitutional issues. Additionally, the Constitution guarantees impunity to members of the ruling military regime, thereby preventing the judiciary from enforcing the law in cases in which they are involved.¹³ Pervasive corruption further undermines the legitimacy of the judiciary, as well as its ability to protect the rights of individuals and hold government officials accountable.¹⁴

In most countries, civil society organizations play a fundamental role in the promotion of democratic principles and help ensure transparency, accountability, defense of human rights, and public participation. In Burma, these organizations are stifled by repressive restrictions or outright bans on civil society activities.¹⁵ In the absence of a vibrant civil society, military junta rule is unchecked, unmonitored, and unaccountable.

1 Economy Watch, *Myanmar (Burma) Poverty Line, Gini Index, Household Income and Consumption*, (May 2011), <www.economywatch.com/economic-statistics/Myanmar/Poverty_Line>.

2 UNDP, *The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways in Human Development*, (New York: 2010), <hdr.undp.org/en/statistics>.

3 UN Human Rights Council, *Progress report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar*, (Geneva: 10 March 2010).

4 Index mundi, *Burma Economy Profile*, (2010), <www.indexmundi.com/burma/economy_profile.html>.

5 *Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar*, (September 2008), arts 74, 109, and 141.

6 UN General Assembly, *Situation of human rights in Myanmar*, (15 September 2010).

7 M. Maung, "Ethnic leaders join NLD vote-boycott roadshow," in *Mizzima News*, (13 October 2010), <www.mizzima.com/news/election-2010-14442-ethnic-leaders-join-nld-vote-boycott-roadshow.html>.

8 J. Davies, and H. Siddique, "Burma election observers report voter intimidation," *The Guardian*, (8 November 2010), <www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/08/burma-election-voter-intimidation>.

9 Burma Fund UN Office, *Burma's 2010 Elections: A comprehensive report*, (January 2011).

10 Ibid.

11 A.U. Htoo, "Analysis of the SPDC's Constitution from the Perspective of Human Rights," in *Legal Issues on Burma Journal*, No. 30 (2008).

12 *Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar*, (September 2008), arts 299, 302, 308, 311, 327, and 334.

13 Ibid., art. 445.

14 US Department of State, *2008 Country Report on Burma*, (Washington DC: 25 February 2009), <www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eap/119035.htm>.

15 Human Rights Watch, *I Want to Help My Own People*, (28 April 2010), <www.hrw.org/en/reports/2010/04/29/i-want-help-my-own-people-0>.

The grim face of militarized development

The SPDC has sold rights to exploit domestic resources to neighbouring countries, generating billions of dollars, yet the Burmese people have not seen the economic benefits.¹⁶ Instead, in pursuing its own interests and militarizing development projects, the Government has exploited local villagers and exposed them to human rights abuses.

Villagers are systematically subjected to forced labour by Burmese army troops.¹⁷ For example, during the construction of the Yadana gas pipeline in Eastern Burma, a joint venture of the French-owned Total and the US-owned Unocal (now owned by Chevron), Government soldiers and proxy military groups providing security forced civilians to cut down trees, serve as porters, and build military infrastructure.¹⁸ Those who refused were beaten, raped, tortured and killed.¹⁹

Large-scale land confiscation is another prevalent development-related government abuse. Villagers receive nominal or no compensation for the farmland seized. In 2010, approximately 2,500 acres of land in Southern Burma were confiscated and distributed to logging companies.²⁰ Villagers who live by the China-sponsored development of the Shwe gas pipelines in Western Burma also report that authorities have been confiscating land without compensation.²¹

Many Burmese rely primarily on farming for their livelihoods. Forced labour leaves them much less time to cultivate their land, while confiscation completely deprives them of their source of food and income. Additionally, militarization of areas with development projects, which is common, is often

accompanied by an increase in unofficial taxes, imposed on local villagers by soldiers.²² These corrupt practices not only heighten food insecurity, they also close off educational opportunities: farmers can no longer afford to send their children to school.

Environmental impact

The severe environmental degradation that frequently results from these projects further exacerbates their negative social and economic impact. Unsustainable logging, shrimp farming and hydro-electric projects, as well as extractive industries have seriously damaged the environment. For example, air and water pollution created by a 2010 coal mining partnership agreement between Chinese and Burmese companies in Shan State have contaminated water supplies and caused approximately 2,000 cases of skin disease.²³ This venture is the largest cooperative mining project between China and Burma, located in the Sagaing Division, and it continues to release toxic chemicals during the refining process.²⁴

The environmental risks associated with development projects are not disclosed to affected communities,²⁵ and in the absence of the rule of law the victims of development-related government actions have no viable legal recourse. Order 1/99, which outlaws forced labour, it is hardly enforced.²⁶ When individuals subjected to forced labour and land confiscation have filed complaints, the SPDC has retaliated against them and their lawyers through criminal charges and arbitrary sentences to hard labour camps.²⁷

The country's environmental laws are not enforced. Although the Forest Law emphasizes the importance of conserving and protecting Burma's forests,²⁸ between 1990 and 2005, the country lost almost 20% of its forests,²⁹ and in recent years the rate of deforestation has increased. Similarly, although the Myanmar Mines Law of 1994 requires permission from land users before a mining permit is issued, in practice villagers are not consulted and their lands are typically confiscated.³⁰

Additionally, no law requires that companies seeking to invest in development projects in Burma consult with affected communities. Even when companies have taken the initiative to do so, the environmental impact assessments that were commissioned have been fundamentally flawed, leading to inaccurate conclusions.³¹ For example, the third-party environmental impact assessment commissioned by the French oil company Total on the Yadana gas pipeline project relied on the testimony of Burmese villagers procured through interviews conducted in the presence of military intelligence officials.

Conclusions

Strong democratic institutions that promote good governance are an essential prerequisite for sustainable development. This entails respect for the rule of law and human rights, effective public participation, access to knowledge, and accountability in the management of public resources.

Democratic principles must be strengthened in Burma through free and fair elections, an independent judiciary that upholds the rule of law, and a constitutional review that involves all stakeholders. Public participation should also be incorporated into all stages of development so that the people can shape economic policies, become fully aware of the social and environmental impact of all development initiatives, and have the power to hold government actors and companies accountable for any rights violations. ■

16 EarthRights International, *Energy Insecurity*, (July 2010), <www.earthrights.org/publication/energy-insecurity-how-total-chevron-and-pttep-contribute-human-rights-violations-financi>.

17 EarthRights International, *The Human Cost of Energy: Chevron's Continuing Role in Financing Oppression and Profiting From Human Rights Abuses in Military-Rule Burma*, (April 2008), <www.earthrights.org/publication/human-cost-energy-chevron-s-continuing-role-financing-oppression-and-profiting-human-rig>; UN Human Rights Council, *Progress report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar*, (10 March 2010).

18 R. Sisodia and A. Buncombe, "Burmese villagers 'forced to work on Total pipeline,'" *The Independent*, (14 August 2009), <www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/burmese-villagers-forced-to-work-on-total-pipeline-1771876.html>.

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20 S.Y. Naing, "Land Confiscation Reported in Dawei Project," *The Irrawaddy*, (15 December 2010), <www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=20326>.

21 Mizzima News Group, "Land confiscation begins with pipeline project," *Mizzima News*, (9 November 2009), <www.mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/3023-land-confiscation-begins-with-pipeline-project.html>.

22 All Arakan Students' & Youths' Congress, *Overview of Land Confiscation in Arakan State*, (June 2010). Available from: <www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/Land_%20Confiscation_in_Arakan-Overview.pdf>; Karen Human Rights Group, *Pa'an District: Land confiscation, forced labour and extortion undermining villagers' livelihoods*, 11 February 2006. Available from: <www.khrgr.org/khrgr2006/khrgr06f1.html>.

23 Pa-O Youth Organization, *Poison Clouds: Lessons from Burma's largest coal project at Tigyit*, (2011), <pyo-org.blogspot.com>.

24 J. Allchin, "China seals biggest Burma mining deal," *Democratic Voice of Burma*, (July 30 2010), <www.dvb.no/news/china-seals-biggest-burma-mining-deal/11015>.

25 EarthRights International, *China in Burma: The Increasing Investment of Chinese Multinational Corporations in Burma's Hydropower, Oil, and Natural Gas, and Mining Sectors*, (September 2007), <www.earthrights.org/sites/default/files/publications/China-in-Burma-2007-background.pdf>.

26 The Government of the Union of Myanmar, "Order supplementing Order No. 1/99," in *The Ministry of Home Affairs*, (27 October 2000).

27 International Trade Union Confederation, *2010 Annual Survey of violations of trade union rights – Burma*, (9 June 2010); M. Maung, "Lawyer arrested for defending labour activist freed," *Mizzima News*, (6 March 2010), <www.mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/3621-lawyer-arrested-for-defending-labour-activist-freed.html>; Kaew, N.K, "Army seizes 30,000 acres of farmland," *Democratic Voice of Burma*, (22 February 2011), <www.dvb.no/news/army-seizes-30000-acres-of-farmland/14351>.

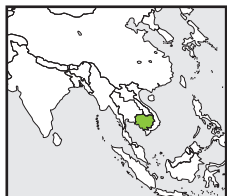
28 The State Law and Order Restoration Council, *The Forest Law (The State Law and Order Restoration Council Law No 8/92)*, (3 November 1992).

29 The National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB), "Burma Human Rights Yearbook 2008-2009," in *Human Rights Documentation Unit*, (November 2009), <www.ncgub.net/NCGUB/mediagallery/album4c6.html?aid=90&page=1>.

30 Pa-O Youth Organization, *Poison Clouds*, op cit, <pyo-org.blogspot.com>; The State Law and Order Restoration Council, *The Myanmar Mines Law (No 8/94)*, (6 September 1994).

31 EarthRights International, *Getting it Wrong: Flawed Corporate Social Responsibility and Misrepresentations Surrounding Total and Chevron's Yadana Gas Pipeline in Military-Ruled Burma*, (September 2009), <www.earthrights.org/sites/default/files/publications/getting-it-wrong.pdf>.

Human and social capacities should be the priority



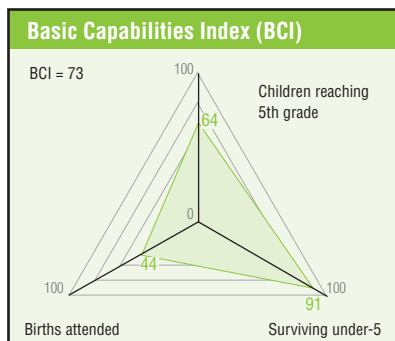
After 18 years of economic liberalization, the country faces pressing economic, social and environmental challenges, such as increasing vulnerability to natural disasters and lack of an appropriate irrigation system. The Government fails to protect the rights of the country's indigenous peoples, who are facing corporate takeover in the name of development. In order to sustain rapid economic growth, to provide jobs and to reduce poverty levels, Cambodia needs to diversify its economy but, prior to that, it must invest in human capital. Promoting economic development without taking basic steps to strengthen internal social and human capacity will condemn the country to a widening gap between rich and poor.

SILAKA
Thida Khus

After two decades of civil war and following the 1993 election sponsored by the United Nations, Cambodia has joined the world economy. Since then, the country has joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2000 and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2009. The country has also embraced a structural adjustment process which encompasses the privatization of State businesses and services; after 18 years of economic liberalization, Cambodia has seen some prosperity mostly due to the adoption of new and modern infrastructure. However, questions remain to be asked whether the development models applied are in fact sustainable and if they could lead to narrowing the gap between rich and poor Cambodians.

The country's GDP growth reached peaked at 13.4% in 2007, and then dropped to 7.2% in 2008, climbed to 10.1% in 2009 and reached its nadir in 2010, with -1.5%.¹ The key growing industries have been tourism, garment manufacturing, and construction, but all these sectors have been heavily hit during the recent economic and financial crisis.

Also, the benefits of growth do not extend to all. For instance, in 2010 nearly 4,000 tourists visited Angkor Wat per day, bringing about USD 4.5 million per month in revenue.² However, this benefit has not reached the poor; even though Cambodia's tourism industry has created 10,000 jobs, a large portion of its profits do not filter down to local communities. Six to 10% of Siemreap City's population of 173,000, for example, earn no more than USD 2.5 a day, according to 2010 statistics from the Ministry of Planning.³ Last year, 289,702 tourists came from South Korea and 177,000 from China, but that was of little help to the local economy.⁴ According to the *Cambodia Daily* newspaper, "they (South Korean and



Chinese tourists) fly on their own carriers, sleep in pre-booked hotels and eat in restaurants that serve their own national dishes."⁵

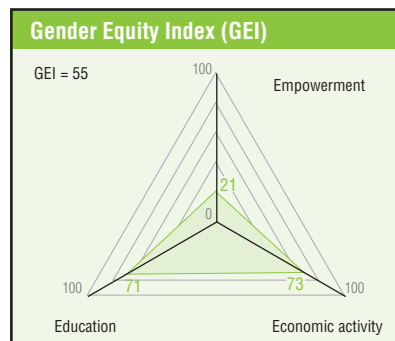
Environmental and economic vulnerability

Cambodia is especially vulnerable to extreme weather and economic downturns, since it lacks a proper social safety net. A study conducted by the Cambodian Economic Association on several poor communities in targeted villages made apparent that there has been an increased vulnerability to food insecurity among the rural poor.⁶

The strategies adopted by poor communities to cope with their decreasing income are tremendously harmful to their human dignity and well-being. For example, 55% of Cambodians in this situation tend to reduce the amount of food consumed; this is more common among the female population, since 64% of mothers and girls are reducing their food intake in order to leave more to the other members of the family.⁷ If we also consider the quality, as well as the amount of food consumed per family member, then 75% of the people of the targeted villages are seriously jeopardizing their nutrition, health and quality of life.

Mining

Management of the mining industry has also been a matter of concern recently, not only because it has a heavy impact on the environment but also because it exemplifies the Government's economic



and social mismanagement. A copper mine in the Kvav Commune (Siemreap province), for example, was almost fully operative while little was known about it by the neighbouring villagers. According to an article in *The Cambodia Daily*, "An official said the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) and Chinese business are behind the mining. It is kept under a blanket of secrecy. The agreement was signed by the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Energy and the Chinese building corporation Nim Meng Group, stating that the data of the exploration, the feasibility study and the mining operation were all confidential."⁸

The agreement granted 80 km² for both extraction (6 yrs) and exploration (up to 30 yrs). A patronage system has existed between RCAF and the business community since 2008, and this has become the official policy. The militarization of the Cambodian mines is now emerging, and reporters were escorted out of the compound of the mining site in Siemreap. The company said that they will build an irrigation system for the rice field and roads for the village, but six neighbouring villages have already filed claims that the company has encroached on their land.

Challenges in agriculture

In order to support the agricultural sector, the Government has to improve public services to support farmers. The irrigation scheme – that serves about a third of the country's farmland – is mostly falling apart as local management fails to address its maintenance.⁹ Furthermore, Japan's International

1 Index Mundi, *Cambodia GDP – real growth rate*, (2011), <www.indexmundi.com/cambodia/gdp_real_growth_rate.html>.

2 Khmer News, "Angkor Wat revenues rise on Chinese flights," (2010), <khmerweekly.com/2011/02/18/angkor-wat-revenues-rise-on-chinese-flights>.

3 Ibid.

4 English People Daily Online, "Cambodia sees Chinese visitors as potential boost to tourism," (15 January 2011), <english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90851/7261729.html>.

5 *The Cambodia Daily*, (24 February, 2011).

6 "The Impact of Economic Downturn on Households and Communities in Cambodia," CEA, (May 2010).

7 Ibid.

8 *The Cambodia Daily*, (1 March 2011).

9 *The Cambodia Daily*, 26, (27 February 2011).

Cooperation Agency study stated during a recent seminar in Phnom Penh that only 1 million hectares of farm land were served by irrigation in 2009 now, plans are underway to increase the irrigation area by 25,000 hectares annually.

Budget allocations to agriculture have been minimal, even though it is considered a priority. Between 2005 and 2009, allocations to the sector have been 1.5% to 2.5% of the total budget.¹⁰

Plundering sacred land

The Suy people are one of the country's smallest indigenous groups. Almost 900 Suy live in five villages in Treapang Chor commune, O Ral District, settled around the Mount O Ral Wildlife Sanctuary, established in 1997. This sanctuary includes their agricultural lands and customary-use forest and is traditionally considered the home of the Suy goddess Yeay Te.¹¹ In 2009 the Government awarded several concessions over 10,000 hectares¹² on the slope of Mount O Ral for corn plantations and tourism, without seeking permission from the local population, including the Suy, who immediately protested, asserting their right over their lands and resources.¹³ Corn planting began nevertheless in June 2009. Nine months later the Government handed back 6,000 hectares to the Suy, but as the non-indigenous population did not get any of their lands back, it was feared that they might try and settle the matter violently in the Suy people's area.¹⁴

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case. Almost all indigenous communities in Cambodia are facing serious land problems largely associated with corporate takeover in the name of development. The Government continues to ignore its own laws on the legal recognition of communal land and reserves,

and fails to protect the rights of the country's indigenous peoples. It also violates international human rights obligations under the International Convention against Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.¹⁵

Economic development and diversification

Cambodia's economy is dependent on a narrow range of sectors, such as rice-based agriculture, garments, tourism and construction.¹⁶ The 2008 global crisis made apparent the vulnerability of Cambodia's limited economy, and many experts agreed on the need to diversify it. Rice remains the leading crop, and although pepper, palm sugar, cashew nuts and rubber are offering interesting prospects, the majority of farmers still depend almost solely on rice production. The garment sector has experienced steady growth, and is now a major industrial employer, especially for women. Yet it is keenly sensitive to international demand; in fact, it was very hard hit by falling demand from the US and the European Union during the crisis.¹⁷

It is clear that in order to sustain rapid economic growth, provide jobs and reduce poverty, Cambodia needs to diversify its economy, but this is not an easy task. To do so, the country needs to increase its competitiveness in the region, as well as acquire greater technology and know-how. This implies major efforts in terms of human resources, natural resource management and structural reforms. The search for diversification should also take into account the potential of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises across the country. These enterprises, along with farming could be the true engines of economic growth, and should be

included in any diversification strategy that aims to achieve sustainable development, better food security and decreased poverty.

Civil society organizations (CSOs)

Cambodian civil society has faced many challenges in the past few years, among them laws specifically designed to jeopardize their freedom of operation. The first is the Anti-Corruption Law, which requires reports of corruption cases to supply extensive evidence and sources. The other piece of legislation that will hit organizations directly is one regarding CSO registration, which demands that all members of a CSO register before starting any activity and requires all CSOs to file annual activities and financial reports to the Government. This will greatly restrict citizen initiatives and will mostly hit community organizations. Villagers and indigenous groups (such as the Suy and Phnong people) will not be able to act until they are registered.

This legislation has been seen as a threat to human rights and democracy, as it gives the Government carte blanche to close down organizations without any legislative proceedings.

The promising aspect of decentralization is that the Government has begun to introduce the second phase, giving local authorities responsibility for assessing democratic development.

Conclusions

Cambodia needs to take control of its own resources and improve their management in order to foster sustainable development. Promoting economic development without taking basic steps to strengthen internal social and human capacity will only condemn the country to a widening gap between the rich and the poor. ■

10 Ngo Sothath and Chan Sophal, *Agriculture Sector Financing and Services for Smallholder Farmers*, (Cambodia, NGO Forum, Action Aid Cambodia, September 2010), <www.ngoforum.org.kh/eng/dip/olddipdocs/AEP_Report_Agriculture_Sector_Financing.pdf>.

11 OMCT Action File, *Cambodia: Suy Indigenous Peoples at Risk of Extinction*, (2010), <www.omct.org/files/2010/03/6139/cambodia_action_file_.pdf>.

12 *Ethnocide: Cambodia's indigenous peoples under attack*. See: <indigenoupeoplesissues.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4146:ethnocide-cambodias-indigenous-peoples-under-attack-aipp-public-statement&catid=62:southeast-asia-indigenous-peoples&Itemid=84>.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 V. Salze-Lozac'h, "Diversifying Cambodia's Economy, Easier Said than Done," *In Asia*, (The Asia Foundation, 15 September 2010), <asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2010/09/15/diversifying-cambodias-economy-easier-said-than-done>.

17 Ibid.

While the Government silences protests, the environmental alarm gets louder



In a country where more than half the population is unemployed and 51% of the people are living on less than two dollars a day it is more important than ever for natural resources to be managed in an intelligent and sustainable way. But the Government's development model is not sustainable. Desertification and the loss of biodiversity are serious problems and if not tackled immediately the population's well-being will be even more at risk. The Lom and Pangar dam project will displace thousands of people and ruin one of the richest ecosystems in the territory.

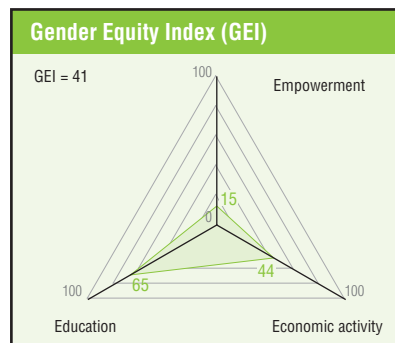
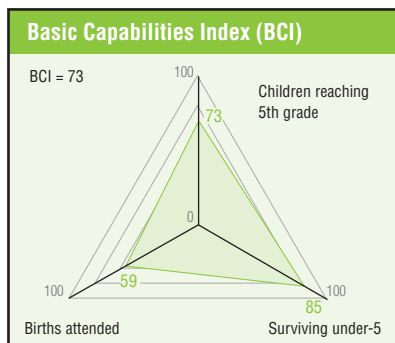
CRADEC (Centre Régional Africain pour le Développement Endogène et Communautaire Dynamique Citoyenne)
 Jean Mballa Mballa

Cameroon benefited from an increase in international oil and cocoa prices in the middle of the 2000s, but rising inflation¹ and the fact that wealth is very unequally distributed (the country's GINI rating in 2005 was 44.6²) mean the economy is even more vulnerable than before. According to the latest data, 51% of the people are living on less than two dollars a day and 17% on less than one dollar.³ The Government has announced measures to strengthen the economy, however it has committed itself to an unsustainable development model.

One upcoming project, for example, is a dam on the Lom and Pangar Rivers that the Government claims will alleviate Cameroon's energy shortage and stimulate economic growth. However it seems that the main beneficiary of this project will be the mining enterprise Alucam, which consumes around a third of the electrical power generated in the country.⁴

This dam will displace whole communities and cause a serious loss of biodiversity. The habitats of many animal species, including gorillas and chimpanzees will be submerged under the reservoir or destroyed when large swathes of trees in surrounding areas are cut down to make way for roads to link the dam to nearby cities. Yet official policy is to strengthen the country's energy generation capabilities at the expense of the environment and the Government is offering more facilities for companies engaged in unsustainable extractive activities.

In 2009 the stated number of people potentially displaced by the dam project increased to 28,000; this includes minorities such as the Baka, who have a history of discrimination.⁵



The Government's tendency to brush aside the rights of communities has been seen before, in 2000, when work started on the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline, a project that involved Petronas Malaysia, ExxonMobil and Chevron. According to a 2005 Amnesty International report, the project could "freeze the protection of the human rights of thousands of people who have lived in the area for decades."⁶ The pipeline project also caused large numbers of people to be displaced. Farmers in the area complained that they were barred access to their land and that ExxonMobil refused to return it or pay compensation. In some cases this meant communities were denied access to their only source of potable water.⁷

In the project contracts signed by the Government the enterprises in question had no human rights or environmental protection obligations and the agreements leading up to the commencement of the work were shielded by business confidentiality and were therefore not available for public scrutiny.⁸ The Government line was that the project was an opportunity for development that would make it possible to build new schools and provide better health service coverage. Not only were these promises broken, but the Government intimidated and detained many people who spoke out against the pipeline.⁹

The imposition of silence

In 2008 President Biya launched an initiative to make changes to the nation's Constitution and people took to the streets in the main cities to protest. These demonstrations were violently repressed and around 100 demonstrators and members of the security forces were killed. The civil society organizations involved in the protest movement have repeatedly claimed that the Biya regime, which has ruled Cameroon since 1982, is autocratic and has retained its hold on power only by rigging elections.¹⁰ In February 2011 Biya's security forces violently broke up a protest demonstration in which two of the participants were major opposition figures, Louis Tobie Mbida and Kah Walla, both of whom plan to turn as candidates in the forthcoming elections of October 2011. Mbida and Walla said they were mistreated by the forces of repression,¹¹ which had been tipped off about the possibility of the demonstration some time before and were able to quickly disperse protesters.

The Government has gone to great lengths to silence the opposition. For example, in March 2011 it blocked an SMS service that provided access to the social network Twitter, which was widely used by members of civil society organizations to organize protest activities.¹²

1 Economy Watch, "Cameroon Economy," <www.economywatch.com/world_economy/Cameroon>.

2 Institute of International Education, "Atlas of Student Mobility: Cameroon," <www.atlas.iienetwork.org/page/48146/>.

3 Earthtrends, "Cameroon," <earthtrends.wri.org/povlinks/country/cameroon.php>.

4 N. Chinton, "El miedo fluye ante nueva represa," IPS, (2009), <ipsnoticias.net/nota.asp?idnews=93679>.

5 Ibid.

6 Amnesty International, *Oleoducto Chad-Camerún: un nuevo informe acusa a las empresas petroleras y los gobiernos de evadirse en secreto de sus obligaciones para con los derechos humanos*, (September 2005), <www.amnesty.org/es/library/asset/POL30/028/2005/es/b9a7ba6b-d4b1-11dd-8a23-d58a49c0d652/pol300282005es.html>.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Amnesty International, op. cit.

10 David Wallechinsky, *Tyrants: The World's 20 Worst Living Dictators*, Regan Press, (New York: 2006)..

11 African News, "Brutal Suppression of Peaceful Protests in Cameroon by Biya Thugs," (24 February 2011), <africandictator.blogspot.com/2011/02/brutal-suppression-of-peaceful-protests.html>.

12 Afrol News, "Cameroon limits social media services," (9 March 2011), <afrl.com/articles/37542>.

Unemployment

According to a 2009 study by the National Statistics Institute there were 12 million people unemployed in that year. This number is absolutely shocking given that the population of the country is only around 18.2 million.¹³

The Government announced plans to tackle the problem, including a scheme to create jobs for young people who drop out of secondary school, but in April 2011 there were no fewer than 350,000 applicants for the 25,000 jobs meant to be created in the public service.¹⁴ Opposition groups have claimed that the programme is a “big fraud,” created to get votes in the upcoming presidential elections, and applicants also have expressed doubts about the scheme’s transparency and reliability.¹⁵ As a mission from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank pointed out, it would be very difficult for the State to find the money to pay for new jobs created in the public sector.¹⁶

The initial commitment to recruit at least 25,000 workers has already been postponed. In May, Emmanuel Bonde, Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms, said the original programme would be replaced by one of “gradual recruitment.”¹⁷

Desertification

One of the most pressing ecological problems in Cameroon is desertification. By the early 21st century the north of the country had been severely affected by this process and deserts were threatening to encroach on the jungles in the central region.¹⁸ In recent years desertification has intensified and brought with it soil degradation, food insecurity, rising poverty and massive migrations out of the arid northern areas.¹⁹

One of the causes of deforestation in the country is the cultivation of cocoa. The way this resource is exploited has traditionally involved clearing forest areas, and there is no doubt that the alarming condition of much of the land in Cameroon today can be traced to the 1980s when the Government promoted cocoa as an export crop. When cocoa prices on world markets went down, the Government’s response was to increase production; even more of the tropical forests were cut down and today the country’s ecosystem is suffering the consequences of that development model, which was completely unsustainable.²⁰

13 Cameroon Today, “Cameroon Government News: Rampant unemployment in Cameroon,” (May 2011), <news.cameroon-today.com/cameroon-government-news-rampant-unemployment-in-cameroon/6152>

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Theodore M. Ndze, “After Review Mission to Cameroon: IMF, World Bank, ADB Dissatisfied – Worried over 25,000 jobs creations,” *The Star*, (4 April 2011), <thestaronline.info/?p=507>.

17 Cameroon Today, op. cit.

18 J.N. Ndi, “Cameroon under threat.” *Le Monde diplomatique*, (2002), <mondediplo.com/2002/12/11cameroon>.

19 W. Van Cotten, “Cameroon: Stemming the Tide of Desertification and Land Degradation,” *Desertification*, (18 March 2010), <desertification.wordpress.com/2010/03/18/cameroon-stemming-the-tide-of-desertification-and-land-degradation>.

20 Ndi, op. cit.

DSCE: LITTLE PROGRESS

The Strategic Document for Growth and Employment, designed to reduce poverty to a “socially acceptable” level, was launched in 2007.¹ The stated long-term objectives were to raise Cameroon to the status of a middle-income country, to industrialize and to strengthen the democratic process and thus bring about national unity. The plan was to tackle this task in successive 10-year phases with the overall targets to be reached by 2035. The goals the Government set for the initial phase were to raise annual average growth to 5% in the 2010–20 period, to reduce the informal sector by at least 50% by 2020 by creating thousands of jobs in the formal sector, and to reduce monetary poverty from 39.9% in 2007 to 28.7% in 2020.²

A 2011 review of progress towards the DSCE goals showed that 41% of the short-term targets had made a little progress, while 23% showed no advance at all. Only 5% of the goals set for 2010 were fully achieved.³ Similarly, some 45% of the immediate human development objectives registered slight progress and 6% made reasonable progress, but 34% of the indicators showed no change at all.⁴ As regards human development, the most encouraging areas were the fight against HIV and AIDS and the initiative to reduce maternal and infant mortality.

Regarding employment 14% of the indicators were stagnant and there was slight progress towards 72% of the objectives including promoting employment in the private sector, self-employment and formal employment. However, no progress was made in the effort to move workers from the informal to the formal sector.⁵ It was the same with regard to the means of production: there was hardly any progress towards most of the goals (60%).

1 Christine Andela, Jean Mballa Mballa and Samuel Biroki, “Cameroon: Aid must be more efficiently managed,” in *Social Watch Report 2010: After the Fall*, Instituto del Tercer Mundo, Montevideo, 2010, p. 80.

2 Ibid.

3 Dynamique Citoyenne, op. cit.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

In any case, the wealth generated at the cost of devastating the nation’s tropical forests did not improve the situation of the population; all it did was drive people who were especially dependent on forest resources deeper into poverty.

The main problems that desertification is causing today are that sources of potable water in several cities including Mbouda, Kumbo and Nkambe are drying up; there is generalized soil erosion and a loss of fertility, which increases the risk of landslides and floods (as happened in the city of Bamenda, for example); there are floods and sand and dust storms in the north; vegetation cover is being lost; water reserves are being polluted; and soils are showing higher levels of salinity and alkalinity throughout the country including the tropical green areas.²¹

Desertification is being aggravated not only by the Government’s unsustainable development model but also by informal logging by the poorest sectors of the population, which is happening even in the nature reserves.

Loss of biodiversity

Desertification is not the only environmental challenge the country is confronting as there is also a serious loss of biodiversity due to a number of different factors including overgrazing, pollution, poaching and over-fishing.²² Some 40% of the mangrove swamp ecosystem has been destroyed, 32 of the 409 mam-

mal species of mammals in the country are in danger of extinction and 14 of the 690 bird species will soon disappear along with 3 species of reptiles, 1 amphibian species, 26 species of fresh water fish and 67 plants species.²³

Conclusion

While the Government has launched an Action Plan for the Fight against Desertification – which includes various studies to analyse the causes and impact of the problem and sets out strategies to tackle it – and has attempted to follow the guidelines in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), neither of these efforts has made any appreciable difference, and desertification and soil erosion have been spreading and getting worse.²⁴

It is doubtful that the objectives of the Strategic Document for Growth and Employment (DSCE) (see box) can be reached, and it follows that the Government should make a more realistic action plan. The lack of information about the DSCE’s objectives and achievements should be resolved with an effective campaign to keep the public informed.²⁵ A serious obstacle is that monitoring progress towards the DSCE targets is hampered by a lack of data. Civil society organizations should be allowed greater access to indicators that are important for examining how the Government’s plans are progressing. Overall there is a need for greater transparency. ■

23 Ibid.

24 Van Cotten, op. cit.

25 Dynamique Citoyenne, *DSCE: Un an après, Quel niveau d’appropriation?*, (Yaoundé, 2011).

Growth: a question of means, not ends



The Government has put short-term economic growth at the centre of its policy priorities. Sustainable growth, however, requires public investments in human capital to ensure that short-term growth doesn't come at the cost of long-term environmental devastation. The environment is already suffering degradation due to lack of policies, and currently, women's and minorities' rights are being eroded – violence against women varies across different groups and regions, and Aboriginal women are disproportionately subject to violence. Civil society organizations have presented a broad range of public policy alternatives that provide practical, sustainable means for achieving well-being for everyone living in the country.

Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action

Kate McInturff

North-South Institute

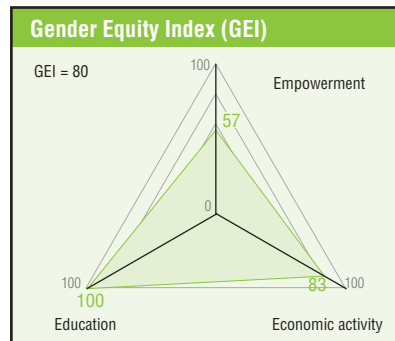
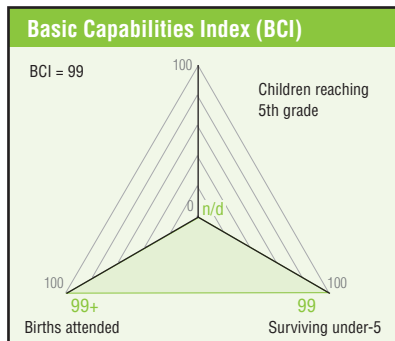
John Foster

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

Armine Yalnizyan

As Canada takes unsteady steps out of recession, President Stephen Harper's Government continues to institute neo-liberal economic policies, including lowering tax rates, decreasing the deficit, and investing in physical infrastructure projects. Even within a neo-liberal framework, the results have been mixed. Job creation has not kept pace with the growth in the working population, nor has there been significant growth in permanent employment.¹ Personal income tax cuts and credits have disproportionately been extended to high-income earners, delivering the most financial support to those who need it least. The decline in corporate tax rates has not yielded increased investments in equipment and infrastructure.² As spending on social programmes falls behind the rate of inflation, spending on the military and the prison system is set to increase significantly, in spite of a largely static crime rate and the scheduled drawdown of Canada's major military engagement in Afghanistan.

The Harper Government has put short-term economic growth at the centre of its public policy priorities. Any growth is deemed good growth. However, sustainable growth requires public investments in human capital development – from childcare to life-long-learning; it requires investments in research and policy development; it requires proactive public measures to ensure that short-term growth doesn't come at the cost of long-term environmental devastation. Civil society organizations in Canada have come together to present a broad range of public policy alternatives, recognizing the constraints of the economic crisis and offering practical, sustainable means for achieving well-being for everyone living in Canada. Examples include: the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternative's annual *Alternative Federal Budget* project, which draws on a wide body of expertise in order to provide cost-effective policy alternatives for



public expenditure; the formation of a broad coalition of organizations called Voices, to document the diminished space for democratic debate in Canada and to provide new forums for that debate; the Canadian Council for International Development's call for a "new deal" between the Government and civil society organizations;³ and the collaboration of scholars and women's organizations to provide a gendered analysis of public spending priorities.⁴ In spite of evidence that organizations with a strong public policy advocacy agenda risk losing their federal funding, Canadian civil society continues to produce critical and innovative public policy that puts human and environmental well-being at the centre of their models of progress.

Inequality

As a result of tax cuts, the Government will have lost CAD 96.6 billion (USD 97.9 billion) in revenue between 2008 and 2011.⁵ As the economic stimulus spending programme wraps up, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives projects a USD 3.8 billion decline in federal programme spending in 2011-2012, "the second biggest spending decline (in US dollars) since the 1950s."⁶ This will likely continue a pattern of federal spending cuts on social programmes that began in the mid 1990s.⁷ The Government's economic policy has had a significant impact on people's

well-being. Social assistance rates have remained virtually unchanged across most of Canada. Most social assistance incomes in the country remain well below the low income cut-off rate. While the overall poverty rate is 9%, poverty still disproportionately affects women, Aboriginal peoples, and people with disabilities. For example, one in three Aboriginal and racialized people in Canada live in poverty. One in four people with disabilities, immigrants, and female single-parents in Canada live in poverty. Across all categories rates of poverty are higher for women than for men.

Access to services is highly uneven – with those most affected by the economic crisis often receiving the least benefit from national economic policies. For example, in the education sector, access to primary education is counted among Canada's achievements, yet many children on First Nations reserves do not have access to safe schools.⁸ First Nations children are over-represented within the child welfare system and are far more likely to be affected by poverty and inadequate housing. However, First Nations students attending federally-funded schools on reserves receive USD 2,000 less per student per year than do students in the rest of Canada.⁹

Women's eroding rights

Economists have demonstrated that women are typically the shock absorbers in situations of economic crisis, as they take on greater burdens of unpaid work

1 Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, *Alternative Federal Budget: 2011*, (Ottawa: 2011), p. 11.

2 K.Howlett, "Corporate Tax Cuts Don't Spur Growth, Analysis Reveals as Election Pledges Fly," *The Globe and Mail*, (6 April 2011).

3 <www.ccic.ca>.

4 <www.fafia-afai.org>.

5 Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, *op cit.*, p.16, "Figure 9: Cost of Tax Cuts Since 2006."

6 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

7 See Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action, *Canada's Commitment to Equality: A Gender Analysis of the Last Ten Federal Budgets (1995-2004)*, (Ottawa: 2005).

8 A. Rajekar and R. Mathilakath, *The Funding Requirement for First Nations Schools in Canada*, Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, (2009).

9 M. Mendelson, *Why We Need a First Nations Education Act*, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, (Ottawa: 2009).

and experience their status in the formal sector become more precarious.¹⁰ Women in Canada have been among the first to return to a post-recession labour force, but this early re-entry does not translate into increased well-being or increased economic stability, since returning women workers are more likely to be engaged in part-time and unpaid work.¹¹ Moreover, they continue to suffer from one of the largest gender wage gaps amongst OECD countries.¹²

Low wages and temporary employment result in fewer women than men qualifying for employment insurance or tax credits. Working mothers face additional challenges. Two-thirds of all mothers with children under the age of six do paid work.¹³ However, the Government cancelled a national childcare plan that would provide increased access for all working parents to safe, affordable childcare. For women who are not part of the paid workforce, the erosion of rights has been particularly acute, especially for those most likely to rely on welfare, including single mothers and Aboriginal women. Welfare incomes are so low that the Chair of the National Council of Welfare recently called them “shameful and morally unsustainable in a rich country.”¹⁴

Violence against women in Canada varies significantly across different groups and regions, with Aboriginal women being disproportionately subject to violence. More than 500 Aboriginal women in Canada have gone missing or been murdered over the last 40 years.¹⁵ Women living in remote communities in the North also experience higher rates of violence than their counterparts in urban and southern regions of Canada and have far less access to support services.¹⁶ With such high levels of gender-based violence, it is not surprising that there is increased support amongst women for policies that address violent crime. However the current Government’s “Truth in Sentencing Act” appears to address a problem that isn’t there, since sentencing rates have changed little over the past decade.¹⁷ The legislation will impact the economy more than sentencing practices. The Parliamentary Budget Office estimates that the Truth in Sentencing Act will double the cost of the penal system over five years – to USD 9.5 billion—and will require an additional USD 1.8 billion for the cost of constructing new prisons.¹⁸

In comparison to spending on social programmes, spending on the security sector is set to increase significantly. The Government’s own estimates indicate military spending will total USD 22 billion in 2010-2011.¹⁹ However, the estimates attached to spending on military equipment and new ‘tough on crime’ legislation has been highly contested. For example, estimates for the cost of the recently purchased F-35 fighter jets range from USD 9 billion, according to the Department of National Defence,²⁰ to USD 29 billion, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer.²¹

Although Canada has committed to doubling its spending on development assistance in absolute dollars, Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a percentage of GNI has remained static since 2005 at 0.3%.²² The *Canadian Official Development Assistance Accountability Act* (2008) requires that Canadian development assistance “contribute to poverty reduction, take into account the perspectives of the poor and be consistent with international human rights standards.”²³ Many civil society organizations see the Act as a very promising mechanism for integrating human rights concerns into international development policy and programming. However, a report from the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, a civil society coalition, suggests that there has been little or no Government implementation of the Act.²⁴

“Equality between women and men” and “environmental sustainability” remain cross-cutting themes for the Canadian International Development Agency; however, political, human and financial resources are being withdrawn from those objectives. The term “gender equality” has largely disappeared from official Government statements and policy documents.²⁵ Funding committed to gender equality-specific programming remains less than 2% of Canadian ODA.²⁶ At the 2010 meeting of the G8, the Harper Government committed 1.1 billion Can-

adian dollars in new spending for maternal and child health programmes in poor countries. Civil society organizations welcomed this commitment, but many criticized the decision not to fund abortion services under the initiative, even where such services are already legal in the country where the project would be implemented.

Environmental degradation

Canada’s record on environmental sustainability brought criticism from other countries during the 2009 UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. Since then, Canada has actually lowered its emissions targets for 2020,²⁷ while its own greenhouse gas emissions are rising. Those living in northern Canada have seen a significant impact on their environment and their well-being. According to a 2011 report by the Penumbra Institute: “Canada’s Arctic has already experienced a warming of more than 1.7°C and an increase of 4 or 5°C is projected.”²⁸ Inuit communities report the decline in access to their traditional sources of food and an overall degradation of their environment and well-being.²⁹ This degradation is further exacerbated in northern and rural regions by the mining and extractive industries. For example, residents of Baker Lake have documented the negative effects of expanding uranium mining activities on their community. Although water quality remains good across Canada, over 100 First Nations communities continue to live with inadequate access to safe drinking water.

Canada’s mining industry has a strong presence internationally as well as domestically. Canadian-based companies make up over 40% of the world’s extractive industry. Although Canadian civil society is playing a leading role in monitoring the industry through initiatives such as Publish What You Pay, the Kimberly Process and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Regional Certification Mechanism for conflict minerals, Canada has not yet agreed to adopt consumer protection regulations or to comply with the guidelines set by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

Economic stability, a question of means

The economic crisis has pushed civil society to renew its engagement with economic policy debates. Governmental and non-governmental actors alike are grappling with the question of how to achieve their goals within a constrained fiscal environment. But the question of how best to stimulate economic growth and ensure economic stability is a question of means, not ends. Ultimately, the focus must remain on the society being built by that growth. ■

10 C. Sweetman and R. King, *Gender Perspectives on the Global Economic Crisis*, (Oxfam International Discussion Paper, 2010).

11 Statistics Canada, *Women in Canada: Work Chapter Update*, (Ottawa: 2007).

12 OECD, *Gender Pay Gaps For Full-Time Workers And Earnings Differentials By Educational Attainment*, (2010).

13 Statistics Canada, “Paid Work,” in *Women in Canada*, op cit.

14 National Council of Welfare, *Staggering Losses in Welfare Incomes*, (Ottawa: 2006).

15 Native Women’s Association of Canada, *Voices of Our Sisters In Spirit: A Report to Families and Communities*, (Ottawa: 2009).

16 Statistics Canada, *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006*, (Ottawa: 2006).

17 K. MacQueen, “Is Canada Tough On Crime Or Doing Just Fine?” *Macleans Magazine*, 7 (September 2010).

18 Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, “The Funding Requirement and Impact of the ‘Truth in Sentencing Act’ on the Correctional System in Canada,” (Ottawa: 2010).

19 Department of National Defence, *National Defence 2010–2011 Report on Plans and Priorities: Part III Estimates*, (Ottawa: 2010).

20 Ibid.; *Arriving at Canada’s Costs for the F-35A Conventional Takeoff and Landing Variant Joint Strike Fighter*, (Ottawa: 2011).

21 K. Page, *An Estimate of the Fiscal Impact of Canada’s Proposed Acquisition of the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter*, Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, (March 2011).

22 Canadian International Development Agency, *Statistical Report on International Assistance: Fiscal Year 2009–2010*, (Ottawa: 2011).

23 Ministry of Justice, *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act*, (Ottawa: 2008).

24 Canadian Council for International Co-operation, *A Time to Act – Implementing the ODA Accountability Act: A Canadian CSO Agenda for Aid Reform*, (Ottawa: 2010).

25 Canadian Labour Congress and FAFIA, *Reality Check: Women in Canada and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Fifteen Years On: A Canadian Civil Society Response*, (Ottawa: 2010); M. Collins, “Gender Equality,” “Child Soldiers” and “Humanitarian Law” are Axed from Foreign Policy Language,” *Embassy Magazine*, (29 July 2009).

26 CSO Working Group on Women’s Rights, *Strengthening Canada’s International Leadership in the Promotion of Gender Equality: A Civil Society Response to the Evaluation of the Implementation of CIDA’s 1999 Policy on Gender Equality*, (Ottawa, 2009), Chart 1: Gender Equality Trends, Percentage of CIDA ODA.

27 Environment Canada, “Canada Lists Emissions Target Under the Copenhagen Accord,” (Calgary, Alberta: 1 February 2010).

28 A. Morgan, *Canadian Index of Well-being Environment Report*, (Waterloo, Ontario: 2011).

29 S. Nickels, et al., *Unikkaaqatigiit – Putting the Human Face on Climate Change: Perspectives from Inuit in Canada*, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Nasiwvik Centre for Inuit Health and Changing Environments at Université Laval and the Ajunnginiq Centre at the National Aboriginal Health Organization, (Ottawa: 2005).

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Ominous trends



All forecasts agree that the outlook for the country is grim. The people are facing a wide range of threats, including desert encroachment, the loss of forests, increasing poverty and under-employment. No one is taking action to improve the situation. The country has no policy for sustainable development. Government bodies do not coordinate their policies and it is not hard to see that the worst is still to come.

Action Group for Peace and Education for Change (GAPAFOT)

Pastor Clotaire Rodonne Siribi

The economy of the Central African Republic depends primarily on the agriculture sector, which employs around 68% of the active population and in 2005-06 generated 54% of the gross domestic product (GDP).¹ The country has about 15 million hectares of arable land, but less than two million hectares – 3.2% of the surface area – are actually cultivated.² Its 16 million hectares of grassland are also underexploited; it has 2.9 million head of cattle while the potential is five million.³ Some agricultural production is exported (cotton, coffee and tobacco) but most of the sector is used for subsistence farming.

The traditional cultivation methods commonly applied use burning techniques, which contributes to soil erosion and deforestation.⁴ The most widespread system is semi-itinerant poly-cultivation, a method that involves rotating cotton, mandioc and cereals in the savannah; coffee and mandioc in the forests; and cereals in the Sahel region. In spite of favourable agro-ecological conditions, agricultural yields are extremely low.

Energy from firewood

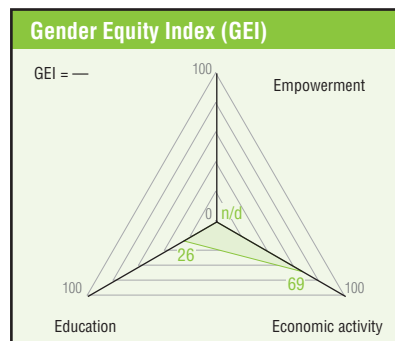
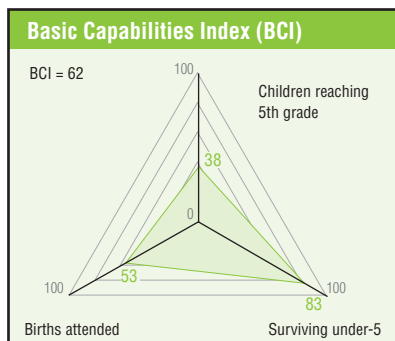
An analysis of the urbanization process and the situation in large cities reveals several serious problems with current exploitation of the country's environmental and human resources. Reliance on wood for nearly 90% of cooking fuel is causing deforestation. Urbanization and the concentration of the population in and around the cities has brought environmental problems such as anarchic housing construction on what was agricultural land, the concentration of pollutants, soil degradation, alteration of the hydro-geological system, expansion of the savannah and pre-desertification

1 World Bank, *Agriculture*, <datos.bancomundial.org/indicador/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS>.

2 ITeM *World Guide, Central African Republic: Indicators*, <www.guiadelmundo.org/uy/cd/countries/caf/Indicators.html>.

3 J.J. Ndewana, *General Panorama of the CAR*, <www.mijarc.org/uploads/media/MIJARCNoticias2-06.pdf>.

4 Mongbay.com, *Central African Republic*, <rainforests.mongbay.com/20car.htm>.



conditions. Wood is the main fuel for heating in 91.7% of households in the capital, Bangui, where it is used in nearly all poor homes (96%); the rich use a combination of firewood (84.5%), coal (10.5%) and gas (2.5%). Between 750 and 1400 tonnes of firewood are consumed every day in Bangui alone, which comes to 280,000 to 500,000 tonnes per year.

Environmental problems

The country's most pressing environmental problems are water pollution, desertification and the loss of biodiversity. Droughts are now frequent in the north, northeast and eastern regions, which in the past were known for their agricultural production. It is increasingly evident that underground water reserves are being exhausted, causing a se-

TABLE 1

Links between energy consumption and poverty

Socio-economic category

Energy for cooking	Very poor	Poor	Middle	Rich	Very rich	Total
Wood	96.4	94.0	93.0	90.8	84.5	91.7
Coal	2.7	4.1	4.5	5.9	10.5	5.5
Oil	0.5	1.4	1.7	2.2	1.3	1.4
Gas	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5	2.5	0.7
Electricity	0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.8	0.2
Others	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Socio-economic category

Energy for lighting	Very poor	Poor	Middle	Rich	Very rich	Total
Oil	97	89.9	76.2	53.3	14.7	65.5
Gas	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Electricity	2.0	9.3	23.0	45.9	84.5	33.7
Wood	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3
Others	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source : RCA-MÉPCI 2005b

vere reduction in productivity in these areas.⁵ To make matters worse, the Central African Republic ranks alongside Zaire and Nigeria as countries with the most severely eroded soil in Africa.⁶ The ravaging of the jungles and forests by farmers and others cutting wood for fuel leads directly to desertification and deforestation. The country has now lost around 29,600 hectares of tropical forest.

Biodiversity has become another critical problem. The elephant population, for example, has long been under threat. In the middle of the 1990s it was estimated that over the previous 30 years 90% of the country's elephants had been exterminated, with 85% of the massacre after 1985. Hunting of elephants is now banned but illegal poachers are still killing them, along with black and white rhinos.

Urbanization and poverty

The myth that moving to a city brings higher income and greater security became widespread in the Central African Republic only recently. The predicted annual urbanization rate for the period 2010-15 is 2.5% and the new city dwellers are overwhelmingly poor.⁷ Analysts attribute this population shift to a variety of factors, including high birth rates, a drastic drift off the land, and an influx of refugees caused by armed conflicts and instability not only in the Central African Republic itself but in neighbouring countries (Congo, Sudan and Chad). Living conditions are far from good. For example, in some districts of Bangui inhabitants have electricity only four days a week. Access to potable water is extremely limited.⁸

According to the 2003 General Population and Housing Census, 2.6 million people, 62.7% of the population, live below the poverty line. The overall poverty rate is 60% in cities and 72% in rural areas.⁹

Since Bangui's population growth is due to migration from rural areas, the structure of the urban landscape and the use of space are key questions in the future development of the city. Reliance on poorly remunerated, precarious methods of earning a living, such as collecting firewood aggravates urban poverty.

5 "Central African Republic – Environment", in *Nations Encyclopaedia*. Available from: <www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Central-African-Republic-ENVIRONMENT.html>.

6 FAO, *Land and environmental degradation and desertification in Africa*, <www.fao.org/docrep/X5318E/x5318e02.htm>.

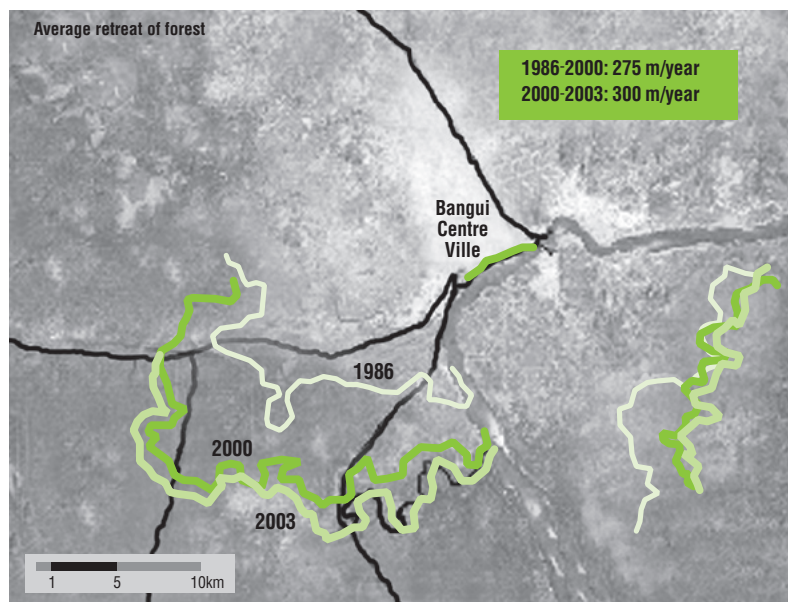
7 <en.worldstat.info/Africa/List_of_countries_by_Rate_of_urbanization>; *Indexmundi, Central African Republic Urbanization*, <www.indexmundi.com/central_african_republic/urbanization.html>.

8 Social Watch, "Central African Republic. The Reduction of Poverty: a very distant objective," in *People First, Social Watch Report 2009*, (Montevideo: 2009), p. 146.

9 Social Watch, "Many obstacles and slow progress," in *After the Fall, Social Watch Report 2010*, (Montevideo: 2010), p.154.

FIGURE 1

Influence of the growth of the city of Bangui in the last 20 years on the forest to the southwest of the city and in the border region with DRC



Source: Drigo 2007

Although the unemployment rate is calculated at only 2%, 64% of new labour opportunities are in activities that are very poorly paid, such as extensive small agriculture and the informal sector; only 10% of jobs are in the formal sector.¹⁰ Urban poverty is particularly severe among people working in agriculture and fishing.

The worst is still to come

The State is offering no solutions to these problems and appears to have no will to take action. It does not engage in any long term planning, has no development policy and has taken no measures to tackle the most urgent problems. Individual ministries, including Agriculture and Environment, intervene without any kind of coordination.

If current trends continue the forests will continue to shrink, even more land will become savannah and soil erosion will increase, gradually depriving people who cultivate crops or cut wood of their main source of income and increasing the risk of flooding. Conflicts over whether urban and semi-urban plots of land should be used for building or for agricultural production will become acute.

In the long term we can expect the prices of firewood and agricultural products to increase, and poverty in cities and their periphery to intensify. Even more worrying, climate models predict that average temperatures will rise and droughts will become more frequent. This will lead to a marked increase in desertification, which will exacerbate the other catastrophes gradually degrading the country. ■

10 Ibid.

Many promises, little commitment



The country's development model is tied to resource extraction and the Government is still prioritizing energy sources such as coal that have serious negative ecological effects. Chile has made a series of international commitments to adopt environmental-protection policies, but very little has actually been done in terms of effective legislation or concrete action. The country urgently needs to develop or strengthen institutions to handle environmental threats, a new energy policy, regulations to govern biodiversity, to change its electricity generating profile and also to bring civil society organizations into the debate about sustainable development.

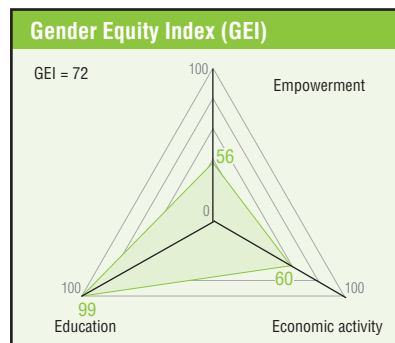
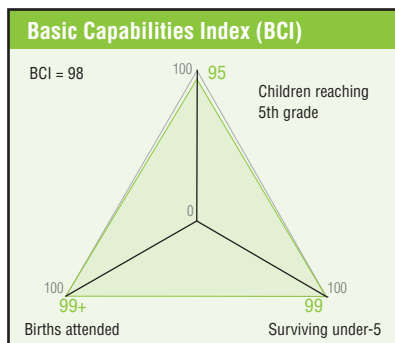
Fundación Terram

Luz M. Fariña
Flavia Liberona

In the 20 years since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (Rio 92) Chile has undergone big political, economic, environmental and social changes. Its extractive economic model, however, has remained virtually unchanged. The mainstay of the economy is still the export of natural resources with low levels of processing, and the environment is still being intensively exploited, particularly by the mining, fishing, agriculture and forestry sectors.

Rio 92 produced a series of commitments to pursue sustainable development policies, agreed to by more than 100 countries. Chile subscribed to all of these but has made almost no progress in the areas in question. For example, it has not promulgated a biodiversity protection law, it does not have a regulatory framework to protect its philogenetic patrimony and traditional techniques and systems, and it does not have a register of endangered species or plans to restore stocks of these fauna. Weaknesses in regulations that involve authorization and permits have allowed the introduction and cultivation of transgenic organisms that, according to Greenpeace,¹ negatively affect food security, and that many believe constitute an environmental and health risk.²

The successive administrations of Patricio Aylwin, Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet (1990 to 2010) adhered to a neoliberal export-oriented growth model that benefits the big groups of enterprises but has widened social and economic differences. According to the IMF, in 2008 Chile had the highest per capita income in South America (about USD 14,600³), but the effective



distribution of this income - as measured by the GINI index - makes Chile one of the most unequal countries in the world, with a coefficient of 0.55.⁴

In the first decade of the 21st century Chile's image was "made greener" in response to international requirements, but this has not been translated into better democracy or greater respect for the environment. With the adoption of the 1994 General Law of Bases of the Environment, which became operational in 1997, the environment management system should have been improved by developing control and monitoring instruments like quality standards and limits on emissions into water, soil and the atmosphere. However, more than a decade later only a fraction of these measures have been implemented.

Moreover, according to a 2005 OECD report⁵, systems for the protection and conservation of natural resources and to manage nature in line with international parameters have not been developed. In practice the environment law only generated a single window system to obtain environmental authorization for Chilean and foreign investment projects.

We might even question whether sustainability is possible at all in a country that is being pillaged, where water is provided free and in perpetuity to big foreign business consortiums, where copper is mined with no environmental safeguards and where the predominant forestry model is based on plantations of exotic species.

In Chile water is legally classed as a public good but it is supplied for private sector use. This makes it a tradable good even though these enterprises are awarded rights to consumption free of charge and with no time limit. The forestry model in Chile was implemented during the dictatorship period through Decree-Law No. 701, whereby forestation was subsidized and the planting of exotic species of pine and eucalyptus promoted with State disbursements covering up to 90% of the cost.

Regulations governing copper mining are either deficient or not yet in place and the sector is fraught with problems: the State levies a specific tax rather than receiving royalties, mining operations have only been obliged to close works since the environment law came into force in 1997, there are projects currently in operation whose environmental impacts have never been evaluated, there is no public register of places that have been polluted by mining and there is no plan to deal with mining sites that have been closed down or abandoned.

New institutions for the environment

Chile urgently needs to consolidate its new environmental institutions, including the Ministry of the Environment, the Environment Evaluation Service and the Superintendent of the Environment, which were set up at the beginning of 2010 in line with Law 20.417. This new system of institutions promotes policy dialogue and cooperation in environmental matters, separates environment evaluation policies and regulations from investment project influence, sets up an autonomous body to monitor compliance with environment regulations, and implements new environment management instruments like the evaluation strategy.

1 Greenpeace, *Transgénicos*, (2010), <www.greenpeace.org/espana/es/Trabajamos-en/Transgenicos/>.

2 EcoPortal, *Tema especial: transgénicos*, (2010), <transgenicos.ecoportel.net/>; G. Persley and J. Siedow, *Aplicaciones de la biotecnología a los cultivos: beneficios y riesgos*, (December 1999), <www.agbioworld.org/biotech-info/articles/spanish/ensayo.html>; GreenFacts, *Consenso científico sobre los cultivos transgénicos y OMG*, (2005), <www.greenfacts.org/es/omg/index.htm>.

3 IMF, *World Economic Outlook (WEO), Crisis and Recovery*, (April 2009), <www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2009/01>

4 Government of Chile, Mideplan, *CASEN 2009*, <www.mideplan.gob.cl/casen2009/distribucion_ingreso_casen_2009.pdf>.

5 OECD, *Environmental Performance Reviews: Chile*, (2005).

However, discussions about reform did not tackle the basic issues but merely led to political agreements between the Socialist members of Parliament, the right-wing interests and the Government. These excluded subjects and proposals from civil society organizations and demands for crucial measures to strengthen democracy and safeguard the environment, arguing that this was necessary in order to move the process along. But the resulting legislation does not contain instruments to protect Chile's environmental heritage and does not promote full civil society participation and thus fails to remedy the serious defects in the way the country's democracy works.

Energy going the wrong way

Between 1999 and 2008 the electricity generating sector grew by 32% and installed generating capacity increased by 428%. In 1993 the sector's potential output was 2,162 megawatts (MW), which amounted to around 40% of total electric capacity, but by December 2008 this had risen to 9,251 MW and accounted for 64.7% of the total. This shows how dependent the country has become on fossil fuels, and it is precisely these that have severe negative impacts on the environment. In the period 2004 to 2008, the use of coal to generate energy went up by 72% while the use of natural gas – which is less damaging to the environment than other fossil energy sources – fell by 31%.⁶

In the electricity sector there is no framework through which to govern or monitor such aspects as water emissions, the useful life of power stations, fuel quality, the introduction of up-to-date technologies or consideration of the environmental costs of generation. This means that the State cannot plan or

make projections about power output for the middle and long term; this depends entirely on the plans of the private enterprises that run Chile's electricity sector.

Vulnerability, climate change and desertification

Chile has seven of the nine vulnerability categories established in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): low-lying coastal areas, mountain ecosystems, arid and semi-arid land vulnerable to drought and desertification, areas at risk of natural disasters, areas prone to forest deterioration, highly polluted urban areas and fragile ecosystems.⁷

Greenhouse gas emissions in the country make up only 0.23% of the world total, but per capita emissions are increasing at a faster rate than anywhere else in the continent (1.2 tonnes per year in 14 years).⁸ According to the International Energy Agency, in 2008 Chile had the second highest percentage increase in CO₂ emissions in the world;⁹ only China was in a worse situation. And when the inevitable consequences of the decision to use coal as a main energy source are considered the outlook is even more discouraging.

Chile made an early commitment to combating climate change when it subscribed to (1992) and ratified (1994) the provisions of the UNFCCC, and signed (1997) and ratified (2002) the Kyoto Protocol. The 2006 National Climate Change Strategy and the Climate Change Action Plan 2008-2012 are also in force. But despite these national and international commitments, climate change is not high on the Government's agenda.

One of the most alarming consequences of climate change is desertification, which is among

Chile's most serious socio-environmental problems. According to official data, this phenomenon is affecting some 62.3% of the country (47.3 million hectares), mainly in the north (Region 1 to Region 8) and in the south (Regions 11 and 12).¹⁰ Chile signed the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 1997, but the main causes of this phenomenon in the country – drought, deforestation, forest fires, soil erosion and changes in land use – are still operating, so this problem is nowhere near being resolved.

Proposals

As regards the environment, the main tasks the country faces are as follows:

- To consolidate and implement a new national environment institutional structure;
- To implement biodiversity regulations and adopt a new law to safeguard the country's native biodiversity and its phylogenetic patrimony;
- To design and implement a middle and long term energy policy and to revise current regulations to enable the State to plan electricity generation and lay down standards to control the sources and types of fuels used in this sector;
- To improve people's access to information about the environment and to engage the population more effectively in these processes;
- To move forward in implementing the National Plan to Adapt to Climate Change;
- To establish and/or implement pollution prevention and clean up plans. Air pollution has got worse in both the north and the south of the country and this has serious consequences for people's health in those regions. ■

7 Government of Chile, Conama: "Plan de Acción Nacional de Cambio Climático 2008-2012", (Santiago: 2008), p. 13.

8 UNDP, *Informe de Desarrollo Humano 2007-2008. La lucha contra el Cambio Climático: solidaridad frente a un mundo dividido*, (New York: 2007).

9 *World Energy Outlook 2008*, (International Energy Agency, 2008), <www.worldenergyoutlook.org>.

10 University of Chile, Instituto de Asuntos Públicos, Centro de Análisis de Políticas Públicas, *Informe País: Estado del Medio Ambiente en Chile 2008*, (Santiago: March 2010), p.251.

6 Fundación TERRAM, *Evaluación, Actualidad y Proyección del Sistema Termoelectrico Chileno*, (Santiago: November 2009), <www.cambioclimaticochile.cl/documentos_terramp.php>.

Extraction-led growth versus people's well-being



The recently elected Government of Juan Manuel Santos has given priority to environmental sustainability and risk management and has issued a National Development Plan aimed at generating income and increasing production while still preserving and protecting bio-diversity and the nation's ecosystems. Nonetheless people's well-being and the environment are still under threat. A recent example is the production of biofuels, which has damaged the peasant economy, displaced entire populations and destroyed natural ecosystems. Despite its rhetoric of sustainability, the Santos Government continues the same economic model of its predecessor.

Corporación Cactus, Coordinación Nacional de la Plataforma Colombiana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo
 Aura Rodríguez

Following his election in 2010, President Juan Manuel Santos, Minister of Defence in the previous Government of Álvaro Uribe (2002-10), established "environmental sustainability and risk management" and a National Development Plan (NDP) as core policies of his new administration. The official text of the NDP recognizes a direct relation between rising poverty levels and environmental deterioration. Two connected strategies are proposed to overcome these problems: an economic policy geared to generating income and increasing production, and an environmental policy of preservation and protection of bio-diversity and ecosystem services that contribute to the people's well-being.¹

The strategy of raising income and production assumes that in the immediate future the country will grow by 1.7 percentage points per year, thereby reducing poverty by 1.2% and indigence by 1.0%. At the same time, the Government estimates that the mining and the energy production and transmission sectors will expand by 588%. Permanent hydrocarbon reserves will increase by 335%; oil and gas production, by 79%; the construction of oil and multi-purpose pipelines, by 78%; coal output, by 70% and gold production, by 51%.²

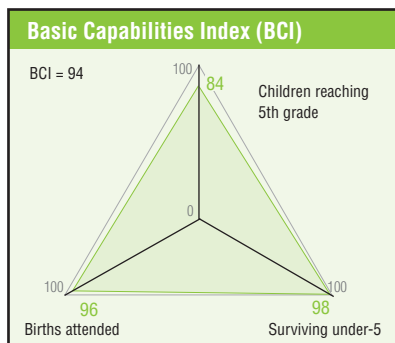
The Plan does not address the distribution of wealth, however. Latin America is the region with the most unequal distribution of wealth in the world, and Colombia has the most unequal distribution in the region.³ The poorest 50% of the population receive only 13.8% of total income while the richest 10% enjoy no less than 46.5% of the income.⁴ It is unclear how the contemplated development will create a more equitable distribution of income.

1 Government of Colombia, *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2010-2014, Prosperidad para Todos*, (Bogota: 2010).

2 Ibid., p. 423

3 Colombia Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Informe sobre Colombia*, (A/HRC/16/22), (February 2011), paragraph 99.

4 R. Bonilla and J. I. González (coordinators), *Bienestar y macroeconomía 2002-2006: el crecimiento inequitativo no es sostenible*, (Bogotá: CID, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Contraloría General de la República, 2006), p. 23.



Preservation and protection of bio-diversity, as set forth in the NDP, reflects the need to incorporate environmental considerations into land planning and sector policy management processes. The Government's stated goal is to reduce the impact of the country's ecological footprint of 1.9 global hectares (gha) per person. This unit captures the demand humans make on resources measured against the ecosystem's capacity to regenerate itself. An ecological footprint of 1.9 gha per person means that Colombia is exploiting its ecosystems 1.9 times more rapidly than they can renew themselves. The standard for sustainable human development is 1.8 gha.⁵ One aspect of the new environmental policy is a proposal to stimulate economic growth through increased production of biofuels and the alternative use of coal.⁶

The foundations have not changed

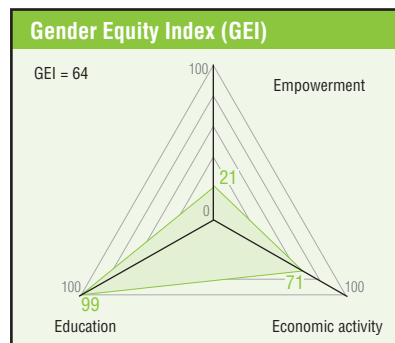
The recent change of government has left many in the country confused. President Santos has moved away from his predecessor's stance in relation to the judiciary and the opposition, but in political economy and environmental development policy - in spite of public pronouncements - the main policy thrust of the new administration seems to be the same as that of its predecessor.

During President Uribe's two terms in office, inequality in Colombia - measured by the Gini coefficient - held steady at 0.59,⁷ which was the 2002

5 Ibid., p. 424.

6 Ibid., p. 463.

7 Departamento Nacional de Planeación, *Misión para el Empalme de las Series de Empleo, Pobreza y Desigualdad (MESEP) entrega series actualizadas al Gobierno Nacional*, (24 August 2009), <www.dnp.gov.co>.



level when Uribe took office. That inequality did not change over his eight years shows how ineffective the government programmes in that period were. Yet the current administration is continuing those same programmes.⁸

One of the mainstays of economic growth during President Uribe's tenure, which continues today, is a steady expansion of mining. Over the last ten years, the mineral extraction sector has greatly expanded, causing a corresponding shrinkage of investment in the agriculture sector. Before 2001, between 80 and 100 mining authorizations were issued per year. Since then, they have been issued at an average rate of more than 400 per year.⁹ The severe negative effects that mining has on the soil and the reduced financial support for small peasant farmers have undermined small-scale agriculture throughout Colombia.

Biofuel production

A worrying aspect of the Government's environmental policy is the link it proposes between environmental protection and the expansion of biofuels, an alternative energy source favoured by international capital and the Santos Government. The Inter-American Development Bank has proposed biofuels as the best production and clean energy option for developing countries since they are presumed not to have a

8 "Familias en Acción va a seguir y se va a fortalecer," *El Universal*, (Popayán: 5 March 2011), <www.eluniversal.com.co/cartagena/politica/familias-en-accion-va-seguir-y-se-va-fortalecer-12786>.

9 J. Houghton (ed.), *La tierra contra la muerte. Conflictos territoriales en los pueblos indígenas*, (Bogotá: Centro de Cooperación al Indígena, 2008).

harmful impact on the environment.¹⁰ Washington has implemented a series of commercial strategies to encourage biofuel expansion in the hemisphere as a low-cost way to solve US energy problems without diverting part of its own agriculture resources from food production to biofuels.¹¹ Concomitantly, in recent years the Colombian Government has increased its support for agro-industrial mono-cultivation, which is the mode of production of biofuels. The diversion of resources from small scale peasant farming to biofuels has caused the displacement of entire populations.¹²

In the period from October 2005 to March 2006, five ethanol plants went into operation (Ingenio del Cauca, Providencia and Risaralda, Ardila Lulle, and Mayagüez and Manuelita). These plants produce 1,050,000 litres of ethanol per day, which represents 60% of the Colombian market's needs. The negative consequences were evident from the start.

Biofuel production requires large-scale monocultivation of sugar, maize, palm oil or soybean. First, this production system erodes the soil and exhausts its nutrients.¹³ Second, water resources are compromised because the extraction and refining processes cause pollution. Third, less land is available for producing food, so food prices rise and food shortages among the poorest stratum of society are aggravated.¹⁴

The use of soybean and maize to produce biofuels is pushing up the prices of these products on the food market. Since the US started promoting ethanol as a fuel, the price of maize has soared to an all-time high. In 2007, the International Food Policy

Research Institute issued a report that estimated international repercussions of this rising demand for biofuels: by 2020 the price of maize is expected to have risen by 41%; the prices of soya and sunflowers could increase by as much as 76%, and wheat could be 30% more expensive.¹⁵

Further, biofuels emit CO₂ and produce greenhouse gases - though less, of course, than methane and those fuels which contain nitrogen and sulphur (NO_x and SO_x).¹⁶ Moreover, the financial yield of such biofuels as palm oil is very delayed, with the return on the initial investment coming as long as five years after planting. Consequently, biofuels often are profitable only for agricultural units of more than 50 hectares, which means that only medium and large landowners benefit from their production.

Discrimination against people of African descent

The expansion of biofuel production has also had a negative impact on people of African descent in Colombia. In proven cases, bio-fuel entrepreneurs with links to paramilitary groups have illegally expropriated the lands of these communities. In places like Curbaradó, where people of African descent are a large majority of the population, some 29,000 hectares of their land have been annexed through paramilitary action, and today 7,000 of these stolen hectares are being used for palm oil production.¹⁷

Racial discrimination against people of African descent has been a problem in Colombia for a very long time. These communities, which account for 26% of the total population, are living under mar-

kedly worse conditions than the rest of the country. For example, an estimated 72% of all people of African descent are in the lowest socioeconomic stratum.¹⁸ The infant mortality rate is twice that of Colombia as a whole. As high as 79% of the municipalities in which Afro-Colombian people represent a majority are at the lowest economic and social development level with 85% of the population living in poverty. This shocking percentage contrasts sharply with the other municipalities where at most 38% live in poverty.

People of African descent have less access to basic education, health services or good jobs and a lower level of participation in public life.¹⁹ In May 2009 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) reported that although the Government has made an effort to combat violence in areas of Afro-Colombian settlement, law enforcement authorities have failed to solve most violent crimes, a situation that has led to the displacement of entire communities.²⁰

Recently some progress has been made towards rectifying this state of affairs. In March 2011, more than 25,000 hectares of land were returned to communities in the Curbaradó and Jiguamiandó River basins in the northeast of the country. That land had been expropriated for biofuel production by a paramilitary organization called Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia, which was dissolved in 2006. It was restored to its rightful owners as part of a Santos administration programme to return some 2.5 million hectares that had been taken over by paramilitary groups.²¹ ■

10 P. Álvarez Roa, "La política del Gobierno colombiano en la promoción de agrocombustibles", (2008), <confraternizarhoy.blogspot.com/2010/08/estado-terrorista-en-colombia-para.html>.

11 M. A. Valencia, Los agrocombustibles en Colombia: El modelo de Robin Hood al revés y los precios de los alimentos, (2008), <mavalencia.blogspot.com/2008/03/los-agrocombustibles-en-colombia-el.html>.

12 "Ley para sufrir menos por el dólar," *El tiempo*, (24 July 2009), pp. 1-8.

13 Ecoclimático, *El monocultivo y sus consecuencias*, (November 2008), <www.ecoclimatico.com/archives/el-monocultivo-y-sus-consecuencias-822>.

14 Movimiento Mundial por los Bosques Tropicales, *Biocombustibles, un desastre en potencia*, <www.wrm.org.uy/actores/CCC/Nairobi/Biocombustibles.html>.

15 Greenpeace, *Biocombustibles*, <www.greenpeace.org.ar/biocombustibles/argentina/informacion.html>.

16 Ibid.

17 Revista Semana, *Los usurpados del Choco*, (no. 1402, 16 to 23 March 2009), p. 49.

18 G. Romaña, *Afrocolombianos en busca de leyes contra el racismo y la desigualdad*, (November 2005), <www.revistafuturos.info/futuros14/afrocolombianos.htm>.

19 Globedia, *Padece población afrodescendiente de Colombia marginación*, (15 May 2009), <uy.globedia.com/padece-poblacion-afrodescendiente-colombia-marginacion>.

20 IACHR, (May 2009).

21 Vanguardia.com, *Restituyen más de 25 mil hectáreas a colombianos afrodescendientes*, (19 March 2009), <www.vanguardia.com/actualidad/colombia/97218-restituyen-mas-de-25-mil-hectareas-a-colombianos-afrodescendientes>.

Civil society: the sole defender of the public interest



The global crisis has hit Croatia's economy hard. The country is experiencing increased poverty and unemployment rates yet the Government is still favouring non-sustainable approaches to development. The authorities seem to serve only the private sector while the people's well-being often has to be defended by civil society organizations, as shown by a successful campaign against the extension of an oil pipeline to the Adriatic Sea. The Government's Strategy for Sustainable Development is inadequate and the current land, water and forest legislation is not only flawed but also lacks transparency. The country must embrace the cause of sustainable development immediately.

Croatian Law Centre
Inge Perko-Šeparović, Ph.D.
Eko Kvarner
Vjeran Piršić

The 2008 global economic crisis had a profound and negative impact on the Croatian economy. Growth dropped from 2.4% in 2008 to -5.8% in 2009 and -1.4% in 2010.¹ At the same time and aggravating the crisis, foreign debt service had reached almost 100% of GDP by 2010, severely limiting continued access to foreign credit.²

One of the main negative impacts of the crisis has been increasing unemployment. Between 2005 and 2008 economic growth allowed some job creation but the crisis reversed this situation: in 2010 the unemployment level (measured as a percentage of the total population) was approximately 17.6%.³

Poverty rates have also increased. Between 2005 and 2008 poverty was primarily linked to long-term unemployment and inactivity, mostly concentrated among low-skilled workers, but this changed with the crisis. Reduced employment, decreased real income and a salaries' freeze in the public sector have pushed many people below the poverty line. As a result the "emerging" poor are better educated, younger and economically active.

Defending the environment

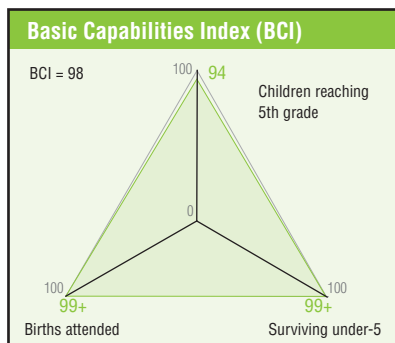
Public and private interests continually collide in Croatia. The public interest is being defended solely by civil society while the political elites often serve only private interests. In 2009 the Parliament approved the "Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia," which established a series of guidelines and policies regarding sustainable development and also commented on the country's environmental situation.⁴ However, it has been heavily criticized by several civil society organizations, which have pointed out that it does not establish priority goals and lacks benchmarks and indicators of progress.

1 Countries of the World, *Croatia Economy 2011*, <www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/croatia/croatia_economy.html>.

2 US Department of State, "Background Note: Croatia," (6 April 2011), <www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3166.htm>.

3 Index Mundi, *Croatia unemployment rate*, <www.indexmundi.com/croatia/unemployment_rate.html>.

4 See: <www.mzopu.hr/doc/Strategy_for_Sustainable_Development.pdf>.



The crisis has led to so-called "investment hunger" in which the Government aligns with private and foreign investors at the expense of the community as a whole. The capital that is attracted as a result is not a viable source of development since it depends on minimal labour and environmental regulations and typically both reduces and degrades the country's natural resources.

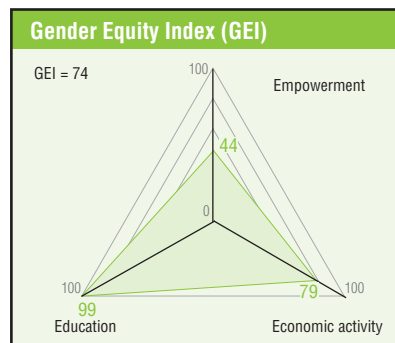
In this context the problems tend to accumulate. The tendency towards unsustainable use (and abuse) of non-renewable resources is made worse by the Government's mismanagement.⁵ There is a dire need for a national consensus on the issue of resource management, particularly regarding which resources should or should not be used more intensively at this moment without endangering the environment or compromising the needs of future generations.

Land issues

Land is one of the country's best natural resources, especially on the Adriatic coast. National strategies on the use of land are adopted by Parliament and enforced through the urban planning departments of local and regional governments. Control over the creation of these plans and verification of their acceptability rests with the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction, which has no overall guidelines. This means that there are no good estimates of taxes or regulatory mechanisms to prevent misguided or harmful use of this resource.

An independent analysis of plans for urban developments along the Adriatic coast has established

5 The costs and benefits of resource extraction in terms of sustainable development and citizen well-being have not been measured.



that the current projects enable the settling of 17 million inhabitants. The area is currently inhabited by less than 2 million people so the impact of housing such a large number of newcomers will be enormous. Other research has shown that 750 km (out of 6,000 km) of the Adriatic Sea's east coast have been urbanized in the last 2,500 years, while current plans for towns and cities will urbanize another 600 km., meaning that the same level of development that took place over two and a half millennia could be almost doubled in a single decade. Agricultural land is also being used for construction as part of urban planning by regional and local governments.

Forests, water and biodiversity

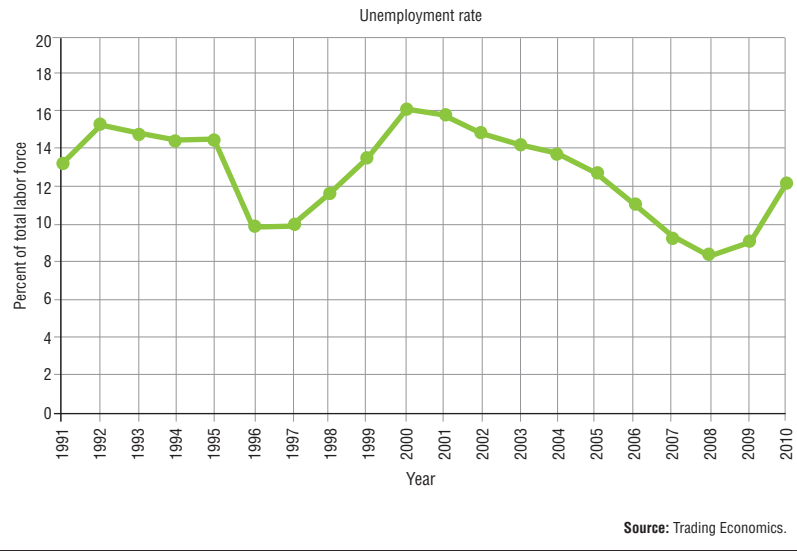
One of the main issues regarding forest management is the absence of official biomass estimates. The numbers vary dramatically: from 700,000 tonnes per year according to the public enterprise Hrvatske Šume (Croatian Forests) to 2 million tonnes per year according to the academic community. Meanwhile Hrvatske Šume keeps the price of wood high and the delivery quantities insufficient, thereby destroying the local wood-processing industry and ultimately causing unemployment and pauperization. The pursuit of the common good, which should be the Government's main concern, is being neglected for the pursuit of private interests.

This murky picture gets even darker when we consider the issue of water management. The 2009 Strategy for Sustainable Development, for example, lacks a clear definition of the much-invoked "right to water."⁶ Also there has been a series of privati-

6 The right to sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

FIGURE 1

Unemployment in Croatia measured as a percentage of the total labour force (1991–2010)



zation proposals; the first one failed but the fear of widespread privatization of water resources remains. Some water resources are already being placed in private hands through concessionary contracts that are anything but transparent.

Croatian biodiversity is unprotected, as can be seen for example, in the introduction of foreign species in local ecosystems. This situation is particularly pressing in Cres island where 30 wild boars introduced by hunters multiplied within 10 years to 1,000. The boars not only damage the habitat but attack sheep and lambs, destroying farmers' livelihoods.⁷

One of the main issues regarding the country's biodiversity is the lack of reliable information. Croatia is one of the few countries in Europe lacking updated checklists of species or country-specific field guides. Existing species' inventories (as well as knowledge regarding the local fauna and flora) are inadequate for many purposes, including environmental impact assessments. The nature of subterranean fauna is also very poorly known. This lack of proper inventories and knowledge inevitably limits the scope of any land use or ecosystem management planning that is needed for development projects.

Another case of endangered biodiversity stems from monoculture production, both in agriculture and in forestry. Many endemic species have been lost as they are progressively replaced with foreign ones seen by agro-enterprises as more attractive in the short term.

Environmental controls are not properly enforced

The procedures by which environmental impact assessments are made for new constructions, as well as the requirements for securing permits for expanding or even continuing to operate existing facilities, are both supposed to be strictly regulated by law. Unfortunately all facilities easily avoid the state control system. Moreover since the facilities already in place do not conform to European pollution norms, their owners are granted extensions for adjustment that include transitional periods of up to 12 years.

Such transitional periods are negotiated with the EU as part of the measures needed to grant Croatia's membership; nevertheless some of the facilities' are allowed to continue operating the end of their lifecycle. An additional problem stems from the use of substandard raw materials, especially in oil refineries, which causes substantial air pollution in

the refineries' surrounding areas. In 2004 the Ministry issued an order for oil refineries to use better quality raw materials. Although the order was backed by a Court decision, the refineries frequently disobey.

Examples of good practice

Since most of the time the public interest is not protected by the Government, civil society has assumed this task. Although its influence is not strong enough yet, examples of successful interventions should be mentioned.

The Eko Kvarner organization, for example, strongly opposed the proposal to extend the Družba Adria pipeline, which is already the longest in the world and carries oil from Eastern Russia to Belarus, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine, through Croatia and Hungary to reach the Adriatic Sea.⁸ The projected transfer of oil would have threatened the northern part of the Adriatic Sea and the well-being of people living in this region. Eko Kvarner cast enough doubt on the validity of the environmental impact assessment⁹ to ensure that the authorities rejected the proposal.

The latest success concerns a proposed golf course in Istria. Two organizations, Green Action and Green Istria, sued the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction for extending permits to a build a golf course despite a problematic environmental impact assessment. As a result the Administrative Court annulled the permits.

Conclusion

Croatia urgently needs to adopt a sustainable development paradigm. More and better investment in renewable energy sources and energy efficiency policy could be a good start. Protection of the most vital resources (agricultural land, water and forests) is of the outmost interest to croatian sustainable development. It is important to build environmentally friendly tourism facilities since tourism plays an important role in Croatia's economy and at the same time is not viable without a preserved and protected environment. The official policy is supposed to promote protection of the environment but in reality economic interests are favoured over environmental and sustainable ones. Local governments should be encouraged to develop their own projects in order to promote sustainability and environment protection within their jurisdiction.¹⁰ ■

7 P. Ettinger, "The birds are on the money in Croatia," *Wildlife Extra*, <www.wildlifeextra.com/go/world/cres-vultures.html#cr>.

8 Wikipedia, *Družba pipeline*, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Družba_pipeline>.

9 OneWorldSEE, *Eko Kvarner Announces Public Debate of the 'Družba Adria' Project*, (16 April 2004), <oneworldsee.org/sq/node/2901>.

10 Jelena Lonar and Mladen Maradin, *Environmental challenges for sustainable development in the Croatian north Adriatic littoral region*, (Croatia: 2009), <www.ff.uni-lj.si/oddelki/geo/publikacije/dela/files/dela_31/10_Loncar.pdf>.

Needed: sustainable schools



Educational systems are key factors in sustainable development. Despite the country's efforts in promoting "environmental education" in the last decade of the 20th century, the absence of adequate planning and implementation has relegated these ideas to the margins of the educational system. In fact, many advances achieved in this area over the last few years have been initiated by the country's non-governmental organizations. If it wishes to engage fully in sustainable development, Cyprus must accelerate the expansion of "sustainable schools" and broaden civil society participation in the process.

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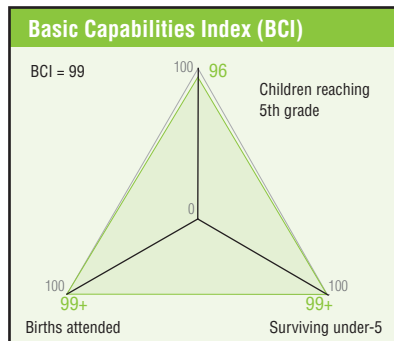
Sotiris Themistokleous
Michalinos Zemylas
Charalambos Vrasidas

In recent years the concept of sustainable development has generated debate in both scientific and public discourses around the world.¹ In this context, educational systems have been called upon to respond with educational frameworks and curricula that constructively engage the notion of sustainable development and its potential consequences.²

Sustainable development in education is not limited to the creation of curricular units on the environment. It is, rather, an all-inclusive, multi-dimensional process for reconsidering and reversing ideologies and practices concerning our relationship with the environment.³ It must be viewed as a discourse and practice that establishes a balance between sound economic development and social justice, equality and environmental protection. An educational philosophy grounded in this framework would develop in a different direction from one focused exclusively on economic development.⁴ Education for sustainable development attempts to transmit knowledge, skills, and practices that will inspire students to become engaged citizens who actively promote a better quality of life for all people, and for the natural environment as well.⁵

Sustainable schools

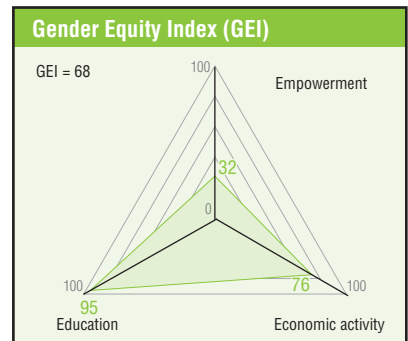
A widely used term for educational institutions adopting this framework is "sustainable schools." Their primary goal is to educate and guide students to work for a better quality of life, applying the principles of



sustainable development to improve the living conditions of all beings.⁶ A critical factor in their success is the establishment of links to local communities that serve as partners in promoting the sustainable development framework.⁷ Using this strategy, "sustainable schools" combine the educational achievements of their students with quality of life within the school and the wider community in accordance with the values of environmental awareness and critical citizenship.⁸

Environmental education

Cyprus introduced the first elements of sustainable development education with particular focus on "environmental education" in the 1990s. However, the absence of a structured educational plan related to environmental education and education for sustainable development has relegated these ideas to the margins of the educational system for almost a decade. During this time environmental education and sustainable development have had a more limited presence in formal and informal education than in many other countries.⁹ Education stakeholders in Cyprus have only recently begun to integrate ideas of sustainable development into a more holistic framework linked to



goals for a better society in a healthier environment. A major advance in this direction took place in 2005, with the ratification of the Strategy for Education and Sustainable Development in Europe.

However, despite this ratification and the subsequent establishment of the National Action Plan for Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development in 2007, the country's educational system pursues a narrow vision on the issue. Its "fragmentary" approach focuses mainly on the provision of knowledge and information about the environment, neglecting action-oriented perspectives based on social development.¹⁰

A research study on "Transformative leaders for sustainable schools," conducted between 2005 and 2007 (the time period when the two aforementioned plans were introduced), showed that 89% of primary school principals had never been informed on issues related to sustainable development.¹¹ One of the major weaknesses found in the study was that school principals were unable to define sustainable development in terms of a holistic framework that included the economy, society and the environment.¹² A majority of their definitions focused on "environmental protection." Vigorous efforts to apply the 2007 National Action Plan began only in 2009, when

1 Hopwood, B. and O'Brien, G., "Sustainable development: mapping different approaches" in *Sustainable Development*, (London: 2005), p. 38.

2 Tillbury, D. et al., *Education and Sustainability: Responding to the Global Challenge*, IUCN – The World Conservation Union (2002).

3 Network for Ecological Education and Practice, *Sustainable is more than able: viewpoints on education for sustainability*, (2002), <www.sustainabledevelopment.dk>.

4 Vrasidas, C. et al., *ICT for Educational Development and Social Justice*, (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2009).

5 Saul, D., "Expanding environmental education: Thinking critically, thinking culturally", in *Journal of Environmental Education* 31, (London: 2000), pp. 5-8.

6 Dimopoulou, M., and Mpampila, E., "The role of the principal in the operation of an eco-school – the challenge to the leadership of a sustainable school," <www.aeforosxoleio.gr>.

7 Department of Education and Skills, *Sustainable schools for pupils, communities and the environment: Securing the future in delivering a UK sustainable development strategy*, (London: 2005).

8 Ibid.

9 Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, *Revised National Strategy for Sustainable Development*, (Nicosia: 2010), <www.moa.gov.cy>.

10 Mavroudi, E., "Insufficient Environmental Education, interview with Dr. Zachariou Aravela," in *Simerini*, (Nicosia: 2009), <www.sigmalive.com>.

11 Zachariou, A. and Kadji-Beltran, C., "Cypriot primary school principals' understanding of education for sustainable development key terms and their opinions about factors affecting its implementation", in *Environmental Education Research*, (Abingdon, UK: 2009), pp 315-334.

12 Ibid.

the Ministry of Education and Culture published a new Study Programme for Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development.¹³ As the document itself declares, this is the most comprehensive effort the Government has made to introduce sustainable development into the educational system, focusing especially on the transformation of school units into “sustainable schools.”

The new curriculum indicates that the Ministry of Education and Culture now understands the importance of sustainable development not just as another school subject but as a “philosophy” that should be applied at all levels of education.¹⁴ One important aspect of this programme is its strong emphasis on the social elements of development, including concepts such as participation, inclusion and multiculturalism, along with respect for the environment. Underlying this approach is the assumption that, beyond any interdisciplinary strategy for imparting knowledge that may be required, sustainable development has to become embedded in the values of society. One consequence is that the curriculum places strong emphasis on the establishment of close relations between “sustainable schools” and the local community.

However, the heavily centralized educational system and its decision-making mechanisms continue to pose a systemic obstacle to effective transformations thereby limiting the possibility of major reform. For example, the transformation of school units into “sustainable schools” becomes very difficult without greater school autonomy. Also, decision-making mechanisms have to include the peripheral stakeholders in the education system, such as school boards, parent associations, civil society organizations and local community authorities.¹⁵ Such actors, being closer to the local community and environment, could provide more effective solutions based on the needs of each school unit and its extended social, economic and natural environment.¹⁶ The Ministry of Education and Culture can still provide overall national objectives and goals, but should also put in place a network of local actors who could develop valid and efficient practices that

incorporate the needs of communities within a more holistic sustainable development framework.

Designing on strategies

Following a year of national debate among Government actors, the Board of Ministers recently ratified the Revised National Strategy for Sustainable Development (2011-2015). The new Strategy is presented as an advance on the previous one, which covered the period from 2006-2010. Despite new elements have been introduced in sections such as natural resources, energy, sustainable transportations and sustainable tourism, the strategy for education remains essentially the same as the one laid out in the 2007 Strategy for Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development. Weaknesses in the document, such as an over-emphasis on the environment to the detriment of other aspects of sustainable development and the absence of any reference to the role of nongovernmental-actors, have been incorporated into the Revised National Strategy for Sustainable Development,¹⁷ leading to inefficiency and confusion that hinders promotion of sustainable development. These inadequacies appear to be related to Government decision-making and policy implementation processes. Ministries and public services involved in different sectors set their own priorities and follow their own strategies, often failing to forge a common national framework that encompasses all relevant actors.¹⁸ Future policy making would be more effective if the Government established mechanisms to align all stakeholders in a common strategy that has a real impact on all levels of society.

Integrating civil society: a key factor

The potential advantages of the involvement of local non-governmental organizations for sustainable development became evident through the evolution of the centres for environmental education of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (Ministry of Education and Culture). The first centre was a private venture in a small village in southwest Cyprus, established in the 1990s. It proved to be extremely successful in researching and developing practices and tools for environmental education. Even so, it wasn't until 2004 that State authorities established the first

public Centre for Environmental Education.¹⁹ Today these centres are already considered to be pioneers in the promotion of research and development in the field of environmental education. The progress achieved so far demonstrates the potential and opportunities presented by the integration of local civil society actors in formal and informal education for sustainable development.

Although the Revised National Strategy for Sustainable Development provides guidance for the integration of civil society in the overall decision-making process and the drafting process for Strategies and Plans on Sustainable Development has been quite efficient, implementation and the impact on citizens has been less successful.²⁰ To promote and implement a more holistic sustainable development framework, the Government should make greater efforts to tap the great reserves of knowledge, experience, expertise and mechanisms of civil society organizations.

Perspectives

Since 2005, when the Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development was ratified, Cyprus has come a long way in its efforts to shift the focus of education in a more holistic direction. The country has transformed several school units into “sustainable schools,” applied relevant good practices, and provided training for teachers and other public servants. That said, full adoption of the sustainable development framework requires the Government to enlist active involvement of local actors in the decision-making process, as well as in the implementation of education strategies. To be successful in practice, “sustainable development” must be closely linked to the local community and social actors.²¹ These local non-governmental actors have a unique capacity to propose, develop and apply effective educational practices for sustainable development that correspond to the needs of their community. Moreover, citizens are more willing to adopt sustainable development policies and practices that emerge from their own community actors, including local sustainable schools.²² In addition, the integration of non-governmental actors into the decision-making processes would provide the multidimensional approach to sustainable development that is still absent from the overall educational system. ■

13 Ministry of Education and Culture, *Study Programme for Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development*, (2009), <www.paideia.org.cy/upload/analytika_programmata_2010/12.perivallontiki.pdf>.

14 Mavroudi, E., “interview with Dr. Zachariou Aravella”, op cit., (2009).

15 Mpakas, T., “Organization and Management of the Educational System: The peripheral level of Education Leadership - Weaknesses, Challenges and Potentials”, in *Primary Education and the Challenges of our Era*, seminar conducted at Loannina, Greece, May 2007.

16 Bass, S., Dalal-Clayton, B. et al., “Participation in Strategies for Sustainable Development”, *Environmental Planning Issues*, (London: International Institute for Environment and Development, 2005).

17 Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, *Revised National Strategy for Sustainable Development*, (2010), <www.moa.gov.cy>.

18 Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation, *Linking Science and Policy in Sustainable Development Research*, (Limassol, Cyprus: 2009), <www.research.org.cy/EL/user_info/scie.html>.

19 Zachariou, A. “Centres of Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development: A Report on the Network of the Centres of Environmental Education in Cyprus”, 4th KEEPE, Nafplio, (Greece: December 2008).

20 Mavroudi, E., “Interview with Dr. Zachariou Aravella”, op cit., (2009).

21 Uphoff, N., *Local Institutions and Participation for Sustainable Development*, IIED, Gatekeeper Series, no. 3, (London: 1992).

22 Ibid

The need for a change



The country is more and more dependent on exports to neighbouring countries while its current account deficit does not seem to be curtailed. The Government is sticking to the implementation of a neo-liberal non-sustainable model, which undermines social well-being, and is refusing to consider policy on a long-term basis. Currently, the country faces threats such as the impoverishment of middle-class and low-income groups, increasing unemployment and rampant gender inequality. Loss of biodiversity and radioactive pollution are among the environmental challenges that need to be assessed immediately. Increasing involvement in these issues by civic society gives some hope that the demand for change will be heeded.

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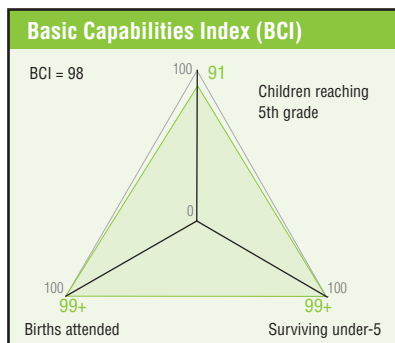
Milan Smrč (Eurosolar.cz)

The Czech Republic is becoming more and more dependent on the economic health of its neighbours, especially Germany. Industrial exports, which increased by 10.5% in 2010, have resulted in GDP growth of 2.3% according to preliminary data from the Czech Statistical Office (SÚ), but as in previous years deficits appear in trade with non-EU countries, and the large deficit with China highly exceeds the surplus with Germany. Motor vehicles continue to be the most important export commodity and to generate the highest surplus; on the other hand, the deficit is created mainly by the import of oil and natural gas, but also of pharmaceuticals.¹

This unbalanced economy seems almost at the brink of disaster, especially for the more vulnerable sectors of the population. A recent Government policy statement suggests that it is set to continue with its neo-liberal reforms without paying attention to social issues.² The Government fails to see obvious risks of this strategy, as it doesn't acknowledge that one of the factors that threw the economy into disarray is the decrease in tax revenues from the highest income sectors of the population. Threatened with the Greek example and possible bankruptcy, the Government succeeded in making debt restriction the main topic and is focusing mainly on cuts in social spending. As a result, important issues such as unemployment (7.0% in the 4th quarter of 2010 according to ILO estimates and 8.9% according to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs), gender inequality and environmental threats (such as radioactive poisoning and the loss of biodiversity) are left aside.

1 Czech Statistical Office, Ekonomické údaje za rok 2010: produkce, obchod, zaměstnanost, see: [czso.cz/csu/tz.nsf/i/prezentace_ekonomicke_udaje_za_rok_2010/\\$File/ekonomicke_udaje_2010_070211.pps](http://czso.cz/csu/tz.nsf/i/prezentace_ekonomicke_udaje_za_rok_2010/$File/ekonomicke_udaje_2010_070211.pps)

2 See: www.vlada.cz/cz/jednani-vlady/programove-prohlaseni/programova-prohlaseni-74856/.



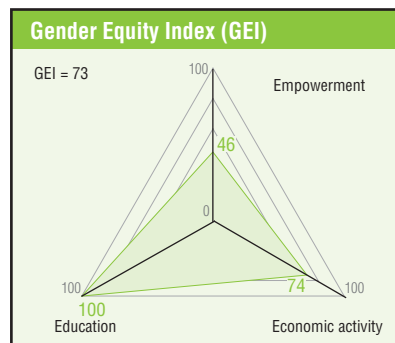
Budget cuts and unremitting corruption

The Government's strategy since the onset of the global crisis in 2008-09 has been to cut social expenditures. The cuts have been presented as reforms, but the expenditure cuts are not accompanied by a new conception of the Czech Republic's social system. Furthermore, these cuts were not supported by impact analyses, although most of these measures will have an impact, especially on low-income groups and the middle class. This is a sign of a continuing trend not to view social expenditures as investment in the development of society.

The cuts include such things as parental allowances³ and disability benefits. In addition, it appears that subsidies for the provision of social services such as for example, the so-called "early care" subsidies intended to help families with physically handicapped children, are being decreased. This will have a strong negative impact on single parents, of whom women are a vast majority. Even before these changes, statistics showed that 40% of single-parent families with children are threatened by poverty and poor living conditions; approximately half of these families are below the income level of 1.5 times the subsistence minimum. In the future it is therefore to be expected that the number of people threatened by poverty will increase.

Another step within the "reforms" framework is plummeting wages and layoffs in the public/State sector, which represents a large number of women. Besides enlarging the ranks of the unemployed, this measure will strongly affect the level of pensions

3 See proposal of so called social reform by Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.



and childcare financial aid for women working in the State sector.

In addition the corruption that runs throughout the public contracts system burdens the State budget by tens of billions each year, even by the most optimistic estimates.⁴ One Minister had to resign because he was suspected of corruption; another Government member is suspected of unlawful scheming during the Czech presidency of the European Union. Almost no attention is paid to solving the problems of international tax evasion; the focus is mainly on small entrepreneurs dodging taxes, first and foremost those from the Vietnamese community.⁵ On the other hand, and despite being criticized by NGOs for several years, the Government server Businessinfo.cz offers information that facilitates international tax evasion.

Gender: under-represented women

In the May 2010 parliamentary elections, due to preferential votes (which enabled to vote preferentially for four candidates on the party's list and shift them higher) women gained 12 more seats in the Chamber of Deputies than those they would have had according to candidate lists only, which were drawn up by political parties. Women's representation in the Chamber of Deputies rose to 22% after this vote. However, they are grossly under-represented in the higher ranks of decision-making posts. In the judiciary for example, while taken as a whole, there

4 Deník Referendum, 2. 1. 2011, see: denikreferendum.cz/clanek/8192-ekonom-pavel-kohout-do-jara-z-vlastni-vule-opusti-nerov.

5 Nasepenize.cz, 20. 6. 2010, see: www.nasepenize.cz/vietnamsti-obchodnici-zpusobuji-miliardove-danove-ztraty-7093.

have been more women in the judiciary than men (by about 20 % on average over the long-term), but their representation decreases dramatically at the higher levels. Apart from Hungary, the Czech Republic is the only other EU country in which the Cabinet consists strictly of male representatives.

Worsening conditions for immigrants

Dissatisfaction with the response to the crisis and the shift of its costs to the middle and lower classes has increased tensions in society. Maintaining the social contract is becoming ever harder while the growing income differentials leads to an increase in xenophobia, racism and the degradation of social solidarity. Thus, the economic crisis has also led to a more radically negative attitude towards migrants, especially undermining the situation of female migrants.

One example is the complications migrant parents are facing with their children's health insurance. An employed foreigner is included in the public insurance system, but if neither the mother nor the father have permanent residence in the Czech Republic, their child cannot be insured before birth and the medical care provided in the maternity clinic must be paid for in cash. Should the newborn have medical problems, the insurance companies may even refuse to provide insurance.⁶ A woman foreign entrepreneur is limited to the system of commercial insurance from the very beginning; she has the chance to arrange insurance for the birth and immediate postnatal care for an additional fee (about double the average wage).

Environment: down with the trees, up with the malls

Protecting the environment is another crucial issue for the Czech Republic. In the beginning of 2010 a new law on the preservation of nature and the landscape came into force and reduced the protection of trees and other woody species. As it was no longer necessary to get the approval of the local authorities, this led to extensive logging in towns and cities. Throughout 2010, the Ministry of the Environment

failed to publish a decree intended to reduce this effect.⁷

The Ministry of Agriculture, on the other hand, has tried – repeatedly and against the protests by ecological organizations and smaller wood-working companies – to push the concept of “forest tenders” on public forests (17% of the area) that favour large timber companies, pushing the public functions of State-administered forests (recreation, protection against erosion, water retention, home for plants and animals) towards wood production and profit generation.

Notwithstanding the enduring economic crisis the construction of large shopping centres has continued in the Czech Republic, which already has the highest per capita number of such centres in all of Central and Eastern Europe.⁸ In the last seven years, chain store outlets have expanded to an area of 900 football fields and have created 80,000 parking lots; 63% of these have been built on undeveloped areas (arable land, fields, pastures or orchards), and trees were cut down in 62 % of the cases, while 25% have had some impact on protected elements of the environment (both to ensure ecological stability and protect animal biotopes).⁹ Other consequences of the unrestricted expansion of mainly international chain stores have been the liquidation of local grocery shops, the spill-over of shopping centres into open land, the depopulation of city centres and the increase in individual car traffic.

A U-turn on renewable energy sources

The importance of renewable energy sources is not properly addressed in the Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development ratified by the Government in 2010, although its importance is obvious when we consider that it links the principles of climate measures with the decrease in energy import and the decrease in external costs to the current energy system.

In 2010 the State declared a halt to the development of photovoltaic power plants. It seems likely that in the future only installations of up to 30 kW will be admitted, which means a substantial restriction in the development of photovoltaic energy generation.

On the other hand, new steps have been taken to finish construction of the Temelín nuclear power plant.² This is now scheduled to finish in 2025 and the plant should be operative until 2070.

The last uranium mine in Central Europe, located in Rožná, still remains operative and thus will last until at least 2013. The mine was supposed to be closed several times already, but the Government has always decided to keep it operative. The situation of radon-infested houses in the areas of former uranium mines (e.g., Jáchymov), remains an unresolved problem.

Citizens' reaction

In response to the anti-social politics of the Government, the ProAlt movement has emerged, a civic initiative criticizing the proposed reforms and supporting alternatives. This brings together people from every profession, generation and walk of life who are opposed to insensitive, across-the-board cuts. The “Alternativa zdola” movement supports the participation of citizens in the political as well as economic life of their communities through consultations, education, networking and political actions.

The “esko proti chudob” (Czech Republic against poverty) campaign constantly points out the necessity to increase the effectiveness of development cooperation and to criticize the country's failure to make good on its pledge to increase Official Development Assistance (ODA) resources. A positive feature of the Czech Republic's development cooperation is its gradual standardization and increasing transparency. One contribution of Czech ODA is its focus on renewable energy sources for poor regions.

Increasing political activity in civic society does give at least some hope that people will demand redressing policies and will not turn their anger against the poorest, whom the political elite already accuses of being the reason for State prodigality and of indebtedness. People's involvement, focused on the corrupt political sphere financed by Mafiosi capital, is one of the last remaining possibilities to ensure formal democracy and a minimum of social standards. ■

6 One particular case is being handled with assistance from Inbáze Berkat, o. s. See: <www.inbaze.cz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=185&catid=52>.

7 See: <ekolist.cz/cz/zpravodajstvi/zpravy/zacina-obdobitemer-volneho-kaceni-stromu-chybi-novela-vyhlasky>.

8 See: <hn.ihned.cz/c1-42048630-diskontum-a-hypermarketum-se-dari-i-v-krizi>.

9 Nesehnutí, Impact of Retail Chains in the Czech Republic See: <hyper.cz/soubory/vyzkum_2003-2009.pdf>.

Inequality is the biggest obstacle



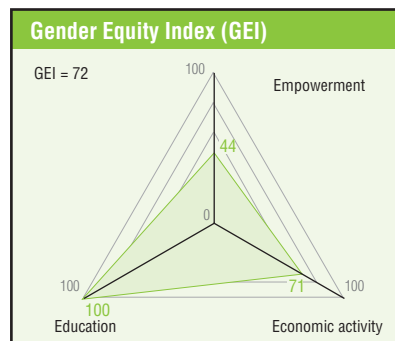
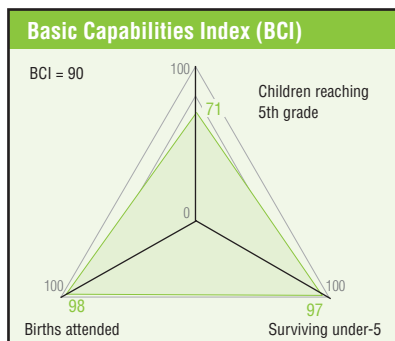
The Dominican Republic is fraught with numerous problems including violence against women and against immigrants from Haiti, the degradation of the environment, and principally inequalities in the education system, all of which make it most unlikely that the Government will be able to bring about sustainable human or economic development in the middle term. There has been progress in some areas, but the country urgently needs more far-reaching social policies that are genuinely geared to the changes needed to ensure a decent future. The country will almost certainly not be able to achieve sustainable development unless the education system is drastically changed to make it more democratic.

FEI
Mesa Nacional para las Migraciones
Red Nacional de Emergencia
ADIMJO
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The Government of the Dominican Republic has made a commitment to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but the obstacles to doing so are that its policies in crucial areas like social investment, the redistribution of wealth, restoring the environment and in particular improving education are not effective. As explained below, official and also independent studies show the country is a very long way from MDG 1 (the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger), Goal 2 (universal education) and Goal 3 (equality between men and women). In addition to these problems, there has been little progress in environmental sustainability in a land that is severely degraded after decades of over-exploitation, and this raises the question of whether the Government is actually capable of creating a sustainable economy.

In 2006 the Government set up the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development (MEPYD), charged with monitoring State policies for social development and reform. The Ministry drew up the Basic Document for a National Development Strategy 2010-2030, entitled "A journey to change into a better country".¹ This was an attempt to create a consensus that would clarify the steps to be taken to transform the Dominican Republic into a fairer and more equitable nation.

In 2010 UNDP described the Dominican Republic as "A middle income developing country that depends mainly on the services sector and remittances from abroad. Today the level of economic activity is 12 times greater than it was in 1960, and the average growth rate over the last 48 years has been 5.4% per year. Foreign currency income from exports, tourism and remittances is now 15 times greater



than it was 40 years ago."² However, in spite of these positive indicators and institutional changes, social investment is at a low level and there has hardly been any improvement at all in education, which means the country is still a long way short of the goals the Government claims it is pursuing.

Persistent inequality

The Dominican Republic has made good progress towards some other MDGs, including infant and maternal mortality and life expectancy at birth, indicators for which have improved significantly in recent years. But, data from the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development shows that in a country of nearly 10 million, the current levels of poverty (34%) and indigence (10%) are very high,³ although they have fallen considerable since the economic crisis of 2003 when these indicators reached their peak: 43% and 16% respectively.

The UNDP 2010 Human Development Report concludes that the biggest obstacle to the country's development is inequality.⁴ The report also says that education and health service levels have not increased in the same proportion as per capita wealth. The UNDP Human Development Index ranks the Dominican Republic 88th out of 169 countries, with a mean human development rating of 0.663.⁵

The 2006 UNICEF report on the State of the World's Children stated that "social progress in the

Dominican Republic, measured by life expectancy at birth, infant mortality, babies underweight at birth and the adult literacy rate, is very low compared to other countries in the region with the same levels of economic growth."⁶

ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) reports that since 2004 the Dominican Republic has been third from last among the countries of the Americas in terms of relative investment in social policies, and this is reflected mostly in the population's poor access to health and education services and social assistance.⁷

Violence and discrimination

In its 2010 report, Amnesty International denounced the Dominican Republic for persistent discrimination against Haitian immigrants and their descendants. These people are the victims of numerous hate crimes that even include lynching, and as illegal immigrants they are exploited in the labour market. Unofficial estimates put the number of Haitians in the country at 800,000 and nearly all of them live in the poorest areas.⁸

In 2007, following a directive by the Central Electoral Council, thousands of citizens, mostly descendants of Haitian immigrants, those becoming Stateless had their identity documents rescinded. This severely restricted their access to health services, education and jobs, and also took away their right to vote. People without the correct documents are

1 Basic document of the proposed National Development Strategy 2010 – 2030, (Santo Domingo, 2010), <www.end.gov.do/download/Documento_base_propuesta_END_2010_2030.pdf>.

2 See: <www.pnud.org.do/content/acerca-del-pais>.

3 See: <www.economia.gov.do/eWeb/ShowContent.aspx?idc=452>.

4 UNDP. Human Development Report 2010, <undp.org/es/informes/mundial/idx2010/capitulos>.

5 See: <hdr.undp.org/es/estadisticas>.

6 See: <www.unicef.org/spanish/sowc06/index.php>.

7 See: <www.unicef.org/repUBLICADOMINICANA/grafico_ODMs.pdf>.

8 IPS, "Aumenta la violencia contra haitianos," <cpnnoticias.net/nota.asp?idnews=90376>.

liable to arbitrary detention and can be expelled from the country. These regulations are still in force today.

Gender violence is another endemic problem, above all with regard to people under the legal age. In May 2009 the Santo Domingo Prosecutor's Office said that in 90% of reported cases of sexual violence the victims were girls under 18 years old.⁹

Environmental degradation

In the second half of the 20th century the country's natural resources were so heavily exploited that most of the forests and coral reefs were devastated, and today some 80% of its river basins are severely degraded.¹⁰ Moreover in many areas there is no adequate sewage system and there are big problems with the distribution of potable water, which together create a widespread health risk. The fact that poverty is so widespread means that a large proportion of the people have to depend on the natural food resources of their own areas, and this inevitably places great strain on these stocks and makes for further degradation of the ecosystem.

Poor education and Government inaction

A discouraging aspect of the current situation is that the State is paying scant attention to education, even though an educated population must be the cornerstone of any future plan to improve social, economic and environmental conditions. Education is the main means whereby a society constructs its values, and it is a key factor in sustainable human development because it will enable future generations to properly manage the country's social and natural resources.

As well as failing to increase investment in education, the State is even failing to comply with the requirements of the Education Law of 1997 (Law 66-97, which states in Article 197 that starting in 1999 annual public spending on the sector should be at least 16% of total public expenditure or 4% of the estimated GDP for the current year, whichever is higher.¹¹ Public expenditure on education, which increased from 1.9% to 2.9% of GDP in the period 1996 to 2002, dropped as a consequence of the economic crisis to a paltry 1.5% in 2004. In 2005 it recovered somewhat to 1.9%, but it is still far too low and it has never reached 3% of GDP.

The Ministry of Education has calculated that in the 2000 to 2005 period the proportion of the education system financed by the State decreased to 52% and the proportion contributed by students' families

fell to 39%, while the OECD reports that the shortfall was made up with foreign loans and donations and contributions from private enterprises.¹² Some 24% of the student population attend private educational institutions, which do better than the State system in terms of this basic human right.

In the face of this, the Government is sending confused signals. President Leonel Fernández sowed doubts about the degree to which he was committed to the provisions of Law 66-97 when he claimed there was no correlation between the amounts invested in education and the academic results achieved. According to Fernández, increasing the proportion of GDP allocated to the sector would not guarantee good quality equitable education.¹³

In response, civil society organizations have come together to form the Decent Education Coalition to demand the Government comply with its legal obligations. They have even received support from the business sector; for example the Federation of Industrial Associations (FAI) has backed the Coalition's campaign. According to the FAI and other similar institutions, "industry in the Dominican Republic cannot become competitive with a workforce that is poorly trained. We believe, as the President says, that the pedagogic style and the curriculum are in need of reform, but this cannot be done without resources."¹⁴

Inequality in the classroom

According to a 2008 report from the Latin American Laboratory for Education Quality Evaluation (LLECE), the Dominican Republic has "a dual-quality education model in which the best goes to the richer groups and the worst to the poorer groups, and this has become so ingrained in the culture that many people see it as the natural order of things."¹⁵ There have been many independent as well as official surveys and studies that lay bare the reality of the situation but nothing has changed, and this is making inequality endemic.

In 2007 the country's Demographic and Health Survey (ENDESA) found educational disparities that were attributable to differences in income. For example, in the richest quintile of the population the

illiteracy rate is only 2% but in the poorest quintile it is extremely high at 26%.¹⁶

Another evaluation that confirms these findings is the 2008 Second Comparative Regional Study and Explanation of Student Learning in Latin America and the Caribbean (SERCE), which concluded that "in mathematics and language pupils from third to sixth grade in the Dominican Republic are far below the average for Latin America and the Caribbean."¹⁷

One of the factors behind this poor showing in education is the poor quality of teaching. The teachers in the State system are not well trained, they are overloaded with work and badly paid, and in order for them to earn a minimum acceptable salary they have to do so many classroom hours they have little time to prepare the courses. This makes it impossible for them to keep to the set programmes or to effectively transmit the required educational content to their pupils. Another negative factor is that in the 2005-06 academic year only 43.1% of active teachers had a teaching diploma. The rest were not qualified to teach classes.

It is clear that the country's education system is not providing good quality education. In the last ten years overall pupil coverage has increased but academic performance is still very poor and consequently most young people finish their studies without the basic knowledge needed to compete in the labour market, which limits their access to decent work.

Conclusion

Overall, in spite of some encouraging progress in achieving national development goals, particularly regarding greater life expectancy and reduced maternal and child mortality, the Dominican Republic urgently needs to adopt a far-reaching strategy for sustainable development if it is to overcome serious obstacles, most of which relate to high, and increasing, inequality. This is especially evident in terms of access to health and education, both of which affect the productivity of the labour force, as does continued violence and discrimination against women and Haitian immigrants. In particular, if the quality of education does not improve dramatically, and if the population's access to it is not extended, it is most unlikely the Government will be able to lead the country along the path to sustainable development. ■

9 Amnesty International, "Human Rights in the Dominican Republic," *Amnesty International Report 2010*. <www.amnesty.org/es/region/dominican-republic/report-2010>.

10 Instituto del Tercer Mundo, República Dominicana, in *Guía del mundo 2010*, (Montevideo: ITeM, 2010), p. 468.

11 Organic Education Law of the Dominican Republic, <www.educando.edu.do/files/2413/1783/9636/ley_general_educacion_66-97.pdf>.

12 Ediciones OCDE, *Report of national education policies: the Dominican Republic*, (Paris: 2008).

13 "Iberoamérica alcanza logros en educación," *Listín Diario*, (5 December 2010), <www.listindiario.com.do/la-republica/2010/12/4/168999/iberoamerica-alcanza-logros-en-la-educacion>.

14 *DiarioDigitalRD, Industriales piden reforzar campaña a favor del 4% para la Educación*, <www.diariodigital.com.do/articulo,59550.html>.

15 UNDP- Dominican Republic, *Política social: capacidades y derechos-Análisis y propuestas de políticas sociales en República Dominicana*, Vol. 1, (Santo Domingo: 2010).

16 Centre for Social and Demographic Studies (CESDEM) and International Framework Inc., *Demography and Health Survey 2007*, (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: CESDEM and Macro International Inc).

17 UNDP-Dominican Republic, op cit.

Large scale mining: unsustainable development on and on



In Ecuador's new constitution, which came into force in October 2008, the State's most important duty is to respect and enforce the population's human rights on the collective as well as the individual level. Besides this, the constitution also recognizes the rights of nature itself, or Pachamama. However, in spite of this most encouraging gesture, nothing has changed and the country is still wedded to an economic model based on mining and oil extraction.

Centro de Derechos Económicos y Sociales
Francisco Hurtado

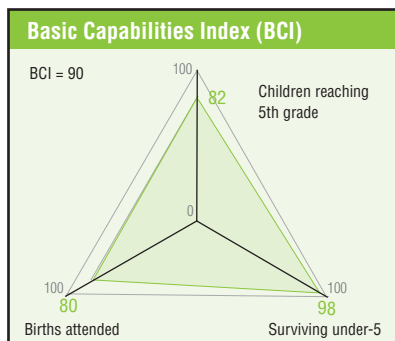
Article 71 of the Ecuador's new constitution recognizes the right of nature "to have its existence and the maintenance and regeneration of its life cycles, structure, functions and evolutionary processes holistically respected,"¹ and individuals, communities, peoples and national groups have a legitimate right to demand that the political authorities comply with this disposition. This translates into a State obligation to care for and protect the natural environment and to restore degraded ecosystems, and it is quite apart from the established rights of individuals or groups to receive compensation when their human rights are violated.

The human right to live in a healthy and ecologically balanced environment, and to manage that environment in a way that is based on the principles of sustainable development, to some extent conflicts with the rights of nature itself, as recognized in the constitution, because nature is acknowledged as having intrinsic value over and above the goods and services that mankind may extract from it.

Sustainable development

The ever-accelerating exploitation of nature in 19th and 20th centuries has led to some resources, above all non-renewable ones, being over-exploited, and it is clear that in many areas the planet's physical capacity to serve mankind's rapacious production and consumption needs is now exhausted. This means ecosystems all over the world are becoming increasingly degraded because people are extracting natural resources more and more intensively to take maximum advantage of them. This is having a whole range of negative effects all over the world like soil degradation, the disappearance of entire species of flora and fauna, water pollution, high levels of air pollution, deforestation and desertification. Besides these impacts on nature, communities and people in all parts of the world are suffering social and cultural devastation, and the most extreme example of this is the actual extinction of some original indigenous peoples.

In the 1970s and 1980s there was growing concern with protecting the environment from the

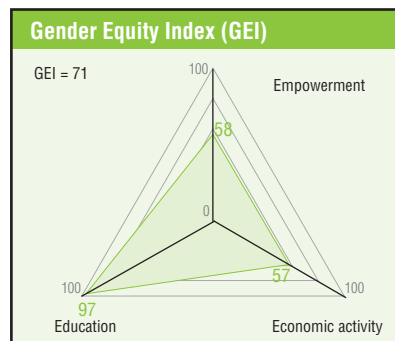


effects of unrestrained human activity and this went beyond policy discussions in international organizations and led some States to gradually start enacting environmental protection measures. These were linked to the recognition of people's right to live in a healthy and ecologically balanced environment, and to the development of environmental management. We shall now analyse how concern about the environment interconnects with the concept of development.

The right to live in a healthy and ecologically balanced environment

The concept of sustainable development is not in itself a criticism of the logic of capitalist accumulation as a structural cause of negative effects on the environment. However, one of the implications of the notion of sustainability is that people have the right to live in a healthy environment, and this has led to the emergence of environmental management, which takes different forms in different places and necessarily includes environmental impact evaluation processes as part of the mechanisms to reduce or eliminate unsustainable production and consumption systems. In some cases local people play a role in managing the environment, and this means they must be provided with adequate information about the problems involved and have the opportunity to take part in decision-making processes. In Ecuador today this is known as the right to environment consultation.

However, in practice, environmental management is not geared to protecting nature as such, it is not aimed at preserving ecosystems or the people who live in them because these spaces and communities have intrinsic value, rather it is a mechanism



to perpetuate the exploitation of these resources for the purposes of economic development. The focus is to implant systems that will allow these natural resources to be used more efficiently over time and will involve technical and scientific development so that more economic gain can be extracted per unit of the natural resource.

Large scale mining in Ecuador

In Ecuador large scale extraction, mainly the oil industry, is the paradigm case of how the exploitation of natural resources can cause the accelerated deterioration of ecosystems and of the conditions of life of the people who live in them. According to data from the Ecuador System of Social Indicators (SIISE),² most of the people in settlements near the oilfields are above the national average for poverty and their local environments are now being very seriously polluted.

One of most controversial issues in Ecuador today is the exploitation phase of the large scale mining of metals, which is due to start in the near future. Since the 1990s successive governments have been laying the foundations for this expansion of mining, and claiming it will generate large revenues for the State and enable the country to develop.

The Technical Assistance Project for Mining Development and Environmental Control (PRODEMINCA) and the 1991 Mining Law, both of which were carried through under the auspices of the World Bank, signalled the start of a State policy to gradually develop large scale mining. The main aim of this legal framework was to generate conditions favourable for private investment, and various transnational

1 Political Constitution of Ecuador, Article 71.

2 SIISE data can be downloaded from: <www.siise.gov.ec>.

companies acquired State concessions and began exploring and prospecting. By 2007 these activities had spread to some 2.8 million hectares of land, and nearly half of this activity involved the mining of metals.³

This has had serious negative social and environmental impacts including the pollution of land and water resources, and it has also led to land speculation, monopolies and outside control of the concession areas. However, in some cases local peasant and indigenous populations are fighting back, and the best-known example is the Íntag in the province of Imbabura. In 1997 the people of this community stopped the Japanese firm Bishimetals from going about their work, and in 2006 they did the same to the Canadian enterprise Ascendant Copper. In 2007⁴ direct action by this resistance movement, and by other groups in the provinces of Zamora Chinchipe and Morona Santiago, caused several transnational firms to suspend their activities.

The start of large scale mining and the resistance process

Several years ago the National Assembly enacted Constitutional Mandate No. 6 whereby under certain circumstances mining concessions would revert to the State, but in spite of this, when the country's new constitution came into force the Government submitted a new mining bill and identified five large scale mining projects as being strategically important for Ecuador's development plan, and this was passed by the National Assembly.

Ecuador now has a National Mining Development Plan 2011–2015 in which some 21 extensive mineral deposits in various provinces are earmarked for exploitation. The State's share in the revenues from mining is stipulated in a system of royalties and taxes the private companies have to pay, and environmental and social management policies for these activities have been established. The State has also consolidated the legal framework for these projects to go into operation⁵ and is currently negotiating five mining contracts with transnational companies, one of which has already been awarded its environmental licence for the exploitation phase.⁶

The indigenous and peasant communities that will suffer the direct impacts of these projects have mobilized resistance on a permanent basis, and the

THE EVIDENCE SOME WANT TO IGNORE

The Government of Ecuador and some social actors insist that the large scale mining model in place today is sustainable, but the evidence that is plain to see in the country's mining and oil producing regions tells quite a different story. According to a report on the sustainability of mining in Ecuador, the exploitation of the copper deposits at Mirador in the Cóndor mountain range by CCRCTongguan, a Chinese enterprise, will generate at least 326 million tons of waste, which is equivalent to four hills like El Panecillo in Quito or the volume of all the rubbish collected in Guayaquil for the next 405 years. Another example is at Fruta del Norte, where the extraction of 11.8 million ounces of gold will leave behind 384 million tons of waste. But the Government claims this policy is justified as the extractive sector's contribution the country's economy will grow to an estimated USD 37,000 million in the next twenty years.¹ This is the reality, and any official talk of alternative development is just rhetoric and hot air.

1 William Sacher and Alberto Acosta, ¿Puede ser sustentable la minería?, Report on mining conflicts in Latin America, (August 2011), <www.conflictosmineros.net/contenidos/12-ecuador/8199-ipuede-ser-sustentable-la-mineria>.

Government has kept them under constant pressure with arguments about the need for development and has accused them of political primitivism and of wanting to prevent the State from generating the financial resources needed for the country to grow economically.⁷ The authorities have also taken more direct action like using legal machinery to persecute these communities, and in the courts resistance efforts are being treated as terrorism and sabotage.⁸

An alternative view of development

The arrival of large scale projects to mine metals in Ecuador has provoked and is still provoking social mobilisation and resistance against the current and potential social and environmental impacts these kinds of operations cause. This tension and conflict between the Government and indigenous and peasant communities is being played out against a background of political debate about the development model the State is implementing.

The 2008 Political Constitution of Ecuador has dispositions that govern these matters, and this legislation should be analysed in a way that is holistic and goes beyond strictly legal interpretations and applications. Not only is it the State's inescapable duty to defend the rights of nature as well as human rights, both individual and collective, but the State should also design and construct an alternative policy that is radically different from today's development model in which the economic growth of society is tied almost exclusively to exploiting non-renewable natural resources.

The sustainable development philosophy cannot be considered an alternative or even a criticism of

the current model unless it questions the very ideology of economic progress. Without this dimension it can do no more than cover the prevailing capitalist model with a cloak of concern about the environment, because in this model nature is still regarded primarily as a source of resources. However, the defenders of the current sustainable development stance would say it is an attempt to use science and technology to preserve the environment for future generations.

To sum up, the start of large scale mining in Ecuador reawakened debate about sustainable development, but the only change from the previous raw neo-liberal approach is that now the State is taking a greater share of the profits. There has been no change whatsoever in the way these projects are carried out and private transnational companies are still operating without restraint. It is these firms that are causing devastating impacts on a whole range of ecosystems and on the lives of the people who live in them. These communities are demanding new alternatives to protect their ecosystems in a holistic way so that natural areas and the animal and plant species that live in them can be saved, and the human beings who have their homes there can lead decent lives.

The Government is projecting a false image on the international stage. It makes pronouncements about how it is planning to move beyond the extraction model, it has recognized in the country's constitution that nature itself has rights, it considers *sumak kawsay* and alternative development proposals, and there is even talk of not extracting the country's oil in exchange for economic compensation from the international community (as expressed in the Yasuni-ITT plan⁹), but in actual fact it is pushing the frontiers of extractive enterprises, especially mining, ever deeper into natural areas. This is making Ecuador even more dependent on the exploitation of non-renewable resources and perpetuating the violation of the human rights of the populations involved. But the Government justifies this on the grounds that it needs the revenues from these projects in order for the whole country to develop. ■

9 See: <www.yasuni-itt.gob.ec; www.amazoniaporla vida.org>.

3 CEDHU - FIDH, *Intervención minera a gran escala en Ecuador y vulneración de derechos humanos*, (Ecuador: Ecumenical Commission for Human Rights and the International Human Rights Federation, 2010) 13-15.

4 "Brief history of resistance to mining in Intag, Ecuador" <www.sloth.gr.jp/S-chapter/MINING%20RESISTANCE%20IN%20JUNIN-SUMMARY_esp.pdf>; "Anti-mining resistance in Morona Santiago" <www.olca.cl/oca/ecuador/mineras54.htm>; "Mining cannot operate in Zamora" *Diario La Hora*, (29 May 2007), <www.lahora.com.ec/index.php/noticias/show/575172/-1/Minera_no_puede_operar_en_Zamora.html>.

5 National Mining Sector Plan for Mining Development 2011-2015 <bit.ly/PlanMinero2011-2015>.

6 "Ecuacorrientes cerca de obtener permisos ambientales" Newspaper *El Hoy*, (6 October 2011), <www.hoy.com.ec/noticias-ecuador/ecuacorrientes-cerca-de-obtener-permisos-ambientales-505288.html>.

7 "Presidente Correa defiende minería responsable" *Ecuadorinmediato.com*, (25 September 2009), <bit.ly/rhESn3>; "Presidente Correa afirma que el Gobierno no acepta plazos de nadie" *Ecuadorinmediato.com*, (11 December 2009), <bit.ly/n6AwEt>; "La Minería" Ministry of Non-Renewable natural Resources <bit.ly/rgTbeb>.

8 Francisco Hurtado, "Análisis sobre la criminalización actual en Ecuador" (Ecuador: Report on Collective Rights of the Centre for Economic and Social Rights - CDES and Oxfam, 2011) <observatorio.cdes.org.ec/analisis/documentos-de-analisis.html>.

Now is the time for environmental strategies



The country faces big environmental problems, and the Government – although moving in the right direction - is not paying enough attention to them. To ensure environmental sustainability, the Government should continue to enact and implement environmental laws, many of which have been debated in recent years, and decide once and for all to make a firm commitment to international environmental protection agreements. The Durban talks on climate change may be an excellent opportunity to develop a national, long-term strategy and work towards ensuring the well-being of future generations.

Social Watch El Salvador

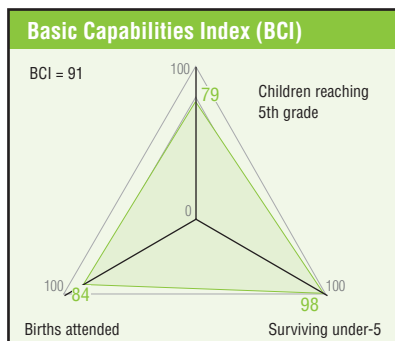
Susana Barrera
Magdalena Cortez
Scarlett Cortez
Ana María Galdámez
Omar García
Mario Paniagua

El Salvador is rich in biodiversity. Were these diverse biological resources well-managed, they could provide the basis on which to support the entire population and lift many out of poverty. At the present time, however, they are not being properly administered, and the country's great potential is being wasted. In 2009, an estimated 37% of the Salvadoran population was living in poverty.¹

A sizeable proportion of the rural population live below the poverty line, and their subsistence strategies depend on and exploit natural resources. The Government lacks a clear policy to guide and provide technical and financial support to existing and new rural settlements whose struggle for existence has accelerated the destruction of forests, soil and water resources. Historically, the lack of a national environmental policy has led to unplanned and indiscriminate dumping of rubbish, the pollution of water with human and industrial waste, and increasing air pollution caused by more and more motor vehicles.² Big industries and agricultural exploitation have caused pollution in nature areas, and there has been no suitable treatment for liquid or solid waste.

The environment and the Millennium Development Goals

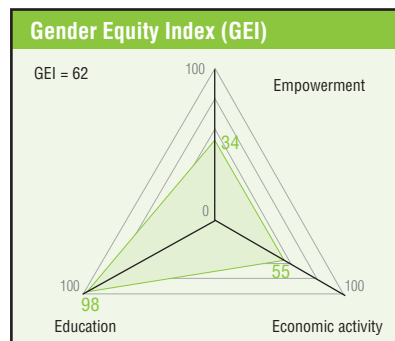
Despite these problems, according to the UNDP, the prospects of El Salvador achieving its targets under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are encouraging. The poverty reduction target and the target for access to sanitation have already been reached, and indicators show the country is very near its target for access to potable water. Less progress has been made towards the other MDG



goals, but El Salvador seems to be on the right path and doing reasonably well.³

Measured against the MDGs, El Salvador has incorporated the principles of sustainable development into national policies and programmes and reversed the loss of environmental resources. It has reduced the loss of biodiversity and by 2010 had brought the rate of loss down considerably. The country is on track to cut by half the percentage of the population without access to potable water and basic sewage services by 2015 and to improve the lives of at least one million inhabitants of shanty towns by 2020.⁴ According to UNDP, the goal of reversing the rate of loss of environment resources and the target of cutting in half the number of people without access to potable water or sewage services have already been reached.⁵

El Salvador has also reduced consumption of substances that damage the ozone layer, specifically chlorofluorocarbons (CFC gases).⁶ It has made good on its commitment to the Montreal Protocol to reduce emissions of CFC gases 50% by 2005, 85% by 2007, and by 2010 was on course for a 100% reduction.⁷



The question of access to potable water and sewage services is less easy to assess, depending on the criteria used to evaluate progress. The traditional evaluation system considers the supply of improved water by pipes, public access points, perforated wells or pumps, protected wells, protected sources and rain water. If these criteria are used, the proportion of the population with access to sources of improved water increased from 63.3% in 1991 to 83.9% in 2000 and 86.9% in 2007. However, if a more rigorous standard is applied that considers only access to water in households, the figures are less encouraging, showing an improvement from 42.2% of households in 1991 to 67.5% in 2007.⁸

An important step forward

One important step forward came in March 2011 with the enactment of the Law of Land Reclamation.⁹ This lays down regulations that impose order on the unrestricted spread of large urban areas, establishes standards for how soils are used and sets up a legal framework to govern human activity in river valleys and the forests that still remain.

The country also has an Environment Law and a battery of specific laws to support it, including the Law of Protected Nature Areas, the Forestry Law and the Law of Forest Wildlife Preservation. In addition, El Salvador has subscribed to the Montreal Protocol and is committed to applying international standards to the management of dangerous materials.

1 The World Bank, *El Salvador*, (San Salvador: 2011), <data.worldbank.org/country/el-salvador>.

2 M. A. Alvarado, *Diagnóstico de la situación medioambiental de El Salvador*, (3 October 2006), <www.ecoport.net/Temas_Especiales/Desarrollo_Sustentable/Diagnostico_de_la_situacion_medio_ambiental_de_El_Salvador>.

3 UNDP, "Avance hacia los ODM en El Salvador," in *Millennium Development Goals 2007*, <www.pnud.org.sv/2007/odm/content/view/15/101>

4 UNDP, *Segundo Informe Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio, El Salvador*, (2009), p. 39; also see: <www.unhabitat.org/stats/Default.aspx>.

5 Ibid.

6 UNDP, *Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio*, <www.pnud.org.sv/2007/odm/content/view/1/82/>.

7 UNDP, *Segundo Informe Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio*, op cit.

8 Ibid.

9 El Salvador Noticias, *El Salvador con nueva ley de ordenamiento territorial*, (12 March 2011), <www.elsalvadornoticias.net/2011/03/12/el-salvador-con-nueva-ley-de-ordenamiento-territorial/>.

Taking a broad view, even though in practice not enough resources are being allocated to make it possible for these laws to yield significant concrete results, the very fact that a regulatory framework has been put in place must be regarded as a big step in the right direction.

The impact of climate change

Climate change is another dimension of sustainable development in which El Salvador must undertake serious long-term planning. The country, and indeed the whole region, will have to consider how to prepare for and cope with the effects of climate change.

Climate change is creating a whole range of problems for the countries in Central America, arising from the adverse impacts of weather-related phenomena on production, infrastructure, and people's means of support, health and safety. Increasingly, the environment is less and less able to provide resources or play a key role in sustaining life.

As an example, Central America has been blessed with a rich endowment of water resources, but these are unequally distributed among the various countries and regions and between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. There are great variations in water

availability from year to year and even within the same year. According to climate change forecasts, the use of and demand for fresh water could rise by as much as 20% in a scenario based on the premise that in the near future there will be a proliferation of local solutions to the problems of managing economic, social and environmental sustainability. But in some scenarios that are less careful about protecting ecosystems, demand could even go up by 24%.¹⁰

El Salvador is particularly vulnerable to climate change. Of all the Central American countries, El Salvador could be hit the hardest, followed by Honduras and Nicaragua.¹¹ Demand for water currently exceeds the 20% threshold that is accepted internationally as the critical level for pressure on water resources. Thus, El Salvador falls into the same category of water dependence as Egypt and some countries in the Arabian Peninsula.¹²

The outlook for agriculture is equally uncertain and worrying. According to some studies, the principal effects of climate change will be greater CO₂ concentrations, higher temperatures, changing rainfall patterns and increasing pressure on water resources --though the tolerance of higher limits and endurance of the country's crops may have a mitigating effect.

Conclusion

To achieve environmental sustainability, El Salvador must make a commitment to international environmental agreements that will enable it to put a brake on activities that harm the environment. In addition, it should design and implement national policies that include guidelines that promote full respect for human life and for living things.

El Salvador has a unique opportunity to tackle these problems. It should assume leadership of the Central American countries at the climate change discussions in 2011. It has already taken a firm step in this direction with the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources currently engaged in consultations to design and coordinate a national climate change strategy that should enable El Salvador to take firm positions at international forum.

Confidence and support are also needed when it comes to adopting new strategies like the "National Policy on Water Resources in El Salvador," a Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources initiative aimed at ensuring that the country's present and future generations will have enough water for all their needs. ■

¹⁰ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), *La economía del cambio climático en Centro América*, (2010).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

Engineering a failed State



Once praised as one of the most promising countries in Africa, the country has become the victim of an authoritarian and militarized regime. The country has rapidly descended into intolerable levels of political repression, leading to abject poverty and “social anomie,” an environment that precludes fulfilment of its international commitment to sustainable development, economic growth and progress. The fundamental obstacle of political repression can only be removed with the help of outside pressure on the Eritrean Government.

Eritrean Movement for Democracy and Human Rights (EMDHR)

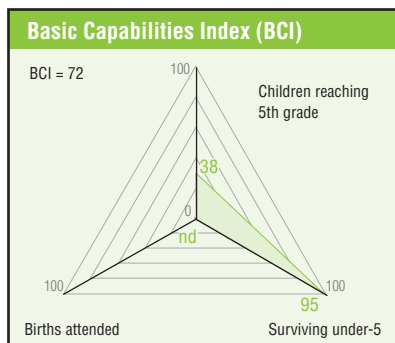
Daniel R Mekonnen

Speaking at an academic conference in November 2010, French scholar Gerard Prunier, a specialist in the Horn of Africa and East Africa, described Eritrea as one of “the hardest and worst dictatorships anywhere” and “a hell on Earth.”¹ This was not hyperbole. The Government has declared war against its own people. The worst manifestation of this war situation is the pervasive practice of forced labour under the guise of the national military service programme (NMSP), which has kept hundreds of thousands of Eritreans under an unbearable yoke of dictatorship.

Despite the looming economic, social and political crises, which have been amply detailed, the Government obstinately refuses to acknowledge the reality on the ground. On the contrary, President Isaias Afwerki, has proclaimed the country the best in Africa. Asked by Al Jazeera TV about his aspirations for Eritrea, he declared: “We are focused on doing the right things in this country ... At least we will not be like Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan; we are better off. We are number one in this continent.”² But the 2010 *Global Hunger Index* has a different view. It ranks Eritrea, together with Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo as one of the three African countries with alarming levels of hunger.³ In the context of this and other credible reports, the Afwerki comment must be viewed as an affront to the suffering Eritrean people.

A laboratory for botched experiments

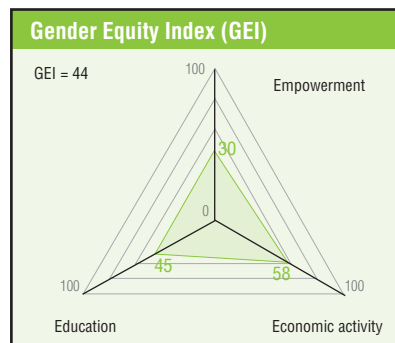
As noted above, the abusive Government policy of forced military service is the major cause of vulnerability in Eritrea. Although the country has never conducted a census, the proportion of the population forced into military service appears to be exceedingly high. One recent study estimated the country's



population at 3.6 million.⁴ In 2010 the Eritrean army had an estimated 600,000 troops,⁵ which would be an extraordinary 16.6% of the total population. This forced military service makes it extremely difficult for ordinary citizens to realize their personal aspirations in life, even if they are not personally affected by the Government's abhorrent human rights violations, such as torture and imprisonment.

Since the outbreak of a border conflict with Ethiopia in 1998, the Government has arbitrarily extended its statutory NMSP of 18 months to an indefinite period. Under this abusive policy, all adults, male and female, up to the age of 45 are subject to what amounts to slavery or forced labour, either in military camps and trenches bordering Ethiopia or working under strict military rule for corporations owned by the State and army generals.

The actual situation may be even worse. More than 1 million Eritreans are believed to be living outside of the country—one of largest diaspora communities in the world. Thus, the domestic population may be less than 2.6 million. This would make the proportion of the population in the military closer to 23%. According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), a leading think tank on human security issues, the maximum limit of military mobilization is normally considered to be 10% of the total population. Beyond that, society ceases to function normally.⁶



Scholar Nicole Hirt defines “social anomie” as a state of large scale disturbed order and societal disintegration resulting from the inability of a large proportion of the society to realize personal aspirations.⁷ Along the same lines, Tricia Redeker Hepner and David O’Kane have investigated the bizarre state of affairs in Eritrea using the concept of biopolitics, which they define as “a state-led deployment of disciplinary technologies on individuals and population groups.”⁸ As their study indicates, Eritrea has become the latest laboratory for experimentation in economic, social and political policies which have previously proven disastrous in a number of archaic repressive regimes.

Given the high level of military mobilization it comes as no surprise that the Eritrean Government is accused of supporting armed groups ranging from Al Shabab in Somalia to the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. The former allegation is supported by UN experts,⁹ and resulted in a severe sanction adopted by the UN Security Council in December 2009 (Resolution 1907). The latter has been validated in a report by the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It is also important to note that Eritrea is currently ruled by

1 Prunier, G., *Eritrea and its Discontents*, speech delivered at the Conference of the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA), (5 November 2010), <video.com/18716003>.

2 Dutton, Jane, “Interview with Isaias Afwerki”, *Al Jazeera TV*, (19 February 2010), <www.youtube.com/watch?v=00uQwODNkTA>.

3 International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), *2010 Global Hunger Index*, (2010), <www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ghi10.pdf>.

4 Russell, George, “Eritrea to UN: Take This Aid and Shove It”, *Fox News*, (30 March 2011), <www.foxnews.com/world/2011/03/30/eritrea-aid-shove/?test=latestnews>.

5 Bertelsmann Stiftung, *Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2010: Eritrea Country Report*, 2 and 13.

6 International Crisis Group (ICG), *Eritrea: The Siege State*, (Africa Report No. 163, 21 September 2010), 13.

7 Hirt, Nicole, “‘Dreams Don’t Come True in Eritrea’: Anomie and Family Disintegration due to the Structural Militarization of Society”, *GIGA Working Papers*, 119/2010, (January 2010), 7-9. Merton, Robert K., *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: The Free Press, 1995) 131-132, 163.

8 Redeker, Tricia, and O’Kane, David, “Introduction” in O’Kane, David, and Redeker, Tricia (eds) *Biopolitics, Militarism and Development: Eritrea in the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford & New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

9 See the periodic reports of the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, <www.un.org/sc/committees/751/mongroup.shtml>.

a government which does not hesitate to establish links with individuals or groups which are globally condemned for their involvement in a number of illicit activities. One such individual is the notorious Russian arms dealer, Viktor Bout, known as “The Merchant of Death.” In short, Eritrea is ruled by a small cohort of ex-freedom fighters who do not constitute a “government” in the conventional sense.

The recipe for a failed State

The country is on the brink of becoming another failed state in the Horn of Africa, a region described as the most-conflicted corner of the world since the end of WWII.¹⁰ For the past six decades, war, displacement, abject poverty and repression have been the hallmarks of this region. It has already produced one failed state, Somalia, in the last 20 years; the likelihood of Eritrea becoming another is not far-fetched. ICG raised this possibility in a September 2010 report, which called this a real danger in the absence of effective and timely international intervention. Two of the major factors it cited are “the widespread lack of support for the Government within the country and the deteriorating state of the army, whose ability to either sustain Isaias Afwerki’s regime or to successfully manage regime transition is increasingly questionable.”¹¹

By refusing to accept humanitarian assistance, under the guise of self-reliance, the Government has condemned the population to prolonged suffering. Most recently it rejected an offer of humanitarian assistance under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The decision was formally announced in a letter from the Minister of Finance on 25 January 2011.¹² Eritrea ranks third in the world in aid dependency;¹³ the Government’s decision to discontinue or at least to curtail the activities of the UNDAF comes at a time when such assistance is urgently needed by the Eritrean people.

Mass exodus

Throughout its brief history, Eritrea has been one of the leading refugee-producing countries in the world. During the armed struggle for liberation, the main cause of mass exodus was the brutality of the occupying Ethiopian army. After the country achieved its independence in 1991, emigration declined precipitously. However, this trend dramatically shifted in the aftermath of the 1998-2000 border conflict with Ethiopia. Since September 2001 the main cause of mass exodus remains the brutality of the Eritrean go-

vernment. Nathaniel Meyers, who travelled to Eritrea in mid-2010, crystalized the situation with his observation that *Prison Break*¹⁴ has become one of the most popular television series in Eritrea.¹⁵ This metaphor depicts the tragedy of Eritrea becoming a giant open-air prison where every Eritrean considers himself or herself an inmate while relatives outside of the country are regarded as potential rescuers.

Similarly, Gaim Kibreab describes Eritrea as a society severely affected by a “powerful obsession to migrate”.¹⁶ The mass exodus typically begins with flight across the border to Sudan or Ethiopia, and continuing to Libya and then the Italian coast, the initial European destination of many asylum seekers. This journey is extremely hazardous. The suffering that Eritreans endure in crossing the Sahara Desert (including the Sinai Desert) and the Mediterranean Sea is comparable only to the extreme hardships depicted in bestseller novels or Hollywood adventure movies. The resulting trauma and psychological harm is difficult to imagine. Perhaps the most heart-breaking recent incident occurred in March 2011, when a boat carrying 335 refugees fleeing the conflict in Libya, including 325 Eritreans, capsized due to unknown reasons. Everyone on board, including pregnant women and children, perished.¹⁷ For Eritreans, this was one of the most horrendous disasters of recent times.

No room for popular uprisings

From the end of 2010 and through the beginning of 2011 an unprecedented wave of popular uprisings has removed repressive regimes in a number of North Africa and Middle East countries. Some observers have predicted that this upsurge may expand to other countries still governed by repressive regimes. In the case of Eritrea, Will Cobbett notes, this is very unlikely to happen in the near future for several reasons:¹⁸

First, Eritrea’s entire able-bodied population is strictly regimented by absolute military discipline as a result of the never-ending NMSP programme.

Second, Eritrea has no official opposition in any form that could possibly generate the kind of popular uprising seen in Tunisia, Egypt and other countries. In September 2001 the Government mercilessly crushed the first post-independence reform movement; ever since, no internal opposition or dissent has emerged.

Third, one of the major catalysts of change in other countries, the Internet, is tightly controlled by the Government and Eritrea has one of the lowest Internet penetrations in the world, far below that of countries in North Africa and the Middle East. Just 4% of Eritreans have access to the Internet, and the Government could quickly cut this off: “there’s no need for Isaias [Afwerki] to close down Twitter or Facebook – but he could if he wanted to, because he controls the monopoly telecoms provider.”¹⁹

Fourth, with the control of the only TV channel, radio station and newspaper (broadcasting and printing in each national language) the Government holds a complete monopoly of information. According to Reporters Without Borders and The Committee to Protect Journalists, Eritrea ranks last country in the world in press freedom and has imprisoned more journalists than any other country in Africa.²⁰ It is also the only country in Africa without a single private newspaper or any other form of media outlet. Nonetheless, the possibility of popular rebellion cannot be completely ruled out.

The way forward

Along with the compression of political space, eliminating any possibility of an official opposition or any form of dissent, Eritrea is also suffering increasing levels of international isolation. In this environment, which the ICG has described as “the siege state,” the country can hardly fulfill its international commitment to sustainable development. Sustainable economic growth and advancement can only occur if the fundamental problem of political repression is resolved immediately. This would require sufficient pressure to compel the Government to open up political space. As the country’s leading development partner, the European Union (EU) possesses ample diplomatic and political leverage. One way in which it could use this is by making future development assistance contingent upon the abolition of the indefinite NMSP, the holding of long-promised national elections, the implementation of the long-delayed constitution and the release of political and other prisoners. These are among the most important measures that must precede long-term planning on sustainable development. ■

19 Ibid.

20 Committee to Protect Journalists, *Iran, China Drive Prison Tally to 14-Year High*, (2010), <cpj.org/reports/2010/12/cpj-journalist-prison-census-iran-china-highest-14-years.php>; Reporters Without Borders, *2010 Press Freedom Index*, (Paris: 2010), <en.rsrf.org/press-freedom-index-2010, 1034.html>.

10 Shinn, D.H., *Challenges to Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa*, (California: World Affairs Council of Northern California, 12 March 2011).

11 ICG, op cit., note 6 above, ii.

12 Fox News, *Eritrea to UN: Take This Aid and Shove It*, (30 March 2011), <www.foxnews.com/world/2011/03/30/eritrea-aid-shove>

13 NationMaster, *Aid as per cent of GDP*, <www.nationmaster.com/graph/eco_aid_as_of_gdp-economy-aid-as-of-gdp>.

14 *Prison Break* is a prominent American TV serial drama telling the story of a man wrongly convicted of murder and sentenced to death, and the efforts of his brother to help the prisoner escape.

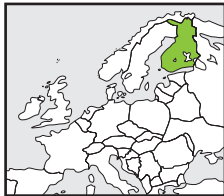
15 Meyers, Nathaniel, “Africa’s North Korea: Inside Eritrea’s Open-Air Prison,” *Foreign Policy*, (New York: August 2010), <www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/21/africas_north_korea?page=0,0>.

16 Kibreab, G., “The Eritrean Diaspora, the War of Independence, Post-Conflict (Re)-construction and Democratisation” in Johansson Dahre, Ulf, (ed) *The Role of Diasporas in Peace, Democracy and Development in the Horn of Africa* (Lund: Lund University, 2007), p. 99.

17 Assena.com, *335 Refugees Perished in the Mediterranean Sea*, April 11 2007, <news.assena.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3671:breaking-news-330-&catid=1&Itemid=44>.

18 Cobbett, W., *Tunisia, Egypt, Libya ... Why Eritrea Won't be Next*, (2011), <www.bigbrotherwatch.org.uk/home/2011/02/tunisia-egypt-libya-why-eritrea-wont-be-next.html>.

Politics of sustainability



The country needs to recognize that there are no easy and sustainable technological fixes. Reducing energy consumption and the ecological footprint can be started by passing a climate act for cutting emissions annually by 5%. It is time to redefine the sustainable development agenda beyond narrowly interpreted State and business interests. The sustainability agenda can be used by social movements to pressure governments and companies successfully. It is time for an open discussion on the fundamental issues of well-being, equality and development, including forsaking the unending quest for material growth.

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In 2002 then Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen defined the Finnish approach to sustainability as follows: "Whereas the Brundtland report was focusing on needs of present and future generations, Finland is focusing on possibilities".¹ Social and environmental movements, however, argue that this "possibilities" approach has led to a narrow understanding of sustainability. While Finland wants to see itself as a global sustainability problem solver, the country's track record in this regard is far from convincing.

Finland is showing growing interest in understanding well-being in new ways and to supplement Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with other statistics in the national accounting system. Social movements and scholars have proposed the introduction of the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), and the Government has agreed that something of this sort is needed.² While GDP measures only economic growth, the GPI distinguishes good growth from undesirable growth. As the costs of negative issues are subtracted, resource depletion and the costs of criminality and pollution are counted as negative.³ This indicator emphasizes equal possibilities for everyone to fulfill their needs and the money spent on education.

Setbacks in sustainable development

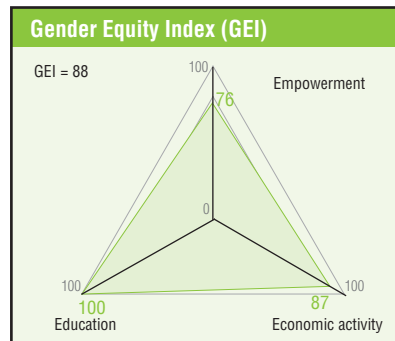
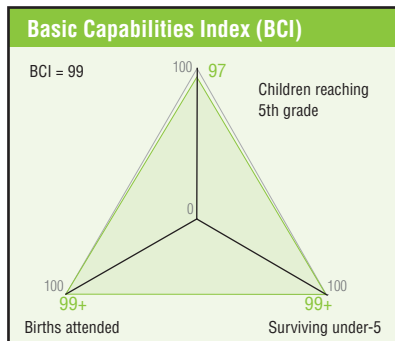
In the case of Finland, the GPI brings in an unpleasant surprise: aggregate GPI-measured well-being rose up to the late 1980s, but has decreased drastically since 1990 in spite of strong economic growth in the period 1995-2008.⁴ The explanation for this is that economic growth was resource intensive and benefits were more unequally distributed than previously. The GPI therefore suggests that Finland has actually regressed during the period in which the sustainable development agenda was established.

1 Speech of PM Paavo Lipponen, chair of the Finnish Commission for Sustainable Development, (2002). The Report of the Brundtland Commission, *Our Common Future*, published in 1987 focuses on the change of politics needed to achieve sustainable development.

2 Government of Finland, *Programme 2010*, (Helsinki: 2010).

3 J. Talberth, C. Cobb and N. Slattery, "A Tool for Sustainable Development. Redefining Progress", in *The Genuine Progress Indicator 2006*, (Oakland, California: 2006).

4 V. Ylikahri (ed), *Onnellisuusastolous* (Helsinki: Visio, 2010).



Another useful sustainability indicator is the ecological footprint which highlights the human impacts on the global ecosystem. Based on a combination of CO₂ emissions and land use indicators, the footprint is compared to the planet's renewal capacity. Finland has been consistently among or near the top-10 countries with the highest footprint per person, and as of 2007, the most recent data available, ranks 12th out of 199 countries. If everyone on earth consumed like an average Finn, with a footprint area of 6 hectares per capita, we would need three planets to live on instead of one. Some environmental and social movements are therefore seeking to place the political target of planned de-growth or negative material growth in the global North at the core of the sustainable development agenda and the Rio+20 conference.

Energy policies in the quest for sustainability

Energy policies are a key area of sustainable development. In Finland the energy use per capita is comparatively high. This is somewhat mitigated by a positive record in utilizing biomass waste from the pulp and paper industry for energy production. In 2010 renewable energies (mostly biomass) accounted for 25% of all primary energy consumption.⁵

Recently Finnish energy policy has refocused on nuclear energy. The country is considered a forerunner in a worldwide nuclear renaissance since the Parliament made core decisions for building two new nuclear power plants in 2010.⁶ If built, these plants will lead to energy production exceeding many estimates of consumption needs. Finland will thus either export nuclear energy or further strengthen its posi-

tion as a European base for energy-intensive industry. It is important to stress that, although the nuclear accidents following the tsunami in Japan have now somewhat altered the tone of political parties, until then, safety concerns and social and environmental problems with uranium mining in countries of the global South have been largely ignored.

As part of the nuclear power decision the Government announced a renewable energy "package." However, close reading reveals that with this Finland is only able to fulfill the legally binding targets within the European Union. Environmentalists have criticized the country for trying to get Finnish peat accepted as a slowly renewable energy source, a position rejected by the European Union. From a climate perspective peat is even worse than burning coal and its renewal lasts for hundreds of years, while peat-land mining is environmentally problematic.

The Government argues that its energy policies are sustainable, with "renewable" peat and "low-carbon" nuclear. There is little emphasis on energy saving and efficiency in Finland's energy policies, which serve short term economic interests. Also, environmental researchers and activists argue that a decentralized renewable energy solution would reduce environmental impacts and risks, while also increasing local well-being if employment is considered.⁷ A recent report commissioned by Friends of the Earth argues the country could realistically phase out coal and nuclear power without drastic effects, thus fulfilling its share of the global climate challenge.

5 Finnish energy statistics, <www.motiva.fi/en>

6 See <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_renaissance>.

7 P. Lund, *The link between political decision-making and energy options: Assessing future role of renewable energy and energy efficiency in Finland* (2007).

Indigenous peoples' rights

A conflict over sustainability in relation to indigenous peoples' rights has surfaced in the form of an ongoing dispute in Northern Finland over land use and forests between the State and indigenous Sámi.⁸ Finland has failed to ratify the ILO-169 convention which would guarantee land rights to the Sámi who claim a historical right to nomadic reindeer herding. From a global perspective, this is a regrettable shortcoming for the realization of indigenous peoples' rights.

Conflicts over Lapland or Sámi forests began in the 1990s as Finnish multinational pulp and paper companies such as Stora Enso bought wood from the State logging company, including from the few remaining intact natural forests. Sámi livelihoods were jeopardized because of threats to reindeer winter grazing, which relies on ground and tree lichen only present in old forests.⁹

After Sámi reindeer herders and Greenpeace International directed an international campaign against Stora Enso and its paper buyers, as the company was about to lose its reputation and its position as an investment target for several ethical investment funds, logging in the Sámi forests stopped and negotiations began. In 2009 and 2010, over 80% of the disputed areas were protected or exempted from logging. However, increasing disruptive tourism flows and mining concessions, supported by the State, are now threatening reindeer herding. Legal recognition of Sámi rights by Finland has not proceeded.

Shifts in development policy

Finnish Official Development Assistance (ODA) has risen gradually in the past few years and in 2010 reached 0.55% of GDP (projected to be 0.58 in 2011). Most political parties have committed themselves to reaching the UN target of 0.7% of GDP by 2015.¹⁰ However, the current practice of counting climate funding for developing countries as ODA undermines the integrity of ODA commitments and reduces trust in the multilateral climate negotiations.

Finnish development policy made a marked shift in 2007 by emphasizing sustainable development.¹¹ However, it also introduced guidelines such as: "Finland has know-how and technology that meets the needs of developing countries."¹² The Ministry for Employment and the Economy wants ODA to promote Finnish competitiveness and create employment and new markets for Finnish companies. This implies a renewed push in knowledge services and technology from Finnish companies with ODA funds.

This line of thinking has led to a significant shift in Finnish development cooperation towards water, forestry and energy related projects, where Finland

is thought to have a competitive advantage. But the question remains whether Finnish forest knowledge is useful to export to the tropics. The self-interested emphasis also raises questions about the ownership of the partner countries. Poverty reduction targets are being pushed to the background, and the shifts imply unpredictability in development cooperation, making it less sustainable.¹³

Finnish companies in the Global South

In addition to ODA, the Government officially measures its global sustainability by the total amount of foreign direct investments by Finnish multinational corporations.¹⁴ Currently there are several examples of key Finnish companies claiming to be world leaders in sustainability establishing large scale eucalyptus monocultures (Stora Enso, UPM) and palm oil plantations (Neste Oil) in the global South, contributing to displacement and large scale land grabbing.

Although it has received several awards for its business ethics and sustainability worldwide, Neste Oil, a Finnish oil company, was voted the most unsustainable company in the world at the 2011 Public Eye Awards. The company is majority State-owned and has the strategic target of becoming world leader in what it calls "green, second-generation sustainable bio-fuels".¹⁵ It recently announced the opening of two of the world's biggest palm oil based bio-fuel refineries, with a total capacity of 2 million tons annually,¹⁶ whose main sources of palm oil are from Malaysia and Indonesia.¹⁷ The demand for palm oil is driving land conversion and deforestation in peat-land rain forest, arguably the world's most concentrated carbon stock. These forests are also socially important as home of forest peoples and important biodiversity hotspots.¹⁸

Neste Oil claims it will buy raw material solely from certified palm oil plantations by 2015. The total land area needed for plantations to supply its refineries is reported to be 700,000 hectares. Research has established that even the indirect effects of rising palm oil demand is driving tropical deforestation.¹⁹ Although Neste Oil has argued that its raw material for palm oil can be traced, it has not disclosed the sources of its supplies, a worrying tendency in the corrupt-ridden context of Indonesia. Neste Oil's only named source of palm oil in Malaysia was convicted in 2010 for not respecting indigenous land rights and converting tropical forest.

This example shows that the drive to produce "low-carbon fuels" in the name of sustainable development is not only ecologically and socially problematic but can also undermine efforts to create sustainable ways of life in many parts of the developing world. Total greenhouse gas emissions for palm oil bio-fuel from Indonesia is probably higher than for fossil fuels.

Conclusion

The concept of sustainable development harbours great potential for change, but narrowly understood it is at best unhelpful and at worst destructive. Talk of synergies and win-win opportunities is hiding on-going conflicts. The social, ecological and economic spheres cannot be meaningfully separated when talking about marginalized groups who depend on the environment for their livelihood. Moreover, in the Finnish debate the ecological dimension of sustainable development is normally not understood to include biodiversity or the livelihood-sustaining capacity of an ecosystem, and instead the focus is crudely on measurable carbon emissions.

The Brundtland report of 1987 emphasized respecting ecological limits and meeting human needs. These questions, contrary to the present sustainability debates, involve inherently political issues of burden sharing and justice. Who is allowed to produce emissions, use what natural resources, and on what terms? The sustainability agenda and its focus on synergies sometimes inhibit us from seeing these political questions.²⁰

Finland needs to accept that there are no easy and sustainable technological fixes in sight: we cannot offset our climate emissions or our responsibilities elsewhere. It must start by fulfilling its global commitments to ODA without misleading figures. Reducing its ecological footprint can start by passing an act to cut emissions annually by 5% as demanded by social movements.

As the case of the Northern Finland forests shows, the sustainability agenda can be used by social movements to pressure governments and companies successfully. Currently Neste Oil and its palm oil plantations are at the centre of attention. By highlighting individual cases, social movements can work towards the goal of enforcing stricter rules on companies.

In the lead up to the Rio+20 conference, social movements all over the world are placing their hopes on the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability, co-chaired by the president of Finland, Tarja Halonen. The worldwide challenge is to create trust among the peoples and political will to build pathways to genuinely sustainable futures. From the Northern countries, including Finland, this calls for an open discussion on the fundamental issues of well-being, equality and development, including forsaking the unending quest for material growth. ■

8 See K. Mustonen and T. Mustonen, *Drowning Reindeer, Drowning Homes* (Helsinki: Snowchange, 2010).

9 See documentary movie *Last Yoik in Sami Forests*.

10 Ministry of Environment, *Facts on Environment Protection, November*, (2010).

11 Ministry for Foreign Affairs, *Finland's Development Policy Programme*, (2010).

12 Ibid., *Development Policy Forestry Guidelines*, (Helsinki: 2009).

13 Finnish Development Committee, *The State of Finland's Development Policy 2009*, (Helsinki: 2009).

14 Finnish Commission for Sustainability Web Page, *Criteria for sustainability*, <www.environment.fi/download.asp?contentid=120039&lan=en>.

15 Neste Oil, *Neste Oil Annual Report 2009*.

16 Ibid., *Neste Oil celebrates the grand opening of its ISCC-certified renewable diesel plant in Singapore*, (Neste Oil Press, 8 March 2011).

17 Neste Oil, op cit.

18 United Nations Environmental Programme, *The Last Stand of the Orangutan*, (2010).

19 C. Bowyer, *Anticipated Indirect Land Use Change Associated with Expanded Use of Biofuels and Bioliqids in the EU*. Institute of European Environmental Policy, (2010), <www.ieep.eu>.

20 J. Pasanen, and U. Marko, *Sustainable Futures*, Ministry for Foreign Affairs Publication series, <www.sustainablefutures.fi>

We need less inequality and a little more fraternity



The world economic crisis hit France's society quite hard. The economy has recovered somewhat, but unemployment and inequality have worsened and society has become more competitive to the detriment of values like fraternity and solidarity. The country also has pressing environmental problems including air and water pollution and a loss of ecosystems. The State has made commitments to pursue sustainable development, and these should now be re-examined not just from the national or European perspective but in terms of their impact in the world. The country's presidential elections are looming and this is an opportunity for civil society organizations to make their voices heard in the debate.

Secours-Catholique / Catholic AID

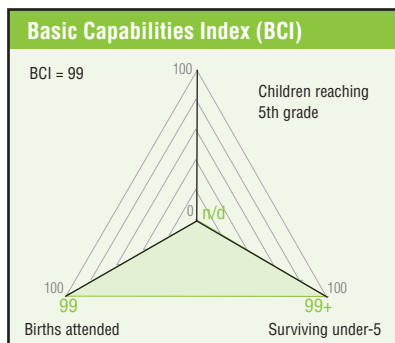
Grégoire Niaudet

France has been seriously hurt by the world economic crisis. Its social protection system has to some extent attenuated the negative effects but unemployment, which is what the French are most concerned about, has increased considerably and now stands at 10% of the economically active population. Public debt has also risen to unhealthy levels as a result of the country's long-running imbalance in foreign trade and the fact that its production is rather uncompetitive. The social consequences are that the most fragile sectors of the population are sliding towards poverty, and inequality is becoming more marked because the richer sectors have been relatively less affected.

In the preamble to the 1946 Constitution, social rights are established as the prerogatives of all citizens. The State's social security apparatus, which has a welfare mechanism and a system to finance it through taxation, was designed to provide uniform benefits for all members of society. At the heart of this redistribution model, the main means of access to rights was work. However, since the 1970s, when large scale unemployment first emerged, the welfare state has been in an ongoing crisis that is not only financial but also to do with its legitimacy and efficiency. The horizontal redistribution system is less effective when an increasing portion of the population is unable to contribute to the social insurance system. People today are uncertain about the future and this is putting more pressure not only on workers as a class but also on individuals. Work is no longer synonymous with well-being. In addition, people are under added pressure and stress because they have to be more productive and efficient, and this is making the world of work very hard, exclusive and demanding.

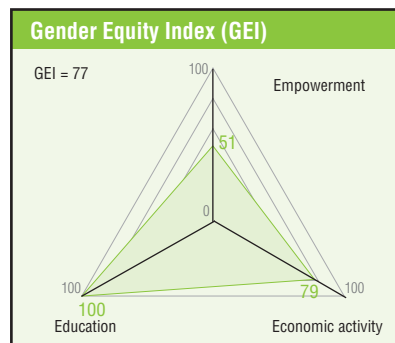
Increasing inequality

There was an economic upturn in 2011 but the benefits of this new growth have gone only to the richer strata of society and inequality is getting worse. A report by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) that came out in April 2011 showed that in the period 2004 to 2007 higher incomes increased more quickly than those of the



population as a whole. For 90% of the people, income increased by a little under 10%, but the 1% of the population whose income is above 84,500 euros (USD 115,798) enjoyed a rise of from 20 to 40%. If wealth is to be redistributed more fairly there will have to be tax reform, and this will have to include taxing capital and reducing or suppressing certain fiscal niches.

The reasons why inequality is increasing in the developed countries are clear: taxation systems have been changed and the burden on the very rich has been lightened, incomes in the world of finance have expanded enormously and production has been reorganized. The current crisis is accentuating these trends because, in order to maintain the financial



sector's prerogatives, States have absorbed most of the costs by making huge loans to the banks. The other side of the coin is that governments in many countries are now implementing austerity policies, and these weigh heavily on the most vulnerable sectors of society and exacerbate inequality.

The solutions that have been put forward such as social development –since 30 years ago– and sustainable development –for the last 15 years– are not sufficiently strong to solve these problems in the current context. The social vision of sustainable development must be based on a series of priorities including reaffirming basic rights, asking just what our needs really are, co-operation on the part of the actors involved, and

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Some of the most degraded ecosystems in France are the coastal regions. Pollution in general, and that caused by heavy metals and hydrocarbons in particular, has damaged flora and fauna in coastal waters, especially seabirds, molluscs and algae. More than half of France's coastal areas have been urbanized, which makes for an even greater loss of biodiversity, and in fact there are nearly no coasts left that have not been affected by human beings.

Another serious problem that cannot be ignored is the fact that water is becoming increasingly scarce and that its quality is deteriorating. Large scale agriculture consumes some 44% of the water available, and the massive amounts of fertilizer this sector uses is seriously polluting the country's underground water stocks. In the future more plants to produce potable water and more waste-processing facilities will have to be built.

One quarter of France is forest. It is the biggest wooded area in the European Union, but this biosphere is under threat from various kinds of environmental degradation most of which stem from air pollution.

WORLD LEVEL COMMITMENTS

The world has changed completely since the Rio Conference of 1992. Economics and finance have become totally globalized and two parallel trends have emerged, the economic take-off of emerging countries and a crisis in the system that mainly affects industrialised countries and has economic, social, ecological and political aspects. In this context it is becoming increasingly clear that we need a common system for managing the planet so as to defend ourselves against climate change, protect biodiversity and establish more equitable access to natural resources.

- The first priorities are to reduce inequality and eradicate poverty. It is evident that even while countries may achieve economic growth, they have been unable to make good on their commitments to pursue the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Inequality is getting worse and a billion people on the planet are going hungry.
- There will have to be a new system of social protection that benefits all the people in the world. The problem is that industry has to

be competitive but economic globalisation is making for competitive selection between workers in different countries and eroding social protection systems, where such systems exist.

- Another priority is the international fight against the health crisis because chronic illnesses are on the increase everywhere. They are taking the place of the infectious diseases of the last century, a phenomenon known as "epidemiological transition". This crisis is hitting not only society but also countries' economies and it is putting great pressure on health insurance systems, where such systems exist.

Economic globalization in a context of deregulated competition translates into increasing inequality. This takes a variety of forms including competitive selection among farmers in unequal conditions, the economic collapse of regions and States that have lost their industries, income gaps that in most cases are widening between different population sectors, inequality in access to health and

care services, the marginalization of some population groups, and the weakening of social protection systems everywhere. This widespread trend towards the degradation of some social groups raises political and ethical questions, but it also constitutes a considerable burden for countries' economies because they have to provide support to counterbalance inequalities and help people in crisis situations to return to active life, and this is increasingly difficult. Unfortunately the costs of these social ills are indirect, which means they can be passed on to future generations or left for other actors to deal with, but these other actors are the community, and at the end of the day those who bear the burden are the taxpayers.

The notions of sustainable development and social development agree in that they seek a similar balance, they are both concerned with the same social issues and they share common objectives. If we are to make the transition to a better future for all we will have to negotiate a new social contract that involves sharing responsibilities, affirming human rights, and renewing solidarity with others and with future generations.

that everyone should make a contribution so as to enrich local projects and in a broader sense to help renew local public policies.

In the context of the crisis these ideas should be the basis for defining sustainable social development priorities. The way forward has to be to adopt a holistic vision of social, environmental and economic problems, to redistribute wealth and to give everyone a reasonable share. Today's problems in society and democracy should evoke responses built around new collective perspectives and a plan for a shared future that will make sense for every individual. In the sustainable development model each person will have a

role in helping to construct the future and will be provided with the means to develop his or her own talents in a society that has a strong relational dimension.

The worsening of inequality, the degradation of social protection systems, and the individualisation of risks and uncertainty about the future are combining to make everyone into a rugged individualist because there is no clear strategy as to how we can act collectively. The response needed to meet the challenges of climate change is a collective commitment, and this involves completely re-thinking our patterns of consumption and our ways of life so that society as a whole can move towards sustainable development.

France will have presidential elections in the first half of 2012 and it currently occupies the presidency of the G20, and this means civil society organizations have an opportunity to make a contribution to the debate. This is a chance to open up new perspectives, to reformulate the aims and strategies of economic development and social progress, and to change course in society towards a new model geared to seeing social and ecological matters in a different way. Social justice and social cohesion will have to be rebuilt, not as a luxury that we may or may not pursue but as the way to overcome the world crisis. ■

Great expectations, limited outcome



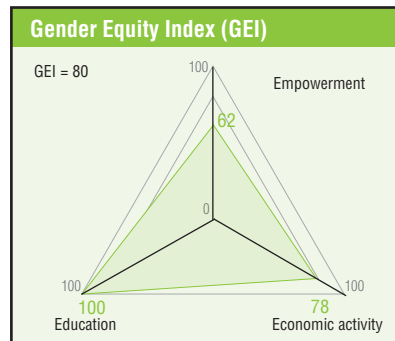
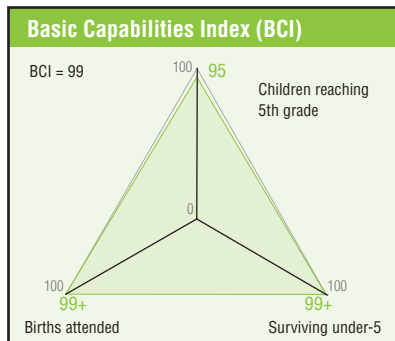
Sustainable development in general seems to be widely accepted in the country. A more detailed look however shows that there is still some resistance. Climate change is not properly addressed, and renewable energy sources are still reliant on subsidies from the Government and consumers. Moreover, these subsidies are being reduced, particularly for solar power, while the operating life of nuclear plants is being extended. In addition, the budget item for economic compensation to countries affected by climate change has been deleted from the 2011 draft budget. Meanwhile, the gap between rich and poor is growing and social policies are not fully implemented.

Social Watch Germany Uwe Kerkow

The concept of sustainability is now firmly embedded in German politics, science and research. The German Council for Sustainable Development's primary tasks,¹ for example, are to contribute to the advancement of the National Sustainability Strategy,² to propose projects and fields of action, and to position sustainable development as a key issue of public concern. Also, a National Sustainability Strategy, adopted in 2002, contains numerous references to the social dimensions and implications of sustainability, but it has not been updated since it was adopted.

In 2009, the German Council for Sustainable Development conducted a Peer Review which arrived at a somewhat ambivalent conclusion about the implementation of the sustainability concept: "At the level of ideas the concept of sustainable development has been widely accepted in general terms. But when broken down to specific issues and at sectoral levels there appears to be much more reluctance, resistance and mistrust."³ It adds: "The biggest single potential mismatch between objectives for 2050 and the state we are in now lies in the field of climate change."⁴

In the Coalition Agreement between the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CSU) and the Free Democratic Party (FDP) a section on "Climate protection, energy and the environment" notes that policy is shaped by the principle of sustainability. It includes a target to "limit global warming to a maximum of two degrees centigrade" and "continuously expand the role of renewable energy," while increasing "assistance to developing countries for combating climate change and coping with its consequences."⁵



Sustainability in practice: the energy sector

The status of Germany's sustainable development policy is most apparent in the field of energy policy. On one hand, German industry is a formidable player in the energy sector, notably in system design and construction; on the other, renewable energy sources are still reliant on subsidies from government and consumers.

The Parliament's decision in late October 2010 to extend the operating life of nuclear power plants marked a radical break with previous energy policy.⁶ In 2002, Parliament had voted to phase out the use of nuclear power over the long term, to limit the remaining operating life of existing plants to a maximum of 32 years, and to build no new plants. The 2010 decision extended the plants' operating life by an average of 12 years,⁷ and was implemented even though a solution for the final storage of nuclear waste is not in sight⁸ and the majority of Germans have consistently opposed nuclear power for decades.⁹

At the same time, subsidies for renewable energy sources are being reduced, particularly for solar power,¹⁰ despite firm evidence that their use reduces power generation costs.¹¹ The German Advisory

Council on the Environment has concluded that a 100% renewable electricity supply is possible by 2050.¹² In response to the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan in early 2011, the Government shut down seven nuclear reactors and announced that it intends to speed up the nuclear phase-out.¹³ But whether this will result in a genuine change of policy remains to be seen.

Sustainability in practice: the social dimension

A holistic sustainability strategy must also take into account the social dimension. The most significant social policy debate in Germany in 2010 followed a decision by the Federal Constitutional Court on 9 February 2010, which said that welfare benefits must be calculated "in a transparent and appropriate manner according to actual need, that is, in line with reality" and that "the assessment of benefits must be justifiable on the basis of reliable figures and plausible methods of calculation." The judgement forced policy-makers to review the welfare benefits system.¹⁴

1 See: <www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de>.

2 Federal Government, *Perspectives for Germany: Our Strategy for Sustainable Development*, (2002), <www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/fileadmin/user_upload/English/pdf/Perspectives_for_Germany.pdf>.

3 German Council for Sustainable Development, *Peer Review on Sustainable Development Policies in Germany*, (Berlin: 2009), p.15, <www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/dokumente/studien/studien/peer-review-report-nov-2009>.

4 Ibid., p. 21.

5 *Growth, Education, Unity. The coalition agreement between the CDU, CSU and FDP for the 17th legislative period*, p. 17, <www.cdu.de/en/doc/091215-koalitionsvertrag-2009-2013-englisch.pdf>.

6 Federal Government, "Energy policy legislation," (Berlin: 2010), <www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2010/10/2010-10-01-energiekonzept-bt.html>.

7 Ibid, <www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/StatischeSeiten/Breg/Energiekonzept/energiekonzept-final.html>, p.18.

8 Ibid.

9 Zeit Online, *Schon wieder Ärger mit dem Volk*, (2011), <www.zeit.de/2010/30/Atomausstieg>.

10 Tagesschau.de, *Solarförderung wird weiter gekürzt*, (2011), <www.tagesschau.de/inland/solkuerzung100.html>.

11 Energie und Klima-News, *Erneuerbare verbilligen den Strom*, (2011), <www.heise.de/tp/blogs/2/149246>.

12 German Advisory Council on the Environment, *Wege zur 100% erneuerbaren Stromversorgung Kurzfassung für Entscheidungsträger*, (2011), <www.umweltrat.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/02_Sondergutachten/2011_Sondergutachten_100Prozent_Erneuerbare_KurzfassungEntscheid.pdf>.

13 Federal Government, *Energiewende beschleunigen*, (2011), <www.bundesregierung.de/nn_1021804/Content/DE/StatischeSeiten/Breg/Energiekonzept/07-energiewende-beschleunigen.html>.

14 Diakonie, *Sachgerechte Ermittlung des Existenzminimums*, p.1, <www.diakonie-portal.de/presse/zum-herunterladen/Kurzuebersicht%20Diakonie-Studie.pdf/at_download/file>.

A study by Diakonie, the Protestant Church welfare organization, calculates that a 10-30% increase in welfare benefits is needed in order to comply with the Court's ruling.¹⁵ Instead, a decision was taken in February 2011 to increase benefits by around 1.5%, with a further increase of less than 1% planned for 2012.¹⁶

At the same time, the gap between rich and poor has widened. A 2010 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report¹⁷ states: "the distribution of gross wages widened significantly after 1995" and "the share of jobless households has increased [...] to 19%, the highest level across the OECD area." It adds that social transfers "are less targeted to lower income groups than in other countries."

Sustainability in practice: development policy

According to figures published by the OECD in early April 2011, German Official Development Assistance (ODA) increased slightly in 2010 – but not enough to bring it into line with the European Union's timetable to raise ODA to 0.56% of gross national income (GNI). In 2010, the country spent 0.38% of GNI on development assistance – and has therefore stalled at the 2008 level. What's more, in 2009 it actually decreased to 0.35%. In absolute terms, the country has fallen from second (2008) to fourth place in the international ranking of donor countries and is trailing behind the United States, France and the United Kingdom, while its ODA spending of just 0.38% of GNI ranks it 13th out of 23 Western donor countries.¹⁸

The Government is not expected to substantially increase development spending. In fact, according to its medium-term financial planning, ODA spending will be cut by more than half a billion euros by 2015.¹⁹

Moreover, a change of strategy will change the allocation of funds, with bilateral development cooperation taking precedence over multilateral cooperation. There are also plans to cut budget support and reduce the number of partner countries from 58 to 50. However, the centrepiece of this conservative-liberal policy restructuring is the forging of closer links with the private sector. To that end, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development's (BMZ) budget for "development partnerships with the private sector" has already been increased by 25% in 2010 to the present figure of 60 million euros.²⁰

There are shortfalls in Germany's climate change financing as well. According to non governmental organizations *Terre des hommes* and *Welthungerhilfe*, Germany should provide around 7.6 billion euros to the costs of climate change mitigation and adaptation in the global South.²¹ This would represent a more than threefold increase in official spending on global climate protection. In advance of the Climate Conference in Copenhagen, the Government pledged to contribute EUR 420 million a year to the EU's fast-start climate funding for developing countries of 2.4 billion euros a year for 2010-2012. Under the Copenhagen Accord, this should constitute "new and additional" funding. Germany has failed to honour this however, ear-

marking just 70 million euros in the 2010 budget. Moreover, this item has been deleted from the 2011 draft budget entirely.²²

The unwillingness to make a substantive contribution to climate protection is epitomized by the Government's refusal to contribute to Ecuador's 2010 Yasuni Initiative²³ to "leave the oil in the soil" – that is, to refrain from tapping the oil reserves in the Yasuni National Park in the Amazon basin. In exchange, Ecuador is seeking compensation from the international community amounting to some USD 1.5 billion, equivalent to around 50% of the revenues forfeited as a result of the decision not to drill.²⁴

Outlook

In response to the global economic and financial crisis and in advance of the Rio+20 Conference in 2012, Germany's sustainable development debate is steadily gaining momentum. In November 2010, Parliament established a Study Commission on Growth, Well-being and Quality of Life – Paths to Sustainable Economic Activity and Social Progress in the Social Market Economy. Its purpose is to "consider the role of growth in the economy and society, develop a holistic measure of wellbeing and progress, and explore the opportunities and limits for decoupling growth, resource consumption and technological progress."²⁵ It remains to be seen whether this group of experts will provide significant impetus for the progress towards more sustainability that is so urgently required. ■

15 Ibid., p. 3.

16 See Federal Government, *Bildungspaket für Kinder*, (2011), <www.bundesregierung.de/nn_774/Content/DE/Magazine/01MagazinSozialesFamilie/03/s-c-bildungspaket-fuer-kinder.html>.

17 OECD, *Growing Unequal?*, (2008), <www.oecd.org/dataoecd/45/42/41527936.pdf>; OECD, *Country note Germany*, (2008), <www.oecd.org/dataoecd/45/27/41525386.pdf>.

18 Terre des hommes, *Trotz leichten Anstiegs verfehlt Deutschland erneut Entwicklungshilfeziel*, (2011), <www.tdh.de/content/presse/pressemeldungen/detail.htm?&view=detail&id=343&year=2011>.

19 Finance Ministry, *Eckwertebeschluss zum Regierungsentwurf des Bundeshaushalts 2012 und zum Finanzplan 2011 bis 2015*, (2011), <www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/nn_124500/DE/Wirtschaft_und_Verwaltung/Finanz_und_Wirtschaftspolitik/Bundeshausalt/Bundeshausalt__2012/16032011-Eckwertebeschluss.templateId=raw.property=publicationFile.pdf>.

20 Terre des hommes, *welt hunger hilfe, The Reality of Development Aid*, (2010), p. 6, <www.tdh.de/content/materialien/download/download_wrapper.php?id=319>.

21 Ibid., (2009), p. 34, <www.tdh.de/content/materialien/download/download_wrapper.php?id=305>.

22 Ibid., (2010), p. 23.

23 Federal Government, *Regierungspressekonferenz vom 17 September*, (2010), <www.bundesregierung.de/nn_774/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2010/09/2010-09-17-regpk.html>; see: <www.klimaretter.info/umwelt/hintergrund/6848-deutschland-kein-geld-fuer-yasuni>.

24 See Amerika 21, (August 2010), <amerika21.de/meldung/2010/08/7430/itt-yasuni-vertrag>.

25 Deutscher Bundestag, *Enquete-Kommission "Wachstum, Wohlstand, Lebensqualität - Wege zu nachhaltigem Wirtschaften und gesellschaftlichem Fortschritt in der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft"*, (2011), <www.bundestag.de/bundestag/ausschuesse17/gremien/enquete/wachstum/index.jsp>.

Climate change policies and citizen's rights



Addressing climate change is critical for sustainable development in the country. At the national level, efforts have been made to comply with the decisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), but bilateral and multilateral funding opportunities affect the extent to which the real concerns of citizens are addressed. Donor consultations on adaptation and mitigation of climate change are constrained by a neo-liberal economic framework that limits the space for a citizen-led process. Civil society organizations must intensify efforts to ensure that efforts to address climate change promote social justice, human security, gender equality, and sustainable development.

NETRIGHT

Like other African states, Ghana is already experiencing the impact of climate change: hotter weather, reduced or increased seasonal rainfall, changes in rainfall patterns, flooding, sea surges, tidal waves and a rise in sea-level causing inundation and coastal erosion. The result is a reduction in food security, increased transmission of vector and water-borne diseases, significant economic losses through weather crises and the displacement of the population.

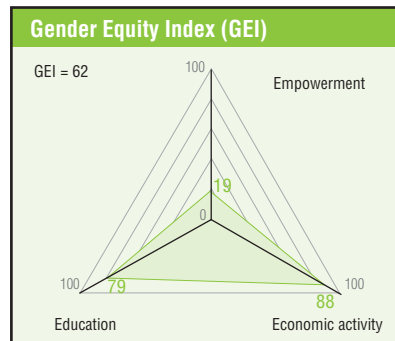
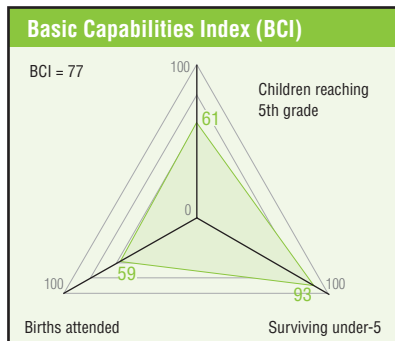
However, since the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Conference on Sustainable Development, after which Ghana adopted the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and in 1997, the Kyoto Protocol, the Government has engaged with the issue of climate change at all levels, from global to local.

Institutional and policy initiatives

Having ratified all the Rio Conventions on the environment--the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Ghana established several national institutions as policy focal points, including the Ministry of Environment Science and Technology (MEST), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Ghana Environment and Climate Change Authority (GECCA).

However, the uncritical stance of these institutions towards the UNFCCC and KP decisions is problematic. Ghana was among the first 23 countries in Africa that associated itself with the Copenhagen Accord in 2009 in spite of the fact that African countries had developed a collective position at Copenhagen against the Accord. The Government took that position ostensibly to access the various funding windows available for adaptation and mitigation measures on climate change. Nonetheless, since then, Ghana has developed a National Adaptation Strategy, set up a National Climate Change Committee and developed a discussion paper on a National Climate Change Policy Framework (NCCPF).

In its National Communication Assessments (NCA), the Government's Environmental Protection Agency has provided useful information about the effect of various climate change scenarios on different economic sectors and the implications for



people's livelihoods. The analysis, however, of the implications for women is premised on women's vulnerability rather than women's human rights or human development.¹ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its assessment of countries developing National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs) has said:

"In general NAPAs portray women as victims without the skills that would allow them to become involved in negotiations of strategic planning. Most of these plans do not even recognize that women with the knowledge they have can make a contribution to adaptation processes and that they should be a focal group for adaptation programmes".²

The NCCPF discussion paper is another concern. Its three objectives – promoting low carbon growth; effective adaptation to climate change; and social development – seem laudable, but their articulation and the policy implications leave much to be desired. Similar to earlier proposals, the NCCPF is located in a framework of market-oriented options, such as carbon-trading schemes including Reducing Emis-

sions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). It focuses on financial schemes available to developing countries that demonstrate compliance with laid down market-driven criteria on adaptation and mitigation.

Civil society engagement

Whereas the NCCPF has been based on broad consultation with a range of actors in Ghana including civil society groups such as Friends of the Earth and ABANTU for Development, the issues of concern to these groups have not been sufficiently articulated in the discussion paper. A case in point is the gender issue which is discussed under the 'social development' objective of the NCCPF. While the document acknowledges the contribution of women and the need to address the risks they could face as a result of climate change, the policy prescription merely refers to the need for "measures such as social protection to smooth out inequities."³

Climate change

Data from 1960 to 2000 indicates a progressive rise in temperature and a decrease in mean annual rainfall in all agro-ecological zones.⁴ Estimates show that temperature will continue to rise on average "about 0.6 degrees C., 2.0 degrees C. and 3.9 degrees C. by the year 2020, 2050 and 2080

1 I. Dankelman, "Climate Change: Learning from Gender Analysis and Women's Experiences of Organising for Sustainable Development", in *Gender & Development*, Vol. 10 (2002):21-29; Dankelman, et al., "Gender, Climate Change and Human Security Lessons from Bangladesh, Ghana and Senegal," prepared by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) with ABANTU for Development in Ghana, ActionAid Bangladesh and ENDA in Senegal, (2008), <www.wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/hns-study-final-may-20-2008.pdf>.

2 UNDP, *Resource Guide on Gender and Climate*, (New York: 2009).

3 Ministry of Energy Science and Technology (MEST), *Ghana Goes for Green Growth: National Engagement on Climate Change*, (Accra: 2010), p. 13.

4 Modern Ghana, *Climate Change Ghana's Threat to Cocoa Production*, (22 August 2008), <www.modernghana.com/news/179906/1/climate-change-ghanas-threat-to-cocoa-production.html>.

Year	Forest Cover (Hectares)	Rate of Deforestation
1990	7,448,000	-
2000	6,094,000	-18.2%
2005	5,517,000	-9.5%
Annual Average		-1.8%

Source : Rainforest Alliance, 2006/FAO

respectively” in all agro-ecological zones except for the rainforest zone where rainfall may increase. Available data also shows a sea-level rise of 2.1mm per year over the last 30 years, indicating a rise of 5.8cm, 16.5cm and 34.5cm by 2020, 2050 and 2080 respectively.⁵

While 23% of the urban population and 51.6% of the rural population still live below the poverty line,⁶ it should be noted that data from the 2008 Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) shows that the number of extremely poor declined by 8.6 percentage points from 26.8% in 1998-99 to 18.2% in 2005-06.⁷ However, given the country's high dependence on agriculture and forestry, changing climate conditions have serious implications for the standard of living of women and men in those communities and could reverse that trend. There is already evidence that vital economic resources – the coastal zone, agriculture, and water – have been affected by climate change with adverse implications for women's rights, poverty, health and livelihoods. Those who live in communities with high poverty levels will be most negatively affected.

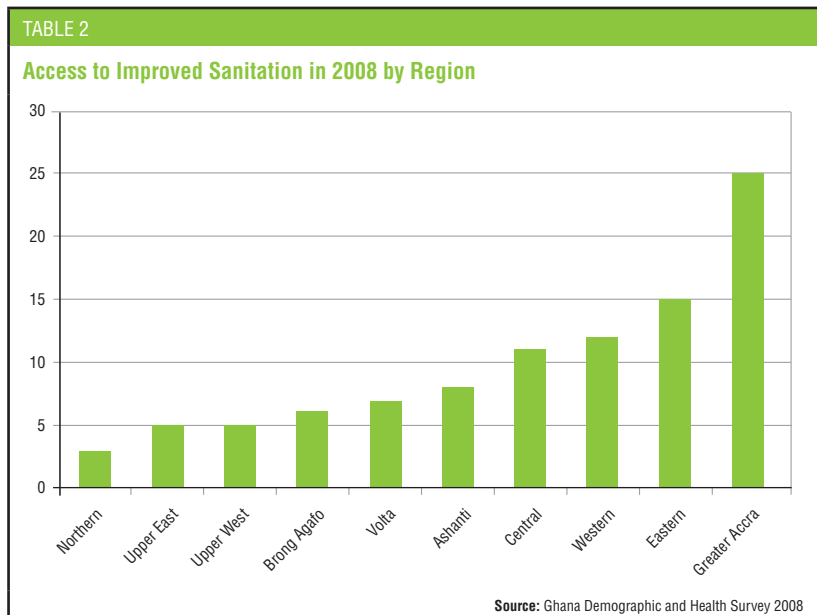
In the northern parts of the country, flooding in 2007 showed that the impact of climate change on development efforts is overwhelming. An estimated 317,000 persons were affected; 1,000 kilometres of roads were destroyed; 210 schools and health facilities were damaged; and 630 drinking water facilities were damaged or contaminated.

Since then, weather variability has continued to affect different societal groups and geographical locations, inhibiting efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs were incorporated into Ghana's Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS 1-2003-2005 and GPRS 11-2006-2009), but the impact of climate change already makes clear that Millennium Development Goal 7 (MDG-7) – en-

5 LWF Youth Blog, *Youth challenge leaders on climate change at UN*, (September 2007), <wfyouth.org/2007/09/25/youth-challenge-leaders-on-climate-change-at-un

6 Ghana's poverty line was set in 2006 based on calorie requirements for nutrition based poverty lines.

7 UNDP, *Human Development Report*, (Accra: 2007).



suring environmental sustainability – will not be met. Further, given the market-driven nature of Government policy to guide action on climate change, it is difficult to see how current trends can be reversed to achieve MDG-7.

The four agreed targets for MDG-7 are:

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015;
- Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving a significant reduction in the rate of loss by 2010;
- Halve the proportion of persons without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015;
- Achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

Regarding the indicator for the biodiversity target, the proportion of land area covered by forest, it is estimated that Ghana's forests declined by 8.5 percentage points between 1990 and 2005, from 32.7% to 24.2% (see Table 1). Forested area was estimated at 7,448,000 ha and has declined steadily each year to 5,517,000 ha in 2005.⁸ The continuous depletion of the country's forests has negative consequences for people's livelihoods, especially those of women and contributes to global warming. Another indicator measuring progress towards the

8 Ministry of Energy Science and Technology (MEST), *Ghana Goes for Green Growth: National Engagement on Climate Change*, (Accra: 2010).

achievement of MDG-7, “populations without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation”, is unlikely to be met by 2015. Available data from the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) shows that the national coverage for improved sanitation has increased 8.4 percentage points from 4% in 1993 to 12.4% in 2008.⁹ But there are wide regional variations in access to improved sanitation. The proportion of the population with access to improved sanitation in the Greater Accra and Eastern regions is above the national average of 12.4% with those in the Western and Central regions also close to the national average (see Figure 1). However, other regions including Ashanti and the Western regions were lower than the national average, while the three northern regions (Northern, Upper West and Upper East) with the worst experience of poverty are less likely to have access to improved sanitation facilities.¹⁰

Already faced with significant effects of climate change, the Government has established national institutions to meet the challenge. Its policy solutions, however, are not keeping pace with ecological deterioration and are compounded by a preference for market-driven solutions that do not articulate with sufficient sensitivity and specificity the issues of concern to civil society. ■

9 The Ghana Statistical Service and The Ghana Health Service, *The 2008 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey*, (Accra: 2008), <www.measuredhs.com/pubs/pdf/GF14/GF14.pdf>.

10 The rural areas in the three northern regions in Ghana are far behind the target for access to basic sanitation. See: National Development Planning Commission, *Ghana Millennium Development Goals 2007*, (UNDP, 2007).

Knocking on environmental death's doors



Historically, the Guatemalan economy has been structured around an extraction-led growth model. The result has been the impoverishment of the rural population and the degradation of the environment. The sugar cane industry, for example, has deepened deforestation which has led to the displacement of entire communities whose rights have been simply brushed aside by businesses in pursuit of profit and a State too timid to regulate them. Successive governments have evaded their responsibility to create institutions that protect the environment and meet people's needs. Civil society organizations must demand a greater share in decision-making and must urge the Government to abandon this exploitative and destructive economic model in favour of sustainable development.

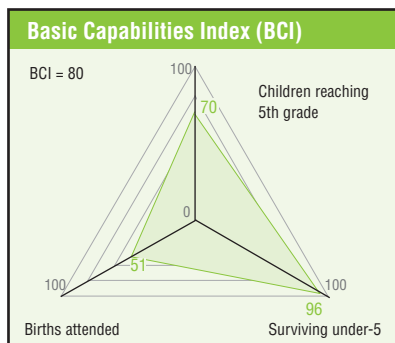
Coordinación de ONG Y Cooperativas de Guatemala
CONGCOOP

Norayda Ponce Sosa
Helmer Velásquez

Since the early 16th century, when it was conquered by Spain, Guatemala's economy has been based in agriculture and the intensive exploitation of the land by large estates through mono-cultivation for export and by small farms where peasants engage in subsistence and infra-subsistence production. In the last decade a new threat to the country's resources and biodiversity has emerged with the granting of licenses by the State to enterprises that prospect for minerals in most of the country. The exploitation of iron and gold deposits has spread chemicals such as cyanide, used in the gold industry, that cause irreparable damage to the country's water sources. These industries also consume large quantities of water, putting local communities' access to this resource in peril.

The power that these large enterprises have acquired stands in sharp contrast to shaky public institutions unable to control the industry's activities and promote an alternative model of sustainability. Present development models in Guatemala involve no long-term planning, have put the environment at risk and have plunged approximately half the country's population into poverty. In rural areas, 72% of the people live in poverty and 40%, in extreme poverty, while in indigenous communities 55% suffer extreme poverty.¹

The Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food, responsible for regulating and managing the environment, natural resources and agriculture, lack adequate financing and have little political weight in State decisions. In fact, the Government has almost no capacity to plan or control the agricultural or environmental sectors though these are the sectors on which Guatemala's economic, social and environmental sustainability largely depends. According to a Government report, Guatemala is "damaged socially and environmentally, and the main evidence of this is an increasingly serious breakdown of social

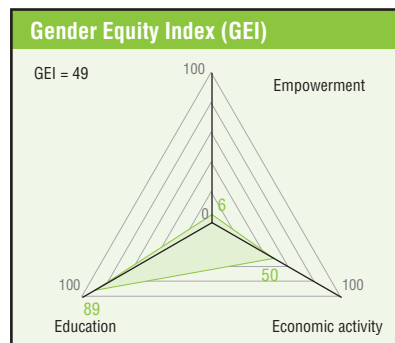


structures caused by the marginalization of large sectors of the population. This grim panorama makes the direct connection between the environment and poverty all too clear. The rural population is poorer now than in the past, when it had access to the fruits of nature."²

Unsustainability and the environment

The sugar cane industry, which devastates and flattens forests so the land can be planted with sugar cane, is just one example of how unsustainable the current model is. Based on the economic and political power of the big landowners, this industry has even managed to change the course of rivers so the water will be diverted to nourish their crops. The environmental result has been more frequent flooding in the winter and more droughts in the summer. Extensive sugar cane cultivation also causes higher levels of greenhouse gas emissions. "As part of the industrial process around 90-95% of the cane grown on more than 200,000 hectares is burned. Each hectare put to the torch releases 50 kilos of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which adds up to around 9,000 tonnes of this gas per year."³

Agriculture and the more recent extractive industries have exploited the forests without any serious effort at re-forestation, using the wood not only for construction but also as a fuel resource. As a result, the country's native forests have been all but annihilated. The deforestation rate is around 82,000 ha per year. If exploitation continues at this level, all



the country's native forests will have been wiped out by 2040.⁴

A very vulnerable land

The country is prone to earthquakes and violent storms owing to seismic activity along the Pacific Rim and its location on the Atlantic Ocean hurricane route. Moreover, a dry corridor runs across the central part of the country which is subject to drought and desertification. Climate change has intensified and worsened the effects of storms and drought.⁵

In 2010, Tropical Storm Agatha and the eruption of the Pacaya Volcano caused hundreds of deaths and approximately USD 950 million in material damage. Rural populations proved to be particularly vulnerable. The Government's lack of planning and long term vision and the unregulated exploitation of the environment creates a vicious circle in which each disaster leaves the country with serious problems which the next disaster only aggravates.

Sustainable development and rural development

The Guatemalan peasantry - often victims of government repression during the country's 36-year-long armed inner conflict and its aftermath - have more recently been negatively affected by structural adjustment measures and a newly implemented free trade regime.

On 30 April 2008 after a consultation process, the Alliance for Integrated Rural Development, made up of indigenous, peasant, environmentalist, trade

1 Plataforma Agraria, *Propuestas políticas*, (Guatemala: July 2008), <www.plataformaagraria.org/guatemala/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=55>.

2 Informe Ambiental Gobierno MARN.

3 Ibid.

4 G. Palma, A. Taracena, E. Baumaister, *Cambios en la tenencia de la tierra: tendencias históricas*, (Guatemala: UNDP, 2004).

5 Informe Ambiental Gobierno MARN, op cit.

union and research groups and other non governmental organizations (NGOs), signed an agreement with the Government on a framework for a national dialogue on holistic rural development and the resolution of the country's agricultural, labour and environmental conflicts. In November of that year, the participants - in collaboration with Government officials and even political advisers from the Office of the Presidency - submitted to the President himself proposals for a National Integrated Rural Development Law, designed to protect "the rural population living in poverty and extreme poverty, with priority to indigenous and peasant communities with insufficient or unproductive land or with no land; indigenous and peasant women; permanent and temporary paid workers, artisans, small rural producers; and micro and small rural entrepreneurs."⁶ Today, three years after it was drafted, the proposed law is still bogged down in the Congress, a telling example of the lack of political will to pursue real solutions to the problems of agriculture and the use of natural resources in the country.

Meanwhile local people continue to resist mega-projects that move into an area, but these are largely ignored by enterprises and the State both. In frustration, entire populations leave what are often ancestral lands and wander in search of some other way of staying alive. For example, in April 2011 some 800 families living on land claimed by a sugar mill enterprise were forcibly evicted by enforcers hired by the putative proprietors and helped by public security forces. The peasant leader, Antonio Beb Ac, was killed, and men, women and children were driven off their land and their crops burned with total impunity

Mining and resistance

The development model which the Government and the World Bank are promoting in Guatemala does not respond to the needs of the local population. Investment in the country is geared exclusively to consolidating that model although it is exploitative, oppressive, discriminatory, unsustainable and promotes inequality.

The World Bank regarded a credit that its International Finance Corporation (IFC) granted to the Canadian enterprise Glamis Gold Corporation as a contribution to Guatemala's "national development," despite the fact that it went to finance the opening of the Marlin gold mine in the department of San Marcos, a project that affects the municipalities of San Miguel Ixtahuacán and Sipacapa. Neither the IFC nor the Government analysed the possibility of using the profits from this venture to set up a sustainable cultural and environmental development plan for the region. Nor did they weigh the social, environmental and economic costs and benefits of the project to determine to what extent and in what time frame the mine should be worked.

6 CNOC, CNP-T, CNAIC, CONGCOOP/IDEAR, *Comunicado de Prensa: El Gobierno debe cumplir sus compromisos en relación a la Política y la Ley de Desarrollo Rural Integral*, (Guatemala: February 2009).

INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE

For the Mayan population, non-violent opposition to development projects that affect them and their lands is a matter of principle. According to Leonor Hurtado, an activist in the National Resistance Front against Mining in Guatemala, "This is directly connected to freedom and dignity. This kind of resistance, whereby indigenous people defend themselves against aggression in a peaceful and active way, fosters unity in the community as they band together in pursuit of a common goal and stimulates them to organize and mobilize in ways that are based on their own values and their own cultural identity."⁷

In an interview with Hurtado, the "Principales" (indigenous leaders) explained in San Juan Sacatepéquez that the peaceful resistance means "respect for Mother Earth and faith that her strength will tell us what to do". We can never meet a threat with weapons because weapons mean the end, they lead to killing, they turn a person into the weakest and most despicable thing there is. Indigenous people come from nature and we resist silently, without showing anger, and we know that we have dignity and we are in the right. These values have enabled us to survive and resist for centuries, and they also give us the ability and the knowledge to defend ourselves and make a contribution."

A Principal from Sipacapa also told her that "gold is like the mountain's weapon, it supports it, it gives it form, it gives the mountain its energy and its balance so there can be life. If you take away the gold you destroy the mountain, and even if afterwards you put the earth back it will not be the same."

A geologist told Hurtado that the indigenous leader at Sipacapa "is absolutely right ... The gold is part of the structure of the mountain and this structure is essential if there is to be life.

7 Hurtado, Leonor, *Explotación minera: Una herida en la tierra y en la sociedad*, Revista Pueblos, (Madrid: junio de 2006).

A community movement against this mining venture has accused the Government of imposing the project as if it had been fully authorized while in fact there was no consultation whatsoever with the population, which is a prior step laid down in international law. According to International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169, a State is required to "...consult the interested peoples through appropriate procedures and in particular through their representative institutions, whenever legislative or administrative measures that may affect them directly are being considered."⁷

Though the Government ratified the Convention, it lacks mechanisms to implement it. The mining law is also at odds with the country's Municipal Code and the Law of Urban and Rural Development Councils.

Looking to the Future

To reverse the ongoing pollution of the environment and the erosion of the population's quality of life, the Government must adopt a sustainable development model as soon as possible. It is urgent and imperative to impose a system that safeguards the use of and democratic access to the land in a healthy co-existence with nature.

The country must preserve the great wealth of biodiversity which it currently enjoys. It needs land recuperation plans that protect and sustain natural and food-producing areas. It must bring society as a whole, and especially impacted local populations, into a broad and active national planning process. Local communities should be making the key decisions about how the

natural environment in their areas should be changed and what means should be employed to do so. Decisions of this importance should be based on the values, world vision and development aspirations of the local populations. National development plans should be built around the country's ecosystems and the interests of the people who live in them.

Sustainability must be based on a rural development model that is geared to the land itself and to the equitable distribution of its wealth. Current development models are always based on private enterprises pillaging the land. If rural development is to succeed, it has to be rooted in small-scale, peasant family agriculture. Only this way can peasant families get access to credits, technical assistance, education, technology and necessary infrastructure. Agro-ecological research programmes that seek ways to reduce to an absolute minimum the use of chemical products that damage the soil must be established and supported. Steps must be taken to safeguard ecosystems. The community and the State must seriously pursue the use and protection of native seeds, particularly of grain.

People's participation must extend to the field of sustainable development. Special attention must be paid to the re-settlement of populations that have been uprooted by the armed conflict. Criteria to govern production and the sustainable development of resources, the selection of suitable land, the recuperation of polluted land, and the management of water, infrastructure and sewage will have to be defined. An agreement on the identity and rights of indigenous peoples will also strengthen environmental protection, the rational use of natural resources, the use of science and technology to preserve the environment and the sustainable administration of natural resources. ■

7 ILO, Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169, (1989) <www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C169>.

Unbearable levels of violence



The main obstacle to sustainable development in Honduras is violence, which affects almost every stratum of society, in both urban and rural areas. People in general, and women in particular, are overwhelmed by a seemingly unstoppable wave of violent crime that has given the country the highest murder rate in the world. Despite other urgent issues, including environmental degradation, economic inequality, poor school performance and limited access to health services, priority must go to reducing the staggering levels of violence. Since the majority of victims are women, a gender-sensitive approach is imperative.

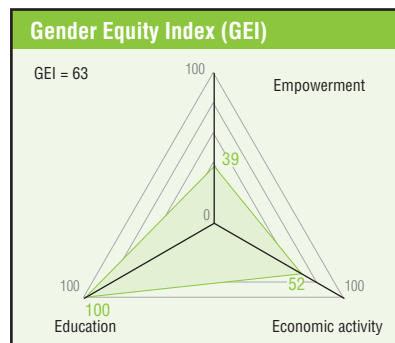
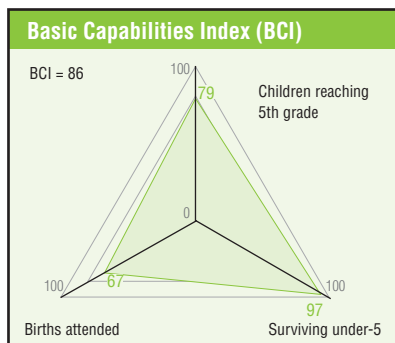
Centro de Estudios de la Mujer-Honduras
Mercedes Elena Flores
Cristina Urbina

Before 2009, Honduras was making steady, if rather slow, progress in reducing poverty levels. In 2005, 63.7% of households were living in poverty, and by May 2009 this had been brought down to 58.8%. A major factor in the economy is remittances from migrant workers, and for many households this is the main source of income. In 2009 remittances amounted to 21% of the country's GDP, contributing more than exports, maquiladoras (export, processing enterprises in tax free areas) and tourism combined. Further progress on poverty reduction, therefore, depends on sustaining foreign remittances, which may not be possible if the US economy remains stalled.

In addition to this economic uncertainty, the biggest problem Honduras is facing is the high level of violence. The 2009-2010 Human Development Report shows that in Central America as a whole, the murder rate is 44 per 100,000 people, 11 times higher than the world average of only 4 per 100,000.¹ But in Honduras the murder rate in 2010 was 77.5 per 100,000 inhabitants. While the World Health Organization has said that 9 murders per 100,000 people can be considered normal, a rate of 10 or more is considered an epidemic.²

If there is to be any hope of sustainable development in the future, in 30 years or however long it takes, the first step must be for the people of Honduras to stop the hatred and murders that take place daily.

The political coup that took place in June 2009 has exacerbated the country's endemic violence. After President Manuel Zelaya was forcibly removed from office gender activists from six countries in the Americas united in the Feminist Observation Group (Observatorio Feminista) reported "massive women's participation in demonstrations" against the de facto government in Tegucigalpa. They reported that many women who were arrested during these protests were "sexually abused" by army personnel



and that demonstrators were "hit with truncheons on various parts of the body, particularly the breasts and the buttocks" and "verbally abused" with insults like, "Go on home, you whores."³

Some women who were subjected to repeated intimidation even went so far as to move away from their families "to protect their children and to save their homes from being ransacked." This was especially true in the departments of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. Another aspect of this cruel scenario is that "femicide got much worse": 51 women were murdered in one month after the coup, and this was in a country where the horrifying average was already one woman killed per day.⁴

The current president, Porfirio Lobo Sosa, came to power in widely discredited elections on 29 November 2009, after which the situation of women continued to deteriorate. On 16 May 2010 a coalition of organizations called Feminist Resistance (Feministas en Resistencia) reported that "there has been an increase in violence against people's full enjoyment of rights established by [both] international institutions and our own Constitution".⁵ One year after the coup, the Honduras human rights organization Centro de Estudios de la Mujer (Women Studies

Center_CEM-H) confirmed seven specific cases of women murdered while demonstrating against the dictatorship.⁶

A bloodstained country

In January 2010 a Government committee submitted to the National Congress its *Vision of the Country 2010-2038 and National Plan 2010-2022*,⁷ highlighting a series of problems that the Government will have to tackle in order to move towards sustainable development. Among these are high levels of extreme poverty, poor school performance, high unemployment, increasing informality in the labour market and serious vulnerability to natural disasters. The report is a brave effort: it presents facts and figures and sets realistic middle and long term targets to reach its vision of long-term change. Yet it also reflects a great deal of wishful thinking, declaring for example:

"By 2022, the security policy will have completely changed the public safety situation in Honduras and will have brought the murder rate per 100,000 inhabitants, the murder rate in robberies, the rate of drug traffic crimes, the rate of sexual offences and the rate of deaths in traffic accidents down to average international levels. In addition, social conflicts will be reduced by 75% as a result of ongoing citizen participation processes and a general improvement in the country's economic and social situation, which will have a positive impact on the

1 UNDP. *Central America Human Development Report 2009-2010*. <www.pnud.org.gt/data/publicacion/IDHAC%202009-2010.pdf>.

2 WHO. *World report on violence and health: summary*, (2002). <www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/summary_es.pdf>.

3 Observatorio Feminista, "Semana de los Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres en Honduras," (Tegucigalpa: 20 August 2009), <www.cemh.org.hn/images/stories/COMUNICADOS_2010/comunicados_2009/Comunicado_20_AGOSTO_Observatorio_Feminista_de_DHH.pdf>.

4 Ibid.

5 Feministas en Resistencia, "Ante el agravamiento de la represión en Honduras," (16 May 2010), <www.cemh.org.hn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=91:comunicado-de-las-feministas-en-resistencia&catid=40:noticias-cem-h&Itemid=55>.

6 CEM-H, *Pronunciamiento público: A un año del golpe de Estado las mujeres seguimos resistiendo*, (Tegucigalpa: 28 June 2010), <www.cemh.org.hn/images/stories/COMUNICADOS_2010/Prnunciamento_2_CEMH-MMM-28_de_Junio.pdf>.

7 See: <www.enlaceacademico.org/uploads/media/VISION_DE_PAIS.pdf>.

underlying factors that generate lawlessness. Honduras will have attained good levels of citizen security that will translate into peace and healthy coexistence and that will generate a favourable situation for domestic and foreign investment.⁸

As well as taking many victims, violence in Honduras also has many causes. There is frequent fighting between rival gangs (*maras*) and their battles are absolutely savage. According to Human Rights Commissioner Ramón Custodio, the *maras* even go so far to cut people's heads off, and "this is now very common whereas before it hardly ever happened. This shows that every day we are getting more and more used to acts of aggression against the human body."⁹ Between 2005 and 2010, 24,674 people died violent deaths, and 19,640 (80%) of these were caused by firearms.¹⁰

Violence against peasants and femicide

Another disturbing trend is an alarming increase in violence against peasant communities in recent years. From January 2010 to the beginning of October 2011, a total of 40 people with links to peasant organizations in the Bajo Aguán valley region were murdered.¹¹

There is also a worrying increase in attacks on transsexuals, as has been reported by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights¹² and by Human Rights Watch.¹³

Even worse, femicide is also increasing. In the period 2003 to 2010 some 1,464 women were killed, 44% of them aged 15 to 29. In 2010 alone 300 women died violent deaths but in only 22 of these cases (7.3%) were the perpetrators brought to justice.¹⁴ From 2008 to 2010 there were 944 murders of women but the legal system only managed to punish 61 of the murderers (6.4%).¹⁵

The only way to reduce or contain this violence is to adopt a gender approach, not just because women are the main victims but also because they are subjected to other more oblique forms of violence. Women make up 51.7% of the population and 41% of the economically active population, and in addition they do 91.1% of family domestic work. For various reasons, official unemployment among women (3.7%) is less than that among men (4%).¹⁶ Unemployment is highest among the young: of the country's 101,296 unemployed some 52.6% are under 24 years old.¹⁷ However, people between 20 and 59 are more likely to be poor, especially in rural areas, where 68.5% of women are living in poverty. 40% of households are headed by women, 40% of which live in extreme poverty, compared to only 35% of male-headed households.¹⁸

Gender discrimination in the labour force

Women in the labour force are more likely than men to be clustered in part time and temporary jobs which are viewed as 'women's work' and less well paid than 'men's work.' Most women are working in the informal economy, where they lack all social benefits. They also make up the great majority in sectors like social, personal and domestic services, but these kinds of jobs usually involve more than the regulation eight hours per day and very often involve health and safety risks, low pay and temporary employment periods.

Most of the workers in the maquiladoras are young women aged 17 to 25, working long hours in precarious conditions. Since the start of the global financial crisis in 2008, which resulted in a 10% drop in textile and clothing exports, the maquiladoras have been systematically cutting their workforce. To make matters worse, a large amount of planned investment was cancelled due to the political crisis, which has also had a negative impact on women in the labour force.¹⁹

Problems in education, justice and health services

Some 15.6% of the population over 15 years old is illiterate, with little difference between the rates among men (15.8%) and among women (15.5%). In recent years the educational situation has improved but there are still huge problems like the very high cost of transport, uniforms and school materials. Girls do better in the system, they spend an average of 7.1 years in education as against 6.8 years for boys, and the girls' repetition rate is 8.8%, considerably lower than the boys' rate of 12.3%.

The Supreme Court estimates that an average of around 20,000 cases of domestic violence are reported per year, and women aged 19 to 30 account for 41.5% of the total. This aggression against women is very often unreported because in it is seen as "an internal problem in the relationship."

Morbidity rates among women are high, which reflects serious deficiencies in sexual and reproductive health services. The maternal mortality rate is currently 110 per 100,000 live births, and in 2006 only 66.9% of births were attended by skilled health personnel.²⁰ This is a crisis and it should be tackled as such, especially in view of the fact that (in 2001) some 38% of adolescent girls became mothers at or before the age of 19.

Access to resources

Yet another area of gender discrimination is in access to land. From February to August 2010 the authorities issued 1,487 independent land ownership deeds, but less than a third of these (482) were awarded to women peasants. At the same time there were 150 cases of women receiving ownership rights for agricultural land, 28.40% of the total issued, while 528 deeds (71.60%) went to men. Because women are denied access to and control of these productive resources, in most cases they are unable to obtain credit.

The situation with regard to housing is similar. According to the National Conditions of Life Survey (ENCOVI), in 2004 some 86.2% of housing in urban areas was rented.²¹ Increasing migration from the countryside to the cities has led to an enormous growth in places like San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa, where according to the National Statistics Institute, the shanty town population increased from 900,000 in 1990 to 1,283,843 in 2010. Most of these buildings do not meet minimum standards and are vulnerable to landslides, floods and collapse caused by severe weather. ■

8 Ibid.

9 El Informador, "Violencia en Honduras ha alcanzado niveles de epidemia. Derechos Humanos," <www.informador.com.mx/internacional/2011/309257/6/violencia-en-honduras-ha-alcanzado-niveles-de-epidemia-derechos-humanos.htm>

10 See: <www.conadeh.hn/joomla/index.php/component/content/article/463-derecho-a-la-vida-y-la-seguridad>

11 La vía campesina, "Honduras: Violencia extrema contra comunidades campesinas en el Bajo Aguán," <viacampesina.org/sp/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1266:honduras-extrema-contra-comunidades-campesinas-en-el-bajo-aguan&catid=19:derechos-humanos&Itemid=40>

12 CIDH observa con profunda preocupación asesinatos de integrantes de la comunidad transgénero en Honduras," <www.cidh.org/Comunicados/Spanish/2011/4-11sp.htm>

13 Human Rights Watch, "Se Exhorta al Presidente Porfirio Lobo Sosa Investigar Muertes Recientes de Mujeres Transgénero en Honduras." Available at: <www.hrw.org/es/news/2011/01/31/se-exhorta-al-presidente-porfirio-lobo-sosa-investigar-muertes-recientes-de-mujeres>

14 CEM-H, "Día de la Mujer Hondureña: Más que una celebración exigimos una patria libre," (Tegucigalpa, 25 January 2011).

15 Estadísticas de las Unidades de Delitos contra la Vida de las Mujeres, de la Fiscalía Especial de la Mujer, (Tegucigalpa: 2010).

16 Programa de Cooperación Internacional de la Junta de Andalucía, *Programa Operativo País Prioritario Honduras 2010-2011*, (Tegucigalpa: 2010).

17 Encuesta Permanente de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples. EPHPM, INE, (May 2009).

18 Programa de Cooperación Internacional de la Junta de Andalucía, op cit.

19 Honduran Private Enterprise Council (COHEP) and Tegucigalpa Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIT), report that from 2008 to September 2009 nearly 120,000 jobs were lost due to the global financial crisis, a minimum wage increase and the country's 2009 political crisis. They estimate that the political upheaval caused losses of 439 million lempiras per day due to marches and roads blocked by demonstrators, and 32 curfews that were imposed. *Honduran economy 2009 and prospects for 2010 Data and perceptions*. UPE/UNDP.

20 ECLAC Data Base and Statistical Publications, <www.eclac.cl>

21 Millennium Development Goals, (Honduras: 2010), Third report on the country.

Growing social inequalities

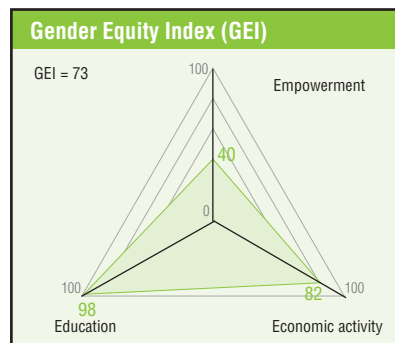
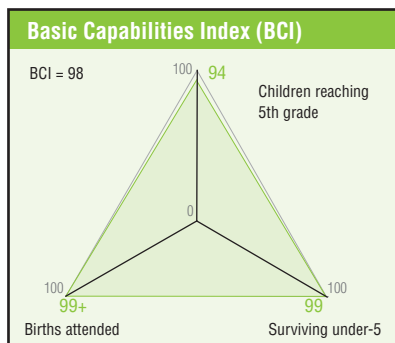


Over the past 20 years the country has seen significant changes in the areas of education, employment and social inequality. Poverty and social exclusion have caused the greatest tensions, but demographic trends, health issues and food security have also created challenges. The structure of poverty remains unchanged. Child poverty is severe; families with several children and, most notably, single parents tend to live in poverty. Among the Roma, who are particularly subject to discrimination and social exclusion, the risk of poverty has significantly increased as it has among the unemployed, the unskilled, and those living in rural areas.

ATTAC Hungary
Matyas Benyik¹

In 2008, while 17% of the European Union (EU) population were at risk of poverty, Hungary's official poverty rate was only 12.4%.² Among certain groups, however, this figure has been much higher. For example, between 2005 and 2009 the poverty rate for the under-18 age group was 20%. One in five children, one in three families with more than three children and nearly one in two unemployed people now live in poverty, as does every second Roma.³ Also, poor people in Hungary are much poorer than those in other member states of the EU. Most national experts agree that about 14% of the country's population lives below the subsistence level.⁴

Measured by living standards, income levels, health, education and access to public services, social inequalities have increased substantially. Most critically, the territorial concentration of poverty and segregation has also increased. Almost 12% of the population live below the poverty line.⁵ And among the Roma, – perhaps as much as 10% of Hungary's population – living standards, housing conditions, health status, employment, and schooling are far below the national average.⁶ Their unemployment rate is three to five times higher while the number of people sustained by one wage earner is three times that in the non-Roma population.⁷



But even discounting the particular situation of the Roma, the Hungarian labour market's main feature is the low rate of employment and workforce participation. For example, low employment in the 15-64 year old age group (55.4% in 2009) is accompanied by growing unemployment (10.1% in 2009) with an outstandingly high – though declining – ratio of economically inactive people (38.5% in 2009).⁸ The highest inactivity ratio is among young and elderly people. Population ageing, coupled with declining fertility rates, has led to an alarming drop in the economically active population, changing the shape of the country's labour market.

Further, the structure of poverty has remained unchanged: families with several children and single parents tend to live in poverty, and child poverty is still very grave. The poorest economically active social groups are characterized by larger than average family sizes, disadvantages in terms of place of residence, family problems, difficulties in cohabiting and health and ethnic tensions.⁹

Economy and environment

In the first half of the 1990s, the country's Gross Domestic Product declined almost 20%.¹⁰ The GDP share of agriculture, industry, and construction decreased while that of the service sector increased dynamically. The decline in the productive sector and the expansion of services contributed to less utilization of natural resources and reduced air and water pollution. In areas where mining and metallurgy were downsized or closed

down, such as the Northeast, environmental pollution decreased as a result of less energy consumption. In farming areas, the excessive use of environmentally dangerous chemicals slowed dramatically. At the same time, energy efficiency improved, and environmental management systems and environmentally friendly products have been spreading steadily.¹¹

In this back-handed way, the goal of separating economic growth from increasing environmental loads was seemingly accomplished. This result, however, was not owing to any environmental or economic policy. Rather, it came about as a by-product of spontaneous processes which followed the systemic change triggered by the collapse of the Soviet Union.

During recent decades, structures of production and patterns of consumption in Hungary have changed greatly. Inequalities between social groups have increased rapidly and, on the whole, several damaging environmental and lifestyle trends have been amplified.

Hungary's consumption structure is becoming more similar to that of Western European countries. Yet growing household consumption hides contradictions. A steady expansion of per capita household consumption has been financed increasingly from bank loans denominated mainly in Swiss francs, leading to a growing indebtedness. While households have contributed to reducing the consumption of energy and water, they also contribute to motor vehicle traffic growth and to increasing waste output rates. Meanwhile the production and consumption of products and services meeting sustainability requirements, which began in the mid-1990s, have shown little progress to date.

1 President of ATTAC Hungary.

2 Eurostat, *Living conditions in 2008: 17% of EU27 population at risk of poverty*, Eurostat News Release, (18 January 2010), <epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-18012010-AP/EN/3-18012010-AP-EN.PDF>.

3 RT, *Poverty pushes Roma into crime in Hungary*, (12 July 2010), <rt.com/news/hungary-roma-crime-poverty>.

4 IndexMundi, *Hungary population below poverty line*, (2011), <www.indexmundi.com/hungary/population_below_poverty_line.html>.

5 Global Edge, "Hungary statistics," in *Global Edge*, Michigan State University, (2009), <globaleedge.msu.edu/countries/hungary/statistics>.

6 BBC News, *Amnesty accuses Hungary of failing to protect Roma*, (10 November 2010), <www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11725531>. France 24, *Making Room for Romas in Hungary's Schools*, (Agence France Presse, 6 April 2011), <www.france24.com/en/20110406-making-room-roma-hungarys-schools#>

7 Hungarian Central Statistical Office, *Labour market situation, 2009. Statistical reflection*, Vol. 4, no. 9 (2 June 2010), <portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/eng/xfp/stattukor/munkerohelyz/emunkerohelyz09.pdf>.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Wikipedia, "Hungary's economy since 1990", in *Economy of Hungary*, (2011), <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Hungary#Hungary.27s_economy_since_1990>.

11 Ibid.

Energy consumption declining

In the past 20 years, structural changes in the economy together with a rise in energy prices has resulted in energy consumption dropping by one fifth.¹² The economy has shown an overall decrease in energy demand with energy consumption per unit of GDP declining significantly.¹³ The proportion of consumption by productive sectors specifically has decreased but there has been a concurrent increase in the proportion of household and communal consumers.¹⁴

Compared to 1989, the domestic output of energy sources has decreased by 35% with a modest increase in energy imports. Energy imports historically have represented 50% of energy consumption. By 2009, consumption of energy imports, however, had increased to 62% though electricity imports had declined significantly.¹⁵ The proportion of domestic natural gas output showed a significant increase while coal experienced a sharp decrease.¹⁶

The past 20 years also have seen more use of solar and wind energy along with that of traditional renewables such as firewood and geothermal energy. The use of renewable energy sources both in extraction and use has increased though they represented only 3.6% of energy use in 2003 and 5.2% in 2005.¹⁷

Despite these positive trends, predatory privatization in certain sectors has increased the risk of environmental catastrophe. Such a calamity took place in October 2010 when a rupture in a wall of a privately owned waste sludge reservoir resulted in three settlements in Veszprém County being flooded by about 1 million cubic meters of toxic red sludge, burying 500 houses, killing nine people and injuring 150.¹⁸ The health consequences of the catastrophe were serious and still have not been made fully public.

Food security is a challenge

Hungary only completed its National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) in 2007.¹⁹ Integrating all

THE ROMA, STILL AT THE VERY BOTTOM

Modern genetic studies state that the origin of the Romanis traces back to the Indian subcontinent, possibly to the present territory of Rajasthan and that they migrated later to the Punjab region. A 2004 study concluded that all Romani share descendants of a group of people living approximately 40 generations ago.¹ Romani people were reported in Europe in the 14th century, living in Crete. They were called *atsiganoi* in Greek, which means “untouchable.” Within the next two centuries they had reached Germany, Sweden and the Iberian Peninsula.

Among the diverse subgroups of the Romani people in Europe are the Roma, concentrated in central and eastern Europe and central Italy; the Iberian Kale; the Finnish Kale; the Romanichal in the United Kingdom; the German Sinti and the French Manush.

During World War II, the Nazis and the Croatian *Ustaše* fascist group embarked on a systematic attempt to eliminate the Romanis, in a genocidal process called *Porajmos* in the Romani language. Romani people were defined as “enemies of the race-based state” by the Nuremberg Laws.² The total number of victims has been estimated as between 220,000 and 1,500,000.³ Some people were killed on sight and others sentenced to forced labour and imprisonment in concentration camps; in Hungary 28,000 Romanies were killed.⁴

According to the 2001 Census, 190,000 people identify as Roma in Hungary, although some estimates give much higher numbers, near 10% of the total population.⁵ The Hungarian Romani face multiple challenges compared to the rest of the population, including poverty, discrimination, lack of access to the educational system and higher unemployment rates. Currently, out of the 22 members of the European Parliament, only one is a Romani. However, there are a number of Roma organizations in Hungary, including the Roma Social Coalition and the Independent Interest Association of Roma.

1 D. Angelicheva et al., *Mutation History of the Roma/Gypsies* (Perth, Australia: University of Western Australia, 2004), <lib.bioinfo.pl/pmid:15322984>.

2 J. Barsony, “Facts and Debates: The Roma Holocaust,” in J. Barsony and A. Daroczi (eds), *Pharrajmos: The Fate of the Roma During the Holocaust* (New York: International Debate Education Association, 2008), p. 1.

3 I. Hancock, “Romanies and the Holocaust: A Reevaluation and an Overview”, in D. Stone (ed), *The historiography of the Holocaust* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2004), <www.radoc.net/radoc.php?doc=art_e_holocaust_porrajmos&lang=en&articles=true>

4 M. Verdofer, *Unbekanntes Volk Sinti und Roma* (Südtirol: Kennenlernen Informationsheft für Jugendliche Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker, 1995), <www.gfbv.it/3dossier/sinti-rom/de/rom-de.html#5>.

5 Romani World, *Economics*, (European Committee on Romani Emancipation [ECRE], 2003), <www.romaniworld.com/ecopr-1.htm>.

12 The Titi Tudorancea Bulletin, *Hungary: total primary energy consumption*, (2010), <www.titudorancea.com/z/ies_hungary_total_primary_energy_consumption.htm>.

13 The Titi Tudorancea Bulletin, *Hungary: Energy intensity – Total primary energy consumption per dollar GDP*, (2010), <www.titudorancea.com/z/ies_hungary_energy_intensity_consumption_per_gdp.htm>.

14 Hungarian Central Statistical Office, *Hungary 1989-2009*, (Budapest: 2010), p. 49, <portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/eng/xftp/idoszaki/mo/hungary1989_2009.pdf>.

15 Trading Economics, *Energy Imports: (% of energy use) in Hungary*, (2009), <www.tradingeconomics.com/hungary/energy-imports-net-percent-of-energy-use-wb-data.html>.

16 Index Mundi, *Hungary Dry Natural Gas Production by Year*, (2009), <www.indexmundi.com/energy.aspx?country=hu&product=gas&graph=production>.

17 Hungarian Central Statistical Office, *Hungary 1989-2009*, (Budapest: 2010), p. 49, <portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/eng/xftp/idoszaki/mo/hungary1989_2009.pdf>.

18 Ministry of Rural Development, *Current Status Report about the Red Sludge Catastrophe*, (Budapest: 9 November 2010), <www.vm.gov.hu/main.php?folderID=2535&articleID=16660&ctag=articlist&iid=1>.

19 Government of the Hungarian Republic, *National Sustainable Development Strategy*, (Budapest: June 2007), <www.ff3.hu/upload/NFFS_20070629_en1.doc>; see also: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, *Sustainable Development Indicators in Hungary*, (Budapest: 2008), <mek.oszk.hu/07000/07002/07002.pdf>.

domestic sectors, the NSDS is a coherent plan with sector strategies and programmes. Despite its coherence, however, the implementation of the social goals of sustainability raises serious concerns about its agriculture planning and food security.

Since 1990, Hungarian agriculture has experienced enormous changes as a result of fundamental alterations in the structure of ownership and production, the conditions of livestock production and the structure of food consumption and foreign trade. Consequently, a substantial part of farmed land (about 300,000 has.) has been taken out of production.²⁰ Multinational food processors and retailers now dominate the Hungarian market while small-scale, traditional family farmers are struggling with fragmented land ownership, lack of capital and few marketing skills. The price squeeze of food processors and big supermarket chains have provoked farmer mobilizations all over the country and have raised serious concerns about the origins and security of food.

20 G. Nagy, *Country/Pasture Resource Profile-Hungary*, (Rome: FAO Website 2001 & 2006), <www.fao.org/ag/AGP/AGPC/doc/Counprof/Hungary/hungary.htm>.

Hungarians' poor health

By international standards, Hungarians' health is extremely poor, the result of historical, social, economic, and cultural factors, including people's habits and general way of life. Alcoholism is widespread, and the number of drug users is growing fast. Life expectancy at birth is low though it has increased both among men and women. In 1990, it was 65.1 years for men and 73.1 for women. In 2008, it was 69.8 years among men and 77.8 years among women.²¹

The Hungarian population has had the third highest mortality rate in the EU, averaging 13.1 per thousand between 2005 and 2009. Hungary is second after the Baltic States with the highest rate of mortality caused by heart and cerebral blood-vessel diseases, malignant tumours and diseases of the digestive system. The lung cancer mortality rate is almost twice the EU average. ■

21 Hungarian Central Statistical Office, *Hungary 1989-2009*, (Budapest: 2010), p.94, <portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/eng/xftp/idoszaki/mo/hungary1989_2009.pdf>.

Ill-founded growth leads to environmental disaster



The lack of long-term planning that has characterized India's governments is seen clearly in its demographic growth and increasing CO₂ emissions. The recently proposed "missions" (or sustainable development initiatives) are not only insufficient but their effectiveness, however minimal, remains uncertain. Recent amendments to the heavily criticized 1894 Land Acquisition Act are unclear and fail to address the problems in the legislation. The Government must fully support renewable energy sources and integrate climate risk management in development planning. If it does not, all future scenarios for the country will be murky.

Social Watch India Himanshu Jha

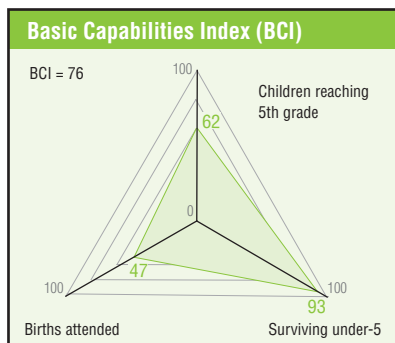
The country faces several social challenges, such as inequitable economic growth, poor natural resource management, the exclusion of the majority of the population from decision making and from access to basic services, unabated environmental degradation and failure of institutions to sufficiently integrate environmental and social development considerations into economic policy objectives. Over the last decade it has been hit by a series of natural disasters that have severely damaged the economy and depleted natural resources, threatening the livelihoods of millions. Currently, 77% of the population lives below the poverty line.

The country is especially vulnerable to natural disasters, including cyclones and annual monsoon floods. If we add poor resource management, inadequate infrastructure and unsustainable practices, the country's future looks bleak. Global warming has already had an impact: increasing cyclonic activity, rising sea levels and ambient temperature and precipitation changes are being reported and will worsen in the near future. Rising temperatures in particular will change the ice and snow patterns of the Himalayas, which will have a huge impact on the region's ecosystems and biodiversity, as well as on the livelihoods of millions of people.

It is estimated that the country's population will increase to about 1.2 billion by 2016,¹ putting enormous pressure on natural resources, so water shortages, soil exhaustion and erosion, deforestation and water and air pollution are expected.

The missions

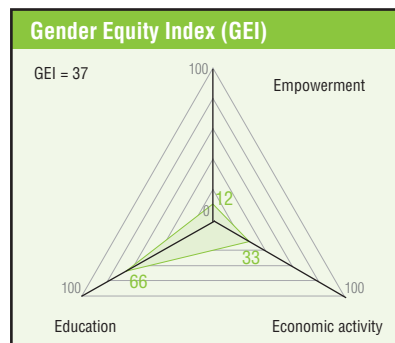
Climate change is due largely to the unsustainable consumption patterns of rich industrialized nations, which are responsible for more than 70% of total global CO₂ emissions and consume 75-80% of the world's resources, while containing only 25% of the global population. Whereas an Indian citizen emits an equivalent of less than 2 tons of carbon per year, a citizen of the USA emits



an equivalent of more than 20 tons.² Yet despite its relative poverty, India's economy is already affecting the climate. In 2008 India was the world's fourth-largest emitter of CO₂.³

The Government has proposed a National Action Plan to curb CO₂ emissions, and is also outlining the 'Missions' programme, a set of sustainable development strategies to serve as the country's domestic climate legislation in the immediate future. Yet, these policies are driven more by adaptation imperatives and unsustainable development models than by a realistic and appropriate approach to environmental sustainability. In fact, India, along with the G77 and China, expects the developed world to agree to a 40% reduction in CO₂ emissions for 2020, so that developing countries get the appropriate "atmospheric space" required to develop.⁴

The projected missions include a National Solar Mission (to generate 20,000 MW of solar power in 2020), a National Mission for Sustainable Habitat (focused on energy efficiency in residential and commercial buildings, and on improved solid waste management), a National Water Mission (to improve water management and river conservation), a National Mission for a Green India (focused on reforestation), and a National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture.



The first to be launched was the solar mission; the others have been approved but not yet implemented, and draft mission documents are prepared for all of them. However, it is still not clear if the Government will propose these as its main strategy for reducing the country's CO₂ emissions. The Minister of Environment and Forests has already claimed that India will enact a mandatory fuel efficiency standard by 2011 and aspires to have 20% of its electricity supplied by renewable energy by 2020. The Government also aims to reduce the country's energy intensity by 15-20% within the next 20 years and increase the area under forest or tree cover by 15%, for carbon sequestration. This will result in more than a 9% deviation compare to the business-as-usual scenario, as calculated by local NGOs.⁵

The impact of large-scale infrastructure projects

There is dire need to reconceptualize large-scale infrastructure projects within a sustainable development framework, and to look at the existing policy and regulatory framework for such projects. "From the standpoint of defining a sustainable low carbon trajectory of economic development, it is important not to see large scale infrastructure projects restrictively as something to be contained for the benefit of the environment and the society."⁶ Among the current policy initiatives are the National Action Plan on Climate Change and National Appropria-

1 Wikipedia, *Environmental issues in India* <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_issues_in_India>.

2 See: *Citizens Report on Governance and Development 2010*, (Sage Publications, 2010), <socialwatchindia.net/publications/citizens-report/citizens-report-on-governance-and-development-2010-executive-summary>.

3 Wikipedia, *List of countries by carbon dioxide emissions*, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_carbon_dioxide_emissions>.

4 *Citizens Report on Governance and Development*, op.cit.

5 Ibid.

6 V. Upadhyay, *Infrastructure Regulation For the Low Carbon Economy: Survey of Key Issues and Concerns*, India Infrastructure Report, <www.idfc.com/pdf/report/Chapter-1.pdf>.

te Mitigation Action Plan for low carbon energy, the 2003 Electricity Act, the Environmental Impact Assessment Notification, the 1981 Air Act for emission regulation and the National Green Tribunal Act, to name a few.

Despite the existing regulatory framework legal challenges to pollution issues have been weak. As a 2002 Planning Commission evaluation of the State's Pollution Control Boards stated: "Non installation of abatement mechanisms by the polluting units is a direct consequence of the absence of any effective punitive and deterrent mechanism in case of non-compliance."

Another study notes that most of India's Environmental Acts and Rules are procedural and lack clear policy guidelines. Their approach to pollution focuses on prevention rather than enforcement of existing legislation.⁷ Moreover, in most cases infrastructure projects are handled through non-judicial processes and are increasingly resolved by contracts and legislative or executive means. A review of India's National Highway Authority projects found that contractors do not integrate environment management into their plans, and also that there is almost no voluntary adoption of good environmental management practices.⁸

Water supply and sanitation

Despite the efforts made by the Government, water supply and sanitation remains inadequate. In 2008, only 54% of the urban population had access to sanitation services including connection to a public sewer and to a septic system, and pour-flush latrines and ventilated pit latrines, while in rural areas the number drops to an alarming 21%.⁹

Institutions in charge of operating and maintaining the water supply and sanitation infrastructure are often seen as inefficient, and in most cases lack needed financial resources. Even so, the situation is gradually improving: in 1980, the rural population's rate of access to sanitation services was estimated at 1%, and grew to the above-mentioned 21% in 2008.

THE ISSUE OF LAND ACQUISITION

Land acquisition by the State has become a major issue. The Government has taken some 147 million ha of agricultural land for urban development, and 2.81 million ha are no longer fertile due to industrialization and urbanization. The Ministry of Commerce has taken over 200,000 acres for development projects, while development projects have displaced up to 21 million people.

The 1894 Land Acquisition Act, enacted during the colonial period, remains the primary legislation in operation. It allows the Government to acquire private land for public purposes, including residential facilities for poor people and those affected by natural disasters, but economic compensation was based on estimated agricultural land values, and has gradually depreciated, making it extremely difficult for the former owners to acquire new land.

The Land Acquisition Act has been criticized by scores of activists, politicians and economists. An amendment was introduced in 2007, accompanied by a Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, but both had failed to be implemented by 2009, so they were reframed and finally reintroduced – by the Government's National Advisory Council – in May 2011. This amendment redefined the concept of "public purpose" as being either for defensive purposes or for any project which is "useful for the general public"; however, the definition of "public purpose" remains unclear.

Pollution in the Ganges and illegal mining

The River Ganges, considered holy by Hindus, is heavily polluted, filled with chemical wastes, sewage waters and human and animal remains. One of the causes of this is illegal mining, specially in the Haridwar district, where most of the illegal stone crushing and mining operations are located, plundering the river bed and polluting its waters with debris and chemical waste. Mining for sand and stone (mostly for construction purposes) has increased the risk of flooding and caused severe deforestation.¹⁰ Illegal mining has generated controversy throughout the country. Some of these cases (e.g., the mining concession in Andhra Pradesh) involve members of the Government.¹¹

Recommendations

The threats to sustainable development make it urgent that the Government take the following steps:

- Make a detailed assessment of state-level energy efficiency potential to support the efforts of Central Government;

- Support renewable energy through tax holidays, subsidies, better market conditions, soft loans from financial institutions, etc.;
- Integrate climate risk management into existing national development plans;
- Establish a multi-donor coordinating committee in order to facilitate climate actions on mitigation and adaptation;
- Make scientific climate information available and accessible to communities, in order to inform their analysis, and support the identification of sustainable solutions, while ensuring that Effective Disaster Risk Reduction remains based on local knowledge, and built upon local level participatory analysis of vulnerabilities and capacities. ■

7 K. Priyadarshini and G. K. Omprakash, "Compliance to Environmental regulations: The Indian Context," *International Journal of Business and Economics*, Vol.2, No.1 (2003): 9-26

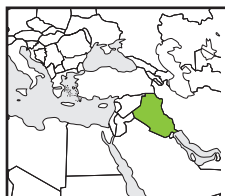
8 Videh, op.cit.

9 Wikipedia, *Water supply and sanitation in India*, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_supply_and_sanitation_in_India#cite_note-JMP-0>.

10 NDTV, *Exposing the illegal mining in Haridwar*, (16 June 2011), <www.ndtv.com/article/india/exposing-the-illegal-mining-in-haridwar-112580>.

11 Wikipedia, *Illegal mining in India*, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_mining_in_India>.

The growing role of civil society



After decades of war, neglect and mismanagement, the country's social and environmental situation is critical. Iraq continues to struggle with an unstable government, corruption, and vast human rights abuses, including attacks on minority groups. Until greater levels of peace and security are achieved, progress in terms of creating and utilizing a successful sustainable development model will prove difficult. While there is increasing civil society participation and democratic involvement, repression and human rights abuses demand persistent attention in order to guarantee a democratic future.

Masarat for Culture & Media Development (MCMD)
Sa'ad Salloum

Iraq continues to struggle with the formidable challenges brought on from years of social unrest and war. The demonstrations that shook the country in February 2011, calling for the elimination of poverty, unemployment and corruption illustrate the new role that Iraqi citizens are beginning to play in a society where democratic participation was formerly violently repressed or silenced altogether. Although still amidst a backdrop of insecurity and highly deficient civil liberties, civil society organizations are growing and playing an ever-increasing role in the nation's democratic development.

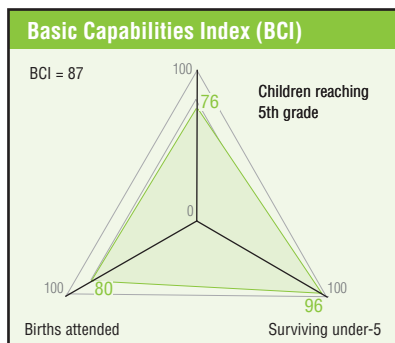
Civil society's vital role

Iraqi citizens went to the ballot boxes on 7 March 2010 and voted for 325 new Members of Parliament to represent them in the Council of Representatives. Unfortunately, the first session of Parliament on 14 June 2010, in a constitutional breach, was left open without electing a Speaker or deputies. This political and constitutional paralysis prompted civil society organizations to launch the Civic Initiative to Preserve the Constitution (CIPC), filing a lawsuit before the Federal Supreme Court. The Federal Court ordered the Chairman of Age to call on MPs to resume the session and to elect a Speaker and two deputies.¹ Civil society observers hailed the decision as a sign of the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, but it also showed that a separation of powers is the cornerstone of a successful democracy.

The most important conclusion that can be drawn from the court decision, however, is the vital role that can be played by Iraqi civil society in the process of building a modern civil State. The lawsuit was followed by another CIPC campaign to collect signatures and put pressure on political blocs to fulfil their election commitments to their constituents. According to CIPC figures, more than 800 NGOs, associations and unions, in addition to prominent figures of different cultural, academic and social backgrounds from various parts of Iraq, participated in the campaign.²

1 Federal Supreme Court, №55 Federal 0.2010.

2 See: <cipciraq.wordpress.com>.

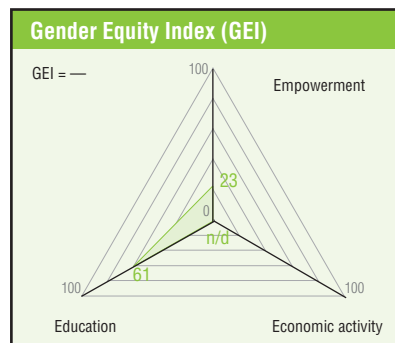


The CIPC has crystallized as a civic framework to achieve multiple objectives including: accelerating the formation of a national partnership government on the basis of sincerity, competence and integrity; drafting a programme to consolidate security and political stability; reforming institutional infrastructure; strengthening the political process through the political parties law; amending the election law; respecting the independence of the judiciary, as well as increasing its efficiency; providing public services; improving the performance of government agencies; ensuring the protection of human rights and public freedoms through constitutional and legal guarantees, including freedom of expression, association, the press and access to information; addressing poverty, unemployment, displacement and discrimination against minority groups.³

Minorities at risk

Despite the fact that levels of displacement have stabilized in recent years, a major terrorist attack on a Catholic church in Baghdad on October 31st 2010 forced some minority communities to reconsider the option of resettling elsewhere. By November 2009 about 350,000 internally displaced people had returned to their districts – 60% of which returned Baghdad – although most of the returnees were Arabs (Sunni and Shia), and therefore not considered part of a minority group. Reports from the International Organization for Migration (IOM)

3 Ibid.



have shown that only 52% of all internally displaced persons wish to return, with 20% wanting to re-settle elsewhere.⁴ According to figures from the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MODM) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), the number of displaced people within Iraq is about 2.8 million people, mostly Arabs (Shia and Sunni), and with nearly 250,000 people from Chaldean, Assyrian, Armenian, Sabeen Mandaean, Faili Kurd, Yazidi and Shabak minority groups.⁵

The lack of effective Government action to address the problems of the country's minorities has prompted civil society organizations to push for greater action against discrimination and attacks on minorities. The CIPC, for example, has organized Parliamentary roundtables on minority concerns, illustrating how civil society can and should participate in issues of national importance. The CIPC discussions highlighted the need to increase minority participation in the political sphere, and to eliminate racist educational policies and other forms of misinformation which contribute to ignorance-based discrimination. They also underlined the fact that since 2003 many minorities have left Iraq, and it is expected that more will continue to leave, owing to the lack of security; lack of constitutional protection or non-discrimination laws; weak representation in Government and Parliament; as well as the domi-

4 L. Mumtaz, *Still Targeted: Continued Persecution of Iraq's Minorities*, Minority Rights Group International, p.19.

5 IDMC, *Little new displacement but in the region of 2.8 million Iraqis remain internally displaced*, (4 March 2010), <www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/B0DB25F7122F4390C12576DC003B49AF/\$file/Iraq_Overview_Mar10.pdf>.

nance of an exclusionary culture in a society based on discrimination and ignorance.

Mass protests and Government repression

Iraq was not isolated from the mass demonstrations known as the “Arab Spring” in 2011. The slow pace of formation of the Iraqi Government (over 7 months of arduous negotiations), the deterioration in public service delivery, in addition to increasing levels of poverty and unemployment, all fuelled the first sparks of protest which started in poor and neglected neighbourhoods north of Baghdad. Throughout the month of February demonstrations were held in the cities of Kut, Diwaniyah, Basra and Anbar, and in a number of others. In the oil-rich city of Basra, in southern Iraq, voices began to be heard demanding an end to corruption, with demonstrators carrying yellow cards (like those used by football referees) to express public dissatisfaction with the Governor and some local officials. Similar resentment was also rising in the rest of the provinces due to a growing lack of services. Criticism regarding restrictions on public freedoms, corruption, and the high salaries of parliamentarians turned into popular slogans and protest banners. Most importantly, the demonstrations brought an end to the law requiring a legal license to protest, which had thwarted hundreds of demonstrations in previous years.

As a result of the vast popular protests, Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki issued a directive in February 2011 to cut his monthly salary by half. This represented a recognition of the unreasonable gap between the salaries of senior officials and those of junior staff and the average Iraqi, and inspired proposals to review the salaries of all senior Government officials and reduce the budget for all three Presidencies – of the Republic, the Council of Ministers, and the Parliament – which add up to a large proportion of the State budget. As in other Arab countries, major demonstrations were called for Friday, 25 February, 24 hours before which the Prime Minister requested a meeting with civil society leaders. The CIPC gave the Prime Minister a strong message, demanding the elimination of poverty, unemployment and government corruption.⁶ In light of the looming protests, the Government put security services on full alert and, in addition to using force to disperse the demonstrations, arrested and tortured four journalists involved in the protests.⁷

The February uprisings launched an unprecedented movement to establish civil society

6 Interview with Hanaa Edgar, Secretary of IAA, (February 25 2011).

7 Interview with four journalists who were arrested (Baghdad: March 4 2011)

WAR AND THE ENVIRONMENT

After the First Gulf War, the Saddam Hussein administration started a series of works aimed to dry the Mesopotamian Marshes region, a wetland zone located in the southern areas of the territory which provided habitat for peoples such as the Marsh Arabs and also for a great diversity of wildlife. The draining of the marshes, in fact, started in the 1950s and continued to the 1970s to reclaim land for agriculture and oil exploration, but, during Hussein’s presidency, the works were expanded and accelerated, mostly as retaliation for the 1991 failed Shia uprising, since the dissidents were thought to be looking for shelter in the marsh region. The drying operations consisted mainly in the opening of three canals (the Third River, the Glory Canal and the Prosperity Canal, as they were called) built as a manner of redirecting waters from the Tigris to the Euphrates. By the late nineties, the Central Marshes became completely desiccated; in 2000 the United Nations Environment Programme estimated that 90% of the marshlands had disappeared.¹

The environmental damage was regarded as catastrophic.² Bird migration areas were lost, and several plants and animals species endemic to the region became extinct. The salinity of the soil increased, resulting in loss of dairy production, fishing and rice cultivation, and over 19,000 km² of the region became a desert. The majority of the Marsh Arabs were displaced to nearby areas, and an estimated 80,000 to 120,000 fled to refugee camps in Iran.³ After the 2003 US invasion, embankments and drainage works were broken open, and the marshes began to re-flood, but the recovery – and the corresponding regrowth of natural marsh vegetation – was slow, and the most severely damaged sections of the marshes have yet to show any signs of regeneration.⁴

But the loss of the marsh ecosystem was not the only negative environmental consequence after two decades of war. For instance, the country presently faces severe soil, water and air pollution from toxic substances released by the destruction of military hardware and factories, according to the UNEP.⁵ (Also, the Tigris and the Euphrates – which provide most of the irrigation and drinking water) are now essentially open sewers plagued by industrial and hospital waste, fertilizer run-off from farming, and oil spills. The restoration of water and sanitation systems, the cleaning up of main pollution hotspots and waste sites, as well as the prevention of further soil erosion and desertification, are some of the most pressing environmental concerns in Iraq.⁶

1 Wikipedia, *Draining of the Mesopotamian Marshes*, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draining_of_the_Mesopotamian_Marshes>; *Mesopotamian Marshes*, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesopotamian_Marshes>; and *Glory Canal*, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glory_Canal>.

2 *The Mesopotamian Marshes of Southern Iraq*, (March 2003), <www.public.iastate.edu/~mariposa/marshes.htm>.

3 Wikipedia, *Draining of the Mesopotamian Marshes*, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draining_of_the_Mesopotamian_Marshes>.

4 See: <ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=37031>.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

organizations and networks to monitor Government activities and human rights situations, and established the important role that Iraqi citizens can play in securing democratic national development.

Recommendations

To realize the vision of the February uprisings, several things need to be done:

- Pave the way for women participation in governance and implement adequate measures to eliminate family and societal gender-based violence.

- Address impunity in financial corruption and forgery, prosecute perpetrators of terrorism and organized crime, and investigate cases of criminals who repeatedly escape prison.
- Implement a national strategy for poverty alleviation. The overwhelming majority of citizens suffer from poverty and unemployment, and the worsening economic, social and services crises, especially in water supplies, food, energy, housing, low levels of health care.
- Accelerate legislation related to political, civic, economic and cultural issues, particularly regulating political parties, elections, oil and gas. ■

Sustainable development: not the Government's priority



Commitments on combating poverty and social exclusion, as well as on increasing gender equality, have not been met, while policies undermine the availability and delivery of essential services. Although sustainable development is not part of the Government's priorities, four successful referenda promoted by civil society (against nuclear power, forced privatization of water and other public services and against the exemption of the Prime Minister from the rule of law) that brought almost 27 million Italians to vote, have pushed the country in the right direction. It is essential to review all public policies and establish a new model of development centred on the enforcement of fundamental human rights, environmental sustainability and the reduction of social inequality.

Italian Social Watch Coalition

The public debate in Italy on a sustainable development model, which introduces social and environmental indicators of well-being in addition to economic variables, has not yet managed to influence policy-making. It was not fed into a national indicators system, although the National Statistics Institute (Istat) and the National Council for Economy and Labour announced the creation of a "discussion table" towards a shared set of indicators, and in 2009 Parliament approved a bill to reform the public accounting system (Law 196/2009), which provides that the Government should review the indicators taking into account environmental sustainability.

For their part, traditional economic indicators are far from encouraging: an increase in GDP in 2010 of only 1.1% compared to 2009;¹ and a debt that continued to grow by 4.5% to EUR 18,432 trillion, against EUR 17,639 trillion in 2009 (USD 26,563 trillion from USD 25,425 trillion), bringing the debt ratio to 118.6%.² An employment rate of 56.7%, highly unbalanced between women (45.8%) and men (67.6%), represented a further decline (-0.8% or 176,000 fewer employees than in 2009).³ The unemployment rate is 7.6% but rises to 24.7% for young people aged 15 to 24.

In 2010 Italy reached a record in the redundancy funds required by enterprises, which amounted to EUR 1.2 billion (USD 1.7 billion).⁴ In the last two decades, families' gross savings rates have fallen steadily from more than 30% in the first half of the 1980s to 14% in 2009. In parallel, purchasing power has fallen more than 5% since 2006. The latest figures available show a decrease in savings capacity of 0.9% for the third quarter of 2010 over the previous year.⁵

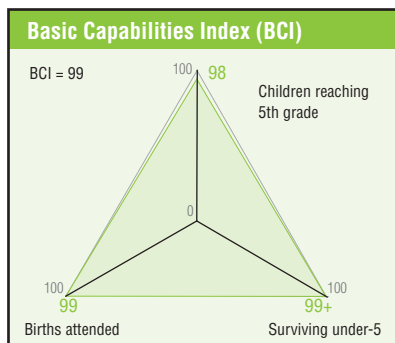
1 Istat, *Preliminary Estimate of GDP, IV Quarter of 2010*, press release, (11 February 2011).

2 Bank of Italy, "Supplement to the Statistical Bulletin," *Public Finance and Debt Requirements*, No. 8, 14 (February 2011).

3 Istat, *Employment and Unemployment, III Quarter of 2010*, press release, (21 December 2010).

4 National Social Security Institute (INPS) data base, <www.inps.it>.

5 Istat, *Income and Household Savings, III Quarter of 2010*, press release, (January 2011).



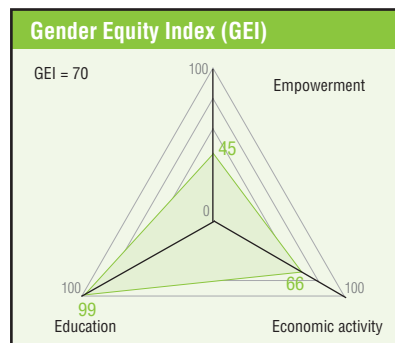
Government inaction

The investigations involving the Prime Minister's alleged offences of extortion and child prostitution, coupled with parliamentary paralysis, have left the main problems of the country unaddressed. Thus the city of L'Aquila, hit by an earthquake in 2009, is still a ghost town. A conflict between the management of Fiat, the largest Italian car manufacturer, and FIOM, the main metalworkers' union, saw the Government largely absent and unable to come up with an effective industrial policy. Moreover, the continued use of "extraordinary powers" to meet emergency needs that are often chronic becomes a replacement for legality and for environmental and health protection.

The weakness of the State is particularly problematic in sensitive areas such as environmental standards for waste management, where there are strong organized crime interests. In 2005 about 107.5 million tonnes of hazardous waste (including 5.9 million highly dangerous) were produced in Italy, but only 87.8 million tonnes were disposed of properly.⁶ The remaining 19.7 million tonnes, therefore, were most probably disposed of illegally.

In October 2010 the European Commission warned Italy that it would face economic sanctions if it did not handle the garbage crisis in Campania, the second most populous region in the country and one of the poorest. The crisis is the result of decades of mismanagement of both industrial and municipal waste.

6 National Environment Protection Agency and National Waste Observatory, *Waste Report 2007*, (Rome: 2007).



Labour and welfare policies

In 2010 the Government issued a budget package of EUR 24 billion (USD 34.6 billion) centred on the contraction of public spending. Welfare, social policies, education, research, official development assistance (ODA) and transfers to local authorities are the sectors most affected by the cuts, which in some cases were lower than budgeted only as a result of pressure by civil society groups and local authorities. Almost nothing has been done to reduce social inequalities.

The austerity budget (called the 'stability law') adopted in 2011 takes the same track. The freezing of public employees' contracts until 2013 and the blocking of seniority have particularly affected a school system already constrained by cuts to the workforce introduced by the Education Minister: 67,000 workers were eliminated in the 2009/2010 school year and 40,000 in the 2010/2011 school year.

Overall, the 10 social funds financed in 2008 with EUR 2.5 billion (USD 3.6 billion) could count on only EUR 349 million (USD 507 million) in 2010.⁷ In support of low-income families there remains the "social card" (EUR 40/USD 58 a month), a charity measure established in 2008 and refinanced in 2011 with a strong discriminatory addition: resident foreign citizens, young workers and retired people whose income even slightly exceeds the minimum pension limit cannot request it. The Federal reform currently under discussion in Parliament, if passed, would jeopardize the guarantee of minimum standards for social welfare throughout the nation.

7 See the proceedings of the Conference on Universal and Local Levels: Institutions and Third Sector Together for a New Welfare System, (Bologna: 25-26 November 2010), <www.idiritizianalavoce.org/>.

In terms of development cooperation, in order for Italy to reach the internationally agreed goal of 0.7% of GDP in ODA by 2015,⁸ more and better aid must go to international cooperation (including through innovative financing mechanisms) and resources must be provided in a more predictable, transparent way.

Italy continues to have a high – but largely overlooked – degree of discrimination against women at work, in politics and in the household, including domestic violence.⁹ The Italian campaign around the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) provides evidence on the “continuation of degrading and sexist representation of women in the media as well as in the political arena,” without the proper tools to combat it.¹⁰

Environment and sustainability

Italy is one of the few countries in Europe that does not have a strategy to reduce carbon dioxide emissions or to meet the European 2020 reduction targets. The only existing plan dates back to 2002, is highly inadequate and does not meet the Kyoto commitments for the period 2008-2012. A national strategy for reducing carbon dioxide emissions in the long term (2050) should be adopted quickly, involving intermediate steps in line with the European objectives and the need to enhance and accelerate the transformation of the economy into a Zero Carbon one.

Since a referendum in 1987 agreed on the country's exit from nuclear power, there are no active plants in Italy. However, a programme for the revival of nuclear power started in 2009, providing for the construction of 8-10 new power plants, 1000 to 1500 MW in size, for a total cost of EUR 40-50 billion (USD 58-73 billion) at the expense of investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy savings.

Although Italy is Europe's richest country in terms of biodiversity, with 57,468 species of animals – 8.6% endemic, that is, found only in Italy – and 12,000 species of flora – 13.5% endemic, much of this heritage is being lost: currently at risk are 68% of its terrestrial vertebrates, 66% of its birds, 64% of its mammals and 88% of its freshwater fish. A National Biodiversity Strategy, finally approved on 7 October 2010, must be fully implemented by pro-

viding national governance (with the contribution of the Regions) along with adequate funding.

Civil society initiatives

There has been widespread mobilization by Italian citizens, including the following:

- 1,400 million signatures were delivered to the Supreme Court on 19 July 2010 calling for a referendum on the public management of water after the “Ronchi decree” in 2009 stated that the water service – as well as other public services such as waste management, public transportation, etc. – was to be entrusted to private companies or have at least 40% private ownership, and on 12 and 13 June 2011, Italian citizens voted against it.
- The issue of nuclear power saw much of civil society coming together in defense of renewable, safe and clean energy. Italians were also called to vote on a referendum and repealed the rule that reintroduced nuclear power plants after they had been banned in 1987 by popular vote. The issue of nuclear power has seen much of civil society mobilize together for the defense of renewable, safe and clean energy. These referenda (together with another one to cancel the “legitimate impediment” law introduced by the Berlusconi Government, which allowed top Government officials to avoid appearing in court when citing their work commitments) resulted in the unambiguous response (95% of those who voted) of Italians voting in favour of abolishing those laws. Furthermore, the results of the referenda have forced the Government to produce a national energy strategy for 2011 that should include specific funding for energy efficiency and renewable resources.
- A large movement of students, teachers and researchers from high schools and universities protested in the second half of 2010 against the cuts in education and research, with hundreds of schools and universities occupied throughout the country.
- The citizens of L'Aquila, voluntary associations and social movements have been working to free the town's historic centre from the rubble of the earthquake, as well as organizing cultural and solidarity activities to address the social reconstruction of the city.
- The charges of extortion and child prostitution initiated against Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi brought out a million women and men to demonstrate in the streets in February 2011, not only to vindicate the dignity and rights of women but also to challenge the political, cultural and social practices that tend to reduce women to – or represent them as – sexual objects.

Conclusion

An overall review of public policies is as urgent as it is essential. The priority should be the establishment of a new model of development centred on the enforcement of fundamental human rights, the reduction of social inequality and a real commitment to environmental sustainability.

In the economic field, public policies should be adopted to boost employment, particularly for youth, including incentives for businesses that hire new workers; to stimulate the development of green consumption and production and the ecological conversion of industrial production that has a high environmental impact; and to support companies that invest in areas of high production, skills, research and the knowledge economy. There should also be greater tax equity – for example, by introducing a 0.05% fee on financial speculations as well as a wealth tax.

In the social field, it is urgent to work on the expansion of resources allocated to social assistance, the fight against poverty, services for children and other dependants, public education, social security benefits and contributions for the social inclusion of foreign citizens. Action must be taken to address the situation of the 5.2% of Italian households reported by Istat in 2009 to be living in absolute poverty.¹¹ In addition, the definition of basic levels of social benefits (provided for in Article 22 of Law 328/2000) must be reaffirmed. If this is not the case, the Federal reform currently under discussion in Parliament might jeopardize the guarantee of minimum standards of social welfare at the national level.

In terms of the environment, an accounting system should be adopted to provide essential information and ensure transparency and accountability of government actions on sustainable development. Priority should be given to small-scale infrastructure, for which the Government set aside EUR 800 million (USD 1,164 million) in November 2009; these funds should be targeted at urban areas and used for repairing and upgrading existing strategic infrastructures (primarily railways) rather than building major new ones. In order to implement the “Directive on criminal law protection of the environment (Directive 2008 / 99/CE)”, the Italian criminal code should include the definition of “environmental crimes,” with increased sanctions. ■

8 See United Nations, “Resolution 2626,” Twenty-fifth Session of the UN General Assembly, para. 43, (24 October 1970); and “Report of the UN Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development,” A/CONF.198/11, para. 42, (2002).

9 *Work in Progress - 30 years of CEDAW*, produced by a group of Italian women's rights and gender equality advocates, <www.womenin.net/web/CEDAW/home>.

10 Ibid.

11 Economy News, *Around 3.8 Million Italians Living in Absolute Poverty*, Available from: <www.newseconomy.info/2010/07/around-38-million-italians-living-in.html>.

Reaching a turning point



In 2010, after many years of struggle, Kenyans finally managed to negotiate the groundbreaking 2010 Constitution. Its focus on basic rights, participation, accountability to citizens and public service provides the basis for defining the role of the State as central to constructing an economy that fulfils the promise of equity, participation and basic social and economic rights. By making popular participation and service delivery the core politics of sustainable development, the people will transform themselves into a new revolutionary force. In environmental terms, the new Constitution is also a step forward since it establishes the right of every Kenyan to a clean and healthy environment.

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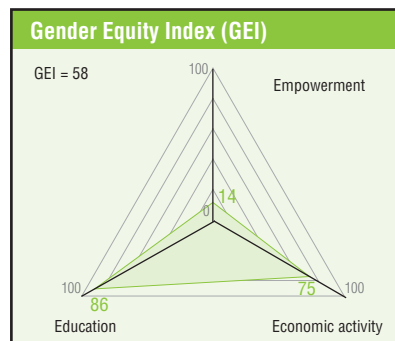
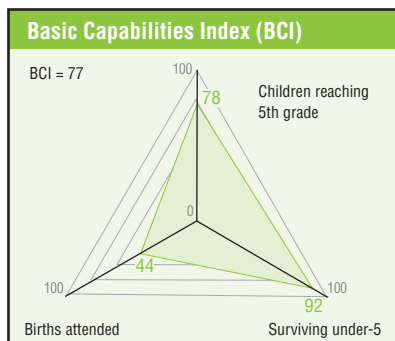
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Reality of Aid

Vitalice Meja

In December 2010, following years of struggle for true sovereignty and citizenship, the people of Kenya managed to negotiate a new social contract in the form of a ground-breaking Constitution. The path to the 2010 Constitution has been neither straight nor smooth, with constitutional reform a major issue since the country gained independence. Attempts to amend the 1963 Constitution intensified in the late 1990s and early 2000s, but succeeded only after the outbreak of post-election violence in early 2008 and the intervention of the African Union through a mediation team headed by then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The Constitution was presented to the Attorney General on 7 April 2010, officially published on 6 May 2010 and put to a referendum on 4 August 2010. Approved by 67% of Kenyan voters, it was promulgated on 27 August 2010.

This new Constitution promises a transformative agenda that, if fully realized, will bring about a new political-economic framework in which the country could break from the neo-patrimonial system (in which patrons use State resources to secure the loyalty of clients in the general population) bequeathed to them by neo-colonialism. Its four transformative features are: an expanded Bill of Rights and a promise to address inequality and marginalization;¹ far-reaching devolution of public authority; a chapter on leadership and integrity founded on the principles of selfless public service, discipline and accountability;



and a value system based on the sovereignty of the people and a culture of human rights.

If properly implemented, the Constitution will offer Kenyans a unique opportunity to obtain straight answers to two long-standing questions, hitherto the source of intermittent and violent sub-national conflicts: what is the concrete meaning of being a Kenyan citizen and what does the State offer to the majority of the people? The 2010 Constitution's focus on basic rights, participation, accountability to citizens and selfless public service also provides the context for defining the role of the State as central to constructing an economy that fulfils the promise of equity, participation and basic social and economic rights.

This will enable Kenya to break free from the stranglehold of neo-liberal policies imposed through various means including conditions for development aid, political arm-twisting, asymmetric multilateral obligations and the collusion of local interests with foreign agendas. It will also help to address the issue of widespread corruption. For example, recent social audits reveal that the benefits of both the Local Authorities Trust Fund (LATF) and the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) hardly reached their primary stakeholders. Most of the funds earmarked for them have been embezzled by the members of Parliament and their cronies who were supposed to manage these resources on behalf of citizens.

What the new Constitution has to offer

The new Constitution presents a holistic and rights-based approach that guarantees equitable social development rooted in the productive capacities of the society as an alternative to the current paradigm that is based on rent seeking. It implies a new political economy based on popular participation not only

in the mechanics of politics but also in the shaping of the economy and the sharing of the benefits of value-added production. Such a political economy will seek to rebalance corporate sector interests with the social development objectives of citizens and the State's obligation to provide a social protection floor for all sectors of society. It suggests a new State that is both democratic and developmental.

A democratic developmental State will separate the public and the private domains so that those who provide public services cannot at the same time be in the private sector. This is essential to avoid conflicts of interest and for the State to balance the public good with the profit motive. A democratic developmental State will steer the economy away from unproductive rent seeking into value-added production based on building the productive capacities of its citizens. It will intervene to ensure that profits arise from productive activity and innovation and in this process not only redirect but also reshape them. It will focus on employment creation, not just aggregate growth, and will ensure that the growth process is itself distributive and aimed at enhancing well-being. It will use taxation as its main source of financing development, as a tool for redistribution and redirection of incentives and as a means of enhancing citizen agency.

The new Constitution also seems propitious regarding environmental issues. For example, Section 42 of Part 2 ("Rights and fundamental freedoms") states: "Every person has the right to a clean and healthy environment, which includes the right a) to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations (...), and b) to have obligations relating to the environment..." , while article 69 states that "the

¹ The Bill of Rights goes beyond the usual political and civic rights to include economic, social and cultural rights. *New Constitution of Kenya*, Nairobi, 2010, p. 4.

State shall (...) ensure sustainable exploitation, utilisation, management and conservation of the environmental and natural resources, and ensure the equitable sharing of the accruing benefits.² This is a considerable step forward in a country with so many environmental challenges including desertification, soil erosion, deforestation, water shortage and water pollution.³ For example, up to 16.8 million people (43% of the population) have no access to an improved water source,⁴ while 80% of the arid and semi-arid areas of the country are rapidly becoming deserts, primarily because of the mismanagement of natural resources.⁵

Kenya prior to the Constitution: food, financial and fuel crises

Accusations of irregularities in the 2007 presidential election triggered a wave of political, economical and social unrest that, in combination with the global financial crisis, ravaged the economy during the years that followed. More than USD 500 million were lost in the stock market on just the first day of 2008, and millions of dollars were also reported missing by business leaders.⁶ Targeted violence escalated against ethnic minorities and all around the country people took to the streets protesting against electoral manipulation.

This situation drove gross domestic product (GDP) per capita growth below zero that year, and the impact of the financial crisis was immediately felt on food prices, trade (with imports and exports declining steeply) and investments as gross fixed investment plummeted from an already dismal level. The social consequences of these multiple shocks were even more dire, with rising unemployment (65% in 2010)⁷

and sharply increasing income poverty, hunger and malnutrition (with at least 100,000 children at risk of extreme malnutrition).⁸ While the poor suffered, owners of real estate, bankers and telecommunications service providers experienced a boom,⁹ exposing the folly of neo-liberal capitalism as it cushions the rich from the vagaries of its cyclical crises and punishes the poor with its skewed reward structure.

The response to the crisis followed a similar pattern, with immediate and significant capital injection by the State into the financial system, quickly lifting stock prices and boosting high-value real estate businesses while investment in social infrastructure and in the conditions of the poor trickled down slowly if at all.

The "light touch regulation" promoted by the World Bank in Kenya and the accompanying mismanagement of capital account policies have ensured that the domestic financial systems no longer support the productive sector and small and medium-sized enterprises. The destabilizing effect of short-term capital flows and the unpredictable behaviour of the market have held the national economy hostage to the whims of itinerant speculative capital. The crisis has exposed the current neo-liberal development paradigm as being driven by the exclusive interests of big business and its multilateral capacity to promote inequitable growth that leads to increased unemployment.

Resetting participation boundaries

The new Constitution guarantees public participation in governance – the "red meat of politics," as the saying goes, without which democracy is fatally undermined. It is an approach to citizen empowerment that is becoming a vital element of democratic theory and

practice. Inspired by the spirit of the African Charter on popular participation in development and transformation and equally, in the Kenyan case, driven by the letter of the newly promulgated Constitution, the basic principles underlying the practice of stakeholder engagement inform the ongoing discourse on the management of sustainable societies.

As a central principle of public policy-making, "public participation" presupposes that all levels of government seek to build citizen and stakeholder involvement into their respective policy-making processes and activities. This means breaking down the artificial boundaries between legal professionals and ordinary citizens. True citizenship is basically a political relationship, requiring respect for the common good and a specific role in society that is based on responsibility to a polity rather than specific interests.

It is time for citizens to reclaim their sovereignty as agents of policy-making that can convert their social development needs away from the hegemonic interests into the popular will.

The State should be forced to remove its mask of a neutral executor of the public will and be made to become an instrument in the service of the productive sectors of society and not as a shield for the parasitic interests of the ruling classes. By making popular participation and service delivery the basis of the politics of sustainable development, people will, at the same time, be bridging the widening gap between the tasks that ordinary citizens have to perform and those that are considered the prerogative of the elites. Through participation and collective action, Kenyans will transform themselves into a new revolutionary force. ■

2 M. McDermott, "Kenya Grants Environmental Rights in New Constitution," *Tree Hugger*, (January 2011), <www.treehugger.com/files/2011/01/kenya-grants-environmental-rights-new-constitution.php>.

3 P. Orengo, "Parts of Kenya Slowly Turning into Desert," *The Standard*, (16 August 2010), <www.standardmedia.co.ke/InsidePage.php?id=2000016338&cid=4>; EcoMerge, *Kenya's Soil Erosion Leads to Famine*, (31 May 2010), <ecomerge.blogspot.com/2010/05/kenyas-soil-erosion-leads-to-famine.html>; Mongabay.com, *Kenya Forest information and Data*, <rainforests.mongabay.com/deforestation/2000/Kenya.htm>; Water.org, *Kenya*, <water.org/projects/kenya>; and AllAfrica.com, *Kenya: Rampant Pollution of Rivers Worries Ngilu*, (23 March 2011), <allafrica.com/stories/201103240499.html>.

4 Water.org, op. cit.

5 P. Orengo op cit.; EcoGeneration, *Desertification in Kenya*, (29 November 2009), <eco-generation.org/activities/news/view.html?boardno=47&cat1=&cat2=&thread=588&no=588&page=71&search=&keyword=>>.

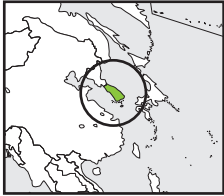
6 CNN World, *Civil unrest damaging Kenya's economy*, (3 January 2008), <articles.cnn.com/2008-01-03/world/kenya.economy_1_kenyan-shillings-nairobi-stock-exchange-mwai-kibaki?_s=PM:WORLD>.

7 M. W. Muthee, *Tackling Youth Unemployment in Kenya*, (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, September 2010), <www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=news.item&news_id=634085>.

8 T. McConnell, "Recession Worsens Kenyan Famine," *Global Post*, (2 April 2009), <www.globalpost.com/dispatch/kenya/090401/recession-worsens-kenyan-famine?page=full>.

9 Kenyan real estate blog, *Analyzing the Real Estate Sector in Kenya*, <www.kenyaluxuryhomes.com/apps/blog/entries/show/5890863-analyzing-the-real-estate-sector-in-kenya>; Kenya Buzz, *Kenya's Very Healthy Banking Sector*, <kenyabuzz.com/lifestyle/business/item/567-kenya-s-very-healthy-banking-sector>; C. Mungai, "Is Kenyan African Silicon Valley?", *Talk Afrique*, (26 February 2011), <www.talkafrique.com/science-and-technology/kenyan-ict-african-silicon-valley>.

The Government's narrow conception of green



The Government's plans for economic growth have no regard for social or environmental issues. Its favouring of a neo-liberal model fails to take into consideration the distribution of wealth, the well-being of natural ecosystems or civil society participation. Meanwhile the economy is more and more dependant on foreign markets and investors. The country is failing to provide a minimum standard of living for the poorer sectors of society, a proper welfare system for senior citizens, adequate childcare facilities or a functioning public health system.

Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice
Kye Hyun Ko

There are at least two main obstacles to sustainable development in the Republic of Korea: a high dependence on an economic model based on exports and a weak social welfare infrastructure. According to a 2010 report the country had the most highly dependent on exports and imports among the G20, with exports accounting for 43.4% of its gross domestic product (GDP).¹ The same study stated that it is also the most highly dependent on foreign investment among G20 countries (88%). President Lee Myung-bak's administration in particular has no concern for anything other than the economic needs of big company owners.

The Government's obsession with boosting the export sector has caused deep inequality between large and small or medium-sized businesses. The economy is dominated by a few conglomerates such as Samsung and Hyundai, and the gap between them and their suppliers is increasing. While big conglomerates form the backbone of the country's economy (e.g., Samsung alone provides 20% of exports), small- and medium-sized enterprises provide jobs for more than 80% of the labour force so their health is crucial to the economy. Yet the number of small companies is decreasing.² Among them 46% are subcontractors that have neither their own capital nor independent technology and are therefore subordinate to the big companies.

Growing inequalities

This situation has led to social and union unrest and also weak domestic demand due to the increasing numbers of non-regular workers and the unemployed. There is a high prevalence of informal or non-regular workers among the small- and medium-sized companies. The country's unemployment rate for 2011 rose from 3.6% in January to 4% in February, according to figures from the Govern-

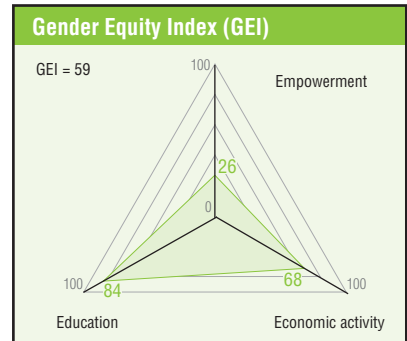
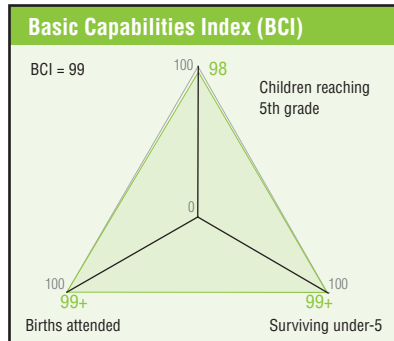
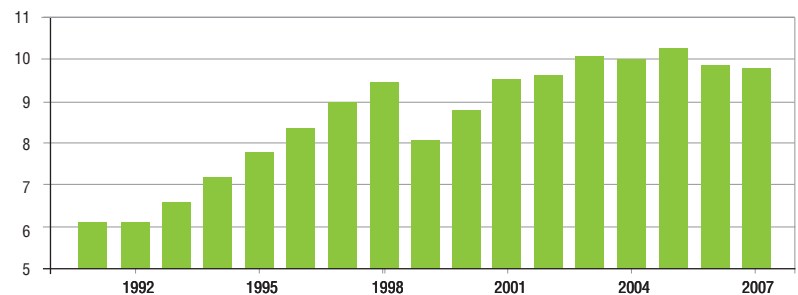


FIGURE 1

CO₂ emissions (metric tons per capita)



Source: Trading Economics, <www.tradingeconomics.com/singapore/co2-emissions-metric-tons-per-capita-wb-data.html>.

ment Statistics Department.³ Unemployment rates are higher among young people (8.5%), with 50% of recent college graduates failing to find a job.

The income gap between informal and formal workers is growing. In 2010 2.1 million workers had earnings below the minimum wage (USD 767 per month).⁴ The quarterly Engel's coefficient (the percentage of food consumption to total spending) posted the highest figure in seven years at

13.92%.⁵ Engel found that the lower a family's income, the greater proportion food expenses account for in its household budget. An increasing coefficient suggests greater impoverishment and growing inequality between rich and poor.

Environmental issues

One of the country's main environmental concerns is air pollution in the major cities (83% of the population live in urban areas).⁶ Sewer discharge and indus-

1 KBS World, *Korea's dependence on foreign trade*, (14 September 2010), <rki.kbs.co.kr/english/news/news_zoom_detail.htm?No=5844>.

2 L. Williamson, "South Korea's small businesses fight for survival," BBC News: Business, (17 August 2011), <www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-14554015>.

3 BBC News Business, *South Korea's unemployment rate rises to year high*, (16 March 2011), <www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-12756028>.

4 Hong Seock-jae, "S. Korea claims highest rate of low-wage employment in OECD," *The Hankyoreh*, (16 February 2011), <www.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/463674.html>.

5 KBS World, *Engel's coefficient highest in seven years*, (20 August 2011), <rki.kbs.co.kr/english/news/news_Ec_detail.htm?No=83925&id=Ec>.

6 CIA, *The World Factbook: Korea, South*, (27 September 2011), <www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ks.html>.

trial effluents have caused water pollution, including in the form of acid rain.

The Saemangeum estuary – which shelters 25 species of migrating birds, boasts thousands of species of animals and plants and provides a livelihood for several fisher communities – is one of the most severely endangered zones in the country. The Government created a dam in order to provide water to farming operations across the shoreline and now river sediment is significantly changing the ecosystem. Migrating birds are not able to nest in the area, which has a tremendous impact on the local food chain. Although most of the environmental impact studies were not made accessible to the public in the initial stages of the project, from the outset, several environmental groups expressed concern that the Government was not doing enough planning to provide the birds with new areas to nest. The dam was completed in 2006 and the estuary began to fill up with the sediment brought by the nearby rivers. Not only was the water from these rivers so polluted that it could not be used for farming on the shore, but the soil it carried was so saturated with toxic chemicals that rice farming was also impossible. The area will therefore have to be used for other purposes, but the environmental damage has already been done. Most of the local bird species are in danger of extinction.⁷

Concern has also risen among environmental organizations regarding Government efforts to boost investment in nuclear power. By 2010 the country hopes to be drawing more than 50% of its energy needs from nuclear power with only a small percentage coming from clean and renewable sources.⁸

The Four Major Rivers Project

The Four Major Rivers Project was launched in 2009 as a part of the new “green” set of policies enacted by the Government on Low-Carbon Green Growth (LCGG) (see box). Accounting for 38% of the budget for LC GG, the project has three main components: revitalization of the Han, Nakdong, Geum and Yeongsan (the so-called “four major rivers”); a set of works on 14 tributaries; and restoration of other, smaller-sized streams. The stated objectives are securing water resources, implementing comprehensive flood control measures, improving water quality and creating “eco-friendly” spaces for tourism. In order to accomplish these goals the course of many tributaries and minor streams will be modified and the four main rivers

WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT “GREEN”?

Since President Lee Myung-bak announced Low-Carbon Green Growth (LCGG) as a national development paradigm in August 2008, every ministry in the country is developing projects related to “green growth.” But what does “green” mean here? The Korean legislation defines it as “sustainable growth with less greenhouse gas emissions and environmental degradation,” also providing specific definitions for “low-carbon” (which means here reduction of fossil fuel dependency, expansion of clean energy use and consequently reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to acceptable levels) and “green growth” (defined as economic growth that seeks to be “in harmony with the environment” by reducing environmental deterioration). According to the Government, use of efficient low-carbon energy will contribute to energy security and also reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

However the meaning of “green” as defined by the Government is different from that understood in the field of political ecology, where it also encompasses social concerns such as gender justice, direct democracy and solidarity. Since the Government interprets it to mean simply the reduction of CO₂ emissions and other environmental pollutants, it can propose nuclear power as a “green” energy source because it generates relatively low CO₂ emissions (without the problem of the disposal of spent fuel being addressed). “Green” is promoted only when it contributes to economic growth, which seems to be the one true goal of the Government.

This is made apparent in major governmental projects such as the Saemangeum estuary dam and the Four Major Rivers Project, the latter a massive piece of engineering that includes the construction of 16 dams in preparation for canals to link the rivers. This is proposed as a “green” strategy in order to cope with climate change; nevertheless, this approach is widely unsustainable.

In this way the sustainable development paradigm is being replaced by “green growth” that is not only unconcerned with social equity and citizen participation but also has a very limited capacity to actually protect the country’s ecosystems.

will host dams and reservoirs that will dramatically change the ecosystems involved.⁹

The project has attracted criticism from local and international environmental groups such as Friends of the Earth. There was no proper Environmental Impact Assessment prior to beginning the work or any kind of dialogue with civil society, which was deprived of information about the project.¹⁰ Indeed it is being undertaken without any regard for public opinion, since 70% of Koreans criticize the project for not restoring but killing the ecosystems.¹¹

In addition the four provinces that host the project have significantly fewer water supply problems than other areas of the country. Environmentalists have stated that due to the massive dredging operations involved rare flora and fauna will have to be relocated and the reservoirs will force the displacement of communities and damage cultural heritage sites. Moreover the project is suspected of violating a number of laws including the Korea Water Resources Corporation Act and those relating to en-

vironmental policy, impact assessment and cultural asset protection.¹² There are also doubts regarding its economic viability.

Conclusion

The country’s economic model has to be changed from the “economic growth first” principle to a sustainable development approach, from big business-oriented to small/medium business-oriented and from policies favouring the rich to ones favouring the poor. In sum, the country should abolish neoliberal policies and focus on social and environmental needs.

The Government must reduce foreign dependence to foster small and medium-sized businesses through tax exemptions and financial benefits. The expansion of the public service could be the key for a job creation process that will play a major role in improving the quality of life in Korea. There should also be more participation from civil society in projects and policies that have an impact on the environment. ■

7 Asia Pacific Business & Technology Report, *Korea: environmental problems & solutions*, (1 February 2010), <www.biztechreport.com/story/417-korea-environmental-problems-solutions>.

8 Ibid.

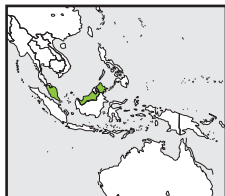
9 J. Card, “Korea’s Four Rivers Project: Economic boost or boondoggle?,” *Environment 360*, (Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, 21 September 2009), <e360.yale.edu/content/feature.msp?id=2188>.

10 Ibid.

11 Sun-Jin Yun, “Not So Green: A Critique of South Korea’s Growth Strategy,” *Global Asia 5*(2), (Summer 2010), <www.globalasia.org/V5N2_Summer_2010/Sun-Jin_Yun.html>.

12 Ibid.

Development at the cost of sustainability



In an effort to achieve developed country status by 2020, the current Government is implementing a development model that is highly unsustainable. For example, an entire rainforest is being flooded and at least 15 communities relocated in order to construct a huge dam for hydro-electrical power, an irresponsible move that will result in the loss of endemic species, increasing social discontent and environmental threats. Meanwhile, the people's right to participate in the management of natural resources is almost totally silenced. Only by empowering the people and ensuring access to information will the Government be able to address sustainable development.

Friends of the Earth Malaysia
Sahabat Alam Malaysia

In 1991, then Prime Minister Mahatir bin Mohamed introduced the concept of *Wawasan 2020*, or "Vision 2020." This was based on the idea that Malaysia could become a developed country by the year 2020, and established nine strategic challenges it had to overcome, including ensuring an economically just society, a competitive and dynamic economy, and also the inclusion of ethnic minorities and the establishment of a feeling of national unity.¹

This plan was later recalibrated. In 2009, incumbent Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak declared that strategies had to be redefined, mainly because in order to achieve *Wawasan 2020's* economic goals, an economic growth rate of nearly 8%² is needed, while the average from 2000 to 2010 was a meagre 1.20% and in 2009 hit a record low of -7.6%, followed by a peak of 5.9% later that year and an estimated 3.2% for 2011.³ The other reason, according to the Prime Minister, was because "being richer alone does not define a developed nation. There are important social and quality-of-life measurements that must be factored in when considering our objectives and successes."⁴

This idea is shared by former International Trade and Industry Minister and incumbent Member of Parliament Rafidah Aziz, who also felt optimistic regarding the achievement of the developed country status for 2020. "We have targeted ourselves into having a developed society in our own mould which means our society in 2020 would be multiracial, cohesive, tolerant, with respect for each other and with no polarisation," she said.⁵

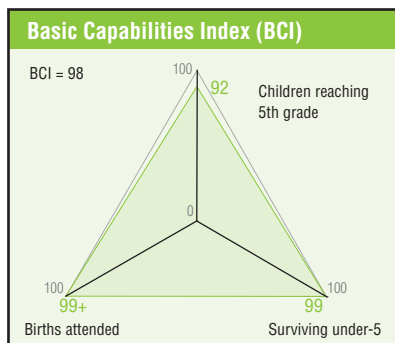
1 M. Mohamad, *The way forward* (Kuala Lumpur: Prime Minister's Office, 2008); See also: <www.wawasan2020.com/vision/index.html>.

2 R. Pakiam and S. Adam, "Malaysia Must Expand Faster to Be Developed Nation, Najib Says," Bloomberg News, (28 August 2009), <www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aAvHYIgg46lg&FORM=Z2NR8>.

3 TradingEconomics.com, *Malaysia GDP Growth Rate, 2011*, <www.tradingeconomics.com/malaysia/gdp-growth>.

4 R. Pakiam and S. Adam, op cit.

5 The Malaysian insider, *Rafidah says Malaysia can be developed nation by 2020*, (18 May 2020), <www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/rafidah-says-malaysia-can-be-developed-nation-by-2020/>.



Despite these good intentions and also the fact that in the 1970s Malaysia was a pioneer in establishing a framework for environmental governance,⁶ very little is being done today to adopt a truly sustainable development model, especially regarding the assessment of environmental issues. Thus, for example, the country's fulfilment of the Rio '92 accords has been generally disappointing. Since that year, it has undergone further industrialization, urbanization and infrastructure development that have resulted in loss of biodiversity and of vital ecosystems, particularly the mangrove and lowland forests. Moreover, despite provisions in various laws, people in the affected areas are hardly consulted and the Government remains secretive when it comes to development projects.

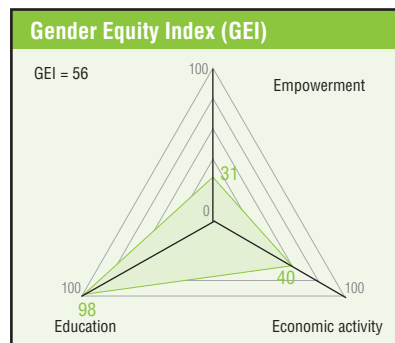
In fact, the development model implemented by the Government, focused on financial and industrial development without regard for the environment, is characterized by unbridled consumption and waste of water and electricity, resulting in environmental degradation and health problems.

Biodiversity loss and lax laws

Malaysia has uniquely rich and diverse flora and fauna, with approximately 25,000 plant species,⁷ 746 birds, 300 mammals, 379 reptiles, 198 amphibians

6 A. A. Hezri and M. Nordin Hasan, *Towards sustainable development? The evolution of environmental policy in Malaysia*, (2006), <www.apimal.org/blogcms/media/13/File/Sus Development Msia_Hezri n Hasan.pdf>.

7 Ibid.



and 368 species of fish.⁸ Among this flora and fauna, 2,199 species are endemic.⁹

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) 2010 Red List, Malaysia ranked third in the world with the highest number (1,180) of threatened species.¹⁰ Of these numbers, animal species account for 488, with 47 of them in the "critically endangered" category. Also, 188 of 692 plant species are critically endangered, and four of the endemic plant species are now extinct.¹¹

The latest plant to be declared extinct is the *Shorea kuantanensis*, after the only forest it grew in, the Bukit Goh Forest Reserve in Kuantan, was cleared for palm oil cultivation. The others are two fern species and the flowering shrub *Begonia eromischia*.

Malaysia's rainforests are rich in timber, medicinal plants, resins, fertilizers, and also supply freshwater, protect soils against erosion and nutrient loss, and sustain a great biodiversity. Malaysia, in fact, is recognized as one of the world's 12 megadiverse countries.¹² This means that it has a huge responsibility for safeguarding its biological diversity. Although laws to regulate the exploitation of natural resources and protection of the environment exist, implementation and enforcement remain poor.

Many laws are in need of review, but as economic development without a sustainable perspective

8 Mongabay.com, *Malaysia*, (2006), <rainforests.mongabay.com/20malaysia.htm>.

9 See: <life.nthu.edu.tw/~d868210/jpg/hwk2/content.html>.

10 See: <www.iucnredlist.org/documents/summarystatistics/2010_4RL_Stats_Table_5.pdf>.

11 Ibid.

12 Hezri and Nordin Hasan, op cit.

has been a high priority, efforts at strengthening the inadequate laws often take a back seat. For example, the proposed amendment of the 1974 Environmental Quality Act has been debated for nearly a decade, and a 1972 wildlife protection law was replaced with the 2010 Wildlife Conservation Act only after nearly 15 years of deliberation. Moreover, new laws fail to address key issues overlooked by the old regulations which have contributed to the country's dubious status as the regional hub for wildlife trafficking.

Another weakness lies in the distinct separation of power between the Federal and State Governments over resources such as land, forest and water. While most biodiversity policies (e.g., the National Biodiversity Policy, the National Forestry Policy and the National Land Policy) were established at the Federal level, the adoption of these policies remained weak at the state level, precisely where effective implementation is most needed.

Resource extraction and deforestation

Until the 1970s, Malaysia's economy relied heavily on the territory's natural resources. For example, large-scale rubber plantation was a major mainstay of the country's economy since colonial times. Hence, rapid rainforest loss in the 20th century can clearly be linked to the extractive models implemented by the successive administrations.¹³ Large areas of arable land were cleared for rubber and palm oil production, and a great number of trees were felled in order to keep up with timber demand for domestic and overseas markets: in 1985, for example, the forestry sector contributed up to 15% of the country's export earnings.¹⁴ According to some studies, Malaysia's deforestation rate is growing faster than that of any other tropical country.¹⁵ In fact, its annual deforestation rate jumped nearly 86% between 1990 and 2005, with a total loss of forest coverage of 140,200 hectares per year since 2000.¹⁶

It has been pointed out that while "on paper" Malaysia has one of the best rainforest protection policies in developing Asia, there is a great gap between the law and its full implementation and enforcement, so logging is still threatening the integrity of rainforests. In fact, over the past two decades, sustainable forest management has been non-existent.¹⁷

While a legal and administrative background was formulated in the early 1970s, the environmental impacts of land-based agricultural development and extractive practices have grown in magnitude, including deforestation, which has intensified significantly.¹⁸

The consequences of deforestation and misuse of land are many: soil erosion, hydrological changes, pesticide contamination of surface waters and also loss of local flora and fauna. Also, the risk of flooding and mudslides is increasing,¹⁹ and for indigenous peoples, who have always depended on the rainforest for medicine, shelter and food, the destruction of their prime source of livelihood is also resulting on the loss of their traditional ways of life: as the forest disappears, so does their culture.

Mega projects, mega destruction

In the last two decades Malaysia has witnessed a number of controversial public and private projects their socio-environmental impacts are still being calculated.

The most controversial of them is the 2,400MW Bakun Hydroelectric Project in the state of Sarawak (on the island of Borneo) where an area of about 695 km² (equivalent to the size of Singapore) is to be flooded. Touted as the world's second tallest concrete-faced rockfill dam, the project was criticized for neglecting environmental issues and also for its dubious justification of growing energy demand.

In fact, most of this alleged demand is said to lie in Peninsular Malaysia, and not in East Malaysia, where the dam is located. But some critics of the project have pointed out that in Peninsular Malaysia there is an over-supply of electricity, which makes the hydroelectric project unnecessary.²⁰

After two failed attempts to build the dam, in 1994 the project was privatized to Ekran Berhad, a logging company with no experience in dam construction, and its completion was aimed for 2003. In the ensuing Asian financial crisis in 1997, the Malaysian Government took over the project and paid "compensation" to Ekran, which had completed only 50% of the engineering work.

The flooding process was initiated on 13 October 2010, and besides the drowning of a vast tropical rainforest, which will mean the loss of a great amount of biodiversity (including many endemic species), 15 indigenous communities had to be resettled downstream. This forced relocation had generated much discontent among the population of the area, along with unresolved compensation claims, loss of livelihood and a host of other social problems. Several communities that rejected the relocation plan had jointly filed a lawsuit against the Government for loss of their native customary land. The case is still pending. Also, there have been recent

reports about unsafe – and even illegal – building practices that seem to be an everyday matter on the construction site due to poor safety measures.

Dirty industry hub?

There are concerns among civil society groups and some Government officials that the Government's industrialization ambitions (despite the "green" claim) could turn Malaysia into a magnet for polluting industries.

More worrying now is the fact that the country's vast coastline, particularly on the peninsula, is targeted for a petro-chemical hub that will be accompanied by the construction of ports to facilitate the export of end products. Such energy-intensive industries also need the construction of coal-fired power plants such as the one in the Iskandar Development Region in the state of Johor.

Such large scale coastal development is wiping out the country's mangrove forests, which are fish-breeding grounds that had supported inshore fisheries. Local communities' complaints of dwindling catches have largely fallen on deaf ears, with meagre compensation from the project developers and the Government. In some areas, coastal development promoted by the aquaculture industry has also taken away farmland with possible consequences on the nation's food security in years to come.

By and large, resistance to the Government's unsustainable development agenda has been restricted by media blackouts and the use of a variety of laws curtailing press freedom, including the Internal Security Act, Official Secrets Act, Sedition Act and the Police Act.

However, well-organized campaigns led by affected communities have shown that informed citizens could become a significant force in challenging the Government's unsustainable development plans. For example, two successful cases in this regard are the closing down of the Japanese-Malaysian rare earth factory in the state of Perak (late 1990s) and the abandonment of the waste incinerator located just 40 km away from the capital city.

Today, the biggest challenge for sustainable development in Malaysia is empowering the people with knowledge of their rights, ensuring access to information and creating mechanisms for genuine public participation so that national policy making and development project decisions can truly be weighed on the economy, society and the environment, that is, the three pillars of sustainable development. ■

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Mongabay.com, op cit.

16 Ibid.

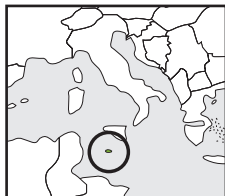
17 Ibid.

18 Hezri and Nordin Hasan, op cit.

19 See: <outskirtoutreach.org>.

20 See: <bakun-dam.co.tv>.

Time to wake up



In order to promote a sustainable future that meets today's needs without compromising those of future generations, the Maltese must begin to think of themselves less as "owners" of the environment and more as its "trustees and stewards." Citizens must realize that environmental degradation and unjust resource sharing are a result of their selfishness, indifference and complacency and become more prudent in using their limited natural resources. The process of caring for the environment should involve subsidiarity – a principle associated with the decentralization of power and the provision of an enabling environment, including material assistance to decentralized units – and translate into more effective integration and co-ordination among responsible entities.

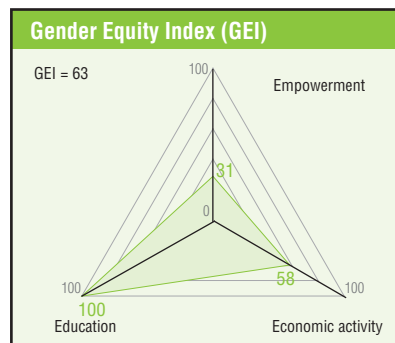
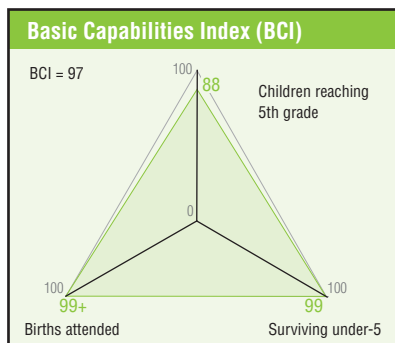
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J.M. Sammut

Malta's commitment to the ideals of the United Nations, particularly regarding environmental issues, is evident in the leading role the country played in 1967 when it introduced the concept of the Common Heritage of Mankind with regard to the international seabed and ocean floor and its subsoil. This led to the adoption of the 1982 United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea and to the 1989 initiative on the protection of the global climate for present and future generations of humankind.

Although Malta was one of the pioneers in recognizing global environment issues, its first national sustainable development strategy was not published until December 2006.¹ It is the numerous environmental NGOs in the country that have been regularly covering the different environmental issues. Some have been active since the 1960s and continue to respond to the challenges that growing commercial and domestic demands pose for Malta's land, sea and air. Studies show that, as a small densely populated archipelago, Malta has to be very prudent and ethical in the use of limited natural resources.² Unbridled market forces and highly consumerist lifestyles, with their emphasis on satisfying profit and individual needs, may be working against the social well-being of Maltese society not only in the present but also in the future.

Climate change

The mean annual air temperature in Malta has risen by 0.23°C per decade over the past 50 years.³ Global warming is expected to lead to more extreme and haphazard weather patterns in the country with prolonged Saharan heat-waves, shorter, more intense rainy periods and longer dry spells that will be detrimental to both the inhabitants and the tourist industry. The rise in temperature will be accompanied



by severe water shortages as rainfall over the central Mediterranean is drastically reduced.

From 1990 to 2008, Malta's greenhouse gas emissions showed an average annual increase of 2.1%. The greatest rise occurred in 1991 when an increase of 8.7% was recorded. The only years which saw a reduction were 1995, 2004 and 2008.⁴ From 2000 to 2008 the energy sector was the major contributor to greenhouse gases, emitting on average 90.4% of the total. Energy production industries, with an average of 73.5% of emissions, dominated this sector. These were followed by transport with 19.8% of the sector's total on average. Malta has 721 licensed road vehicles per 1,000 inhabitants.⁵ To help reduce emissions and over-dependence on private cars, a new bus system was introduced in July 2011.⁶ The Government should also establish incentives towards the purchase of low-polluting cars while discouraging demand for cars that pollute more, such as older models.

The National Strategy for Policy and Abatement Measures Relating to the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions⁷ states that, as an EU member state, Malta is committed by 2020 to reduce carbon dioxide

(CO₂) levels by 20% from the level recorded in 1990 and ensure that 10% of energy is generated from clean alternative sources. In the transport, agriculture and waste management sectors it pledged that, by 2020, gas emissions would be not more than 5% higher than in 2005. The country needs to scrupulously implement the measures laid down by the Climate Change Committee,⁸ look for more efficient use of energy generation and move decisively towards maximum utilization of renewable energy sources such as wind and photovoltaic energy to cut back on CO₂ emissions. Failing to reach such targets would have negative social and economic repercussions.

Land use

With an area of 314km² Malta has approximately 412,970 residents (1,307 persons per km²) and is visited by about 1.2 million tourists annually.⁹ Statistics show that in 2005 27.7% of the island was urbanized.¹⁰ Overdevelopment is Malta's most pressing environmental problem and has been the cause of a great loss of biodiversity and natural resources as well as of much land for agriculture.¹¹ Yet the 2005 Population and Housing Census revealed that there were over 53,000 vacant properties. More than a quarter of Malta's housing lies empty.¹²

The Malta Environment Planning Authority (MEPA) regulates land use and also runs the environ-

1 National Commission for Sustainable Development, *A Sustainable Development Strategy for the Maltese Islands 2007–2016*, (2006).

2 Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA), *The Environment Report 2008*, (2008), <www.mepa.org.mt/ter>; S. Martin, *The Environmental Deficit: The Reform of MEPA and Other Environmental Regulatory Authorities*, (Valletta: Today Public Policy Institute, 2008).

3 MEPA, op. cit.

4 Eurostat, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, <app.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tsdcc100>.

5 National Statistics Office, *Malta in Figures 2010*, (Valletta: 2010).

6 D.Lindsay, "New Public Transport System Unveiled," *The Malta Independent*, (7 November 2010), <www.independent.com.mt/news.asp?newsitemid=114978#top>.

7 Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs, *National Strategy for Policy and Abatement Measures Relating to the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, (Valletta: September 2009), <com.gov.mt/file.aspx?i=1439>.

8 Ibid.

9 National Statistics Office, *Malta in Figures 2010*, op. cit.

10 National Statistics Office, *Sustainable Development Indicators for Malta 2010*, (Valletta: 2010).

11 Ibid.

12 National Statistics Office, *Census of Population and Housing 2005: Preliminary Report*, (Valletta: 2010).

ment protection agency. There have been numerous breaches in land use plans, especially in building outside the Official Development Zone (ODZ),¹³ and the Authority has been criticized for its response to those breaking development regulations, being strong with the weak and weak with the strong.¹⁴ The extension of the building development zones on the eve of a closely fought parliamentary election¹⁵ and a number of other high-profile incidents have led to a perception of political interference in the planning process and undermined MEPA's credibility.

Construction and demolition create around 90% of the country's annual waste.¹⁶ Moreover they are also causing problems due to the generation of fine particles, leading to air pollution.¹⁷ The recycling and reusing of old stones, concrete bricks and ceilings is an issue that has not been addressed. Considering the scarcity of land, careful management of the built environment is urgently needed so as to ensure the best possible quality of life, with minimal risks to human health, while fostering the cultural and social identity of settlements. Maltese environmental NGOs keep reminding politicians and public authorities about the degradation of the natural heritage.¹⁸

MEPA personnel need to abide by the code of conduct¹⁹ presented to MEPA directors and employees in 2008 and design systems and procedures to ensure transparency, effectiveness and accountability for sustainable land use and to eliminate land speculation. It is essential that the members of the MEPA board not be political appointees but include planners, environmentalists and other concerned members of civil society. Only then can MEPA be considered to be safeguarding the environment.

Water

Water is a scarce commodity in the country. The average rainfall is 600 mm per year.²⁰ Both the quantity and quality of ground water are at risk mainly due to over-exploitation by the public water supply and

private uncontrolled pumping.²¹ This is leading to increased salinity and to contamination by excessive nitrates from agriculture and other pollutants.

More than half the water production is carried out by reverse osmosis in very costly desalination plants that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.²² Lately there have been periodic adjustments to water tariffs that contribute to decreased overall water demand. Malta has three sewage treatment plants that generate a substantial volume of second-class water. While the oldest sewage treatment plant, which started operating in the 1980s, provides this water to farmers for irrigation, the more recent treatment plants discharge their water into the sea.²³ Instead, it should be used in agriculture or utilized by industries that require extensive use of water.

The Government needs to invest in better water management, such as rainwater catchments that allow water to be siphoned back into underground aquifers. It should regulate private water collection and make it obligatory for all new building applications to include a cistern to harvest rainwater from the roof and encourage other households to invest in such a cistern. It should also run continuous public information campaigns on more efficient use of water.

Positive signs

For three years MEPA published a yearly environment report that shows there are positive signs of environment sustainability. *The Environment Report 2008*²⁴ notes that 99% of bathing sites around Malta and Gozo are in conformity with the EU's bathing water standards (as outlined in the EU Bathing Water Directive).²⁵

The report also stresses that the overall trend since 2000 has been towards a relative decoupling of energy consumption from economic activity, indicating that Malta's economy is becoming more energy efficient. There has also been an increase in material efficiency. Initial estimates show that Malta's domestic material consumption – which measures the quantity of material consumed by the national economy – declined between 2004 and 2006, indicating increased efficiency in the use of materials used for economic activities.

Conclusion

There is a need for more integrated resource management to conserve the environment for future generations. Malta should exploit emerging economic opportunities opened up through science and technology and develop sustainable development skills and related job opportunities. The Government must allocate funding to university graduates for research and development and help industry develop innovative products and processes.

Public awareness and education also play a key role in ensuring that the environment is respected and cared for. Environmental studies should have an important place across the National Minimum Curriculum. There is also a need for the creation of lifelong educational programmes that focus on enabling meaningful learning experiences that foster sustainable behaviour in educational institutions, the workplace, families and communities. The Government must create different awareness points so that all sectors of the population can benefit from formal, informal and non-formal education for sustainable development. Education, communication and information dissemination can help communities identify important issues, recognize problems, acknowledge opportunities and devise solutions. Better awareness enables citizens to make responsible and informed choices about their attitudes, behaviour and lifestyle.

Political will plays an important role in the enactment and implementation of sustainable environmental regulations and laws. Environmental standards may not be met unless they are backed up by laws enacted by Parliament. Political involvement has at times hindered enforcement actions by MEPA officials and environmental NGOs.²⁶ The courts must ensure that the administration of justice reflects the seriousness of the offence. The "polluter pays" principle, which has already been introduced in some areas, must be expanded.²⁷ Environmental taxes and eco-contributions should be used to encourage a change in behaviour by penalizing high emitters of pollution, and investing the money in sources of clean renewable energy or research in sustainable development. Malta must reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet its targets as an EU member.

Everyone has a role to play in the promotion of sustainable development. Civil society representation and participation should take place at all levels of decision-making. Representatives of civil society bodies, nominated by their own entities, should sit on the boards of national institutions such as the MEPA, the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD), the Malta Resources Authority (MRA) and the Malta Transport Authority (MTA). ■

13 National Statistics Office, *Sustainable Development Indicators for Malta 2010*, op. cit.

14 Sciluna, op. cit.

15 Ibid.

16 National Statistics Office, *Solid Waste Management: 2004–2008*, (25 January 2010), <www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=2672>.

17 Ibid.

18 Nature Trust Malta, "Rape of Natural Heritage Continues," *Gozo News*, (July 2007), <gozonews.com/986/rape-of-natural-heritage-continues-nature-trust/>; *The Times*, *2,500 Outside Development Zone Permits Issued in Two Years*, (24 March 2008), <www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20080324/local/2-500-outside-development-zone-permits-issued-in-two-years.201333>; Nature Trust Malta, *NTM Amazed on What Grounds MEPA Issued the Permit to a Fish Packing Factory at Imgiebah*, (2011), <www.naturetrustmalta.org/news/ntm-amazed-on-what-grounds-mepa-issued-the-permit-to-a-fish-packing-factory-at-imgiebah/>.

19 MEPA, *Good Conduct: A Code of Ethics and Code of Practice for MEPA Staff and Appointees*, (2008), <www.mepa.org.mt/file.aspx?f=256>.

20 National Statistics Office, *Malta in Figures 2010*, op. cit.

21 K. Sansone, "Farmers Extract More Groundwater than WSC," *The Times*, 23 March 2010. Available from: <www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20100323/local/farmers-extract-more-groundwater-than-wsc>.

22 National Statistics Office, *World Water Day 2009*, (Valletta: 2009), <www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=2446>.

23 M. Cremona, "Averting a Water Crisis," *Malta Today*, (7 March 2010), <archive.maltatoday.com.mt/2010/03/07/cremona.html>; J. Debono, "Malta Dumps 6,500 Cubic Metres of Water a Day," *Malta Today*, (12 October 2008), <archive.maltatoday.com.mt/2008/10/12/t14.html>.

24 MEPA, op. cit.

25 European Commission, *The 2006 Bathing Water Directive*, (2006), <ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-bathing/index_en.html#2006>.

26 Sciluna, op. cit.; F. Vella, "Mistra Development: Calls for JPO to Resign, While He Waits for Police Inquiry to End," *Malta Independent*, (19 March 2008); P. Cachia and N. Laviera, "DCC, MEPA Chairman Reacts to Auditor's Report on 'Irregular Supermarket Permit,'" *Di-ve News*, (28 February 2008), <www.di-ve.com/Default.aspx?ID=72&Action=1&NewsID=50003&newscategory=36>.

27 MEPA, *Polluter Pays Principle*, <www.mepa.org.mt/tf04_ppp>.

A path to nowhere



In recent years the country has made considerable progress in human rights and sustainable development. These gains are now in peril. The Government is pushing ahead with hydroelectric and highway mega-projects that violate agreements and legal restrictions, cause serious environmental damage and displace thousands of people from their land. These policies are irresponsible and absolutely devoid of any holistic human rights perspective. Nevertheless, the State appears determined to follow a development path that is totally unsustainable, despite the protests of the Mexican people and civil society organizations

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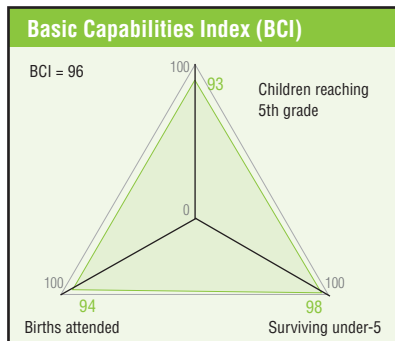
The country subscribed to Agenda 21, an action plan that emerged from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. The Agenda calls for a sustainable development strategy based on human needs, affirms the right to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature, and declares that protection of the environment should be an integral part of the development process.

To promote sustainable development, the State must first establish a solid environmental, economic and social foundation, and then design and implement coordinated policies, programmes and projects that guarantee the well-being of present and future generations. The Mexican State, however, is promoting projects that violate human rights, including the right to development and a healthy environment. Its policies contravene Agenda 21 and obligations under international law, as well as the country's own Constitution and environmental protection regulations.

The El Zapotillo dam

The El Zapotillo dam project in the Altos de Jalisco region is one of many projects proceeding in the face of protests from local communities and civil society organizations. The sponsors – the Federal Government through the National Water Commission (CONAGUA), and governments in the states of Jalisco and Guanajuato – assert that the dam will promote local and regional development and supply potable water to the city of León in Guanajuato, 10 municipalities in Altos de Jalisco and the city of Guadalajara.

No strategy that respects people's right to development can assume that the end justifies the means, but this is precisely the State's premise at El Zapotillo. The project involves building a concrete curtain 105 meters high that will store 911 million m³ of water in a reservoir with a surface area of 4,500 ha. It will also include the construction of 145 kilometres of aqueduct. The estimated total cost will be



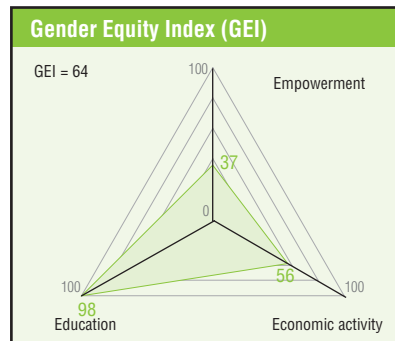
8,010 million Mexican pesos (approximately USD 680,000,000).

Critics note that the useful life of the dam is only 25 years. They point out that project will destroy the natural valley of the River Verde and flood three communities that date back to the sixth century – Temacapulín, Acasico and Palmarejo. Around 700 people currently live in these communities and a high proportion of the population is women and older adults. If the project is carried out, they will be expelled from their ancestral lands and their culture and history will be irretrievably lost.

These communities declared their opposition to the project when it was announced in 2005 and organized to fight for their human rights by peaceful means. Despite harassment and threats, they have continued to denounce the project as an irreparable violation of their fundamental rights and demand that the project be cancelled. They are also insisting that experts be brought in to make an independent evaluation of the social, cultural and environmental impacts of this mega-project. The pressure from the authorities and the threat that their ancestral homes will disappear have severely damaged their psychosocial health.

The negative impact of the project would extend far beyond these communities. It would promote lead over-exploitation and pollution throughout the region, and aggravate current social conflicts and disputes over water. The dam would devastate the River Verde biological corridor, wipe out large swathes of cultivated land, increase saline levels in the soil, and damage areas rich in flora and fauna.

As in other hydro-infrastructure mega-projects in Mexico, federal and state authorities have violated the people's right to information and communities'



right to prior consultation. They have not undertaken any evaluation of the social impacts of the project's utter disregard of the affected communities' rights to a healthy environment, adequate housing, water, health, land, work, or any other economic, social and cultural rights.

The residents of Temacapulín have won several legal battles in their bid to stop construction, but the authorities have ignored court rulings and continued construction work. Last March the local community organized further resistance and finally, on 1 April 2011, more than six years after construction began, the Federal Government and the National Water Commission agreed to begin a dialog with the Committee to Save Temacapulín, Acasico and Palmarejo.¹ Two months later, however, authorities confirmed at a so-called resolution committee that the project could go forward and be completed in 2012. Convinced that they had exhausted their options under Mexican law, the residents took the case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The impact of mega-dams

More than a decade ago the World Commission on Dams² warned against the serious impacts on the environment and on communities that big dam projects are causing all over the planet. The United Nations Committee for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Rights (UNESCO), as well as many NGOs worldwide, had expressed concerns to Mexico

¹ See: <noalapresaelzapotillo.wordpress.com>.

² Set up by the World Bank and the International Union for Conservation of Nature in 1998 in response to increasing opposition to big dams. For further information available see: <www.internationalrivers.org/files/wcdguide-s.pdf>.

concerning the La Parota dam since 2003. This hydroelectric mega-project has also been criticized by the Latin American Water Tribunal, and three UN Special Rapporteurs have issued reports and recommendations noting its potential deleterious impact on the right to housing, the right to food and the rights of indigenous people.

If completed, La Parota, on the River Papagayo in the state of Guerrero, would flood 17,000 hectares of cultivated land, as well as roads, bridges and communities, and displace 25,000 people in the immediate vicinity, along with 75,000 more downriver. As with the El Zapotillo dam, the State has neither divulged information to or engaged in consultations with threatened communities, or issued an evaluation of the project's potential impact on the environment, development, or the human rights of tens of thousands of people living in the area.

In spite of the international recommendations against pursuing this mega-project, and a long and arduous social and legal struggle by the communities affected and organizations allied with them, the Government of President Felipe Calderón has refused to cancel La Parota. The affected communities have continued the fight and in April 2011, they won their fifth legal battle, a court ruling that overturned an agrarian assembly decision of 2010 that authorized the Federal Government to take possession of the land earmarked for the dam. Since May 2011, a coalition of social organizations and networks has been pressing the recently-elected Governor of Guerrero to make a commitment to the threatened communities and lobby the Federal Government to cancel the project.³

Unsustainable development in the Federal District

Dangers to the environment and human rights are not limited to rural areas. The Federal District of Mexico (DF), which encompasses Mexico City and the surrounding urban areas, is also suffering from policies and projects that conflict with sustainable development. Large cities put enormous pressure on natural resources. In addition to their direct impact as a massive concentration of people, they also create an environment in which public policy decisions at the local level are unlikely to maintain a holistic human rights perspective. This poses an increasingly serious threat to present and future generations. One of the most worrying situations

for Mexican civil and social organizations is the development model being pursued by the current Government of the Federal District (GDF – for its initials in Spanish).

First, it must be said that since it was established 14 years ago, the GDF has promoted citizen participation and made great progress in recognizing human rights and introducing public services to support them. The Federal District is the only one of the country's 32 federal entities with a Human Rights Diagnosis Programme (PDHDF). This initiative, promoted by the Mexico Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and set up between 2007 to 2009 with popular participation, has a mandate to review progress toward achieving each of the basic human rights, including the right to a clean environment, the right to water, the right to health services and the right to housing.⁴

In 2010 the GDF became the only public institution in the country with an inter-sector Follow-up and Evaluation Mechanism. This programme created a structure in which different sectors, including civil society organizations, have set up systems to monitor compliance with the PDHDF. The GDF is also the only public body with a PDHDF law, passed in May 2011, which requires all public bodies in the city to pursue policies that respect human rights. In addition, at the instigation of urban popular organizations and with wide popular participation, the GDF drew up a Charter of the City of Mexico that embraces a vision of sustainable, liveable and healthy urban environment, and contains a series of commitments subscribed to by the local executive, legislative and legal branches.⁵

At last year's World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders, the head of the GDF, Marcelo Ebrard, described a broad range of Mexico City initiatives to mayors from other countries. These included programmes in the areas of security, citizen protection, non-motorized transport, citizenship and the environment, as well as housing and urban development projects, all of which, he noted, are elements in the city's progress "in the seven principles of action of the environment agenda: soil conservation, liveability and public spaces, water, transport, air quality, waste management and climate change measures [...] a work agenda that reflects an environmental situation that makes it essential to start implementing changes that will make the development of the city sustainable again."⁶

Despite this impressive rhetoric, this "avant-garde city" is full of contradictions and they are getting worse. In February 2011, 3,500 people took to the streets chanting "Marcelo, you must understand, the city is not for sale."⁷ They were expressing their opposition to various mega-projects that would entail destruction of trees and green spaces, irreparably damaging the lungs of the city, as well as land of great ecological value. The building work involved would also have a very negative impact on the subterranean water sources that the city depends on.

One of these large-scale projects is the so-called Western SuperHighway. In January 2011 the PDHDF submitted a report detailing human rights violations in the areas of legal protection, information, citizen participation, healthy environment, and water and adequate housing associated with this mega-project.

The Ombudsman of Mexico City asked the head of the GDF to halt superhighway construction work pending thorough and wide-ranging public consultations to consider the concerns, views and proposals of the people affected. He also urged the authorities to research sustainable transportation alternative for the city's southwest, and change its environmental impact and risk regulations to bring them into line with the Federal District Environment Law provision making a public consultation process mandatory in evaluations of the environmental effects of construction work.⁸ Civil society organizations and the people living in the affected areas have gone even further, demanding that the entire project be cancelled.

What these civil society and social organizations are demanding is that the GDF strictly adhere to the commitments it made in the PDHDF and its enabling law, as well as the Mexico City Charter, and cancel all legislative and public policy measures that have a negative impact on human rights. They note that by unilaterally imposing projects like the Western Super Highway, the city authorities are not only exposing the population to serious environmental and social dangers, they are dismantling carefully constructed democratic structures and weakening institutional channels for communication, dialogue, debate and proposals.

Mega-projects promoted by federal and local authorities throughout the country represent gross State irresponsibility. Rather than being based on a holistic human rights approach, the policies these projects represent are leading Mexico down a dangerous path of unsustainable development. ■

3 The organizations that have signed up for this campaign include Espacio DESC, the Tlachinollan Centre for Human Rights, Fundar, Serapaz, WITNESS, and the Mexican Centre for Environmental Rights. For further information, see: Tlachinollan, *Organizaciones refuerzan llamado a Gobernador de Guerrero para un No a la Parota*, (2011), <www.tlachinollan.org/Noalaparota>.

4 See: <www.derechoshumanosdf.org.mx>.

5 See: <derechoalciudaddf.blogspot.com>.

6 See: <ciudaddevanguardia.com/medio-ambiente>.

7 See: <www.eluniversal.com.mx/notas/747578.html>.

8 For further information see: <www.cdhd.org.mx/index.php/boletines/999-boletin-212011>.

A thirsty future



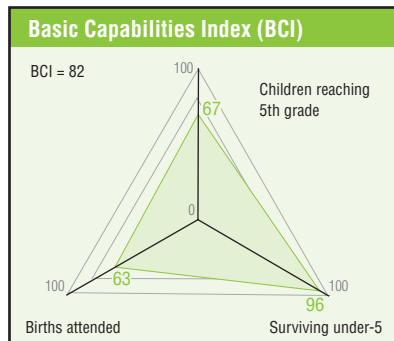
Although Morocco is rich in biodiversity, this is now threatened, in large part because water resources are poorly managed; 35% of piped water is lost, and water stocks are being polluted with industrial and urban waste. Cultivable land is also compromised because of water shortages and soil erosion. These factors are seriously aggravating rural poverty, and the gap between the richest and poorest population segments has widened.

Espace Associatif

Because of its strategic location and its historical and geographic context, Morocco has a great diversity of fauna, flora, climates, socio-cultural groups and landscapes. The climate zones, for example, include the Mediterranean area to the north of the Atlas Mountains, the temperate coastal land to the west and the desert to the east. This means there is a wide range of ecosystems including Mediterranean forests, coniferous forests, prairies and deserts,¹ and this wealth of fauna and flora makes Morocco the second richest country in the Mediterranean in terms of biodiversity. However, in spite of these natural advantages, the country has not been able to realize the kind of development that benefits the whole population. A new, integrated approach to development is needed, one that takes account of economic requirements, social equality, respect for the environment, cultural diversity, and which promotes the participation of local populations in development.

The Government's development model is built around economic growth and urbanization, but this has aggravated the environmental crisis the country is mired in. Moroccans today are facing a whole array of problems stemming from the exhaustion of resources and the deterioration of natural habitats, and these have an impact on the cost of living.² There is a serious imbalance between the increasing demand for fresh water and dwindling stocks of this resource, and to make matters worse forests and soils have been over-exploited, which means land that could have been used for agriculture is being lost. The economic cost of this environmental deterioration has been estimated at approximately USD 350 million.³

The loss of cultivable land due to water shortages and soil erosion has a direct impact on rural poverty. Three of the 4 million people who are below the poverty line live in rural areas. Some 75% of the



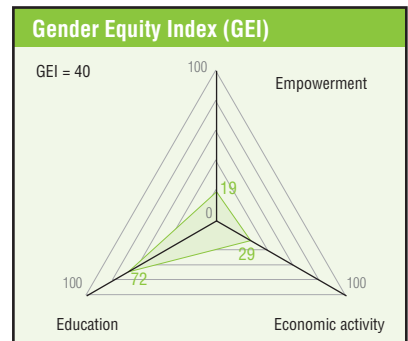
rural population depend on agriculture for a living, but the majority only have access to small, non-irrigated plots of land which have limited crop potential.⁴

Another of the country's pressing environmental problems is flooding. In recent years several regions have been hit by abnormally heavy rains and snow, and the resulting floods caused more than 30 deaths and brought suffering and poverty to thousands.⁵

A land of thirst

Morocco's renewable water resources are limited for technical and economic reasons, and the amount that can actually be used has been estimated at not more than 22,000 million m³/year, or a little over 730 m³ per inhabitant per year.⁶ The activity that consumes the most water is agriculture, which accounts for 80% of the country's total consumption. Together, the industrial sector and households use only 20%.

However, the water supply is compromised by extreme variations in the climate. There are cycles of severe drought that have serious consequences, both for the economy as a whole and especially for agriculture, the worst effect being a fall in the production of cereals.



These pressures on water resources go hand in hand with the increasing deterioration in water quality. The connection rate for potable water in urban areas is 83% (1998), but in rural areas access to water improved from 14% in 1994 to around 40% in 2001 thanks to the PAGER programme to supply water to rural communities, which was implemented in 1996.⁷

Water resources are not being used or managed in a rational way, which has made for even greater scarcity. For example, the potable water pipes in cities are in such bad repair that 35% of the water in the system is simply lost.

Another complication is that the country's dams are silting up, which is seriously affecting the water supply. At the Al Wahda dam and reservoir, for example, more than 60 million m³ of supply capacity per year is lost. But in addition to problems of quantity there are also problems of deteriorating quality caused by various kinds of pollution including the dumping of untreated industrial and household waste into water courses and the sea. Another kind of pollution stems from the intensive use of phytosanitary products and fertilizers, which have a negative impact on underground water stocks. So too does mineralization as sea water comes in, due to the over-exploitation of fresh water resources.⁸

The pollution caused by the concentration of activities in some areas is exceeding the water system's capacity to purify and renew itself. Water resources have already been severely damaged by repeated

1 See: Wikipedia, *List of ecoregions in Morocco*, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ecoregions_in_Morocco>; *Morocco - Climate*, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morocco#Climate>.

2 IndexMundi, *Morocco Environment - Current issues*, <www.indexmundi.com/morocco/environment_current_issues.html>.

3 Global Mechanism, *Increasing finance for sustainable land management: Morocco*, (2008), <global-mechanism.org/dynamic/documents/document_file/morocco_e-1.pdf>.

4 Rural Poverty Portal, *Rural poverty in the Kingdom of Morocco*, <www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/home/tags/morocco>.

5 See: <af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJ0E6AT01820101130>.

6 Wikipedia, *Water supply and sanitation in Morocco*, <wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_supply_and_sanitation_in_Morocco#Conventional_water_resources>.

7 Ibid.

8 Wikipedia, *Al Wahda Dam (Morocco)*, <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Wahda_Dam_(Morocco)>.

droughts and by modifications to natural water systems.⁹ In fact, water stocks are being consumed faster than they are being replaced, but demand from agriculture, industry and the population is increasing. A serious crisis is expected by 2020.¹⁰

Environmental problems

Throughout the country the land is becoming less fertile, arable layers are being lost due to water and wind erosion, dams and reservoirs are silting up because of erosion, there is salinization and desertification, urban areas are being developed to the detriment of agricultural land, there are great accumulations of sand in arid areas and the oases, and mining and quarrying are causing the natural environment to deteriorate.

Air pollution is also getting worse, due largely to the use of bad quality fuels, to very old vehicles continuing in use and to the emission of untreated industrial gases.

As ecosystems are degraded the country's biodiversity has come under threat, and the excessive exploitation of flora has put the very existence of several species at risk.¹¹ The coastal environment especially has suffered owing to the concentration of human activity in these areas. Untreated industrial and household waste is simply dumped, greatly depleting fishing resources. In the desert the oases are under threat and may disappear. In all parts of the country salinity levels are rising and land erosion is increasing, aggravated by the over-exploitation of resources, the natural and artificial desiccation of wetlands and a lack of infrastructure in mountain regions.¹²

Cities have been growing with little or no urban planning, resulting in the spread of huge uncontrolled rubbish tips. Forests are also in danger, as trees are cut indiscriminately to obtain wood for fuel. This situation is aggravated by the fact that household waste collection services provide inadequate coverage, special waste (toxic, hospital, pesticides) is not treated, and urban sewage systems are getting old.

The Garb-Chrada Beni Hsen region

In terms of natural resources the Garb-Chrada Beni Hsen region is among the richest in the country. It has considerable water stocks, an extensive plain of 4,200 km² and some 124,614 hectares of

forest land. However, all these resources are under threat and ecosystems are deteriorating due to inefficient government management of development projects.

One of the main environmental problems in this region is pollution from industrial activities. The worst culprits are the sugar mills (Dar Gueddari, Mechraa BI Kseri and Sidi Allal Tazi), oil drilling, the Sidi Kacem oil refinery, and the Sidi Yahya pulp mill, which is responsible for 50% of the organic industrial pollution in the region. Another serious problem is how to manage the 80 million m³ of domestic liquid waste that is generated in the region each year.

Agriculture too is quite intensive, particularly on the plain of Garb, and is another big source of pollution, particularly of under soil water stocks. The most serious consequence is that water nitrate levels are rising, creating a health risk for the people who consume it.

This region is one of the worst hit by water erosion, above all in the Uarga valley where, because of its rugged topography, average deterioration is 2,070 t/km²/year. In contrast, the loss in the Sebú valley is 600 t/km²/year. Severe soil erosion has also left the region particularly vulnerable to flooding, a threat made more serious by the fact that the Al Wahda dam is functioning badly. Inaugurated in 1997, the dam is the biggest in the country and the second biggest in Africa, but because of sedimentation the reservoir is losing around 60 million m³ of storage capacity per year.¹³

Conditions in Morocco's towns and cities are also rapidly deteriorating. In most cases the systems to handle liquid waste are inadequate, and urban centres either have no sanitary systems or have ancient systems that lack the necessary capacity, resulting in flooding, pollution and nauseating smells. Most of the waste is simply fed into surface water courses.

The collection and dumping of solid waste is another serious challenge. There are no guidelines for managing such operations, which are selective as well as inadequate, and the current practice of mixing medical and industrial waste with household waste involves serious health risks.

Degradation of the wetlands of the littoral zone

The wetlands of the littoral zone stretch for 140 km. Presently, this region is facing pressing environmental issues as a result of tourism, population growth

and lack of long-term planning and viable development strategies.¹⁴

The wetlands, which are extremely sensitive to changes from outside, are being polluted with industrial, urban and agricultural waste, thereby raising air, water and soil toxicity levels. The region's lakes are also being polluted. One, Sidi Boughaba lake, is protected thanks to its status as a forest area, but there are no clear regulations about how other lakes should be managed or preserved. Tourism in the wetlands is also being developed, which is yet another negative factor.

The Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are still the main reference framework for the country's concerned citizens and civil society organizations. The High Commissioner for Planning claims that with only four years until the 2015 deadline, Morocco's performance makes it one of the countries that can reach its goals in time.¹⁵ Unfortunately there is little justification for this optimism. The main obstacles are as follows:

- The passage and implementation of environmental protection laws is very slow.
- The impacts of climate change are likely to be serious, and are as yet unpredictable.
- The great pressure on the country's natural resources.
- Lack of public awareness of these problems and lack of political will to solve them.

Conclusions

Morocco has been very lax about managing its resources, a situation which must change. The country is heading for an ecological crisis and nobody knows how severe it will be.

The development models implemented by the Government, and the lack of long-term planning, has led to increased inequality among segments of the population. Morocco's GINI index rating, which measures differences in the distribution of wealth, has risen in the last 20 years: at the start of the 1990s it stood at 39 points but the estimate for 2011 is just under 41 points.¹⁶ The gap between rich and poor is shocking, especially when we bear in mind the extremely tough conditions that the most deprived sectors have to cope with. ■

9 See: Index Mundi, *Morocco – Water pollution*, <www.indexmundi.com/facts/morocco/water-pollution>.

10 See: <www.socialwatch.org/es/node/13110>.

11 See: <www.earthsendangered.com/search-regions3.asp?search=1&sgroup=allgroups&ID=227>.

12 See the video ¿Están los oasis marroquíes en vías de extinción?, on YouTube, <www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEALD7CXps>.

13 Wikipedia, *Al Wahda Dam (Morocco)*, <[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Wahda_Dam_\(Morocco\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Wahda_Dam_(Morocco))>.

14 See: <www.estrechando.es/?p=794>.

15 Morocco Business News, *Morocco to achieve MDGs by 2015, HCP*, (April 14 2010), <www.moroccobusinessnews.com/Content/Article.asp?idr=18&id=1479>.

16 Trading Economics, *GINI index in Morocco*, (2011), <www.tradingeconomics.com/morocco/gini-index-wb-data.html>.

■ MOZAMBIQUE

An irresponsible administration



The Government has shown it is not only unable to combat poverty and social inequalities but also incapable of formulating a convincing plan to improve the population's quality of life. The benefits of economic growth have not reached the people who need them most and the poor are getting poorer. The current economic model is clearly unsustainable and the Government is failing to administer the country's natural resources or manage exploitation concessions so that these benefit the population as a whole. Some progress has been made in the fight against corruption but this is still one of the main obstacles to increasing people's well-being.

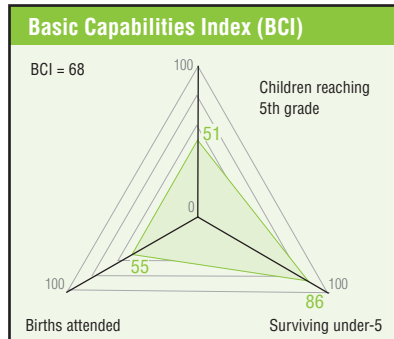
Human Rights League
Public Integrity Centre
Informal Justice Support Centre
Custódio Duma, Coordinator

Mozambique has considerable natural resources in the form of natural gas, vegetal coal, aluminium, silver, more than 2,500 kilometres of coastline, rivers, forests, wood and a great potential for tourism.¹ However there is little chance of this wealth being used to help reduce poverty, first and foremost because the country is pursuing an irresponsible and unsustainable policy of promoting mega-projects.

Some studies go so far as to suggest the Government is incapable of administering these natural resources or of managing exploitation concessions in a way that benefits the country's economy or the population at large, and this means it is missing opportunities to promote national development.² Since the end of last year economists, civil society organizations, and even the Commission of Catholic Bishops of Mozambique have been trying to persuade the Government to reverse its policy of granting tax exemptions to mega-projects while the tax pressure on the general public is increasing.

A November 2009 review by the African Peer Review Mechanism³ reported that Mozambique's public administration is very politicized and that it is difficult to distinguish between the State and Frelimo, the party in power since independence in 1975. Not only is this combination of party and State a discriminatory way to manage the public sector, but it also undermines public policy planning and means that all socio-economic development processes are tied to politics.

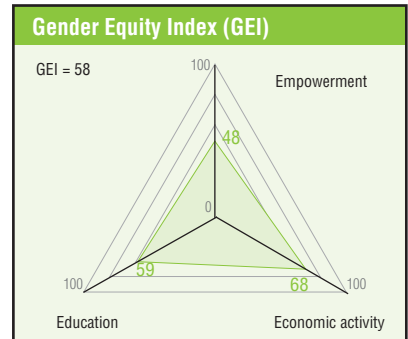
Moreover, with its vacuous pronouncements and failed measures, the Government has shown that it is incapable not only of combating poverty and social inequalities but also of formulating a convincing plan to improve people's lives.



False growth

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported in April that Mozambique's economic growth in 2010 was among the highest in the region⁴ and predicted a real GDP rise of 7.25% in 2011 and 8% in the medium term. The problem is that the economic benefits of this expansion do not help the poor, who continue to get poorer. The minimum monthly wage is MZN 2,700 (USD 90), which according to trade unions and workers' organizations is only enough to satisfy 35% of a family's basic needs.⁵ A study by PricewaterhouseCoopers showed that in 2011 pay increased by only 9.8% while inflation was 15%, so in fact wages have fallen by 5.2%.

When we consider that more than half of Mozambique's general budget is financed by donor countries and 80% of its investment is from foreign sources, it is no surprise that many economists believe the country's economic growth is false.⁶ None of the main factors in the economy – such as the balance of payments, the State budget, investments or control of inflation – are determined by the country's wealth or are functions of internal equilibrium, the domestic market or national production. They are all based on foreign resources.



The high inflation rate may be a direct consequence of the rise in international prices for food and crude oil, but it is clear that Mozambique is unable to exploit its potential and produce foodstuffs and other products that could be exported and help reduce dependence on foreign aid. The country's economic ills can be traced above all to its growth models, which are unsustainable or unrealistic.

The fight against corruption

Transparency International reports that Mozambique has made some progress against corruption, moving from 130th out of 178 countries in 2009 to 116th in 2010.⁷ Corruption is still one of the main obstacles to development however, compounded by a combination of other related factors including weaknesses in management procedures, lack of transparency in public administration, impunity for wrongdoers and obsolete legislation in this area.

Mozambique's ranking on the corruption scale has improved because two important cases involving the embezzlement of public funds have come before the courts. These involved two ex-ministers (one of the Interior and the other of Transport and Communications) and also a president of the Council for the Administration of Airports, with the total loss amounting to around USD 10 million. But even so, the final ruling in these cases⁸ demonstrated how much the judiciary is manipulated by the political arm of government.

1 Maps of the World, "Mozambique Natural Resources," <www.mapsofworld.com/mozambique/economy/natural-resources.html>.

2 C. N. Castel-Branco, "O que é que a ITIE faz bem e o que é que não faz? Uma proposta de agenda de trabalho sobre os recursos naturais em Moçambique," 25 February 2011, <www.iiese.ac.mz/lib/noticias/2011/CNCB_PGMM_Fev2011.pdf>.

3 African Peer Review Mechanism, *Country Review Report: Mozambique*, APRM Country Review Report No. 11, June 2009, <www.aprm-international.org/index.htm>.

4 MacauHub, "IMF says Mozambican economy post growth of 6.5 pct in 2010," 11 April 2011, <www.macauhub.com.mo/en/2011/04/11/imf-says-mozambican-economy-posts-growth-of-6-5-pct-in-2010/>.

5 Empresas e Negócios, "Salários mínimos são marca da pobreza em Moçambique," 26 March 2011, <empresasenegocios.org/2011/03/26/salarios-minimos-sao-marca-da-pobreza-em-mocambique>.

6 Canalmoz, "Estabilidade económica de Moçambique é falsa", interview with João Mosca, 12 April 2011, <www.canalmoz.co.mz/hoje/19205-estabilidade-economica-de-mocambique-e-falsa.html>.

7 Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2010 Results," <www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2010/results>.

8 The Boston Globe, "Sentence Reduced in Mozambican Corruption Case," (24 May 2011), <www.boston.com/business/articles/2011/05/24/sentence_reduced_in_mozambican_corruption_case/>.

The question of transparency was high on the national agenda in 2010–11, especially as regards the extractive sector. In the first quarter of 2011 Mozambique took an initial step towards complying with the requirements of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) when it published its first annual report with a declaration of the payments made by companies in the sector and the sums received by the State.⁹ The civil society organizations that took part in this process agreed unanimously that the contribution of the six firms selected for the report (FY 2008) came to less than 1% of the State budget.¹⁰

Specialists in the field say the report shows Mozambique is losing out in this process of awarding concessions in two ways: first because it grants the multinationals unnecessary tax incentives; and second because it is undervaluing the country's natural wealth.¹¹

Poverty and unrest

The official Government line is optimistic but recent studies show that the cost of living in the country is rising. As there are no mechanisms for ongoing constructive dialogue there may come a point where people express their discontent by taking to the streets with popular revolts as they did in 2008 and 2010.

The “disturbances” of 5 February 2008 and 1 and 2 September 2010 paralyzed the capital, Maputo, and the city of Matola 20 kilometres away, and violence also broke out in the provinces of Gaza, Manica and Nampula. The end result was around 20 people dead and more than 200 injured. The Government only managed to quell the unrest by promising on both occasions to subsidize fuel, semi-collective passenger transport – known as the “chapa 100” – and more recently some foodstuffs, with the promise of a guaranteed “basic basket.”

Since 2007 the President has repeatedly stated that the problem of poverty is basically psychological and that the people should be more optimistic and fight against “mental poverty.”¹² The previous poverty-reduction strategy, which was called the Action Plan to Reduce Absolute Poverty (PARPA), was

changed in May 2011 to the Action Plan to Reduce Poverty (PARP), the logic being that poverty among the people was no longer “absolute.”

However, the Third Evaluation of Poverty did not reflect this conclusion. It showed that some 52% of the population is living in absolute poverty,¹³ with the worst levels in the central part of the country. This means Mozambique will be unable to reach one of its Millennium Development Goals, which was to reduce poverty from 80% in 1990 to 40% by 2015. The unemployment rate is around 21% of the active population.¹⁴

Independent evaluations in 2009, after PARPA II had been in operation for five years, showed that less than 50% of the objectives had been reached. Delays in formulating the new plan, PARP, compromised the subsequent phase (also for five years) which should have started in 2010. The Government only finalized and passed the PARP in May 2011 and therefore the 2010–11 budget was based on generic plans and improvised measures.

The 2010 UNDP Human Development Index, which considers life expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling and per capita income, ranks Mozambique 165th out of 169 countries, and the 2010 Social Watch Basic Capabilities Index (based on infant mortality, percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel and percentage of children who reach fifth grade) gives it a value of 71, which places it in the low level development group.¹⁵

Poor health indicators

Infant mortality in Mozambique is 79 per 1,000 live births.¹⁶ Access to healthcare services is limited and an estimated 50% of the people live more than 20 kilometres from the nearest health centre, which in practice means they do not actually have access to the services. The country is negatively affected by a series of epidemics that up to now have not been adequately tackled:

- *HIV and AIDS.* Some 16% of the population is HIV-positive.

- *Malaria* is responsible for around 30% of all deaths in Mozambique. In different parts of the country from 40% to 80% of children aged two to nine have malaria, and in some areas up to 90% of children under five are infected. Malaria is also the most serious problem among pregnant women in rural areas. Some 20% of pregnant women suffer from it, with the incidence greatest (at 31%) during first pregnancies.¹⁷

- *Tuberculosis* is one of the main causes of sickness and mortality and affects the most vulnerable groups, in particular young adults, children and people living with HIV and AIDS. Mozambique, with its high morbidity indicators, has been since 1993 among the 22 countries in the world considered “very affected” and is currently in 18th position in the World Health Organization (WHO) classification.

- With a *leprosy* rate of 1.4 cases per 10,000 people, Mozambique has the highest incidence of this disease in Africa and is one of the six worst affected in the world.¹⁸

- Another problem is *cholera*. According to the Ministry of Health, last year alone there were 36 deaths from this disease out of a total of 1,968 registered cases.¹⁹

Conclusion

It will not be possible to tackle poverty effectively unless the Government changes its attitude to the problem. As long as indicators such as GDP growth are seen as the only valid way to measure the country's development, the Government will be unable to respond adequately to the population's pressing problems and the national development model will not be sustainable. Economic growth alone is not enough; this is why projects like PARPA and its offspring PARP have not brought about an improvement in people's well-being and discontent is on the increase. ■

9 Iniciative de Transparência na Indústria Extractiva, “Primeiro Relatório da Iniciativa de Transparência na Indústria Extractiva em Moçambique sobre a Reconciliação de Pagamentos e Recebimentos na Indústria Extractiva,” <www.itie-mozambique.org/relatorio.pdf>.

10 T. Selemene and D. Nombora, “Implementação da ITIE, gestão de recursos naturais e urgência da renegociação e publicação dos contratos com mega projectos: O caso de Moçambique,” (Maputo: Centro de Integridade Pública, May 2011, <www.cip.org.mz/cipdoc/84_ANALISE%20ITIE%20MOÇAMBIQUE%202011.pdf>.

11 Castel-Branco, op. cit.

12 Government of Mozambique, “A luta continua pela independência completa,” (25 June 2010), <www.portaldogoverno.gov.mz/noticias/news_folder_politica/junho-2010/a-luta-continua-pela-independencia-completa>.

13 Ministério da Planificação e Desenvolvimento, “Pobreza e Bem-Estar em Moçambique: Terceira Avaliação Nacional,” (October 2010), <www.ine.gov.mz/publicacoes/TERCEIRA_AVALIACAO_NACIONAL_DA_POBREZA1.pdf>.

14 Index Mundi, “Economia: Taxa de desemprego,” <www.indexmundi.com/map/?v=74&l=pt>.

15 UNDP, Human Development Report 2010; Social Watch, *The 2010 Basic Capabilities Index: Slowing Down*, (Montevideo: 2010).

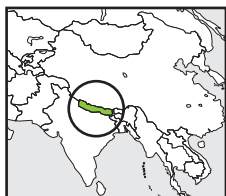
16 Index Mundi, “População: Taxa de mortalidade infantil,” <www.indexmundi.com/map/?t=0&v=29&r=xx&l=pt>.

17 Ministério da Saúde, “Programa Nacional de Controlo de Malária,” <www.misau.gov.mz/pt/programas/malaria/programa_nacional_de_controlo_da_malaria>.

18 Ministério da Saúde, “Lepra,” <www.misau.gov.mz/pt/epidemias_endemias/lepra>.

19 Ministério da Saúde, “Cólera,” <www.misau.gov.mz/pt/epidemias_endemias/colera>.

Unsustainability: causes and consequences



Political instability, human rights violations and corruption are among the main challenges to sustainable development in the country. The Government also needs to address the loss of biodiversity and the mismanagement of agricultural resources, alongside the protection and fulfilment of human rights, the promotion of people's participation in all aspects of State governance and the ending of corruption in politics at all levels. However discrimination based on class, caste, ethnicity, religion and gender is fuelling the creation and perpetuation of poverty, hunger, environmental destruction/degradation and conflict. Unless these underlying issues are effectively addressed, sustainable development will remain a dream.

Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN) Sarba Raj Khadka

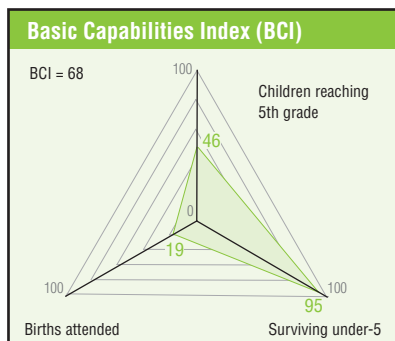
After the decade-long armed conflict (1996–2006) and the removal of the 240 year monarchy, Nepal was declared a Federal Democratic Republic in 2008. Efforts are now underway to institutionalize a republican form of governance by introducing a new Constitution, restructuring the State and bringing closure to the peace process.

Over the years the Government has introduced a number of policies, plans and legal frameworks regarding biodiversity conservation, environmental protection and sustainable development, all focused on benefitting and empowering local people. The key instruments are the 1988 National Conservation Strategy, the 1988 Master Plan for the Forestry Sector, the 1993 and 1996 Environmental Policy and Action Plan, the 1995 Agriculture Perspective Plan, the 1996 Environment Protection Act, the 2002 Nepal Biodiversity Strategy and the 2003 Sustainable Development Agenda.¹ However their implementation has been limited.

In addition Nepal has ratified several related international human rights instruments and agreements, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention on Biodiversity, Agenda 21, and the UN Millennium Declaration. It has also prepared a National Adaptation Programme of Action to address the problems arising from climate change. However, the implementation of these international agreements has also been weak.

Sustainable development challenges

There are several obstacles to achieving sustainable development in Nepal. Most serious is the lack of political stability, particularly due to shifts in the political system first in the 1990s and then in 2008, and the political transition that the country is currently undergoing. Both the drafting of a new Constitution and the conclusion of the peace process are moving at a sluggish pace, and the process of sustainable socioeconomic transformation is still on hold.

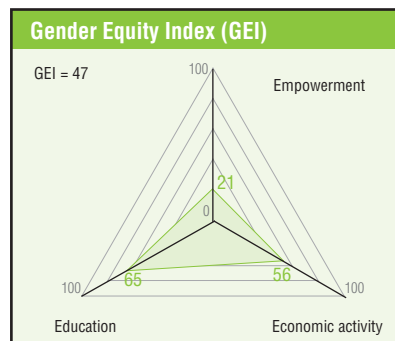


In the past almost all political changes and socioeconomic development efforts were dominated by elite groups who favoured their own interests rather than helping those most in need. Class, caste, ethnicity, religion and gender-based discrimination have fuelled poverty, hunger, environmental destruction/degradation and conflict. Unless human rights violations and socioeconomic exclusion are effectively addressed as part of a time-bound and realistic plan, sustainable development will not be possible.

The process of globalization and adherence to a neo-liberal economic development model constantly challenge people-centred, environmentally friendly and economically viable development in Nepal. Unfair trade conditions – including the imposition of tariff and non-tariff barriers and sanitary and phytosanitary measures without considering preferential trade arrangements – are also counterproductive for sustainable development in countries such as Nepal. Thus it is slowly being guided towards profit-oriented and market-led approaches to development including the controversial public-private partnership model.

Sustainable development and environmental issues

Although Nepal's contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions is trifling (1,977.1 kg per capita compared to the global average of 3.9 tonnes per capita),² it is in the forefront in terms of experiencing the disastrous effects of global warming and climate change.



Erratic, inadequate or excessive precipitation due to climate change has affected livelihoods in a negative way. The river systems that originate in the snow-clad Himalayan range supply water for drinking, cleaning and irrigation throughout the sub-continent of South Asia. The faster melting snow is expected to cause water scarcity in the entire region. There is also a looming danger of glacial lake outbursts. Another threat of climate change is the gradual desertification of the agricultural area. The policies and programmes in response to the impact of climate change are scant in coverage and ineffective in implementation. Rather, these are focused more on dealing with the symptoms than with the root causes.

Nepal is one of the lowest energy consumers in the world, hence its contribution to environmental degradation due to energy consumption is also minimal. Its energy consumption level was 7.16 tonnes of oil equivalent per annum in 2007, which was mainly based on traditional sources of energy such as wood 72%, agricultural residues 5% and dung 7%.³ The remaining 16% was met from commercial sources (coal 2.4%, petroleum 9.9% and electricity 2.7%) and renewable energy was less than 1%.⁴ The poor and vulnerable people mainly living in the rural areas have limited or no access to alternative energy as the technologies required for harnessing it are capital-intensive.

Decreasing biodiversity and increasing genetic destruction and degradation are also threats to

1 S.R. Khadka, *Biodiversity Conservation in Nepal: Policies and Ground Realities*, (Saarbrücken, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011).

2 Government of Nepal and United Nations Country Team of Nepal, *Nepal Millennium Development Goals, Progress Report*, (Kathmandu: 2010).

3 Ministry of Finance, *Survey Monitoring the Paris Declaration, Nepal Country Report*, (Kathmandu, 2011).

4 Ibid.

sustainable development. Realizing the importance of protecting the environment, the United Nations convened the Second International Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, which also adopted the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD). According to Article 1, the objectives of the CBD are: conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components, and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. The CBD entered into force in Nepal on 21 February 1994.

As a party to the Convention, the country has prepared biodiversity conservation policies, strategies and plans, including the Nepal Biodiversity Strategy in 2002. The goal of this strategy is to provide a strategic planning framework for the conservation of biodiversity, the maintenance of ecological processes and systems and the equitable sharing of the benefits accrued. The country harbours 118 ecosystems, 75 vegetation types and 35 forest types with significant presence of species and genetic diversity.⁵ However biodiversity is threatened at several levels: ecosystems, species and genetic resources.⁶

Loss of ecosystems is due to conversion of the natural environment (forests, grasslands and wetlands) to other human uses. For example, the forest habitat is reported to be decreasing at an annual rate of 1.7%; if this trend continues, there are high chances of forest ecosystem degradation at an accelerated rate.⁷ Genetic resources are being depleted due to the destruction of natural habitats, overgrazing, land fragmentation, commercialization of agriculture, extension of high-yield varieties and indiscriminate use of pesticides.⁸ Pollution, fire, the introduction of alien species and illegal trade and hunting – as well as the high incidence of poverty among ever-growing populations – are also major causes of biodiversity depletion. Other problems such as soil erosion, landslides and land degradation, which are most pronounced in the mid-hills and

high mountain ecological zones during the summer monsoons, are due to lack of public awareness and improper land use by farmers.

Agriculture and mismanagement

Unscrupulous and haphazard use of green revolution technology⁹ is another problem in a country whose economy is based on agriculture: more than 65% of Nepal's economically active population is engaged in land-based agriculture, though land holdings are small. While the use of green revolution technology improved the situation of food insecurity and poverty in some parts of the country – even if temporarily – it has destroyed long-used indigenous systems. Most of the research focused on short-term results and not on the sustainable and stable solutions that were the basis of indigenous knowledge and skills. In addition agriculture is now almost completely based on imported inputs that frequently need to be replaced. The regulatory mechanisms are so ineffective that multinational companies now have direct access to Nepal's peasantry where they can sell seeds and other unsustainable products.

The Nepalese are highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, and extreme levels of poverty have been forcing people to use marginal resources in unsustainable ways. For example, they may have no other option than to cultivate unstable slopes or encroach on areas for agriculture that are meant for other uses, and they have low levels of investment for increasing production.

Corruption and lack of appropriate education

A culture of impunity coupled with escalating corruption is also a challenge to sustainable development in Nepal. According to Transparency International's 2010 report, the country ranks 148th with a 2.2 score on the Corruption Perception Index.¹⁰ The authorities are obviously more concerned about their personal fortunes than about the quality and sustainability of development work.

The dwindling political commitment to country ownership and local systems is a further challenge. Development assistance is channelled without any consideration of the specific needs and interests of the people and hence the most suitable mechanisms are not put in place. Lack of appropriate education and awareness are also posing a threat to sustainable development, while the education system promotes consumerism and an unsustainable lifestyle, emphasizing markets and profits.

Conclusion and recommendations

Gross human rights violations, socioeconomic exclusion, the lack of social justice and lack of effective management of natural resources are among the main challenges to achieving sustainable development in Nepal. The following steps are therefore recommended in order to remedy this situation and make sustainability a reality rather than a dream:

- Promote democracy, peace and justice;
- Protect, respect and fulfil human rights;
- Address the underlying causes of poverty and conflicts;
- Promote people's meaningful participation in all aspects of State governance;
- Stop corruption in politics at all levels;
- Promote a culture of addressing needs not greed;
- Implement effective measures for addressing the impact of climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- Ensure adequate investment in research, development and extension in order to promote sustainable development based on the needs and priorities of the country;
- Engage local people in planning, implementation and monitoring for the management of natural resources; and
- Invest in harnessing alternative energy sources. ■

5 His Majesty's Government of Nepal, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, *Second National Report on the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nepal*, (Kathmandu: 2002).

6 T.M. Maskey, "State of Biodiversity in Nepal" in Pie Shengji (ed.), *Banking on Biodiversity: Report of the Regional Consultation on Biodiversity Assessment in the Hindu Kush Himalayas*, (Kathmandu: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), 1996).

7 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Nepal: State of the Environment*, Ministry of Population and Environment of His Majesty's Government of Nepal, South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme, ICIMOD, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation and UNEP, (Bangkok, 2001).

8 Khadka, op. cit.

9 Research and technology initiatives from the late 1960s aimed to increase agriculture production through the development of high-yield cereal grain varieties, expansion of irrigation infrastructure, modernization of management techniques and distribution of hybridized seeds, synthetic fertilizers and pesticides to farmers.

10 Transparency International, *Corruption Perception Index Report 2010*, (Washington DC: 2010), <www.transparency.org/policy_research/survey_indices/cpi/2010/in_detail#6>.

Taxes for a better future



The country will not be able to adopt a sustainable development model unless it can overcome its current lack of resources. The country has serious environmental problems including over-exploitation of the soil, the near-exhaustion of fishing resources, increasing deforestation due to indiscriminate tree cutting and unsustainable practices in agriculture, and overdependence on coffee as a cash crop, which depletes soil fertility and pollutes water resources. Yet the State's coffers are empty. The way forward is to completely reform the taxation system to make it fairer, and to invest the extra funds in education and in promoting methods of production that cause less damage to the environment.

Coordinadora Civil

Dr. Adolfo José Acevedo Vogl

If Nicaragua is to implement policies to promote sustainable development it needs far more resources than are currently available, so the tax system will have to be changed to increase revenue. Development assistance is also decreasing in absolute terms and as a percentage of GDP, and the only way to cover the shortfall is to raise more income from taxes.

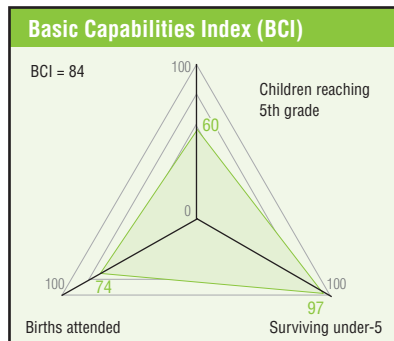
For the State to maintain adequate investment in human capital, basic infrastructure, social protection, and to pursue its equity goals, a greater portion of the burden of financing this expenditure will have to be borne by the higher income strata of society rather than the middle and lower strata (see box on Coordinadora Civil proposal).

Furthermore, this need for added finance responds to a basic principle of a sustainable economy, which is inter-generational fairness, a concept defined in 1974 by James Tobin: "The trustees of endowed institutions are guardians of the future against the claims of the present. Their task in managing the endowment is to preserve equity among generations."¹

Environmental challenges

Nicaragua does not have a sustainable development model, which is all too evident when we consider how poorly successive governments have performed in terms of administering the country's natural resources. For example, water reserves are being depleted due to pollution and deforestation, and this has not only increased the cost of the investment needed to provide the population with drinking water but has also reduced the amount of water available for agriculture and for the generation of hydroelectric energy.²

Moreover, the country is losing 75,000 hectares of forest a year because of illegal tree cutting and slash-and-burn agricultural practices which often cause huge forest fires. Another factor is that currently 76% of the fuel used for cooking is wood.³



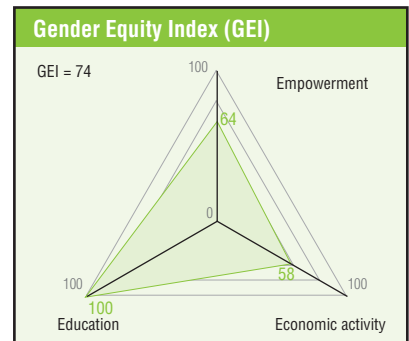
This deterioration of the forests also contributes to soil erosion, which in turn poses a danger to agriculture.

In June 2011 the Government expressed concern about this bleak scenario and announced that it had managed to reduce the rate of deforestation by 50%.⁴ However, of the country's 12 million hectares of forest more than 8 million are still degraded.

Another aspect of Nicaragua's unsustainable economic growth model is the over-exploitation of fishing resources. For example, lobsters are being extracted at twice the species' natural replacement rate, and this problem is exacerbated by the Government's failure to take adequate measures to combat illegal fishing.⁵

There is also the shrimp farming industry, which has not only inflicted serious damage on the mangrove swamps and wetlands of the Pacific coast but polluted other bodies of water through the dumping of waste and toxic chemicals.

Waste is a problem in urban areas too. The way solid waste is managed in cities is inadequate causing increasing problems as rubbish tips are spreading in densely populated areas. This, added to an overall lack of urban planning, has made the poorest sectors of the population more vulnerable to disease and to the effects of natural and environmental disasters. It goes without saying that their increased vulnerability puts the country in a



delicate situation in the face of the various impacts of climate change.⁶

However, Nicaragua's biggest environmental problem is over-dependence on coffee cultivation. Some 26% of agricultural enterprises produce coffee, accounting for 15% of all cultivated land and 25% of the land devoted to export crops.⁷ Data from the Centre for Nicaraguan Exports (Cetrex) indicates that "in the first five months of the harvest (from October 2010 to February 2011) coffee earned USD 154 million, which was around USD 85 million more than was generated in the same months in the 2009-10 harvest."⁸ However, the intensive cultivation of coffee is extremely aggressive in terms of environmental degradation as it leads to deforestation, the loss of biodiversity, pollution with agro-chemicals, soil erosion, and worst of all the exhaustion of water resources, since both growing and processing coffee requires a great deal of water.⁹ Nicaragua's natural environment was pillaged and devastated for more than a century by

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ L. Castrillo, "El Café Nicaragüense," *Nicabilingüe*, <nicabilingue.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46:el-cafe&catid=43:medio-ambiente&Itemid=49>.

⁸ Cited in América Economía, *Cosecha de café en Nicaragua crece 8,6% y reporta US\$154 millones*, (22 March 2011), <www.americaeconomia.com/negocios-industrias/cosecha-de-cafe-en-nicaragua-crece-86-y-reporta-us154-millones>.

⁹ N. Pérez Díaz, R. M. Castillo Ramos, L. R. Carballo Abreu, J. Á. Veliz Gutiérrez, *Impacto ambiental en el cultivo y procesamiento del café y su repercusión social*, (Cuba: University of Pinar del Río), <www.monografias.com/trabajos-pdf/impacto-ambiental-cultivo-procesamiento-cafe/impacto-ambiental-cultivo-procesamiento-cafe.pdf>.

¹ J. Tobin, "What Is Permanent Endowment Income?" *American Economic Review*, (May 1974), p. 427.

² Clima y ambiente de Nicaragua, *Un cambio de actitud en el día de la Tierra*, (22 April 2009), <climayambiente.blogspot.com/2009/04/un-cambio-de-actitud-en-el-dia-mundial.html>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Diario Web Centroamérica, *Nicaragua logró reducir la deforestación en 50 por ciento*, (7 June 2011), <www.diariowebcentroamerica.com/region/nicaragua-logro-reducir-la-deforestacion-en-50-por-ciento>.

⁵ Ibid.

THE COORDINADORA CIVIL TAXATION PROPOSAL¹

The Coordinadora Civil taxation proposal is based on three basic principles:

- *The principle of universal taxation.* To be able to finance increased expenditure on investment in human capital, basic infrastructure and social protection, the State will have to expand the country's taxation base as much as possible. This means that, in principle, all persons resident in Nicaragua who have sufficient means must contribute to financing the services the State provides. Moreover, non-residents who obtain rents in the country must also be obliged to contribute. This would mean far-reaching changes to the current generous system of tax exemptions whereby whole sectors of the economy, usually the most dynamic and profitable ones, pay no taxes.
- *The principle of vertical equity.* People who are able to contribute more must make a greater relative contribution than people with lower incomes. This would mean doing away with the preferential treatment that rents and income from capital are granted, and obviously income of this kind is highly concentrated in the higher-income strata of the population.
- *The principle of horizontal equity.* People at similar economic levels must be treated in a uniform way by the tax system. It is unfair for two people who have the same capacity to contribute to pay different amounts (one paying more than the other) or that one should be taxed and the other not.

To put these principles into practice the basic pillars of the tax system, taxation on rents and value added tax will all have to be completely overhauled.

As regards the first principle, the proposal is that the income tax system should be changed. In the current system, separate and preferential treatment is given to passive income from capital or rents, and this is highly discrimina-

tory to the detriment of people who earn their income in wages and salaries as these are the only sectors that are subject to a scale of progressive marginal rates. This system will have to be replaced by a global scheme in which all income is treated the same. There will also have to be a change from a national criterion of tax jurisdiction to a world jurisdiction principle.

The adoption of a global income tax system means that in principle each contributor would be taxed on all his income regardless of the source of each item. The adoption of a world income tax jurisdiction criterion means that taxpayers resident in the country would have all their sources of income liable to taxation regardless of whether this income is generated in the country or abroad. This would mean each person's full income would be taxed, which would be a genuine application of the principle that each individual should pay in accordance with his capacity to pay. This scheme would not only greatly increase the tax yield, but facilitate the redistribution of resources through taxation and thus make it possible to achieve greater equity in the country, in a horizontal sense as well as vertically.

The income of non-residents would be treated in line with the international trend to use the principle of benefit to justify taxing the income of non-residents at source, and the principle of ability to contribute for taxes paid in the country. This involves splitting the power to levy taxes between the two principles, which is exactly what is in play in the context of international conventions to avoid double taxation.

In the plan to modernize the income tax system the proposal is to incorporate regulations that are in line with the financial and trade liberalization of the last ten years, which involve regulations governing the prices of transfers between different parties, thin capitalization and transactions with tax havens.

¹ See: <www.ccer.org.ni/>.

fruit companies and it cannot sustain the growth and expansion of the coffee industry indefinitely unless the State implements regulations on cultivation techniques so as to give the soil a chance to recover. There can be no sustainable growth if the land itself is barren and exhausted.

Deterioration in education

Sustainable development has to do with the legacy of goods the people of today pass on to future generations. For this model to be successful the population has to be educated so they can exploit the human and natural resources they inherit in the best possible way, but in Nicaragua the outlook in this respect is discouraging. A survey by the consultancy firm M&R that was published in May shows that most people

think the country's education system is seriously deteriorating and the quality of teaching is perceived as being very poor and out of date. One factor in this dismal scenario is that teacher's salaries are far below average pay in the country.¹⁰

Of the people interviewed, 78.9% rated school infrastructure as being in bad or very bad condition and 70.8% perceived the quality of the education received as bad or very bad. Some 91.8% of the interviewees thought teachers' pay in State primary schools was bad or very bad, and 89.4% saw teacher salaries in State secondary schools the same way.

There was a general consensus that if the State significantly increased investment in primary and secondary education (to at least 7% of GDP) this would improve the situation and result in greater

education access and improved teaching quality. Some 92.8% of the people surveyed thought the Government ought to make a considerable increase in the budget allocation for education.

Similarly 93.5% said the country needs to establish a wide-ranging long-term national agreement so that, regardless of the party politics of the government in power at any given time, any policy geared to improving education would be respected and maintained in operation. However, it will only be possible for the State to reform education and pursue sustainable development if taxation is thoroughly overhauled so that extra funds over and above what the tax system yields today can be generated. The first objectives on the road to sustainable development can be summed up as taxation, preservation and education. ■

¹⁰ See: <www.ccer.org.ni/noticias?idnoticia=769>.

Rethinking development



The Government's development initiatives have not managed to reduce poverty in the country and have also failed to diversify a petroleum-based economy, with a non-sustainable extraction-led growth model still being applied. This has led to severe environmental degradation, with alarming desertification and erosion trends. The Government has to rethink its strategies and adopt environmentally friendly long-term planning policies based on renewable energy sources and adequate environmental management. The poor should be empowered and given a stake in managing the environment and natural resources.

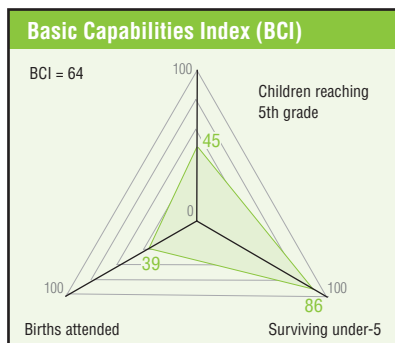
Social Watch Nigeria Ray Onyegu

Although Nigeria is rich in natural resources such as bauxite, gold, tin, coal, petroleum and forests, it is still poorly developed. The 2010 Human Development Index ranks the country in the low human development group, with an index value estimated at 0.423, placing it at 142 out of 169 countries.¹ Non-sustainable attempts to restructure the economy during the last decade have further worsened the situation.

From 2003 to 2007 the Government attempted to implement a programme called the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), designed to raise the country's standard of living through a variety of reforms that included liberalization of the economy and privatization of State assets.² The Government expected that NEEDS would create 7 million new jobs, diversify the economy, boost non-energy exports and improve agricultural productivity. However in 2010, three years after its implementation, about 92% of the population were still living on less than USD 2 a day, while about 71% survived on less than USD 1 a day.³

Reasons for Nigeria's developmental stagnation include inappropriate macroeconomic policies, weak economic growth, the negative effects of globalization, lack of good governance, corruption, the debt burden, low productivity and low wages in the informal sector, deficiencies in the labour market resulting in limited job growth and unemployment, a high population growth rate, poor human resources development, an increase in crime and violence and environmental degradation arising from both climate change and human activities.

This situation is further aggravated by the extraction-led development model being implemented by the Government. Thus despite recent indicators

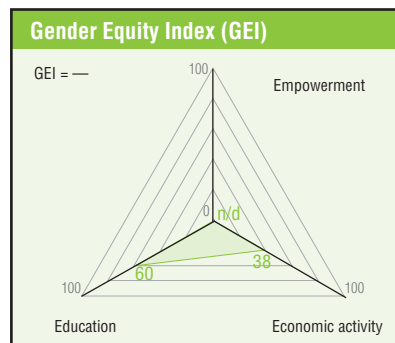


showing some economic progress (GDP growth rose from 5.6% in 2010 to an estimated 6.8% for 2011),⁴ the country remains highly dependent on the hydrocarbon industry,⁵ clearly a non-renewable resource and therefore unsuitable as a basis for sustainable development. Poverty – the country's biggest challenge – is linked to the country's environmental issues, most of which are derived from extractive practices: desertification, flooding, environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity.

Desertification

Almost 350,000 hectares of arable land are being lost annually to the advancing desert.⁶ Natural causes include the poor physical condition of the soil, vegetation and topography as well as increasingly dry land and the inherent extreme climatic variability as evidenced in periodic droughts. Moreover there is human overexploitation, overgrazing, deforestation and poor irrigation due to diverse factors such as demographic growth, migration and the extremely hard socioeconomic conditions in which the people live.⁷

The demand for wood for housing, fuel, the fishing industry and other uses and the removal of trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants and grass cover continue to accelerate the degradation of the soil to



desert-like conditions. Pastoralists also cut foliage to feed their animals and use branches to build enclosures. Bush burning by villagers during land clearing for agriculture, hunters setting fire to the vegetation in search for animals, cattle herders setting fire to dry grass to stimulate the growth of dormant grass buds and cultivation of marginal areas in periods of higher than normal rainfall are also causes of Nigeria's increasing desertification.

The intensified use of fragile and marginal ecosystems has led to progressive degradation of marginal agricultural land even in years of normal rainfall.⁸ Insufficient water supply in most parts of Nigeria resulting from drought has led to increased contamination of the remaining sources of water and enhances the transmission of water-borne diseases such as typhoid, hepatitis A and cholera. It is feared that the damage caused by drought and population pressure may have already resulted in the genetic loss of a vast array of plant species.⁹

Flooding

At the same time as it suffers widespread drought, Nigeria's topography makes it especially vulnerable to flooding. This phenomenon takes three main forms: coastal, river and urban. The first occurs in the low-lying belt of mangrove and fresh water swamps along the coast, including overflow of the Lagos Bar

1 UNDP, *Human Development Report 2010: The Real Wealth of Nations*, (New York: 2010), <hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2010/>.

2 Library of Congress – Federal Research Division, *Country Profile: Nigeria*, (2008), p.11, <lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Nigeria.pdf>.

3 AllAfrica.com, *UNESCO on Poverty in Nigeria*, (27 January 2010), <allAfrica.com/stories/201001280540.html>.

4 IndexMundi, "Nigeria GDP – real growth rate," <www.indexmundi.com/nigeria/gdp_real_growth_rate.html>.

5 EconomyWatch, "Nigeria economy," <www.economywatch.com/world_economy/nigeria/>.

6 N. Medugu, "Nigeria: combating desertification and drought," *AllAfrica.com*, 2 June 2009, <allAfrica.com/stories/200906030289.html>.

7 Ibid.

8 Desertification, "Desertification in Nigeria," 9 March 2007, <desertification.wordpress.com/2007/03/30/desertification-in-nigeria-african-agriculture>.

9 Government of Nigeria, *Country Profile: Implementation of Agenda 21*, submitted to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, (New York: April 1997), <www.un.org/esa/earthsummit/nigeriac.htm>.

Beach of the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁰ River flooding occurs periodically in the flood plains of the larger rivers and in the Niger Delta, and also sudden short-lived flash floods are caused by the overflowing of small rivers in the rainy season. Urban flooding occurs in towns located on flat or low-lying terrain, especially where little or no provision has been made for surface drainage or where existing drains have been blocked with municipal waste. Heavy unpredicted rains and other forms of extreme weather are among the risks of climate change due to global warming, thus increasing the country's vulnerability to natural disasters.

Severe flooding caused the displacement of nearly 2 million people in the northern region of the country in 2010.¹¹ Many other West African countries – including Benin, Ghana and Niger – were also severely affected by the disaster, which followed a large-scale drought and famine in the Sahel region (the transition zone between the Sahara Desert and central Africa) and the Senegal River basin.

The northern states of Challawa and Tiga were among the hardest hit by the floods, which also displaced some 2 million people in Jijawa state. The Governor of Jijawa blamed the flooding on the irresponsible opening of the Challawa and Tiga dam gates with no warning to local villagers. Although the Government admitted that one of the dams had spilled over, it claimed this could not have been enough to cause the flooding and pointed to heavy rains as the cause of the disaster.¹² Entire crops were lost in the floods, which occurred just before the harvest when it was too late for the farmers to replant their fields, increasing the risk of food crisis and famine.

Environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity

Inappropriate agricultural practices along with the destruction of watersheds and the opening up of river banks and other critical areas have led to silting of river beds and loss of water courses. Uncontrolled use of agro-chemicals and the concomitant problems of chemical persistence in the soil in humid areas and soil-crust formation in arid climates have contributed to the destruction of vast agricul-

tural land. In addition petroleum prospecting – with its attendant oil pollution problems including spills, oil well blow-outs, oil blast discharges and improper disposal of drilling mud – has created problems such as: damage to marine wildlife, modification of the ecosystem through species extinction and a delay in the establishment of new flora and fauna, a decrease in fishery resources and the loss of the aesthetic value of natural beaches due to unsightly oil slicks.¹³

Nigeria's wildlife is also rapidly declining due to habitat loss and increased pressure from hunters, poachers and bush burning. The cheetah, pygmy hippopotamus, giraffe and black rhinoceros are no longer found in the country. Rampant bush burning is threatening the growth of trees and wildlife and reducing ecological diversity. Gravel mining for construction is aggravating the problem of erosion and surface run-off, while indiscriminate discharge of particulates from construction sites is leading to pollution and siltation. Areas earmarked as green belts and recreational areas are now being systematically converted into building sites.¹⁴

Industrial pollution and waste¹⁵

Nigeria has about 5,000 registered industrial facilities and some 10,000 small-scale industries operating illegally within residential premises. In places such as Kano, Kaduna and Lagos, coloured, hot and heavy metal-laden effluents – especially from the textile, tannery and paints industries – are discharged directly into open drains and water channels, constituting direct dangers to water users and flora and fauna downstream. Also disturbing is the practice whereby some industrial facilities bury their expired chemicals and hazardous chemical wastes in their backyards, threatening the ground water quality.

Stack fumes from industries emit gases and particulates with grave respiratory and cardiac ailments consequences. They often occlude sunlight for hours in several parts of Lagos, Kano, Enugu and Port-Harcourt. Air inversion with its accompanying foggy dispersion and visibility reduction to less than 20 meters has become an almost permanent feature of the Oko Baba mid-section of the Third Mainland

Bridge in Lagos, where saw millers burn sawdust and other wood shavings.

A similar phenomenon is experienced at the tollgate end of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway at Oregon, where smoke from a nearby dumpsite pollutes the air and has a nauseating odour. Municipal solid waste heaps dot several parts of the major cities blocking roads, alleys and pavements. These unsightly dumps are characterised by:

- Various non-biodegradable household petrochemical products such as polythene bags, plastic containers, Styrofoam packages and tyres;
- Crankcase oils from mechanical workshops, industries, power stations and commercial houses discharged carelessly into drains and surface waters thereby contaminating surface and underground waters;
- The placement of public buildings and residential quarters on flood-prone areas as well as unsettled and improperly reclaimed dumps. Such ecologically sensitive areas are often converted into plots for the erection of residential quarters and public buildings such as markets.

Conclusion

Sound environmental management is critical to sustainable development and, as a consequence, to poverty reduction. Nigeria's present economic growth will be short-lived because of the economy's dependence on hydrocarbon industries and also because of inadequate natural environment and resource conservation. Most of the past damage to the environment and natural resources was caused through deforestation, overgrazing and over-fishing. The rural poor are often forced to live on fragile land and near fragile water supplies that require sensitive resource management in the face of increasing degradation, while the urban poor are exposed to diseases and illnesses resulting from overcrowding, inadequate basic services and polluted living conditions. In order to properly address the issue of poverty the Government needs to empower the poor and give them a stake in managing the environment and natural resources. ■

10 A. Raufu, "Africa underwater: Nigeria's coastline is besieged by global warming," *The Environment Magazine*, (March–April 2002), <findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1594/is_2_13/ai_83667620/>.

11 BBC News Africa, *Northern Nigeria flooding displaces two million*, (24 September 2010), <www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-11409167>.

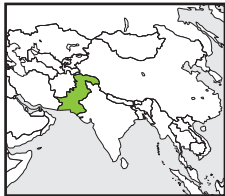
12 TerraDaily, *Agency denies opened dams caused Nigeria floods*, (26 September 2010), <www.terradaily.com/reports/Agency_denies_opened_dams_caused_Nigeria_floods_999.html>.

13 P. O. Bankole and A. Surajudeen, *Major environmental issues and the need for environmental statistics and indicators in Nigeria*, paper presented on behalf of the Nigerian Delegation at the ECOWAS Workshop on Environment Statistics, (Abuja: 19–23 May 2008).

14 Government of Nigeria, op. cit.

15 Ibid.

Squandering the potential for true development



The country's development strategy is almost entirely centred on economic growth with little attention to environmental and social issues. Pakistan has the potential to provide energy for its population, but lacks planning to ensure that those most affected by mega projects are also taken into account. Its water shortage needs to be urgently addressed as eventually the river Indus will dry up. Reliable data on the number of bonded labourers there are in the country is urgently needed so that Government officials can no longer deny the rights of these highly exploited workers while the economy reaps the benefits of their work.

Civil Society Support Programme (CSSP)
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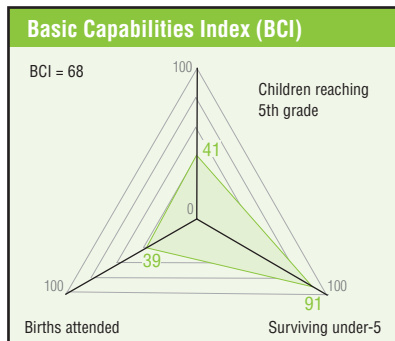
Massive flooding in Pakistan in 2010 devastated an area of around 160,000 km² and affected about 20 million people, most of whom lived and worked in the agricultural sector. They not only lost their homes, but also their livelihoods. It is estimated that more than 2 million hectares of crops were lost during the floods, resulting in fruit and vegetables now having to travel for hours to reach areas that used to have a plentiful amount of fresh goods available. Together with rising petrol prices, this has caused a significant price increase for fresh produce, which has had a devastating effect on the already poor communities of Pakistan.¹

The coping mechanisms developed by riverside communities over decades have also been undermined by high population growth and persistent poverty as well as a number of land management factors, including deforestation, water encroachment on land in the river belt, physical infrastructure development and maintenance of river and canal embankments.

Due to inadequate infrastructure plans and policies, the monsoon season in 2011 also caused devastation throughout the country, leaving much of the Sindh region under water.

Emergency response: success and failures

About 2 million flood-affected families have received Government provided 'Watan cards,' each guaranteeing access to PKR.100,000 (approx. USD 1,170). A major flaw in the programme was the decision to allocate cards to male family heads via the system of Computerized National Identity Cards (CNIC), thereby automatically excluding orphans and female-headed families, along with hundreds of thousands of men and women who had migrated to affected areas before the floods and were ineligible because their CNICs were from other districts. Levels of fraud were high; those registered in more than one flood camp claimed more than one Watan card. No training on how to use an ATM machine was provided and the number of ATMs available remained low; cases of flood victims selling their Watan cards for cash (never their full value) were common. Free fertilisers



and seeds were distributed to farmers; however the project brought complaints of poor seed quality and lack of access.

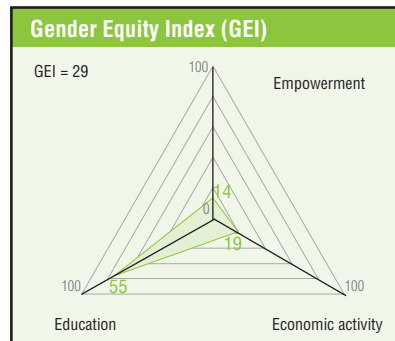
The distribution of aid to people affected by the floods was flawed and corrupt, leaving millions without access to basic rights such as healthcare, education, shelter, food and dignity. The situation is aggravated by the existence of bonded labourers; those working in the agricultural sector found themselves not only homeless, but with the land they lived and worked on now under water, their ability to repay their already endless debt became increasingly unlikely.

Civil society organizations issued a Citizen's Charter stating that the country's "social, economic, commerce, foreign, and national security policies all are extremely exclusionary in nature and need to be redeveloped incorporating a pro-people agenda of development and progress."²

Indus delta issues

Tibetan glaciers are retreating at an alarmingly high rate; in the short term, this will cause lakes to expand and bring floods and mudflows; in the long run, once the glaciers vanish, water supplies in Pakistan will be in peril.³

In 1984, the World Bank initiated the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) programme, which included the creation of a 300km outfall drain from eastern Sindh into the sea. Initially, agriculture improved along the north of the drain and many farmers who had previously left to seek employment in urban areas returned.



However in 1999, a monsoon cyclone caused the drain to burst, destroying thousands of acres of land used for farming. Four years later mass flooding caused even more damage, killing at least 50 local villagers and displacing around 50,000 people. Due to a high level of salinity in ground water caused by the floods, drinking water became scarce and damage to a significant amount of farmland caused major economic losses.⁴

A man-made system of irrigation and drains have led to the unchecked disposal of effluents and chemical waste from factories into Manchar Lake, which then flows into the sea. Large canals in the north, such as Chashma and Tausa, are also widely blamed for a shortage of freshwater; designed to be used in times of floods, due to mismanagement and corruption they are now used at all times. This has not only reduced water in the rivers south of the canals, but has left the downstream Kotri Delta conservation area without sufficient water to sustain its wetlands, which are home to a large number of shrimp and fish as well as being crucial in times of natural disasters. The Kotri Delta is also a globally recognized stopping ground for migratory birds from Siberia; however due to a lack of water, only a few gulls remain today.

As these rivers end before they reach the Arabian Sea, the lack of silt from the rivers has caused the sea to seriously intrude on the land. Over 2 million acres of land has already been claimed by the sea, forcing coastal communities to migrate inland and destroying the fishing industry. There is an urgent need to fix river banks and water flow

1 See: <www.bbc.co.uk/news/south-world-asia-11875204>.

2 See: <www.humanrights.asia/news/forwarded-news/AHRC-FST-098-2010>.

3 See: <www.afp.com>.

4 See: <www.devex.com/en/articles/world-bank-water-project-imperils-pakistan-fisherfolk>.

direction, implement a system for the de-silting of rivers, and stop the misuse of canals which is ruining wetland areas.

Families who have lived and worked on the banks of the Indus for generations now struggle to catch enough fish to survive. It is estimated that fishing has declined by 70-80% in some villages and many farmers have switched production from rice to sunflowers, which require less water and yield about the same profit, but means there is less food available.⁵ Lack of water in the rivers is also posing a serious threat to the Indus dolphins, who are now in danger of extinction.

Coal: potential threats and opportunities

The district of Tharparkar in the Sindh province is rich in natural resources including vast coal mines (among the world's 5 largest coal reserve) and is home to about 1.5 million people. A proposed project for Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) in the district has the potential to generate 5,000 mw of electricity for at least 800 years.

The majority of Tharparkar's residents are members of indigenous minority groups. These groups are doubly disadvantaged in society as they are not only Hindus but also *Dalits*, also called *Outcastes*. They are asset-less people who rely on rain-fed agriculture and livestock rearing who simply wish for their livelihoods and traditions to be respected. Part of their concern comes from a dramatic rise in Thar's population, leading to an increase in poverty levels and scarcity of resources, while there are plans to outsource labour for the UCG project instead of hiring local residents.

The Government has so far created no solid proposals for the resettlement of Thar's residents or taken their wellbeing into account. Because of this, in 2010 the World Bank pulled out of the project, representing a major blow to the country's sustainable development.

Bonded labour

Despite numerous legal provisions designed to reduce bonded labour, this practice continues, particularly in areas where there are brick kilns, carpet industries, fishing, mining, stone/brick crushing, shoe-making, power looms, refuse sorting and agri-

EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan, like most developing countries, actually contributes very little to overall greenhouse gas emissions; however their effects are substantial. For example:

- Glacier melt in the Himalayas will increase flooding before affecting water resources in Pakistan within the next 2-3 decades;
- Freshwater availability is projected to decrease, leading to biodiversity loss as well as shortage of drinking water;
- Coastal areas bordering the Arabian Sea will be at great risk of rising sea levels;
- Crop yields are expected to decrease causing high risk of hunger and food insecurity.
- Endemic morbidity and mortality due to diseases associated with floods and draughts will rise, while changes in coastal water temperatures will increase incidence of cholera.
- Existing social inequalities regarding resource use will be aggravated, leading to instability, conflicts, displacement of people and changes in migration patterns.¹

¹ See: <www.lead.org.pk/cc/basicguide_climate_change.html>.

culture. They are thus found in all provinces, but are highly prevalent in Sindh and Punjab. There is a serious lack of reliable data concerning their numbers, causing the problem to remain unaddressed.⁵ The ILO reported 20 million bonded labourers in Pakistan in 1993, and only 1.7 million by 2009. However NGOs claimed there are around 1.3 million engaged in bonded labour in Sindh province alone.⁶

Due to the lack of economic opportunities and high levels of illiteracy, bonded labour is often voluntary.⁷ Bonded labourers are left with no escape; the majority of them do not own a national identity card, thus having no right to vote and no access to social services. Feudal landlords, who often take pride in having bonded labourers, especially if they are children, resist initiatives for change as they benefit significantly from the bonded labour system.⁸

Long term solutions

The Government needs to make a comprehensive plan for the protection of the local fishing and farming communities, as well as the conservation of important environmental areas such as the wetlands. The plan should include the revival of agriculture and

provision of improved fishing equipment to those affected by river mismanagement, the promotion of livestock and dairy development, income generation activities, the provision of safe drinking water, and a long term plan for the revival of education and health facilities in the area.⁹

All contaminated water released into the Arabian Sea should be treated and routinely checked to preserve marine life. A plan is needed to ensure that sea water does not enter the wetlands and a comprehensive water recycling / rain harvesting system should be in operation to deal with the water shortage problem. A number of smaller dams on the Indus may prove to be more effective than the large canals in operation at present.

As Pakistan is frequently affected by natural disasters, it is crucial that an effective system of Disaster Risk Reduction and Risk Mapping is in place, involving and educating those who are most likely to be affected by major crises, to ensure that the extent of devastation and destruction is as little as possible. Disaster Management Authorities in each province should step up their efforts and engage local universities in conducting research on climate change. ■

⁵ G. M. Kundi and B. Shah, *Bonded Labour and Constrained Role of Pakistan Government in its Eradication*, Department of Public Administration, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, (2006).

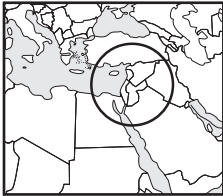
⁶ See: <www.tbl.com.pk/the-menace-of-bonded-labour-in-pakistan-agricultural-sector>.

⁷ District Umerkot Sindh, Rural Support Programmes Network, *Bonded Labour*, (2009).

⁸ See: <www.sparcpk.org>.

⁹ See: <www.ifwatchnet.org/?q=en/node/6>.

No sustainable development under occupation



Israeli occupation undermines Palestine's environment and minimizes any possibility that it can implement sustainable development. Alarming unemployment rates, weak and inefficient institutions and high dependency on customs revenues and financial contributions from donor countries makes apparent the unsustainability of the Palestinian economy. In addition, the disastrous conditions of the water supply facilities – mostly due to laws enforced during the 1967 Israeli occupation – poses an alarming threat to Palestinians' well being.

Palestine represents a very unusual case regarding sustainable development. In order to address this topic, there are a number of issues that need to be considered, the most important being the lack of sovereignty and control over resources, the absence of legislation or policy plans for development of any kind and the growing importance of donor country funding to the economies of both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The lack of legislation and policies, especially with regard to sustainability, is linked to the Israeli occupation, which has ultimate power over the jurisdiction and geographic extension of any possible legislation, and is also a cause of political instability.

The reality of the occupation therefore makes it necessary to take into account the inadequacy of many development indicators when applied to the Palestinian situation. This does not mean that we must exclude Palestine from development statistics, but merely that the indicators that are widely employed are not necessarily valid with regard to this country, and consequently another kind of development measurements must be considered.

Unemployment

The World Bank's 2011 report on the current poverty situation on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip described the Palestinian situation as unique in the world. It noted that the country's unemployment rates are the highest in the world, mostly due to the lack of opportunities, and concluded that the unemployment rates are closely linked to the occupation.

According to this report, 19% of the population was unemployed in 2011, despite the fact that according to official data, 780,000 people were working in Palestinian territory in the first quarter of 2011, an increase of 130,000 compared to the previous year. This means a decrease in unemployment rates of approximately 21.7%. Young men and women are

particularly affected, since in 2009, the unemployment rate among young people was 10% higher than the overall unemployment rate.¹

Social and environmental issues

The situation with regard to health services is daunting. There are 25 public hospitals across the territories, and the number of inhabitants per bed reaches 1,349. The poor condition of the medical facilities makes it inevitable that a large number of patients must be transferred to neighbouring countries for treatment. This resulted in an additional expense of almost 1,484,200,000 Israeli shekels (USD 403,702,400) in 2010, largely due to the lack of sound planning and proper management. In fact, if the existing resources were properly managed, the ministry would be able to build facilities equipped with state of the art medical technology, which would make such expensive transfers unnecessary.

Regarding water supply and sanitation, the 2007-11 Gaza Strip blockade had dire consequences, particularly the severe damage inflicted on the infrastructure. Almost all sewage and water pumps were out of operation due to lack of electricity and fuel; this caused a great shortage of water and also sewage overflow in urban areas.² The blockade impeded the provision of spare parts, so the facilities were not repaired.

Agriculture accounts for 70% of Palestine's total usage of water, followed by domestic (27%) and industrial uses. According to a World Bank 2009 report, the residential water supply for the West Bank was estimated at about 50 liters per capita per day.³ In 2009, 60% of the population of the Gaza Strip

* There are no available data on GEI.

1 See "Amid Palestinian statehood push, a grim World Bank report," *Christian Science Monitor*, 14 September 2011. Available from: <www.csmonitor.com/World/Backchannels/2011/0914/Amid-Palestinian-statehood-push-a-grim-World-Bank-report-on-the-West-Bank-Gaza>.

2 World Bank, *Gaza Strip Water and Sanitation Situation*, 2009. Available from: <web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/WESTBANKGAZEXTN/0,,contentMDK:22026701~menuPK:294370~pagePK:2865066~piPK:2865079~theSitePK:294365,00.html>.

3 Wikipedia, *Water supply and sanitation in the Palestinian territories*. Available from: <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_supply_and_sanitation_in_Palestine>.

lacked access to continuous water supply.⁴ In the West Bank, only 13,000 m3 (out of 85,000 m3) of wastewater was treated in 2009, while in the same year the amount was 65,000 m3 (out of 110,000 m3), in the Gaza Strip.⁵

The same year, Amnesty International reported that up to 200,000 Palestinians in rural communities have no access at all to running water, and the Israeli army prevents them from even collecting rain water, while Israeli settlers have irrigated farms and swimming pools. In fact, the 450,000 settlers counted in this report use as much water as the total population of Palestine. In order to cope with water shortages and lack of infrastructure, many Palestinians have to purchase water of dubious quality from mobile water tankers, at very high prices.⁶

In 1993, the World Bank published a report entitled "Developing the Occupied Territories: An investment in Peace," which described the provision of public services in the occupied territories as highly inadequate, since water, solid waste and wastewater facilities were practically non-existent. Poor waste management contributed to environmental degradation, and the causes go back to the Israeli Administration from 1967 to 1993. Progress in rebuilding these facilities has been almost nonexistent, despite investments by many international donors, mostly due to the flaws and ambiguities in the Oslo Agreement, especially as it has been interpreted by the Israeli authorities. Escalating violence has further worsened this situation.⁷

When Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967, it declared all water resources to be property of the State of Israel, and since then several military orders have minimized water development in Palestine, fixing pumping quotas, prohibiting rehabilitation of wells or drilling new ones without a permit and confiscating or even destroying all Palestinian pumping stations on the Jordan River. Israel, at the same time, increased its exploitation of the water resources of the West Bank, drilling 38 wells. As a result of this, by 1993 Palestinians had access only to 20% of the

water of the aquifer system underlying the West Bank. The Oslo Agreement did nothing to improve the situation for Palestine. In fact, it was agreed that "existing quantities of utilization" were to be maintained, so Israel's exploitation of 80% of the aquifer was formally endorsed.⁸

It is not yet clear what will be the effect of climate change on Palestinian territories, but some experts predict rising average temperatures and decreasing precipitation, which will endanger even more the precarious state of water supply both in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.⁹

According to a report published by the Research in the Middle East Institute, a number of Palestine and Israeli NGOs believe that "a comprehensive peace process would help in resolving the Israeli violations against the Palestinian environment. The current peace process was not seen as helping the environment."¹⁰ The environment clearly can't wait for serious peace talks.

Legislation issues

Palestinian legislation is extremely complex and contradictory. Some laws, for example, date from the time of the Ottoman Empire and British Mandate, and also from Egyptian and Jordanian dominion via Israeli occupation, which included military orders that were not part of the legislation per se but are still in force. Laws adopted after the establishment of the National Authority in 1994 constitute only 12% of the applicable legislation.

The judicial and legislative situation is clearly linked to the political instability of the country. The separation between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for instance, stopped the debate over 50 proposed laws.

Also, the updated laws did not abolish the old ones, some of which are contrary to the geographical jurisdiction of the Arbitration Act as enforced by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Jerusalem. There is dire need of updated legislation regarding the private sector for example, in order to regulate,

promote and strengthen the business environment, as well as with regard to health care.

It could be argued that the occupation is still playing a major role in thwarting effective legislation, weakening its ability to provide a framework for development.

In fact, both the legislative and the judiciary systems suffer from the continuing occupation, but also from the fact that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are split. This is one of the most important obstacles regarding sustainable development, since environmental policies are not available because of the lack of dialogue. Another factor that undermines sustainability is that the institutional weakness makes impossible to measure or improve the effectiveness of funding efforts by donor countries.

Donations, politics and sustainability

Different criteria regarding the allocation and administration of funds from donors are a constant source of conflict. Thus, the projects designated beneficiaries often fail to benefit from the funds from donor countries and enterprises. These conflicts are usually increased by the politicization of the services provided.

It should be noted that donors do seek to ameliorate this situation by promoting accountability and strengthening institutional transparency in Palestine, though the results are now being jeopardized by the increasing politicization of Palestinian society. In fact, many donations have the negative consequence of increasing dependence on this kind of funding, especially regarding donations with political goals such as the fund provided to the activities aiming at normalizing the relations with Israel. This kind of dependency also serves to undermine deep social values such as volunteerism, dignity and altruism. All of this has served to deepen social unrest.

Donors have also sought to enhance the capacity of different institutions in the Palestinian community, which was evident in a situation experienced by both civil society institutions and the Government.

4 UN News Centre, *Gaza water crisis prompts UN call for immediate opening of crossings*, 2009. Available from: <www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=31927>.

5 World Bank, op.cit.

6 Amnesty International, *Israel rations Palestinians to trickle of water*, 27 October 2009. Available from: <www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/israel-rations-palestinians-trickle-water-20091027>.

7 A. Gray, *Environmental justice for Palestine*, 23 March 2007. Available from: <www.countercurrents.org/pa-gray230307.htm>.

8 Ibid.

9 EMWIS, *A war on water*, 2009. Available from: <www.emwis.org/thematicdirs/news/2009/06/war-water-environmental-problems-israel-and>.

10 See: <vispo.com/PRIME/enviro.htm>.

Economic growth is not enough



Panama has enjoyed economic growth in recent years, but this has not led to people being empowered or freed to live decent and fulfilling lives. Nor has it resulted in effective policies to reduce poverty or preserve and protect the environment. Since 2009 the Government has made policy mistakes that have damaged governability, disturbed the populace and generated a climate of tension in the country. To achieve a sustainable development model, the Government will have to design and implement better policies and increase social investment so as to tackle the alarming levels of inequality in the country.

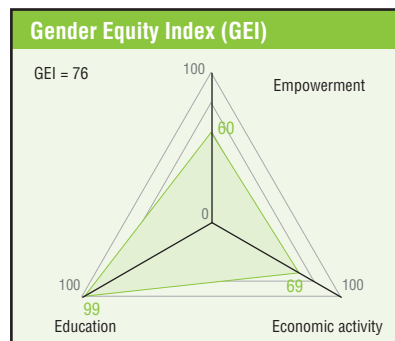
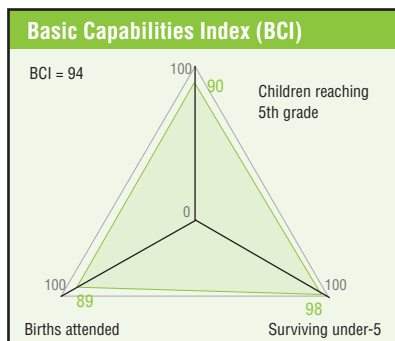
Centro de la Mujer Panameña
Cecilia Moreno Rojas

Panama's economy has grown strongly in recent years, and in 2010 this trend reached a peak of 7% annual growth.¹ The driving force has been investment in public works, widening the Panama Canal and expanding services. This progress was duly noted by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations, all of which report that the country has the highest per capita income in Central America. In 2009 Panama's GDP was USD 24,711,000 million, and its per capita GDP was USD 6,570, while the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) reported that Panama is the region's largest exporter and importer.²

However, this healthy growth trend contrasts sharply with a social panorama of poverty, unequal income distribution and gender inequity. There are still enormous problems of social inequality to be overcome. Income distribution gaps are very wide, especially when they are analysed by type of region, ethnicity and gender. These disparities can be seen in the country's Gini coefficient, which data from 2005³ show to be approximately 55, a clear indication that inequality is a serious problem.

Panama's growth is based on unsustainable development models that focus on economic indicators and ignore the most pressing social and environmental problems. This is a complex challenge for civil society organizations, above all because the style of government imposed by President Ricardo Martinelli is markedly autocratic and far to the political right.

Further, there is a recurrent pattern that every five years the country has to be reinvented. The slate is wiped clean, and public policies start again from scratch. For example, in 2004 and 2005 the Administrator of the National Environment Authority (ANAM), in cooperation with a team of inter-institutional specialists, designed seven public policies for



the priority areas of water resources; climate change; cleaner production; supervision, control and monitoring of solid waste; environmental information and the decentralization of environmental management. These policies were promulgated in 2007, but they were never implemented because a new Government came to power in July 2009.

At the present time the country does not have an environmental policy; the new ANAM authorities who came to power in 2009 completely ignored the progress that had been made in this field. What is more and against all expectations, a year and a half after coming to power President Martinelli - with the backing of his Cabinet and a majority in the National Assembly - made a series of changes to the Environment Law that eliminated the requirement that enterprises perform environmental impact studies.⁴ These changes also opened the door for members of the Government to invest in and promote public works or mining projects without having to hold any public consultations. The ANAN administration said nothing about this change and remained passively in the background while the process went on. Environmental groups severely criticized its stance, denouncing the ANAM as "weak" and lacking "a loud clear voice" to guide the country's environment policy.⁵

Union groups protested changes to the labour law that restricted their right to strike and other social organizations protested similar legal manoeuvres that constituted a violation of human rights. The population at large rejected the new legislation, causing

a chain reaction among civil society organizations and above all among environmental organizations. For three months Panama convulsed with public protests and demonstrations in a range of different sectors. The changes were finally repealed in October 2010. "[W]orkers' right to strike and union fees were re-established; the [Martinelli] policies could no longer go ahead with impunity; and the environmentalists were able to reimpose the obligation to carry out environment impact studies."⁶

The deterioration of natural resources

Another serious obstacle to sustainable development in Panama is the increasing deterioration of the country's biological corridors and a large part of its natural resources due to indiscriminate exploitation of its forests, extensive livestock rearing and environmental pollution caused by the open-pit mining techniques used by transnational enterprises. When these trends are added to the effects of climate change there could be serious repercussions not only on the environment but on people's health and well-being.

Panama is suffering from severe soil erosion and deterioration, which is gradually spreading to nearly all of its valleys, land and water resources, leading towards desertification and the loss of productive capacity. Large swathes of the country's forests have already been destroyed, mainly as a result of agriculture.⁷

1 ABC.es, *Panamá: Crecimiento económico del 7% en el 2010*, (16 December 2010), <www.centralamericadata.com/es/article/home/Panam%C3%A1_Crecimiento_econ%C3%B3mico_del_7_en_el_2010>.

2 World Bank, *Panama*, <datos.bancomundial.org/pais/panama>.

3 Trading Economics, *GINI index in Panama*, <www.tradingeconomics.com/panama/gini-index-wb-data.html>.

4 See: <www.asamblea.gob.pa/actualidad/proyectos/2010/2010_P_227.pdf>.

5 See: <www.expresiones7.net/Exp2.0/Entrevista.htm>.

6 See: <www.mw.nl/espanol/article/panama-se-deroga-la-controvertida-%E2%80%99Cley-chorizo%E2%80%9D>.

7 Ibid.

According to ANAM's Environment Information System figures, desertification is taking hold at an alarming rate. In 1970 some 70% of the country was under forest cover but by 2011 this had been reduced to around 35%. The last in-depth report on the situation dates from 2000, and it shows that forest coverage in 1992 amounted to 49% of the country, but by 2000 (in just eight years) it had shrunk to 45%.⁸

Water pollution

Environmental protection organizations have reported that important sources of fresh water near the Panama Canal valley have been polluted by the operations of two gold and copper mining projects in the Petaquilla and Molejones area, 100 km from the capital. These groups monitored the situation, and water and sediment from sources near the mining area were analysed. The tests showed that the water has high levels of suspended solids and excessive turbidity. Little by little the pollution is negatively affecting the natural environment in very serious ways.⁹ These organizations have repeatedly warned the authorities that the levels of substances in rivers potentially dangerous to the environment and to people's health may increase. But instead of paying due attention to this threat, the Government has persisted in its policy of promoting activities that are not sustainable and cause pollution – mining is a prime example – as a strategy for economic development. In fact, the Government has made a series of changes to the mining laws to make it easier for various transnational mining enterprises to operate in the country.¹⁰

Access to potable water

According to a UN report on Panama's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), large sectors of the population do not have access to potable water. This problem is most acute in rural areas, indigenous communities and some marginalized urban areas on the outskirts of cities where most of the people are of mixed race or of African descent. The situation as regards access to improved sewage facilities is similar, and rural and indigenous population groups suffer the consequences of this unequal distribution of services.¹¹

8 L. Vidal Berrío, "Cobertura boscosa se reduce 50%," *Capital*, (6 June 2011), <www.capital.com.pa/?p=4117>.

9 Teorema Ambiental, "Advierten sobre el riesgo de contaminación de agua en Panamá.", *Teorema Ambiental, Revista Técnico Ambiental*, <www.teorema.com.mx/contaminacion_/advierten-sobre-el-riesgo-de-contaminacion-de-aguas-en-panama>.

10 In a statement to the media the Minister of Trade said, "Adjustment (to the Mining Code) is needed as one of the countries interested in investing in the Donoso copper mine project in the province of Colón is the Republic of Korea, since numeral 1, article 4 of Decree Law 23, prohibits the granting of mining concessions to foreign governments or countries." In *La Estrella.com.pa*, (1 September 2010), <www.laestrella.com.pa/mensual/2010/09/01/contenido/273813.asp>.

11 See: <www.onu.org.pa/objetivos-desarrollo-milenio-ODM/garantizar-sostenibilidad-ambiental>.

TABLE 1

Poverty rate by area (%)

Details	General poverty rate (%)		
	1997	2003	2008
Country total	37.3	36.8	32.7
Urban	15.3	20.0	17.7
Rural total	64.9	62.7	59.7
Rural non-indigenous	58.7	54.0	50.7
Rural indigenous	95.4	98.4	96.3

Source : Encuesta de Niveles de Vida 2008. Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas, Panamá.

The MDG report also states that the precarious settlement populations are far from being able to satisfy their basic needs. Most are families in the grip of poverty and unemployment and have no other alternative in their search for a place to live. The report recognizes that there is a close connection between illiteracy and poverty that subsequently translates into other inequalities including limited access to health services and decent housing, gender inequality, reduced political participation and a lack of protection for the environment.¹²

According to a Levels of Life Survey (ENV) that was carried out in Panama in 2003, some 36.8% of the population were living in poverty, defined as an income of less than USD 100 a month, and 16.6% were living in extreme poverty. In 2008 a similar study found there had been a slight improvement with poverty falling to 32.7% and extreme poverty to 14.4%.¹³

In urban areas where migrants from the countryside are swelling the population without government planning for urban growth, the overall poverty rate is 20%, and 4.4% of the people are in extreme poverty. In non-indigenous rural areas more than half the population (54%) is still living in poverty, and over one in five of these people (22%) are in extreme poverty. In indigenous rural areas the situation is extremely critical as nearly the whole population (98.4%) is in poverty, and the extreme poverty rate is 90%.¹⁴

Gender inequality and poverty

If Panama is to overcome poverty and social exclusion, it has to tackle problems of social and gender inequality. Currently, women and children are more vulnerable to poverty than are men and have fewer opportunities to escape it. Poverty in general is high, but this is even more worrying when we consider its scope and impact by age brackets or ethnicity.

12 Ibid.

13 Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas de Panamá, *Encuesta Niveles de Vida*, (Panama, Panama City: 2008).

14 Ibid., *La Pobreza En Panamá, Encuesta de Niveles de Vida – 2003 Principales. Resultados, Edición Revisada*, (2005).

Gender inequalities can be seen most clearly in the labour market. According to official figures, women's earnings were only 57% of men's earnings in 2009. Although women make up half the population a large percentage of women of productive age (51.7%) are not involved in the formal workforce, which is a major factor in the country's poverty profile. Women are still the most vulnerable group in the labour market, and most of the work they do is not paid at all. According to the 2009 household survey, some 80.9% of the economically active male population had jobs, but only 48.3% of the economically active female population was gainfully employed. In 2009, the unemployment rate among women was 9.27%, which contrasts sharply to the 5.25% rate among men.¹⁵

Women's situation is better in the education field. Statistics show they are an average of two percentage points ahead of men in access to schooling. Girls of the younger generations have greater access to education than their mothers and grandmothers had, but in some indigenous areas the schooling indicator for women is lower than that for men.¹⁶

Conclusion

Panama's approach to economic development ignores sustainability and has led to a degradation of its environmental resources while having only minimal impact in improving the lives and well-being of the majority of its people. Deforestation, desertification, water pollution, accessibility to potable water, and inadequate sewage facilities threaten the environment and the very health of the Panamanian people. Especially affected are migrants from the countryside in overcrowded settlements in towns and cities and the rural population, notably those in indigenous communities, which suffer from severe and sometimes extreme poverty. Women, particularly, have been hard-hit by economic development models that look first to benefit wealthy national elites and their international partners and investors. ■

15 Ministerio de Controlaría de Panamá, *Encuesta Continua de Hogares 2009*, <www.contraloria.gob.pa/inec/Publicaciones/05-03-31/441-02.pdf>.

16 *Atlas de Desarrollo Humano y Objetivos del Milenio*, (2010).

The country must be rebuilt on new foundations



The development models implemented in the country have failed to meet the population's needs. The environment is still being exploited with no thought for the future; inequalities among the different sectors of the population are getting worse. What is needed is a new development plan that enables a better coordination between the State, the organizations of civil society and the market and at the same time lays anew the country's foundations to benefit the good of all. It means moving on from making protests to making proposals and showing that if everyone participates in the effort, it is possible to build a better country.

Decidamos, Campaña por la Expresión Ciudadana
 José Guillermo Monroy Peralta

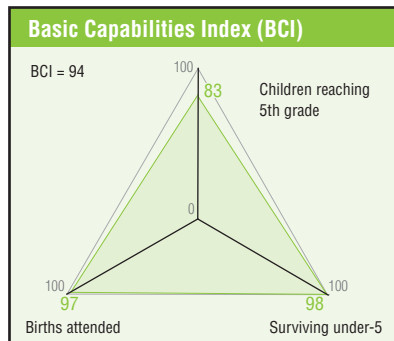
Historically, the development models implemented in Paraguay have depended largely on agricultural exports and their goals have been exclusively focused on economic growth. The results have always been monoculture, progressive deforestation to extend productive land area, concentration of wealth in a few hands, impoverishment, and forced migration of part of the population for economic survival. These unsuccessful models have never met the needs of broad swathes of the population or slowed the serious deterioration of the environment. Their failures reflect an inadequate and incomplete coordination among the State, civil society organizations and the market.

An impoverishing economy

The economy of Paraguay is historically based on exploiting and exporting primary products. Each development model, based in agriculture and highly dependent on foreign trade, has led to an unequal distribution of land. According to the 2008 Agriculture Census, 84% of productive rural units are small farms of 20 hectares or less, and only 9% are enterprises with more than 50 hectares.¹ Families are constantly being driven off the land and moving to urban areas. This internal migration has swelled the slums around big cities. As a consequence, peasant movements have intensified their demands for agrarian reform.

In November 2008, the Government - by presidential decree - set up the Executive Board for Agrarian Reform (CEPRA) with the principal aim of coordinating and promoting economic, social, political and cultural development. CEPRA was also intended to foster the management of public policies in established settlements and contribute to the design and implementation of an agrarian reform. However, this initiative has achieved almost nothing.²

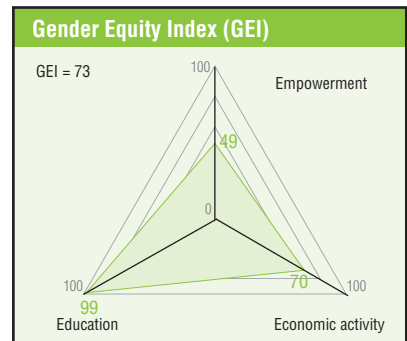
The Paraguayan economy expanded considerably in the period 2003-08, with an average annual growth rate of 4.8%, but the result is still an unequal distribution of wealth. For example, over the same



period, unemployment decreased by only 1.6% and under-employment increased from 24.2% to 26.5%. The inconsistency between the growth of the economy and the weakness of employment indicators clearly shows that economic growth did not generate meaningful numbers of jobs or reduced informal employment.³

Unequal society

Out of 6.4 million Paraguayans, 60% are under 30 years old; 1.7% are indigenous peoples, who face the most unequal conditions throughout the country.⁴ From 1997 to 2008, poverty increased from 36.1% to 37.9%. In rural areas it fell from 51.6% to 48.8%, but urban poverty went up from 22.5% to 30.2%. Half of the people identified as poor (1.16 million) are living in *extreme* poverty.⁵ Around half a million Paraguayans have had to emigrate. According to data from the United Nations Development Programme, in the period 2001-07 alone around 280,000 people emigrated, mainly to Argentina and more recently to Spain.⁶



The environment in danger

During the first decade of the 21st century the Government set in motion a series of initiatives geared to respond to the country's environmental problems and needs, including the National Climate Change Programme (2001), the National Strategy and the Action Plan to Preserve Biodiversity 2004-2009 (2003),⁷ the Paraguay National Environment Policy (2005) and the Paraguay Hydric Resources Law (2007). In spite of these plans and programmes, however, there are more and more environmental problems. For example, there has been a serious loss of forest area, mainly in the Eastern Region, which in 1945 had 55.1% of the country's forest land. By 2005, it accounted for only 7.56%, and resulted in considerable loss of biodiversity.⁸ The lesson to be drawn is that environmental policies can do little in the context of fragile institutions and scarce economic and human resources that are insufficient to establish the required control systems, enforce the law and impose penalties.

Development Plans 2003-2013

As the 21st century opened, the Nicanor Duarte Frutos Government (2003-08) established a development plan called "Agenda for a Better Country," which had four strategic aims:

- To rebuild confidence in State institutions and their representatives.

1 Government of the Republic of Paraguay, *Censo Agropecuario Nacional 2008*, Vol. 1, (Asunción: 2009).

2 Ibid., Presidency of the Republic, *Segundo Informe al Congreso Nacional. Periodo 2009-2010*, (Asunción: July 2010).

3 D. Borda, "Efectos macroeconómicos e impacto social de la crisis global," in *Políticas sociales en Tiempos de Crisis: Memoria del Seminario Iberoamericano*, (Asunción: UNDP - Secretaría General Iberoamericana, 6 and 7 August 2009).

4 UNDP, *Informe Nacional sobre Desarrollo Humano 2008. Equidad para el Desarrollo*, (Asunción: 2008).

5 Government of the Republic of Paraguay, Dirección General de Estadística, Encuestas y Censos, *Estadísticas Recientes sobre Pobreza. Encuesta Permanente de Hogares 2007*, (Asunción: August, 2008); and *Mejora de la metodología de medición de pobreza en Paraguay. Resultados 1997-2008*, (Asunción: 2009).

6 UNDP, *Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2009. Ampliando horizontes. Emigración internacional paraguaya*, (Asunción: 2009).

7 SEAM- UNDP, *Conservación de la Diversidad Biológica en el Paraguay: Una Propuesta de la Secretaría del Ambiente para la Guía de Acciones*, Vol 2, (Asunción: 2006).

8 Ibid.

- To promote the active participation of the country's citizens in constructing democratic institutions.
- To reactivate the economy and generate jobs within a new model of sustainable development.
- To combat poverty, corruption and insecurity.

These aims were set out in 14 guiding core objectives, including 1) a modernized public administration; 2) a reliable economic environment; 3) sustainable economic growth; 4) a revolution in education aimed at improving human capital; 5) health priorities and policies; 6) public works and the construction of affordable housing; 7) energy for development; 8) defence of the environment; 9) establishment of a new model of international relations 10) development of new spaces in the State and society; 11) respect for human rights; 12) reduction of poverty and social exclusion; 13) elimination of corruption; and 14) a modernized State security force.

In order to operationalize the plan, in 2006, the Government laid out the National Strategy to Fight against Poverty. Subsequently social investment increased from USD 400 million in 2002 to USD 1,507 million in 2007.⁹ The Government sought to modernize the public administration apparatus and managed to achieve an average annual economic growth rate of 4.8%.

The Government also tackled agriculture with its National Plan to Re-activate Family Agriculture (2003-08), which included a Programme to Support the Development of Small Cotton Farms and a project called Food Security. In 2007 the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock set up the Fund to Support Family Agriculture, which not only provided financial incentives but also introduced the Agronomic Certificate and the Family Agriculture Register. This programme made it possible to directly support peasant family farming with the transfer of PYG 33,470 million (about USD 8.43 million) to 88,948 beneficiaries.¹⁰

But both the "Agenda for a Better Country" and its programmes fell short of expectations. In 2005, the Government of Paraguay had selected 66 priority districts in programmes to combat poverty. By August 2008 at the end of the mandate of the Duarte Frutos Government, these programmes reached only around 12,000 families. In that same period,

unemployment was reduced from 7.3% in 2004 to 5.7% in 2008, but under-employment increased from 24.2% to 26.5%.¹¹

In August 2008, Fernando Lugo of the newly formed Patriotic Alliance for Change became president, bringing to an end more than 60 years of Colorado Party administrations. The following month the Strategic Economic-Social Plan 2008-13 was launched with the declared aim of improving the living conditions of everyone in the country. It had six strategic objectives:¹²

- To pursue economic growth and generate more jobs;
- To strengthen State institutions in order to make public policy more effective;
- To increase and improve investment in social development, mainly education and health, and focus public expenditure in the fight against extreme poverty;
- To foster diversification in the productive sector of the economy while preserving the environment and developing the country's energy and human resources;
- To promote the participation of civil society and private sector organizations in the economy in order to strengthen micro and small enterprises; and
- To harmonize and coordinate Government action to support the decentralized development of regions in the country.

Then in 2010, the Lugo Government formulated a plan called "Paraguay para todos y todas 2010 -20," which comprised a series of initiatives and resource allocations designed to meet the population's demands and needs and generate opportunities for the people to enjoy and exercise their rights. As part of this plan the Government initiated a social protection system called "Saso Pyahu," designed to alleviate extreme poverty by establishing a package of public policies that would reduce economic and social vulnerability and improve the quality of life of Paraguayan families, mainly in the poorest municipal areas.

The Lugo Government had begun its term of office by setting as one of its priorities the intensification of social policies - above all, those to fight poverty and reduce inequality. It immediately expanded poverty-reduction programmes such as *Tekoporá* (Live Well), a conditional cash transfer and family support programme in select communities, resulting in an increase in the numbers of families

receiving help – including new beneficiaries such as persons over 65 years old and the disabled – of 800% (from 14,000 to 112,000) from 2008 to June 2010.¹³

Up until 2008, the country's health services provided insufficient coverage, reaching only 65-70% of the population. In August 2008, the development of a basic model for health services was given priority, which led to the building of 503 family health units. These services now reach some 1,500,000 people who were not covered previously.

To build a better country

The Chilean sociologist and political scientist, Manuel Antonio Garretón¹⁴, has said that no country (especially in Latin America) has been able to develop without the State playing a predominant role. Nonetheless, we are witnessing the emergence of a new development model, transnational in essence, which reverses the relation between the State and society and erodes the State's guiding role. Of necessity, this change requires a re-definition of the State's role in preserving not only the idea of autonomous development but also the notion of the "National Project." It means that when it comes to building a national effort - a "National Project" - there will have to be greater coordination among all of the actors of a society, each putting their own narrow interests aside and joining forces to lay anew the foundations of their country. This year, 2011, the bicentennial of Paraguay's independence, would be an appropriate time to undertake such a task. Perhaps in this way the Paraguayan State might be able to move towards meeting the very serious challenges faced by its people.

The key is to build a generalized sense of the common good – of a shared destiny – and to establish better coordination between the State, civil society organizations and the market. It requires a broader and more inclusive national agenda, moving on from making protests to staging proposals, and above all, demonstrating that it is possible to build a better country if everyone becomes involved in the effort. ■

9 Government of the Republic of Paraguay, Presidency of the Republic, Secretaría Técnica de Planificación-Secretaría General de la Presidencia-Secretaría Privada de la Presidencia, *Informe Presidencial al Congreso de la Nación*, (July 2008).

10 Ibid. See also: Government of the Republic of Paraguay, Secretaría Técnica de Planificación-Secretaría General de la Presidencia, *Por un País Mejor. 400 días, Cuarto Informe de Gestión*, (July-September 2004).

11 D. Borda, op cit., (6 August 2009).

12 Government of the Republic of Paraguay, Equipo Económico Nacional, *Plan Estratégico Económico y Social –PEES– 2008-2013. Propuestas para un crecimiento económico con inclusión social en Paraguay*, (Asunción: 2008).

13 Government of the Republic of Paraguay, Contraloría General de la República, Dirección General de Control de Recursos Sociales, *Informe Final. Auditoría a la Secretaría de Acción Social "Programa Tekoporá."* Ejercicio fiscal 2007, (Asunción: July 2009); and Secretaría de Acción Social, Dirección General de Protección Social y Desarrollo Humano, Programa de Transferencias Monetarias con Corresponsabilidad, *Informe Trimestral 1º, Informe Trimestral 2º*, (Asunción: 2009).

14 Garretón, Manuel Antonio, "La indispensable y problemática relación entre partidos y democracia en América Latina", en *Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo. La Democracia en América Latina. Hacia una democracia de ciudadanas y ciudadanos. Contribuciones para el debate*, (Buenos Aires: Altaguara, septiembre 2004).

Environmental disaster and minimal efforts



Peru's current development model has been battered by crises, plundered the ecosystem, impoverished the population and severely polluted the environment. The State's sectoral and fragmented approach to environmental management and pollution control is weak and limited. Meeting the needs of the rural and urban poor will require structural measures, as well as new standards and practices. Policies that strengthen the institutional capacity of key actors, support environmental services and improve coordination among donor agencies are essential. The Government should serve the interests of the people rather than cater to the wishes of transnational corporations; this is the only way the country will be able to overcome the environmental challenges that lie ahead.

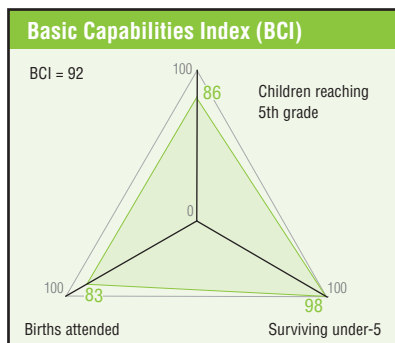
National Conference on Social Development (CONADES) Héctor Béjar

Throughout Peru's history, the ruling oligarchies have pursued extractive models that loot and pillage the country's remarkably diverse ecological and natural resources. One example is the guano crisis, which ended the country's first era of economic prosperity through over-exploitation. This led to economic ruin and widespread impoverishment during the administration of President Manuel Pardo y Lavalle (1872-76). The collapse of the guano industry led to a boom in saltpetre extraction in southern Peru. This, in turn, precipitated the War of the Pacific (1879-83), in which Peru and Bolivia made common cause against Chile, a rival in saltpetre production and export. The allies lost, and Peru was compelled to cede the provinces of Arica, Tarapacá and Antofagasta to its southern neighbour.

In the 20th century, the same pattern of over-exploitation characterized copper, rubber, lead and zinc production,¹ bringing short-term economic prosperity followed by collapse. This pattern is further aggravated by the Government's interest in accommodating the global powers that engage in international price speculation, buy politicians and silence any form of protest, rather than promoting the well-being of Peruvians.

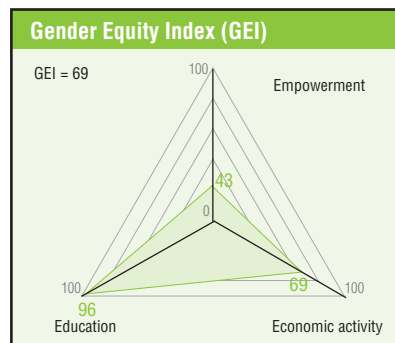
Extensive resource extraction today

Today, as in the 16th century, conquistadors hungry for gold, copper, timber and coca leaf confront the country's indigenous peoples. Instead of horses, dogs and muskets, today's conquistadors come with money, large drilling rigs and bulldozers to cut mountains and devour lakes. In the event that anyone protested, corporate ally Alan García, Peru's President from June 2006 until June 2011, ordered the army and police to "shoot first and think later."²



More than 274 million metric tons of fish were caught from 1950 to 2001,³ almost wiping out the Pacific anchoveta, a member of the Engraulidae Family which also includes anchovies. In the 1970s, the peak of the anchoveta industry, Peru was the world's prime fishing region. Anchoveta meal and oil factories proliferated, their waste severely degrading the environment. Indiscriminate fishing eventually brought the fish to the brink of extinction. In the following decades, the collapse of the fishing and processing industries gradually allowed the anchoveta to flourish in the ocean once again. Now anchoveta meal production is increasing to the point of excess, in all probability leading to depletion, coupled with pollution caused by oil and fishmeal processing facilities, especially in the provinces of Paraca, Paita, Chimbote and Parachique.⁴

At present, virtually all of the anchoveta harvest is used to produce oil and fish meal, with very little consumed by humans. The anchoveta could be a valuable food source, particularly in combating child malnutrition, as it is rich in vitamins A and D, iodine and Omega-3. Fish provides only 8% of the country's food requirements, another indication that the current development model ignores the needs of the population as well as the environment, and will thus prove to be unsustainable in the long run.⁵



At the same time, large forest rivers are dredged for gold, mountains of garbage lie on the Andes and dangerous lead deposits contaminate the main port. Other ports, used for the mining and gas industries, are being wiped out marine life. The country's rivers are being poisoned by urban wastewater, in addition to the arsenic and mercury used to precipitate gold as well as the kerosene and sulfuric acid used to precipitate coca paste into cocaine.

Environmental challenges

The Amazonia, with 68 million hectares of natural forests covering 35% of the country's territory, is the eighth largest forest area in the world and the second largest in Latin America after Brazil, while the Andes contain 300,000 hectares of natural forests. However, decades of wood fuel use by homes and restaurants, along with the slash and burn agricultural methods practiced by farmers have already depleted mangrove, dry and sub-humid forests, and deforestation is continuing at a rate of 150,000 hectares per year.⁶

Peru is also extremely vulnerable to natural disasters. It is located in one of the most seismically active areas of the planet and subject to the volatile atmospheric and oceanic conditions caused by El Niño. The vagaries of this warm ocean current from the equatorial regions can cause both extreme drought and prolonged rains and flooding. Over all, the incidence of floods, earthquakes, hail, snow and drought

1 Third World Institute (ITeM), "Peru," in *The World Guide 2010* (Montevideo: Ediciones G3, 2009), p.443.

2 W. Ardito Vega, *Perú: la criminalización de la protesta en el gobierno de Alan García*, (Servindi Intercultural Communications Services, 2008), <servindi.org/actualidad/4549>.

3 World Bank, *Environmental Sustainability: A Key to Poverty Reduction in Peru*, (Lima, Perú: Sustainable Development Unit – Latin America and the Caribbean Region, May 2007).

4 M. Quesquén, *El caso de la anchoveta en Perú*, <www.monografias.com/trabajos45/mercado-anchoveta-peru/mercado-anchoveta-peru.shtml>.

5 Ibid.

6 El Comercio, *El Perú pierde anualmente 150 mil hectáreas de bosques a causa de la deforestación*, (July 2010), <elcomercio.pe/planeta/611350/noticia-peru-pierde-anualmente-150-mil-hectareas-bosques-causa-deforestacion>.

is almost twice that of Latin America as a whole. The human devastation these natural occurrences cause is compounded by the ignorance of danger and lack of residential planning that leads people to build homes on river banks and dry river beds, at the foot of glaciers or on mountain slopes. According to a World Bank report, more than two million people were affected by natural disasters between 2000 and 2004.⁷ The fatality rate is the highest on the continent.

The Government's response

Since 1940, the Government has created several agencies to address environmental health problems. Currently, the General Directorate of Environmental Health (DIGESA) is the only agency with regulatory power. A Ministry of the Environment has been created, and environmental impact studies are now mandatory for approval of economic ventures. In a proactive programme to reduce the deforestation caused by wood fuel consumption, the Government has initiated a small campaign to promote the use of liquified petroleum gas for stoves.

In the last few years, the Government has enacted laws requiring environmental impact assessments (EIA) and strengthened the legal framework of the forestry sector. The National System of Protected Natural Areas (SINAP), for example, includes 61 natural areas and covers 17.66 million hectares, 13.74% of the country. The financial resources of the Fund for Natural Areas Protected by the State (PROFONANPE), established in 1992, have been increasing, and are being used to raise additional resources. According to the Ministry of the Environment, an estimated USD 90.6 million is being devoted to conservation efforts annually. However, no systematic mechanism has been established to identify priorities.

The institutional framework assigns the main regulatory responsibilities for pollution control and

environmental management to the energy and mining sector departments that develop standards based on the use of Environmental Impact Assessments, Environmental Management and Adaptation and Environmental Management Plans, Maximum Permissible Limits and special environmental standards in the subsectors of electricity and hydrocarbons. Environmental departments have also been established in the Ministries of Production, Transport and Communications, Housing, Construction and Sanitation.

Despite these efforts, the sectoral approach to environmental management and pollution control is disorganized, weak and has limited institutional capacity. Newly adopted environmental policies suffer from a lack of overall coordination and clarity. In sum, Government action to date has amounted to little or nothing compared to the challenge of ceaseless environmental deterioration and the overwhelming strength of the global powers destroying the country.

What is to come

Since 1980 the glaciers in Peru have lost one-fifth of their ice. In 50 years the country will not have enough water to drink, irrigate fields, or maintain the current hydroelectrical power system that provides electricity to towns and industries.⁸ With the rise in the sea temperature, phytoplankton and anchoveta, the foundation of the maritime food chain, will sink into the depths in search of colder temperatures or migrate to other areas, which could lead to the extinction of numerous species in Peru. Likewise, a reduction in rainfall altitude will reduce precipitation on mountaintops and slopes, and cause uncontrollable floods, damming and landslides further down. The higher water level in the ocean will wipe out fishing coves and beaches. Changes in temperature and precipitation rates will transform a great part of the Amazon rainforest into desert.⁹

Minimizing the impact of these impending threats demands an integrated response to natural disasters, with an emphasis on prevention through regulation of the activities of the formal and informal mining, logging and fishing industries. These activities are currently in the hands of corporations and hundreds of thousands of "informal" miners. Vulnerability to natural disasters could be reduced through the adoption of appropriate building technologies, standards and practices among the urban poor and rural populations.

Peru could produce more electricity from hydropower and wind energy sources, switch from fossil fuels to natural gas, manage waste and avoid further deforestation. The possible impacts of climate change, using the devastation and consequences of natural occurrences such as El Niño and its effects as a baseline should be investigated. Essential policies include building the institutional capacity of key stakeholders, clearly defining the roles and functions of the Ministry of the Environment, supporting national efforts to strengthen biodiversity and environmental services, utilizing Peru's comparative advantage in biodiversity, and strengthening coordination mechanisms among donor agencies.

The National Fund for Natural Areas Protected by the State (PROFONANPE) must be complemented by an Environmental General Fund, financed by taxes paid by corporations. The work of INRENA (National Institute of Natural Resources) should be carried out through watershed councils involving grassroots organizations.

All of these reforms require determined political will; a recognition that the Government must give priority to the country's present and future, rather than serving corporations and criminalizing the protests of indigenous and local communities, which are increasingly frequent and militant. ■

8 P. Vargas, *El cambio climático y sus efectos en el Perú*, (Lima, Perú: Central Bank of Peru Working Paper Series, 2009).

9 Ibid.

7 World Bank, Lima, op cit.

Clearing the path to sustainability



Addressing the vulnerability of the country's already degraded environment is as important as making the economy grow. In addition, the Philippines long ago exceeded the 0.4 hectares per person required to satisfy the optimum food requirement/capacity. Decentralization efforts attempting to create growth centres away from Manila are still unable to break the elite and urban-centred structure of power and resources. The Government must strive to find ways – in cooperation with farmers, NGOs, the mass media, schools and the national agriculture research system – to achieve long-term food security and environmental sustainability.

Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM)
Social Watch Philippines
Isagani R. Serrano

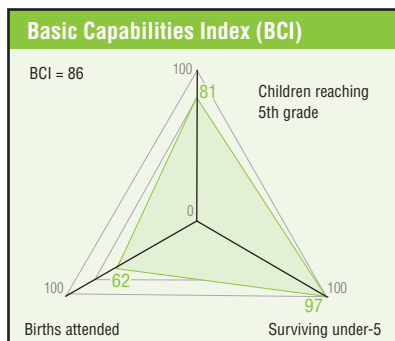
In 2010, inspired by the Philippines' second greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory, then president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo pompously announced that the country was now a net carbon sink. Carbon intensity, as expressed by CO₂ emissions, may indicate something about the level and nature of development, but there is much more to consider. Indicators vary widely, depending on what people value most.

Low CO₂ emissions are a poor indicator of sustainable development. A more sensitive single indicator of a society's well-being is probably the infant mortality rate, which reveals the quality of nutrition and healthcare. In addition, it is connected to other basic indicators such as the quality of water resources, housing, education, and especially women's education level. It can also be an indicator of State failure.¹ In the case of the Philippines, child mortality indicators are discouraging: the infant mortality rate (under 1) stood at 26 per 1,000 in 2009 and the under-5 mortality rate at 33 per 1,000.² While these figures do show some improvement when compared to data from 1990 (41³ and 34⁴ respectively), the country's problems, as seen below, remain structural.

Poverty and inequality: the same old story

Despite the restoration of democracy in 1986 and the subsequent succession of regimes that promised to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, and despite the fact that the economy has been growing, the country is still stuck with high poverty/high inequality alongside continuing environmental degradation.

While poverty declined to 32.9% in 2006 from 42% in 1991, the faces of those in poverty remained the same: rural, landless, indigenous/tribal, Muslim and female. Inequality has hardly decreased during



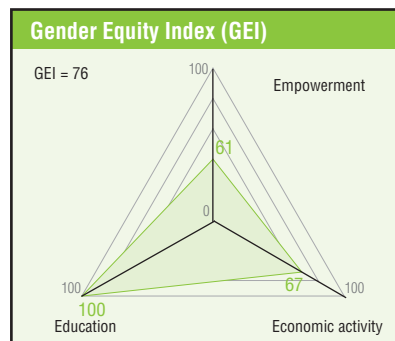
the same period: it was 0.4680 in 1991 and 0.4580 in 2006.⁵ This is a high level compared to the majority of the Philippines' Asian neighbours and means the country is only slightly better-off than most countries in Latin America (the most unequal region on the planet). Most importantly, there is wide inequality among the country's regions, provinces and municipalities.

The gap between the richest 20% and the poorest is widening in spite of measures such as land reform and local autonomy. The regions with the most inequitable income distribution are Central Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao and Caraga. These regions have Gini coefficients higher than 0.44. More than 50% of the 20 poorest provinces were in Mindanao in 2003 and 2006, with Tawi-Tawi having the highest poverty incidence in 2006.

Debt and corruption – developmental nightmares

The Government derives two thirds of its revenue mainly from taxes on fixed-income earners. Over the years it has consistently spent more than it earns. It sets huge annual budgets and makes up for deficits by borrowing. It wants to cap the 2011 budget deficit at 3.2% of gross domestic product (GDP) or some PHP 290 billion (USD 6.69 billion).

Mounting debts and debt service are the bane of Philippine development. The country's outstanding debt ballooned from PHP 701 billion in 1990 to PHP 4.4 trillion in 2009 (USD 16.2 million to USD 101.5



billion), showing a steady increase except for a slight decline in 2006 and 2007. This is more than 50% of the country's GDP. The debt-to-GDP ratio remained high at 57.7% at the end of 2009 although it had declined from 63.8% in 2006.⁶ In September 2010 each of the 92.2 million Filipinos could be said to owe PHP 47,039 (USD 1,091) to local and foreign creditors.

About a third of the national budget goes to paying the interest and principal of the country's mounting debt stock. That is a third of the pie sliced off from poverty reduction activities. In addition, corruption has been a constant feature and has triggered most of the regime changes since the days of President Marcos. In 2004 Macapagal-Arroyo said that corruption was strangling the Philippines and called on citizens to "join hands to root out this evil." The evil, however, continues to be very much alive and to hinder Philippine development.

The need to break the urban-centred structure

The country's economic geography demonstrates highly uneven development and unequal distribution of created wealth. Primate cities suck up most of the resources. It is no wonder, therefore, that small savings deposited in faraway rural banks end up eventually in big banks in Makati⁷ and are then lent to big borrowers who prefer to invest in already highly developed areas.

1 G. King and L. Zeng, "Improving Forecasts of State Failure," *World Politics*, Vol.53, (July 2001), pp. 623-58.

2 UNICEF, *At a Glance: Philippines*, <www.unicef.org/infobycountry/philippines_statistics.html>.

3 Ibid.

4 World Health Organization, *Mortality Country Fact Sheet 2006: Philippines*, <www.who.int/whosis/mort/profiles/mort_wpro_phl_philippines.pdf>.

5 Income inequality or disparity is commonly measured using the Gini coefficient. A Gini ratio of zero means perfect equality while a ratio of one would mean complete inequality.

6 C. M. Reinhart and K. S. Rogoff, "Debt to GDP Ratios" in *This Time is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), <www.reinhartandrogoff.com/data/browse-by-topic/topics/9/>.

7 The financial centre of the Philippines and one of the cities that make up Metro Manila.

The conflict in Mindanao is instructive of the country's development situation. Violence first flared in the 1960s when the Muslim minority – known as the Moros – launched an armed struggle for their ancestral homeland in the south. Fighting escalated in 2008 after a decade-long peace process, but a truce was signed in July 2009. What needs to be underscored is that much of the violence is fuelled by deep poverty rooted in decades of under-investment. Mindanao, an extremely rich area hardly visited by typhoons, could achieve prosperity if left to itself, but it has failed to make progress on something as basic as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The poverty and inequality that continue to dog that region, especially the Moro and *lumad* (indigenous) areas, are rooted in historical injustices and discrimination dating back to the colonial past and perpetuated by a succession of post-colonial regimes. They are embedded in unjust economic, political and socio-cultural structures urgently needing change.

The structure of growth and wealth creation in the Philippines contradicts the mantra of broad-based, inclusive growth. Attempts to create growth centres away from Manila will never work unless the Government alters the current elite and urban-centred structure of power and resources. The 1991 Local Government Code, although a landmark piece of legislation, has yet to result in the decentralization of elite power. Resources and authority need to be deliberately transferred from the richer regions to the poorer ones.

Population growth and vulnerability

Carrying capacity is a real problem in a mountainous archipelago with a population that has grown from 62 million in 1990 to about 95 million in 2010 and is expected to reach over 100 million by 2015. Although the population growth rate decreased from a high of 2.36% a year in 2000 to 2.04% in the 2007 census, it is still considered to be one of the highest in Asia. This high population growth rate makes the country vulnerable. For each person, a total of 0.004 hectares is needed to satisfy optimum food requirements/capacities, and this possibility has long since been exceeded.⁸ The population issue is also a reflection of poverty and inequality. Those with more money and more secure futures tend to have fewer children;

8 The Ecological Footprint (EF) is a measure of the consumption of renewable natural resources by a human population. A country's EF is the total area of productive land or sea required to produce all the crops, meat, seafood, wood and fibre it consumes, to sustain its energy consumption and to give space for its infrastructure. To calculate the number of hectares available per capita, one adds up the biologically productive land per capita world-wide of arable land, pasture, forest, built-up land and sea space, excluding room for the 30 million fellow species with whom humanity shares this planet.

Region	1991	1994	1997	2000	2003	2006
Philippines	45.0	40.6	36.8	33.0	30.0	32.9
National Capital Region	16.7	10.5	8.5	7.8	8.9	10.4
Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)	55.4	56.4	50.1	37.7	32.2	34.5
I Ilocos Region	55.3	53.6	44.1	35.3	30.2	32.7
II Cagayan Valley	48.9	42.1	38.0	30.4	24.5	25.5
III Central Luzon	35.5	29.2	18.5	21.4	17.5	20.7
IV-A Calabarzon	43.2*	34.9*	30.0*	19.1	18.4	20.9
IV-B Mimaropa				45.3	48.1	52.7
V Bicol Region	61.3	60.8	57.0	52.6	48.6	51.1
VI Western Visayas	52.9	49.9	45.9	44.5	39.2	38.6
VII Central Visayas	46.7	37.5	38.9	36.2	28.3	35.4
VIII Eastern Visayas	47.1	44.8	48.5	45.1	43.0	48.5
IX Zamboanga Peninsula	54.4	50.6	45.5	44.8	49.2	45.3
X Northern Mindanao	57.4	54.1	52.7	43.8	44.0	43.1
XI Davao Region	51.6	45.6	44.3	33.3	34.7	36.6
XII Soccsksargen	63.1	58.7	55.8	46.8	38.4	40.8
XIII Caraga	-**	-**	-**	51.2	54.0	52.6
Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)	56.0	65.3	62.5	60.0	52.8	61.8

* Region IV has not yet been divided into Regions IV-A and IV-B. ** Caraga was created on 23 February 1995.

Source: NSCB, 2011⁹.

the poor have bigger families and rely on numbers as productive assets and as their old-fashioned social security fallback for old age.

Although farmlands are shrinking, sustainable agriculture might be able to feed these millions. But for this to happen, the Government must work in cooperation with farmers, NGOs, the mass media, schools and the national agriculture research system to find ways of achieving long-term food security and environmental sustainability.

Conclusion

Addressing the vulnerability of the Philippines' already degraded environment is as important as growing the economy. Regarding development and environment as a trade-off is a false dilemma. Human needs cannot be met from an impoverished environment, and impoverished human beings do not care about protecting the environment.

Restoring the country's forest cover, now down to 27%, back to the ideal 40% for an archipelagic system like the Philippines is critical. Mining and other extractive industries will have to be put on hold or under the strictest control. The scope provided by coastal and marine zones, if restored from their present degraded state, could help the nation through worst-case scenarios that would affect food security and human settlements.

Keeping debt at sustainable levels and controlling the repayment haemorrhage are central to solving the issue of where money for development will come from. The Government borrows a lot to fund its MDG commitments. Its major anti-poverty programmes, such as conditional cash transfer, run on borrowed money and further strain the country's fiscal situation. Corruption is also symptomatic of the state of governance, and curbing it is therefore a big part of the solution to the Philippines' development problem.

From 1972 to 2010 the Philippines has gone from democracy to dictatorship and back again. People's participation has been a key factor. Such participation has taken different forms, mostly peaceful movements addressing a range of issues including regime change. Yet it seems that after all those changes things remain the same. The country has yet to see real empowerment of the masses matching that of the elite. When that time comes, there will be a better guarantee of governance for sustainable development. ■

9. National Statistical Coordination Bureau, 2009 Philippines Poverty Statistics, (8 February 2011), <www.nscb.gov.ph/poverty/2009/default.asp>.

A Green New Deal



The Government favours a neoliberal model of development that has led to growing social stratification and rising pressure on the environment. An alternative could be the Green New Deal, which aims to address global warming and global financial crises by implementing a set of policy proposals intended to secure global sustainable development. Green Growth and environmental protection programmes must act as catalysts to create decent work and sustainable livelihoods for the most disadvantaged Polish citizens.

ATD Fourth World Poland

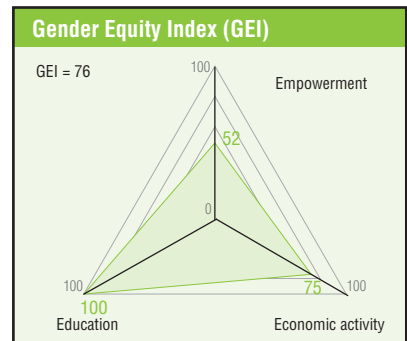
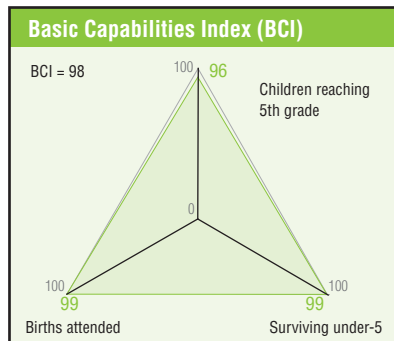
Pierre Klein
Monika Kalinowska
The Green Institute
Dariusz Szwed

Introduction¹

Poland is one of the very few countries that have introduced the concept of sustainable development at a constitutional level. According to Article 5 of the Polish Constitution: “The Republic of Poland shall safeguard the independence and integrity of its territory and ensure the freedoms and rights of persons and citizens, the security of the citizens, safeguard the national heritage and shall ensure the protection of the natural environment pursuant to the principles of sustainable development.”

Paradoxically Poland is also a country where any reference to the concept of sustainable development is rather difficult to find in public debate. In July 2000, for example, the “Poland 2025 – Long-term strategy for sustainable development” was adopted by the Council of Ministers with the clear objective to “improve the welfare of Polish families.” According to some experts, however, its overall impact is extremely limited: “[It] has met with no response from society and today hardly anybody seems to remember its existence. The average citizen does not know about the concept of sustainable development, nor does he or she have even the vaguest notion of it.” The authors go on to say that even people who have heard of sustainable development often consider it to be synonymous with environmental protection.²

In July 2009 the Government issued *Poland 2030. Development challenges*,³ intended to be the mainstream analysis and strategy line for development over the next 20 years. Written in hard-to-understand jargon it favours the “polarization and diffusion model” as opposed to that of sustainable development. Developed by the Board of Strategic Advisors to the Council of Ministers led by Minister Michał Boni, the report was not discussed in its initial phase and no alternative projects were com-



missioned, which made consultations impossible. The power to set the direction for the future of the country was thus given to a narrow group.⁴ Moreover in an interview for *Polska* one of the co-authors said that the departure point for the creation of this new model was the observation that “in reality, sustainable development is only a myth.”⁵

Unsustainability and the neoliberal model

The lack of implementation (or rather comprehension) of the principle of sustainable development inscribed in the Polish Constitution can be illustrated by the fact that subsequent governments have implied the existence of a conflict between environment and economy or between environment and society. Ways of addressing the current state of affairs, as presented by key politicians, seem to have been poorly prioritized. “The economy first, my reasonable Pole,” said Bronisław Komorowski, incumbent President of Poland, during a debate on the future of the Polish and European economies.⁶

In explaining the “polarization-diffusion model,” *Poland 2030* states that “apart from boosting growth polarities (i.e. polarisation processes), we have to primarily create conditions for diffusion – anything and everything which might support the process of equalizing education-related opportunities, improve transport accessibility in all parts of

the country, eliminate the threat of digital exclusion, improve social integration levels, structure and support intergenerational solidarity, and offer a sense of capacity to follow individual ambitions.”⁷ However the authors also define economic growth as a solid foundation for Poland’s development, along with “efficient administration and demographic potential,” and state that “current EU policy, as regards energy and climate security, is heading towards the reinforcement of Europe as a world leader in sustainable development. This, however, cannot occur at the cost of the Polish economy.”⁸

Here lies the biggest trap of the Government’s development strategy: Poles ought to tighten their belts in order to achieve a state of economic and social balance in 20 years time. But this model has led instead to increased social stratification, decreasing social capital and rising pressure on the environment measured by the total use of energy and non-renewable resources.⁹

The prevailing ideology was aptly described by Edwin Bendyk in the afterword to *Ecology: Guide for Political Criticism*. Noting that the dominant development discourse rested on neoliberalism and

1 This report is partly based on D. Szwed, “Green New Deal in the World, in Europe, in Poland?” in D. Szwed (ed.), *The Green New Deal in Poland*, (2011), <zielonyinstytut.pl>.

2 K. Kostrzewska and R. Piasecki, “Approaches to Sustainable Development in Poland,” *L’Europe en formation* n° 352, (2009).

3 Available from: <www.polska2030.pl>.

4 E. Charkiewicz, “Rozwój społeczny – próba diagnozy,” *Raport Krajowy Polskiej Koalicji*, (Social Watch, 2009).

5 A. Koziński, “Wojnarowski: Zrównoważony rozwój kraju to tylko mit,” interview in *Polska*, (29 June 2010), <www.polskatimes.pl/opinie/wywiady/275178.wojnarowski-zrownowazony-rozwoj-kraju-too-mit.id,t.html>.

6 At the opening of the Second European Economic Congress in Katowice, (31 May 2010).

7 Board of Strategic Advisers to the Prime Minister, *Poland 2030. Development challenges: Report summary*, p. 4., <www.kprm.gov.pl/files/file/Dokumenty/Poland%202030_%20Development%20Challenges%20-%20report%20summary.pdf>.

8 Ibid.

9 One indicator of total energy use is the ecological footprint. In 2007 there were 1.8 global hectares (gha) of biologically productive space for each inhabitant of Earth. Between 2003 and 2007 usage in Poland rose from 3.3 to 4.35 gha – i.e., an average of 241% of globally available ecospace for each Pole. If everyone consumed this way humanity would need 2.5 planets.

postcolonialism, he writes, "The former means the primacy of growth policy using free market instruments understood as a space for negotiations of private preferences that are only protected and not shaped by the state which is withdrawing from the management of interpersonal relations to the maximum extent. If at all, this can happen only under the influence of external commitments. This dictate, expressed in ideas like the climate and energy package or Natura 2000, is treated like divine retribution, a cost of membership in the club of developed countries. In fact, we are a postcolonial, developing country that was harmed by history and is still being damaged by the hegemonic centre that tries to enforce solutions detrimental to aspirations reflected in a desire to maintain economic growth."¹⁰

Neoliberal notions of the unfettered free market and of endless economic growth measured by GDP are wearing thin. The GDP does not reflect reality for it does not consider the country's low level of social capital, unpaid housework (done mainly by women) and increasing income stratification. Nor does it take into account environmental devastation, extinction of plants and animals, growing populations or the greatest challenge of the 21st century – the need to implement a global climate deal, which is a critical investment in our common future, as noted by the economist Nicolas Stern.¹¹

The Green New Deal: an alternative

The concept of the Green New Deal appeared first in a July 2008 report by the New Economics Foundation¹² in response to the economic crisis driven by credit bubbles, global climate change and increased oil prices. The authors stated that in order to avoid a deep recession comparable to the Great Depression it is necessary to undertake key structural changes both in the national and international financial systems, including the tax system, as well as make stable investments in energy savings and the production of energy from renewable sources.

The Green New Deal puts forward a set of policy proposals that aims to address issues such as global warming and financial crises by securing global sustainable development and creating a low emission economy. It also supports the development of modern technologies that are human-, environment- and climate-friendly, enhancing energy efficiency and greater use of renewable sources of energy, modern-

izing the building sector and promoting autonomous and sustainable buildings, developing environmentally friendly railway systems on the continent and changing the priorities of the EU Common Agricultural Policy. Like the reforms of the 1930s, the Green New Deal involves an active role for public authorities in the implementation of policies, in this case, for sustainable development.

In March 2009 prior to the European Parliament elections, the European Green Party issued its manifesto, *A Green New Deal for Europe*, which significantly develops this concept. The summary states: "As the economic, social and environmental challenges currently facing the EU are closely interrelated, they must be tackled together as part of a comprehensive package which for us is the Green New Deal. ... [This] is the only way of really delivering the changes to the way we live and work that will result in the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions which science shows will be necessary if we are to avoid the most disastrous impacts of climate change." It goes on to say that the benefits will go beyond the environment "to provide a major boost to the economy, lead to sustainable economic development and result in the creation of millions of new 'green collar' jobs in renewable energy and other future-oriented technologies." It adds that the Green New Deal will ensure that social and labour rights are not sacrificed in the name of competition and that public goods and services are provided so that all citizens can enjoy a good quality of life. "Greens will continue to defend equal rights for all within and outside the workplace, fight all forms of discrimination and intolerance and take the urgent action required to help the most disadvantaged in society."¹³

The Green New Deal in Poland also states that "business as usual" is no longer possible since it merely continues to push economic growth at the cost of the degradation of society and the environment.¹⁴

Building sustainable development

It is generally accepted that people living in extreme poverty are the most vulnerable to dangerous environmental conditions. One main issue for the poorest in Poland, for example, is housing quality. Roofs Over Heads,¹⁵ a coalition of 15 NGOs led by Habitat for Humanity Poland, launched a campaign in 2008 to raise awareness about poor housing conditions

in the country. There is no national policy dedicated to building homes for low-income groups, nor for assisting them with home improvements. Nearly 12 million Poles – almost a third of the population – live in overcrowded homes. More than 60% of apartments need serious renovation and more than half of the housing stock is more than 40 years old. Low-quality building materials and poor insulation are resulting in high monthly energy bills, making funds even scarcer for families that need to improve their living conditions.

People facing extreme poverty are often seen as responsible for environmental damage and thus an obstacle to sustainable development. This has to change; in fact, people living in extreme poverty should be included in all levels of policy making. Thus the Polish and international response to the challenge of sustainable development must ensure that new technologies and mitigation and adaptation programmes benefit the most vulnerable populations and build on their capacities and efforts. People in extreme poverty are often at the frontline of development initiatives that aim to transform their living conditions by improving water, sanitation or heating facilities.

Conclusion

Some authors believe that in seeking an alternative development model, "it is essential to accurately define the goals of economic development, environmental improvement and social cohesion."¹⁶ This gets to the essence of sustainable development. Amartya Sen argues that eliminating poverty and preserving the environment could be considered as "different parts of an integrated task."¹⁷ This means that environmental protection programmes could be used to obtain decent work and training for the most disadvantaged groups while maintaining respect for local cultures.

Green Growth must act as a catalyst for creating decent work and sustainable livelihoods for the most disadvantaged populations, building on efforts they are already undertaking. This is in line with the priority theme of a "green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012 in Brazil. ■

10 E. Bendyk, "Ekologia Polityczna dla Polski, czyli w stronę Zielonego Okręgu Stołu," in *Ekologia: Przewodnik Krytyki Politycznej*, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, (Warsaw: 2009).

11 N. Stern, *Globalny Ład. Zmiany klimatu a powstanie nowej epoki, post pu i dostatku*, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, (Warsaw: 2010).

12 Green New Deal Group, *A Green New Deal*, New Economics Foundation, (2008), <www.greennewdealgroup.org/?page_id=53>.

13 European Green Party, *A Green New Deal for Europe (Summary of Manifesto)*, <europeangreens.eu/menu/egp-manifesto/>.

14 For a full analysis of the Green New Deal and the possibilities for its implementation in Poland, see <zielonyinstytut.pl>.

15 See the coalition's website: <www.dachnadglowa.org>.

16 X. Godinot, Th. Viard and H. de Courtivron, "Extreme Poverty and World Governance," Proposal Paper Series, Forum for a New World Governance, (December 2010), <www.world-governance.org/spip.php?article662>.

17 A. Sen, "Environment and Poverty: One World or Two?" address at the International Conference on Energy, Environment and Development, (Bangalore, India: 16 December 2006), <www.institut.veolia.org/ive/ressources/documents/1/166,Amartya-Sen.pdf>.

■ SENEGAL

A social and ecological time bomb



Senegal has been hit hard by the world economic crisis and it is faced with serious difficulties including a lack of transparency in State institutions and a lack of long term planning. This has made the country more vulnerable to natural disasters, but the Government has no effective plans to cope with these or to protect the population. Another serious challenge is deforestation, which is mainly due to the demand for fuel, and it is an ecological time bomb. Social unrest is on the increase and in the last year various sectors of society have taken to the streets in demonstrations calling for adequate governance.

Cultural Association for Educational and Social Self-Promotion (ACAPES); National Associations for the Disabled of Senegal (ANHMS); Democratic Union of Teachers (UDEN); Youth and Environment Action (AJE); Pan-African Youth Organizations (OJP), a member of the African Youth Coalition against Hunger; Syndicate of Professors of Senegal (SYPROS); Association for the Economic, Social and Environmental Development of the North (ADESEN); Enda TM.

In 2003 the Government began implementing its Strategy Document for the Fight against Poverty (DSRP), which is the reference framework for an economic and social policy aimed at national growth, reducing poverty and achieving the country's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

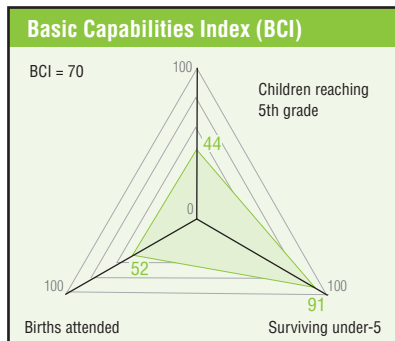
The world crisis hit Senegal very hard and the negative impacts reached a peak in 2010 when the economy and public revenues were seriously hurt by problems with energy, food and finances, and this laid bare the country's basic vulnerability. GDP growth in 2011 has been estimated at 4.2%,¹ but to overcome the economic crisis and reach the poverty eradication targets that have been set, it is vitally important to maintain a 10% growth rate, and the means that are used to achieve this should be in line with the principles of sustainable development.

The economic situation has certainly worsened. For example, there have been power cuts because of a lack of funds to maintain and run the power stations, and this has hampered economic growth so much so that in 2010 the rate was an estimated -1.4%.² One effect of this is that social inequity and vulnerability have become more serious.

Confusion in governance

The MDGs are a new reference framework that can be used to measure countries' development and to set parameters for evaluating progress towards sustainable development.

Judged from the MDG perspective, Senegal's development policies and strategies are not effective enough, particularly as regards maintaining essential social services and promoting gender equity. This constitutes a challenge, and the Government and all the actors involved will have to redouble their efforts

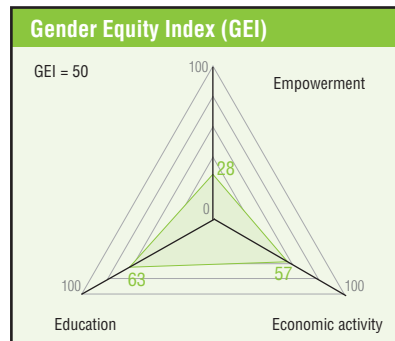


and gear their action to concrete objectives that are shared and focalised.

When we analyse the Human Development Index (HDI), which like the Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)³ gives ratings for gender inequality and for poverty, it emerges that Senegal has not laid solid foundations for sustainable development. In fact, in 2010 it ranked only 144th out of 169 countries.⁴ The way towards establishing a sustainable development model is plagued with difficulties and up to now the Government has not been able to tackle them effectively.

Official data show that since 2006 progress has been made towards reducing monetary poverty, but there is another indicator we should consider, non-monetary poverty, which gauges access to basic social services, adequate food, unpolluted water, decent housing and the overall conditions for a healthy life, and by these criteria the country is moving far too slowly to reach its MDGs by 2015.

The programmes to improve in these areas suffer from problems of governance. There are many institutions and agencies involved and different ministries that have overlapping responsibilities, and this makes for a very confused institutional governance framework. The way the public sector is structured is not geared to making effective development possible. The State today does not have good governance, it is not transparent and it does not have a culture of combating corruption, but these are essential if the country is to achieve decisive results and make



genuine progress.

Large sectors of the population are still living in poverty not only in rural areas but also in the cities, and households headed by women are particularly vulnerable. In recent years public spending on social protection and security has been around 1.16% of GDP, but this is even below the average for Africa, which is 1.44% (Ministry of the Family, of Women's Groups and Child Protection).

It is clear that a new approach is needed because the programmes to tackle these problems are not coordinated, some interventions are repeated and much of what is done is ineffective, all of which is reflected in poor results.

A Social Orientation Law promoting and protecting the rights of the disabled was passed in 2010, but up to now it has not been implemented and the institutional framework needed to provide care for people with different capacities and integrate them into social and economic life is not yet in place.

Social unrest

There have been large scale movements in the country calling for better conditions of life, work and security, and there have also been street demonstrations protesting against the high cost of living, power cuts, and the Government's failure to take action to help flood victims. This wave of unrest has irreversibly altered the social climate. There has been tension in the air for a year with rallies and marches, and a series of strikes in the education system, health services and even in the legal system.

The protests originated on the outskirts of Dakar and were backed by religious leaders (imams and priests) and they have since spread to all parts of the country, but the Government has tried to ignore

1 Data from the Ministry of the Economy and Finance – Board of Economic Forecasting and Studies.

2 Data from the Board of Economic Forecasting and Studies.

3 For a detailed description of the BCI see the report on its 2011 edition that is included in this volume.

4 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *The True Wealth of Nations*.

them. Initially this was a wide-based expression of discontent with the high cost of living, the power cuts and a range of other issues including the erosion of democratic values and the general deterioration of the people's conditions of life.

The movement subsequently diversified into different groups and there were anti-Government marches headed by imams and priests in 2009, protests by the youth movement "Y'en a marre" (We are fed up) led by hip hop musicians, and action by workers associations and other social groups that held mass meetings and staged hunger strikes outside the railings of the Presidential palace.

The environmental challenge

Senegal has structural problems that go hand in hand with the unsustainable development of the cities. Sewage services are still inadequate even though a lot of money has been spent on public cleanliness (which has led to a common joke "there is gold in this waste"). But there are other problems besides public hygiene such as deforestation, and erosion on the coast that is threatening whole communities. The problem of flooding has got worse and it is aggravated by a lack of precautionary planning and the fact that assistance initiatives are weak or non-existent. All parts of the country are under threat, a total of 521,968⁵ people have been affected in different ways by floods and lives have been lost in various places like Kolda in the south and Kaffrine in the east. Just in the northern region of Saint Louis some 5,661 families were driven from their homes and 4,354 latrines were destroyed, which caused a serious health hazard for the local population. Agricultural production was also hit as thousands of hectares of farmland that had already been sown were inundated.

This distressing situation is further complicated by the fact that there is a chronic lack of infrastructure in rural areas, which is why civil society organizations are pressing for investment in highways in country areas, stimulus packages to bolster the rural economy in peripheral regions and measures to accelerate Senegal's connections with neighbouring countries.

A discouraging panorama

There has been a certain amount of progress towards goals like restoring natural resources and land, helping biodiversity to recover in some areas, managing transboundary resources in a better way and the fight against pollution, so the country seems to be on the right track at least as regards reversing

INTENSE DEFORESTATION: AN ECOLOGICAL TIME BOMB

The forests in the south of the country are disappearing very fast and this is going on completely unchecked. In a report by the Commission of the Kandion Mangana Rural Council entitled "The environmental time bomb", the destruction of vegetation in the area is described as "actual extermination". This attack on the flora throughout the northern strip of the Casamance region has been going on for decades, it is particularly severe in the department (province) of Bignona, and it has intensified since 2005. The main reason for this devastation is the disruption caused by an ongoing conflict with the Casamance Democratic Forces Movement (MFDC), a guerrilla group that for more than thirty years has been demanding independence for this part of southern Senegal.

The deforestation process in this area involves vegetation being burned off indiscriminately, and one of the consequences of this is increased emissions of greenhouse gases, which cause global warming and climate change.

There are other factors involved in the degradation of these forests: land is being cleared so it can be planted with crops, vegetal coal is being extracted to meet the population's fuel requirements and wood is being taken for the construction industry, which is a direct threat to noble species that are mostly slow-growth ligneous hardwoods.

To put a brake on this ongoing deforestation a whole series of measures will have to be taken. The Government will have to restore forests that have been degraded, evaluate forestation programmes and implement the appropriate strategies, research and adopt sustainable resource management practices, protect existing forests (mainly by stopping people from burning off vegetation), promote the use of alternative sources of energy, protect the soils, and impose stricter controls on forest exploitation as part of a policy to regenerate and protect certain species of flora.

the degradation of the environment. Another good point is that it has a national strategy for adapting to climate change.

However, one area where there are serious problems is health. For example, investment in this sector is distributed in a most unequal way with a far greater proportion of the funds available going to the cities than to rural areas, particularly when it comes to setting up and maintaining health centres and maternity units. Far more finance goes to regional and national hospitals and specialized health organizations than to basic services that cater to the poorer sectors of the population. The Government's official line is that its main priority is to provide basic health care services, but this is not borne out by the facts.

Another problem is that there are not enough trained health care workers, particularly in country areas. This means some sectors find it far more difficult to access health care, and it is no surprise that the rural population is most disadvantaged in this respect. More than half of all trained health personnel are concentrated in just two regions, Dakar and Thiès, which have 52% of Senegal's doctors, 69% of the midwives and 31% of the nurses.

The fight against HIV/AIDS is going well among the people as a whole but there are certain regions and population groups (sexual workers, long distance truck drivers) that still have rates above 7%.

The proportion of births attended by trained health care personnel is low, and even though a great effort has been made to improve the situation, in 2009 coverage was only 66.9%. It is no surprise that maternal and infant mortality rates are still relatively high in the context of the goals that have been set for 2015.

In contrast to health, education is one of the sectors that has benefited from a rather generous allocation in the budget. But in spite of this, academic results are still poor compared to the average for Africa. This is mainly due to low school enrolment rates. At the pre-school level, for example, coverage is only 3 to 4% in some parts of the country and the national average is only 9.8%. There are other problems too: the drop-out rate in secondary education is high, there are too few science teachers, and technical education and vocational training are very underdeveloped. ■

5 Data from the Senegalese Red Cross.

Laws and strategies await implementation



The country's severe environmental problems constitute key challenges for sustainable development and poverty reduction. In recent years a new legal and policy framework for environmental management has been put in place. However its effective implementation remains a serious concern. A National Sustainable Development Strategy, developed with the participation of civil society organizations, has been adopted but achieving the goals means that Serbia must invest more of its GNP into protecting the environment. Success in addressing the key challenges in this area depends on building capacity for implementation, monitoring and enforcement, raising awareness and securing political support for environmental management.

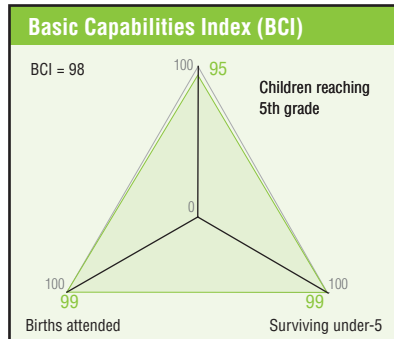
Association Technology and Society

Mirjana Dokmanovic, PhD

Danica Drakulic, PhD

Due to economic collapse during the 1990s, most needed environmental investments to prevent pollution in Serbia and build infrastructure for sanitation and water were not undertaken.¹ In recent years the country has made progress in developing formal policies and laying the legal groundwork for environmental management, mainly by harmonizing legislation with the *acquis communautaire* (the accumulated legislation, legal acts and court decisions that constitute the body of EU law).² The National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) for the period 2009–2017 was developed with the participation of civil society organizations and adopted in May 2008.³ The NSDS is based on three key factors of sustainable development: sustainable economic development, sustainable social development and environmental protection with rational utilization of natural resources. This strategic document has identified the following key environmental problems in Serbia:

1. **Water pollution:** this is the main environmental issue in the country. Only 63% of the population has access to public water supplies, while only 35% is connected to a public sewage system. The quality of drinking water is generally unsatisfactory. Only half the population is supplied with drinking water from controlled water supply systems. Water controls show that in central Serbia more than 40% of samples were contaminated with bacteria, while in Vojvodina, an autonomous province, the main problem is chemical pollution.⁴ The majority of industrial sites and major towns do not have wastewater treatment plants. Due to this fact, 44,000 tons of toxic agents are deposited into lakes and rivers an-

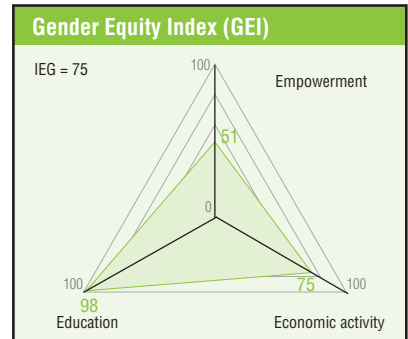


nally.⁵ Serbia is the main polluter of the Danube, while the Danube-Tisa-Danube channel is the most polluted area in Europe.⁶

2. **Air pollution:** the main producers of air pollution are facilities for energy generation and industrial plants with deficient air-cleaning technology. Public electricity and heat production emit around 345,000 tons of SO₂ per year, which corresponds to 98% of total SO₂ emissions.⁷ Air is polluted in all the major cities, mainly due to transport as leaded petrol is still in use.

3. **Inadequate waste management:** while energy efficiency in manufacturing is one third of the world average, waste production is extremely high and waste recycling and safe handling is poor. Only 60% of municipal waste is collected (2.2 million tons per year). Waste disposal sites generally do not meet technical requirements. There are 3,251 illegal dumpsites, mostly in rural areas.⁸ There are no reliable data on the unsafe waste produced by manufacturing, and there are no treatment plans or disposal sites for this type of waste.

4. **Soil degradation:** agricultural land covers 60% of central Serbia and 82% of Vojvodina. Soil quality is affected by the use of polluted water for



irrigation, by chemical pollution from industrial plants, by dumping of waste and by erosion.

5. **Unsustainable forest management:** forests cover 27% of the country's territory. However woodland growth and quality are threatened by over-harvesting, illegal logging and poor management.

The links between the environment and public health

A study by the World Health Organization (WHO), which looked at people's exposure to environmental factors and the national statistic data published in 2007, estimates that 27% of the population of the country is affected by illnesses caused by environmental factors.⁹ Taking this into account, as well as the fact that children are the population group most sensitive to negative environmental influences on health, the Government adopted the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan on 1 October 2009. Its main priorities are increasing access to safe drinking water in rural areas, increasing access to adequate sanitation, reducing traffic injuries, reducing air pollution, reducing the exposure of children to tobacco smoke and stopping and subsequently prohibiting the use of leaded petrol.

The Roma and the internally displaced are particularly exposed to environmental risks due to lack of adequate housing and access to safe drinking water. In addition, land degradation contributes to rural poverty. The first and second Progress Reports on the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy concluded that: "investments in water supply facilities, wastewater treatment plants

1 D. Slunge, A.Ekbom and E. Dahlberg, *Serbia Environmental and Climate Impact Analysis*, (Göteborg: School of Economics and Commercial Law, 2008).

2 Government of Serbia, *National Sustainable Development Strategy*, (Belgrade: 2008).

3 Official Gazette of RS, No. 57/08.

4 Slunge et al., op. cit., p. 2. Vojvodina is an autonomous province in Serbia.

5 Ministry of Environmental Protection website, (2011), <www.ekoplan.gov.rs>.

6 Government of Serbia, *Sustainable Development Strategy Is One of the Preconditions for Serbia Entering the EU*, (Belgrade: 5 December 2007), <www.srbija.sr.gov.yu/vesti/vest.php?id=79525>.

7 Slunge et al., op. cit., p. 2.

8 Government of Serbia, "Chapter 27: Environment" in *Responses to the European Commission Questionnaire*, (Belgrade: 2011), p. 150. <www.srbija.gov.rs/?change_lang=en>.

9 Ibid., p. 92.

and environmental hotspot clean-up programmes have had a direct impact on poverty reduction. Indirectly, such activities have also contributed to the employment of a number of semi-qualified, poorer workers.”¹⁰

The National Assembly adopted the Public Health Act in 2009. This recognizes the impact of the environment on health as one of the priority areas within public health. In addition, the Public Health Strategy,¹¹ also adopted by the Government in 2009, lays out a set of strategic activities with the purpose of protecting the population’s health from negative environmental effects.

Economic trends and environmental issues

In recent years the need to make national environmental protection legislation and policy comply with EU policy has led to the adoption of a great number of laws and policy documents¹² that address the identified challenges (air quality, waste management, water quality, nature protection, industrial pollution control and risk management, chemicals, climate change, noise and civil protection), as indicated in the Government’s responses to the European Commission’s questionnaire in 2011.

Financing the implementation of the NSDS is a key challenge, however, due to unfavourable economic tendencies. After the high growth rates of 5–6% between 2001 and 2008, the last three years have been characterized by a slowdown of economic activity and foreign exchange developments, followed by a decrease in foreign and domestic demand and in foreign investment. In 2010, gross domestic product (GDP) rose 1.5%,¹³ while during the same period consumer prices increased 10.3% and living costs 6.8%. The negative foreign trade balance was 58% and the foreign trade deficit amounted to EUR 4.3 billion (USD 6.1 billion) in 2010. The foreign debt reached 80% of GNP and foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows were still

falling: they amounted to EUR 654 million (USD 931 million) in 2010. Small inflows of FDI and net credit outflow led to a worsening balance of payment. The public debt reached 36% of GDP.¹⁴ Obligatory reserves decreased and the referential interest rate went up from 9% to 9.5% in October 2010.

The official rate of unemployment in 2010 was 20%, but the real number of jobseekers was considered to be higher and the rate of employment was decreasing. There was a high rate of work in the black market – 20.6% compared to the total number of workers in regular employment.¹⁵

The Government predicted a mild recovery of economic activity as a result of the combination of several circumstances including the recovery of the EU economy, the successfully completed revision of arrangements with the IMF, the agreement of the largest foreign banks in the country to maintain their levels of credit exposure to stabilize financial markets, and the economic policy measures that were undertaken. However the macroeconomic indicators at the beginning of 2011 point to a further decline in economic activity as a consequence of setbacks in industries such as manufacturing and electric power as well as a decrease in agricultural production.

Inherited economic problems such as the insolvency of enterprises, negative trends in the labour market, continual unemployment growth, bad prospects in earning growth and increases in poverty are not only deepening this crisis but making it chronic. The Government has been insensitive to the consequences of the crisis and is increasingly facing social discontent. The failure to implement reforms and the worsening of living conditions at the beginning of 2011 – particularly for vulnerable groups such as the unemployed, rural population, Roma, people with disabilities and pensioners¹⁶ – has been further complicated by the reshaping of the Government and political instability. Social discontent and insecurity are in-

creasing due to lack of access to employment and decent jobs. At the same time, jobs are increasingly insecure¹⁷ due to the ongoing bankruptcy of firms, the enormous internal indebtedness¹⁸ and a badly led process of privatization resulting in a mounting number of strikes in 2011.¹⁹ Many new owners of privatized companies purchased them with the goal of making money by reselling them and not to maintain production. Trade unions estimate that average monthly salaries will decrease in 2011 from USD 435 to USD 350.²⁰

The Government’s projections for 2011 (GNP growth of 3%, inflation rate of 5.8%, unemployment rate of 20%, and foreign debt in GNP of 74.2%) are already in doubt.

Conclusion

The Government is simply in denial regarding the real economic trends and the evident fall in the population’s living standards. It limits itself to making optimistic pronouncements for the short term. However the need to change the previous path of development and growth is becoming increasingly urgent because the current state of affairs is untenable. In essence, the economic growth model should be changed and the economy should be oriented to development and the increase of investment and export, not to consumption.

Achieving the goals set in the NSDS demands that Serbia invests its best efforts in reaching the planned GNP. Currently, only 0.3% of GNP is devoted to protecting the environment. These modest resources are insufficient. It is estimated that there is need for supplementary financial funding of 1.02% in 2011 for delivering on this priority. Success in addressing the key environmental challenges depends on building capacity for implementation, monitoring and enforcement, raising environmental awareness and securing political support for environmental management. ■

10 Government of Serbia, *First Progress Report on the Implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in Serbia*, (Belgrade: 2005); *Second Progress Report on the Implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in Serbia*, (Belgrade: 2007).

11 Ibid., *National Strategy on Public Health*, (Belgrade: 2009).

12 For example, the National Strategy on Inclusion of the Republic of Serbia in the Mechanisms of Clean Production of the Kyoto Protocol in the Areas of Waste Management, Agriculture and Forestry; the National Strategy on Public Health; the National Strategy on Introducing Cleaner Production. See: <www.srbija.gov.rs/>.

13 The source of all data in this paragraph, if not given another source, is Ministry of Finance, *Revised Memorandum on the Budget and Economic Fiscal Politics for 2011, with projections for 2012 and 2013*, <www.mfin.gov.rs/?change-lang=en#>.

14 B. Mijatovic, “The European View on Serbia”, *Fokus*, (Belgrade: Center for Liberal-Democratic Studies, 2011.)

15 Government of Serbia, *Social Connection Control in Serbia*, (2010), <www.inkluzija.gov.rs/?p=2615>.

16 Government of Serbia, *First National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia*, (Belgrade: March 2010).

17 Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia, “250,000 Dismissals in Serbia in Last Two Years,” (February 2011), <www.sindikats.rs/e_saopstenja.htm>.

18 Ibid. In 2010, the total amount of money owed to the banks was USD 27.17 billion.

19 Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia, <www.sindikats.rs/e_saopstenja.htm>.

20 Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia, op. cit.

The downward spiral continues



The failure of the current socioeconomic model in the country is obvious. The most burning social issues are rising unemployment, the reform of the pension system and new legislation on flexible part-time work, which replaces the previous system of student work while also offering unemployed and retired people incentives for “flexible” work. The bankruptcy of many companies and small businesses, widespread corruption, violations of workers’ rights and the exploitation of migrant workers, together with a controversial new coal power plant, have made the headlines. The country has also already faced significant penalties from the EU because of its deficient environmental policies.

Društvo Humanitas
Rene Suša

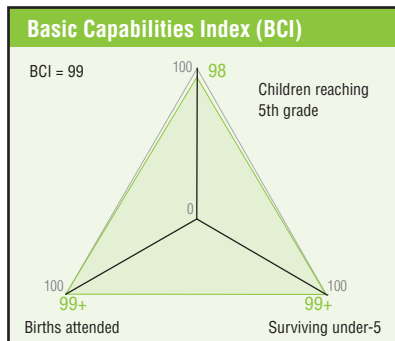
The lack of coherent economic, environmental and social policies is leading Slovenia in a downward spiral in which exploitation of the environment and people continues to take an increasingly high toll on the population’s wellbeing. Thus, the country will be building a new coal power plant while it is already paying sanctions of EUR 80 million (about USD 113 million) for failing to meet Kyoto standards. The economic crisis has revealed many underlying contradictions and uncertainties in Slovene society, with the public debate revolving around questions of employment, intergenerational solidarity, wealth distribution and the environment.

During the transition to a market-driven economy, Slovenia morphed from having almost no social differences to having a distinct elite group owning a significant portion of the national economy on the one hand, and a record number of poor and unemployed people on the other. The economic elite consolidated itself through shares acquired from controversial management buyouts. Some of these buyouts (and other fraudulent behaviour) are now in court; one case includes the first Slovene ombudsman, who later became the manager of a big petrol company and is currently being charged with money laundering.

The gaps translate also to the basic services the population can access. For instance, the division of healthcare into public and private systems has decreased quality in the public system and led to absurdly long waiting times. Often the same doctor who it takes a few months to see in a public clinic will attend to a patient immediately if the appointment is made in his or her private clinic.

Intergenerational solidarity

The pension system is built on the concept of intergenerational solidarity, since the current active population provides the taxes from which the pensions for retired people are paid. However with rising unemployment and an increasing number of retired people (due to an ageing population) this model is falling apart. New laws – such as the one discussed below on flexible part-time labour – will further diminish the contributions to the pension fund as the employer will be motivated to hire “flexible” workers for whom they have to pay significantly smaller contributions.



Young and jobless

There was a 15.6% increase in the number of registered unemployed people between January 2010 and January 2011,¹ representing 11.8% of the active population.² The actual number is estimated to be somewhere between 160,000 and 200,000. About 25% of young people not in the formal education system are unemployed.³

At the same time, almost 75% of those aged 20–24 were enrolled either in secondary or tertiary school programmes in 2010.⁴ It has become common for young people to enrol in further study programmes after graduation in order to keep their health insurance, collect benefits (subsidized food and accommodation) and still get work through the networks of student employment agencies. Just how difficult it is for young graduates to get a job is evident from the fact that from 2000–2010 the number of unemployed young people with tertiary education increased by 240%. There is also a considerable gender gap, as the percentage of young unemployed women is almost twice as high as that of young men.⁵

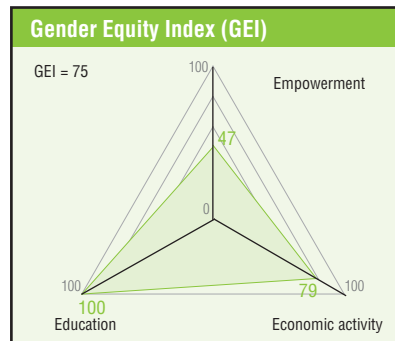
1 ZRSZ, *Trg dela v številkah*, <www.ess.gov.si/trg_dela/trg_dela_v_stevilkah>.

2 ZRSZ, *Stopnja registrirane brezposelnosti*, <www.ess.gov.si/trg_dela/trg_dela_v_stevilkah/stopnja_registrirane_brezposelnosti>.

3 Milan Lavri et al., *Mladina 2010*, (Ljubljana: URSM, 2010), p.109, <www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/Mladina_2010_Končno_porocilo.pdf>.

4 Ibid., p. 110.

5 Official data shows no such discrepancies: in fact it portrays unemployment among women as lower than that among men. See *ibid.*, pp.113–16.



Part-time work: a full-time issue

Connected to the issue of unemployment is the proposed new law on flexible part-time work. This type of work enables employers to lower their costs as they do not have to pay pension contributions, sick leave, and so on. The total share of taxes and other contributions for such work is only about 17% of labour costs,⁶ which is two to three times less than in regular employment. Since the work is strictly on a daily basis there is complete flexibility about hiring and firing. Many of the students who obtain work through student employment agencies lose this work as soon as they finish their studies because registered students are much cheaper and, by definition, flexible. The agency mechanism puts great pressure on the labour market by pushing down wages and increasing employment insecurity.

The new flexible part-time work law (passed in October 2010, entering into force in January 2012) addresses the issue of student work by limiting the number of part-time working hours, previously unlimited, to 60 per month while also setting an annual earning limit, previously unlimited, of EUR 6,000 (USD 8,492). It also greatly increases the pool of people who are able to work in this fashion by including retired people, the unemployed, asylum seekers and other non-active individuals.⁷ Moreover,

6 Mladi podjetnik, *Koliko delodajalca stane delo prek študentske napotnice*, <mladipodjetnik.si/podjetniskikoticek/poslovanje/koliko-delodajalca-stane-delo-prek-studentske-napotnice>.

7 DZ RS, *Zakon o malem delu*, (Uradni list RS no. 102-01/10-28/87 EPA 1133-V), <www.dz-rs.si/index.php?id=101&vt=4&sm=k&q=zakon+o+malem+delu&mandate=-1&unid=PZIF47C7FF2C259B251C12577C900237714&showdoc=1>.

the employer is not obliged to pay full contributions for social welfare (1 working hour counts only as 40 minutes of “regular” work). Student organizations and trade unions have launched a massive campaign opposing the legislation, and a referendum will take place in Spring 2011.

Pension reform and working conditions

Another expected referendum regards the proposed reform of the pension system, which relies heavily on a prolonged working period of a minimum of 38 years (40 years for men) and a retirement age of 65.⁸ According to a recent study by Eurofond, only 13.5% of Slovene workers answered positively when asked whether they would still be able to do their job when they turn 60—compared to an average of 44.1% across all 27 EU countries. Also, 59.2% of respondents said that they had worked while feeling ill in the last 12 months—compared to an EU average of 39.2%; almost 75% said they had to work at a very pressing pace; and very few—13.5%—expressed great satisfaction in their work—compared to an EU average of 25%.

The issue of the exploitation of migrant workers for heavy physical labour (especially in construction) surfaced over the last year when many of the companies went bankrupt. However in several cases (e.g., SCT—the largest Slovene construction company) the main company survived at the expense of thousands of workers, who lost their jobs and who never received full payment for their work.⁹ Invisible Workers of the World (IWW)¹⁰ estimates that some 14,000 migrant workers have returned to their countries of origin in the past three years without ever receiving their wages. Unpaid forced overtime, forced residence in company hostels, threats of deportation and other forms of abuse have been reported.

Coal: a 19th century resource for a 21st century society

It is hard to believe that the largest investment in the Slovene energy policy will apparently be a new EUR 1.2 billion (USD 1.7 billion) coal power plant in Šoštanj. It is estimated that the proposed power plant, which relies on lignite to produce electricity, will produce approximately 3,500 GWh per year, about the same as the old plant it is to replace. The proposed project has been subject to much criticism for alleged environmental, economic and legislative flaws. It is still unclear whether the signed agreement for its construction is even valid since there was no public tender for offers.¹¹

The price of the project has more than doubled since the preliminary analysis. The cost of construction is also estimated to be about twice as high per installed MW as in comparable projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Germany.¹² In addition there are obvious environmental concerns as it is estimated that the plant will produce over 100 million tonnes of CO₂ during its lifetime. Slovenia already exceeds the globally acceptable levels of greenhouse emissions and depletion of natural resources by two to four times.¹³ The EU target of 2 tonnes of CO₂ per person until 2050 is the amount that the Šoštanj plant alone is going to produce. This will make it impossible for Slovenia to reach the common goal.

Some laws but no order

Another pressing issue is the illegal burning of waste in the Lafarge cement factory in Trbovlje, which is having a serious effect on people’s health and the local environment. The company lost the legal battle over this, but it continues to ignore court orders.¹⁴ This is hardly surprising in a country where even State-owned enterprises consider themselves above the law, as evidenced by the constant abuses in the construction sector, where many companies are (at least partially) State-owned.

A recent report from Umanotera, the Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development, quotes the “lack of implementation of already accepted programmes as the biggest issue of Slovene environmental policy.”¹⁵ Traffic, waste management and energy policy are cited as especially problematic. The country produces 435 kg of waste per person and only about 25% is recycled. The national monitoring scheme for environmental protection is apparently inoperative as only 14 out of 188 indicators have been marked.¹⁶

Of the many companies going into bankruptcy and exploiting workers, the worst are previously successful companies that were involved in highly questionable management buyouts involving massive loans from partly State-owned Slovene banks, where the securities on the loans were the very shares the managers were buying. This involved cronyism of the worst kind as most of the bankers and business people involved were acquaintances.

Conclusion

Slovenia has already faced considerable penalties from the EU because of its environmental policies, yet the ruling elite seems unwilling to respond to the challenges of environmental protection. The huge coal power plant and related investment leaves little space for future efficient and renewable energy sources. Although energy efficiency could lower emissions even in the short term, it does not receive proper support from the Government.¹⁷

Energy efficiency programmes could also create and sustain jobs and provide long-term economic, social and environmental benefits. The new law on flexible work, in contrast, is likely to lower standards, increase the number of poor yet employed people, intensify pressure on “regular” work, increase job insecurity and lead to lack of long-term benefits for employees.¹⁸ The fact that so many young people are unemployed combined with the late age at which many people start work greatly undermines the financial basis of the intergenerational solidarity model on which the State pension system is built. The proposed pension reform, by merely extending both the age of retirement and the number of years of work needed to qualify for a pension, fails to address this key issue. ■

8 DZ RS, *DOPOLNJEN PREDLOG ZAKONA o pokojninskem in invalidskem zavarovanju (ZPIZ-2), druga obravnava*, <www.dz-rs.si/index.php?id=101&vt=40&mandate=-1&o=10&unid=PZI7C61DD6BEF7AA4E2C12577DE0053A035&showdoc=1>.

9 It is only the ad hoc subsidiaries, with virtually no assets of their own, that have filed for bankruptcy.

10 IWW, *Nevidni delavci sveta*, <www.njetwork.org/IWW-Nevidni-delavci-sveta>.

11 RTVSLO, *Bi morali dobavitelje za TEŠ 6 izbrati na razpisu?*, <www.rtvsllo.si/gospodarstvo/bi-morali-dobavitelje-za-tes-6-izbrati-na-razpisu/252118>.

12 M. Dodevska, *TEŠ 6 za telebane*, (Delo.si, 19 December 2010), <www.delo.si/clanek/132096>.

13 D. Plut, *Trajnostni razvoj med mavrico teorij in skromno prakso*, (2010), <www.planbzasslovenijo.si/upload/trajnostni-razvoj/plut-besedilo.pdf>.

14 EKO KROG, *Sodba v imenu ljudstva*, <www.ekokrog.org/2011/03/>.

15 Umanotera, *Ogledalo vladi 2010: Nevladni zeleni monitor*, <www.planbzasslovenijo.si/upload/dokumenti/2010/ogledalo-vladi.pdf>.

16 *Ibid.*, pp. 9–11

17 Focus, *Sporo ilo za javnost: Ne zaklenite nam prihodnosti! Poziv vladi pred odlojanjem o TEŠ 6*, <focus.si/index.php?node=26&id=1024>.

18 ZRSS, *Malo delo – miti in dejstva*, <www.zsss.si/attachments/article/422/MALO%20DELO%20%20MITI%20IN%20DEJSTVA_ZSSS.pdf>.

The quest for stability



Somalia's national institutions collapsed in January 1991 when the late president Siyad Barre fled the capital. Since then factional fighting and the formation of fiefdoms and mini-states have replaced the unified Government. At least five authorities now coexist and various groups strive for one cause or another. Instability and insecurity have pushed the country further into poverty despite its low population density and significant natural resources. There is much to be done to restore stability and statehood in order to initiate effective development.

SOCDA

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Despite Somalia's abundant resources, the lack of effective development policies through successive governments since independence in 1960 have contributed to a continuous cycle of poverty that has often led to upheaval. In 1969, for instance, a military coup put army officers into power and ushered in a pro-socialist regime that eroded human rights. Social unrest led to rebel group challenges to the military regime of the late Major General Mohamed Siyad Barre in the 1980s, a situation made worse in January 1991 when rebel militias toppled the regime but failed to fill the power vacuum. When rebel factions turned their guns on each other, they initiated a two-decades long struggle for power.

Governance structures subsequently emerged in Somaliland and Puntland in the north of the country that allowed for the attainment of some degree of stability and economic recovery. However they have shown no concern whatsoever regarding environmental issues and so the potentially rich territory of Somalia has been marked by degradation.

Yet despite the unrest Somalia has maintained a healthy informal economy based mainly on livestock, remittances and telecommunications. Living standards have actually improved faster since the early 1990s than in the average sub-Saharan African country.¹ The most interesting part of this relative success is that it has been achieved in the absence of any effective central government. Yet about 43% of the population still lives on less than USD 1 a day, a figure that rises to 53% in rural areas, where extreme poverty is more prevalent.² Somalia remains very dependent on international aid.

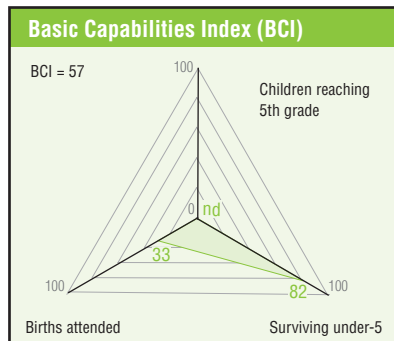
The economy

Due to the lack of official government statistics and the recent civil war, it is difficult to gauge the size or growth of the economy. The CIA World Factbook

* There are no available data on GEI.

1 B. Powell, "Somalia: failed state, economic success?" *Freeman* 59(3), (April 2009).

2 Rural Poverty Portal, "Poverty in Somalia."



estimated GDP at USD 5.61 billion in 2008, USD 5.75 billion in 2009 and USD 5.89 billion in 2010, with a projected real growth rate of 2.6%.³

Agriculture is the most important economic sector, accounting for about 65% of GDP and employing 71% of the workforce. Livestock contributes about 40% to GDP and more than 50% of export earnings.⁴ Other principal exports include fish, charcoal and bananas, and the country is also a major world supplier of frankincense and myrrh. The main imported goods are sugar, sorghum, corn, qat (*Catha edulis*, a natural stimulant) and manufactured goods. Imports total about USD 798 million per year while exports total about USD 270 million, leaving an enormous trade deficit.

This deficit, however, is far exceeded by remittances sent by Somalis in the diaspora. Remittance firms (*hawalas*) have become a large industry in the country with an estimated USD 1.6 billion annually, or 71.4% of GNP, sent to the region via money transfer companies.⁵

Taking advantage of the country's location near the Arabian Peninsula, Somali traders have increasingly begun to challenge Australia's traditional dominance over livestock and meat markets in the Persian Gulf. In response, Arab States have started to make strategic investments in the country, with Saudi Arabia building livestock export infrastructure

3 CIA World Factbook, "Somalia," <www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>.

4 Ibid.

5 UNDP Somalia, "Sustainable partnerships with the Somali Diaspora forged", *News Update*, <www.so.undp.org/index.php/View-document-details/313-Sustainable-Partnerships-with-the-Somali-Diaspora-forged.html>.

and the United Arab Emirates purchasing large farmlands.⁶ Additionally fishing fleets from Europe and Asia have reached commercial fishing agreements in the northern Puntland region. This is considered one of the richest fisheries in the world, which has led to a lot of illegal fishing by foreign ships in Somali waters.⁷

On the other hand, the industrial sector, based on agricultural products, accounts for a mere 10% of Somalia's GDP.⁸ Medium and large manufacturing firms foundered due to the conflict. However, primarily as a result of substantial local investment by the Somali diaspora, many small-scale plants have re-opened and newer ones have been created. The latter include fish-canning and meat-processing plants in the north, as well as about 25 factories in the Mogadishu area that manufacture goods such as pasta, mineral water, sweets, plastic bags, sheets, hides and skins, detergent, soap, aluminium and foam mattresses.⁹

According to the UNDP, investments in light manufacturing have also expanded in Bossaso and Hargeisa, indicating growing business confidence in the economy.¹⁰ In 2004 a USD 8.3 million Coca-Cola bottling plant opened in Mogadishu, with investors hailing from various constituencies in Somalia. The robust private sector has also attracted foreign investment from companies such as General Motors and Dole Fruit.¹¹

Telecommunications

Telecommunications is a major area of success in Somalia. The number of telephone landlines has shown dramatic improvement from about 2 per 1,000 of population in 1990 to 25 in 2011. Some nine private operators provide competitive telecommunication services to almost every part of the coun-

6 C. West, "Africa a poor alternative to Aussie exports," *Farm Weekly*, (12 August 2010).

7 Partnership Africa Canada (PAC), *Peace and development in northern Somalia: opportunities and challenges*, (2009), <www.mballi.info/doc200.htm>.

8 CIA, op. cit.

9 M. Yuusuf, "Somalia: The resilience of a people," *The African Executive*, (2011), <www.africanexecutive.com/modules/magazine/article_print.php?article=4693>.

10 AfricanSeer, *Economy in Somalia*, <www.africanseer.com/countries-in-africa/somalia/economy.asp>.

11 Ibid.

try. Research has shown that this moved Somalia from 29th to 8th position among African countries studied.¹²

Funded by Somali entrepreneurs and backed by expertise from China, Korea and Europe, the nascent telecommunications firms also offer affordable mobile phone and Internet services.¹³ Somalia ranks high in mobile phone (16th in Africa) and Internet users (11th), while it ranks 27th in the number of households with televisions.¹⁴

Deforestation and soil erosion

According to RMSN (Resource Management Somalia Network) and other local environmental agencies, the environment is one of the sectors in the country that has suffered as a result of the anarchy and particularly in the absence of a functioning government.

Coastal people, for example, have complained of hazardous waste dumping and pastoralists have reported the increased loss of forests. Moreover the country is marked by water scarcity as rainfall is very low (250 mm a year) while evaporation is generally very high (over 2,000 mm a year).¹⁵ Frequent droughts especially in the southern part of the country have serious impacts on rural communities, whose survival greatly depends on the availability of rainwater. These droughts are often followed by devastating floods.¹⁶ Tree cutting, deforestation and overgrazing contribute to soil erosion and other ecological problems.

Deforestation in Somalia is closely associated with charcoal production for local use and export. This puts a severe strain on wood resources, especially in a country with only 9% of land covered by low-density woodland. According to the World Bank 55% of Somalia's land area is suitable for grazing, while the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates only 29% demonstrates a certain degree of suitability for livestock production.¹⁷

The land is also affected by inefficient irrigation methods, causing higher salt concentrations. This has a negative effect on farmland.

Waste dumping

People living on the coast frequently complain of waste being dumped in the sea. In early April 2011, for example, residents in Hobyo district 660 km northeast of Mogadishu spotted three large, drum-shaped containers washed up on the beach by the high tide. They were afraid these might contain dangerous industrial or chemical waste, which they blame for a number of health-related issues in the area. The event revived the long-held suspicion that the marine environment was being spoiled by foreign vessels taking advantage of the political confusion in the country and lack of central government to dump hazardous waste in Somali waters.¹⁸

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and other agencies have in the past promised to assess the issue of illegal waste dumping; however lack of security in the war-torn Horn of Africa has hampered local and international efforts.¹⁹

Social services

In addition to environmental and economic challenges, all Somali regions face real challenges concerning access, availability and quality of indispensable social services.

Enrolment in education, for instance, is one of the worst in Africa. Just over 20% of school-age children are in school, and only a third of them are girls. This is accompanied by a high female dropout rate. Both the quality and quantity of vital educational resources and materials are poor, even in relatively more stable regions such as Somaliland and Puntland.

In the absence of a fully functioning government, and following a joint needs assessment carried out in 2005–2006,²⁰ many groups have supported the public education system, including UN organizations (under the UN Somali Assistance Strategy), donor agencies, international and regional banks, NGOs and other associations. Such groups have also contributed to improving the health, water and sanitation sectors. These services are purely in unregulated private hands or reliant on traditional sources, and in most cases their affor-

ability is beyond the capacity of poor families.²¹ In addition to seemingly endless wars and an ongoing culture of impunity that have eroded people's ability to enjoy civil and political rights, the absence of an effective central rule has also eroded economic, social and cultural rights.

Gender inequality

Women make up some 50% of the population but lag behind in access to resources and services. Policies are needed to guarantee women and other disadvantaged groups access to education and health care, especially to maternal health and family planning. Further research and improvements are vital in the areas of HIV/AIDS and female genital mutilation (FGM). The latter is profoundly rooted in the Somali culture, necessitating strong measures to eliminate or at least minimize its impacts on society as a whole and on women in particular.

Equitable provision of social services calls for appropriate policies and adequate resources as well as legislation. Instability in Somalia originating from two decades of power struggles has hindered the country's ability to empower women through skills training and incentives and make significant improvements in gender equity.

Conclusion

Events in Somalia are proof that development is tied to peace and stability. Apart from the clan-based factions, self-styled authorities and rag-tag militias, opportunists emerged to vandalize everything from private property to natural resources and the environment. Regarding the latter, civil society activists insist this negative trend must be reversed. No central coordinating body was in charge of environmental protection even under the last Government prior to January 1991 and a strong agency is needed. The transitional Federal Government needs to renew its attempts to set up relevant ministries. State policies must be put in place to protect and improve the environment.

One way to reverse the negative trends is to strengthen development cooperation under Goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals and other development programmes in order to stimulate stronger collaboration between Somalia and its development partners. It is time to turn risks and challenges into opportunities to stabilize and rebuild a country and society shattered by years of civil war. ■

12 Powell, op. cit.

13 A. Mohamed and S. Chidress, "Telecom firms thrive in Somalia despite civil war, shattered economy," *The Wall Street Journal*, (11 May 2010).

14 Powell, op. cit.

15 A. Sadyhan, *Somalia's Degrading Environment*, (11 October 2001), <www.aaefrica.org/cgi-bin/africa/index.cgi?action=viewnews&id=78>.

16 Ibid.

17 A.E. Mohamed, *Somalia's Degrading Environment: Causes and Effects of Deforestation and Hazardous Waste Dumping in Somalia*, (2001).

18 A. Khalif, "Suspicious containers wash up on Somalia's coast," *Africa Review*, (8 April 2011).

19 Ibid.

20 United Nations, "Somali Joint Needs Assessment: Social Services and Protection of Vulnerable Groups Cluster Report," draft, (14 September 2006), <www.somali-jna.org/downloads/SSPVG%20140906%20AD%20Final%20Draft%20rec-social%20rev-1.pdf>.

21 Ibid.

Wasted words, empty policies



When the present Government came to power it announced it would support sustainable development, but it has not made good on these commitments. In fields like gender and energy policies and overseas development assistance Spanish civil society organizations have heard a lot of promises but the actual concrete results have been meagre. Today, as a consequence, there are no solid policies to promote gender equality or to work towards a sustainable development model that involves reducing greenhouse gas emissions or promoting the development of renewable sources of energy.

Plataforma 2015 y más

Ana Bustinduy
Pablo Martínez Osés

In 2011 the Government moved even further away from the pursuit of sustainable development and turned instead to economic policies centred on adjustments and reducing public spending. In spite of numerous protests it has continued to reject any of the alternative proposals aimed at fiscal reform, changing the production model or implementing anti-cyclical measures that would help the country recover from the recession with policies based on people's rights. This change in economic direction marks the end of a political cycle.

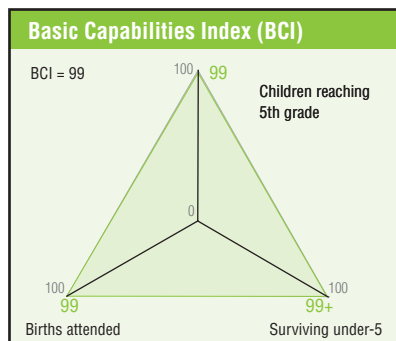
In this report we will analyse the evolution of the public policies that were put forward to promote the transition to a sustainable development model in Spain in three key areas: gender equality, environment protection and overseas development assistance.

Gender: empty promises

In its first term in office (2004-2008) the socialist Government tackled the problem of gender inequality with a two-part strategy aimed at social change. First, there were public information campaigns to raise awareness about the great inequalities between women's rights and those of men, and second, steps were taken to initiate a wide legislative framework in this area.

The effort to make gender injustice more visible led to the emergence of many spaces for debate in Spain, a society in which patriarchal attitudes and constructs still carry a lot of weight. However, progress towards overcoming the generalised tolerance of discriminatory practices and towards social change in favour of equal treatment has been slow, and the extent of the debate about this has made it increasingly evident that to tackle the problem public resources will have to be allocated and there will have to be political spaces geared to gender equity.

In addition to the campaigns to disseminate information and raise awareness there have also been institutional initiatives to try to set up a legal framework that is coherent with other aspects of the strategy to promote equality. This effort to enact legislation lasted from the beginning of the first democratic legislature until the end of the second. It bore fruit in the form of the Integral Law against Gender

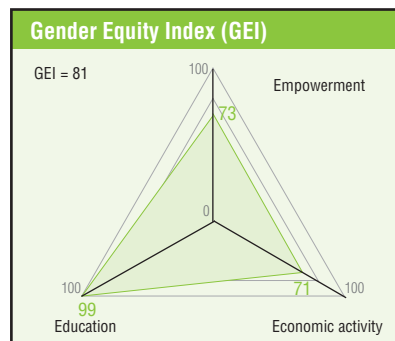


Violence and the Abortion Law. There was a further initiative, an equal treatment and anti-discrimination bill, but this bogged down in Parliament and did not complete the whole legislative procedure.

Besides raising awareness about the problem and initiating institutional change, the Government set up a Ministry of Equality, which was a tangible expression of its political will to make gender equality a basic pillar of its other public policies. There was also a public declaration in favour of forming governments that were balanced in the sense that there would be the same number of women as men in the cabinet. This sparked off a debate about quotas as a means to break through the glass ceilings that are keeping women in Spain down, and it put the spotlight on subjects like the pay gap between men and women, the precarious labour conditions some women are subject to, and the fact that very often women find it difficult to coordinate their home lives with their work lives.

There is more information available today and it is managed better, and it shows that in general gender discrimination is still prevalent in Spanish society. For example, in 2008 the typical annual pay for a woman was 13,494 euros (USD 18,370), which was only 86.9% of the typical pay for a man (15,522.9 euros, or USD 21,131.6). In terms of mean remuneration the pay gap was 79.2% and in terms of average gross pay it was 78.1%. It works out that women's annual pay for a full time job was 86.3% of the amount men earned, and for part time work women received only 84.8% of men's pay.

What is needed to tackle this and many other kinds of gender discrimination is a sustained long term institutional, political and economic policy. To overcome the underlying causes of discrimination there will have to be a generalised effort from social,



educational and cultural sectors to bring about a genuine change in the country's culture, and this will have to be supported by the public at large.

However, in 2010 the Government started making cuts to public spending and this has had a negative impact on gender policies. In October 2010 the State apparatus was changed in various ways and the Ministry of Equality was closed down, which left no doubt what the Government's new priorities were. "Putting equality policies back under the Ministry of Health means the situation of women is a question of health again rather than a social matter, and this will cause bitter disappointment in many sectors."¹ The abolition of this Ministry gives the impression that setting it up in the first place, which was costly in terms of structure, human resources, dedication and innovation, was no more than a symbolic gesture.

The Government's failure to get the equal treatment bill passed into law has brought other contradictions to light. Just one year ago liberal labour reform legislation was passed, but shortly afterwards the same Government, under pressure from the ECO-FIN, the IMF and credit rating agencies, interrupted the passage of a law that would have made it compulsory to pay women at the same rate as men and would have extended paternity leave to four weeks. The bill has now been modified and these and some other less well known dispositions have been eliminated.

Not long ago the sense of solidarity with the victims of abuse, and pressure to use institutions, mechanisms and budgets to bring about far-reaching changes in our society and eliminate gender discrimination, were

¹ *El País*, (20 October 2010), <www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/igualdad/hoguera/recortes/elpepuesp/20101020elpepunac_26/Tes>.

reflected in Parliament by the progressive left, which supported the feminist cause in opposition to the right, which as always opposed any changes. But today there is almost no difference between the two sides in Parliament; they both have an orthodox neo-liberal stance and both are promoting economic adjustment policies. It seems that equality will just have to wait.

The environmental void: unsustainable energy

In the early days of its mandate, the socialist Government tried to project the idea that its international policy included strong support for multilateral mechanisms to promote environmental sustainability. President Zapatero was applauded for his celebrated speech at the Copenhagen Summit where he said, "We have to unite the world to save the earth, our earth, where there are poor people who are too poor and rich people who are too rich. But the earth does not belong to anyone, only to the wind."²

At the very centre of the Government's programme there were domestic measures to combat climate change and reduce CO₂ emissions, and this was supposedly a clear signal that Spain was taking its fair share of responsibility for the challenges the world is facing. The Government's plans to enact legislation to facilitate the change to a new production model that would be less vulnerable and more in line with the principles of sustainable development came to fruition in October 2009 when its sustainable economy bill came before Parliament. After more than a year and a half of troubled procedural delays the bill was eventually passed into law in March 2011. The final content of this lengthy document – 114 articles and 60 additional dispositions spread over 200 pages – was heavily influenced by the economic crisis and includes measures with little connection between them and some that even contradict each other.

With this legislation the Government missed an opportunity to set up coherent and effective mechanisms to lead the country towards sustainable development. As a consequence of this bungled effort, the sustainable economy law aroused nearly no public debate, and now it merely serves as a supposed achievement in the Government's empty rhetoric. This legislative process coincided with, and suffered from, policy decisions flowing from the administration's adjustment programme and its efforts to reduce public spending, so the law can hardly be said to meet the requirements of sustainability. In article 2 the concept of a sustainable economy is defined as "a growth model that reconciles economic, social and environmental development in a productive and competitive economy". The main point of reference is "a growth model", which shows that this law is geared above all to economic growth and is hardly conditioned at all by environmental concerns. A genuinely sustainable economic model would be based on natural and human principles and limits, but this legislation ignores essential points such as setting reduction targets, which is considered essential by the international community.

Another problem area is electrical power. The Government presented a Renewable Energy Plan (PEN) 2011-2012, but this has been criticized for disregarding the whole question of generating electricity by renewable means. According to the IPCC, countries like Spain should reduce domestic CO₂ emissions by 40% in the 1990-2020 period, but Spain has set itself a target of only a 30% reduction by 2020.³ This feeble commitment to renewable energy looks even worse when we consider that Spain is one of five European countries that together will be responsible for two thirds of the increase in emissions in the near future because the Government has invested in biofuels, which could generate an additional 9.5 million tons of CO₂.⁴

The Zapatero administration has also reneged on its commitment to close down the country's nuclear power stations. In 2011, in the wake of the tragedy at Fukushima, there was renewed public debate about how safe these installations were, but plans to definitively close down the nuclear programme have not been forthcoming. To make matters worse, the Government is still insisting that in the energy balance nuclear power should figure as "domestically produced", but this manoeuvre evades the inconvenient fact that all the fuel used in the process – enriched uranium- is imported. This is a way presenting the false impression of how self-sufficient Spain is as regards electrical power, and it is also a factor that makes it more difficult to integrate renewable energy systems into the power transmission network.

To sum up, policies that are coherent with sustainable development seem to have lost all their force as a result of political reactions to the global economic turnaround. This shows that these policies were regarded as little more than luxury items the country was able to afford in times of economic boom, whereas in fact the Government could have taken advantage of the crisis to make radical changes to its development model.

Empty international cooperation policies

Like institutional reform, another promise that has come to nothing is the commitment to raise official development assistance (ODA) to 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) by 2012. Social organizations have identified two very worrying trends in this area.

First, since 2009 public funding for international assistance has been cut a lot more than the general cuts in public expenditure. In 2010 and 2011 the resources allocated to international cooperation have been reduced by around 20% but overall public spending has only been cut by just over 6%.⁵

Second, the Government has also aided private enterprises in the cooperation for development area by fostering their capacity to invest in and finance foreign development projects, but it has not set any kind of regulatory limits on these activities. It would seem that not only has the Government been unable to maintain coherence or keep up the level of what was formerly a priority policy, but now it has sought assistance from the private sector to raise finance for development abroad. To help private initiatives in this field it has enacted legislation that makes it easier to internationalise companies and has set up a new fund to provide repayable loans for capital investments that serve to develop private enterprise. This might be a key tool in the near future because these funds are repayable so levels of investment can be maintained without generating a deficit. It is an entirely different question whether this instrument will yield results that are useful for the development objectives of the receiving countries or will be congruent with the aims of Spanish development cooperation.

In May 2011 a parliamentary committee was set up to investigate the whole question of assistance for overseas development. Civil society organizations criticized the committee's report, which was approved by the Cooperation Committee in Parliament, because it gives a lot of weight to private sector profits and carries the implicit risk that the main focus of overseas aid, which is the fight against poverty, could be lost. But this focus was the guiding principle behind the original reforms and improvements in the country's overseas development assistance policy, and these original reforms were supported by a broad consensus of the social and institutional actors involved in international cooperation.

Conclusion

All the signs are that gender equality will have to wait. Public policies that are coherent with sustainable development seem to have been drained of any effective content because of the Government's change of course brought on by the economic crisis. The inescapable conclusion is that these policies, which seemed so encouraging when they were first undertaken, were little more than luxuries the country could afford in times of economic boom. In a similar way, Spain's commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and invest in renewable energy projects have been discarded, much to the disappointment of people who thought the Government's pronouncements about sustainability and the fight against climate change would actually lead to concrete results. Another disturbing change is that in Spain's foreign assistance programme the Government has abandoned the fundamental guiding principle of fighting poverty. This was done so as to be able to bring in other actors, albeit with laxer ideas about sustainable development, but it could turn out to be a step backwards and might have unforeseeable consequences in a field that, by definition, is an expression of solidarity with poorer countries on the part of the Spanish people. ■

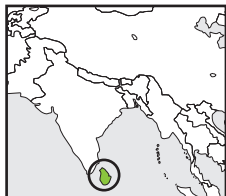
2 Speech at the Climate Change Summit, (Copenhagen: 17 December 2009), <www.psoe.es/ambito/saladeprensa/docs/index.do?action=View&id=428476>.

3 Greenpeace, *Comentarios de Greenpeace al borrador del PER 2011-2012*, <www.greenpeace.org/espana/Global/espana/report/cambio_climatico/20110919_Alegaciones%20PER%202011_2020_GP.pdf>.

4 Institute for European Environmental Policy, *Anticipated Indirect Land Use Change Associated with Expanded Use of Biofuels and Bioliquids in the EU – An Analysis of the National Renewable Energy Action Plans*, (March, 2011) p. 19, <www.foeurope.org/agrofuels/ILUC_report_November2010.pdf>.

5 See the Plataforma 2015 y más annual report *Balance de la cooperación española: crisis, estancamiento y debilidad política*, and *Política Globales Importan*, Plataforma 2015 y más, (2011), pp.45-56, <www.2015ymas.org>.

People and the environment should be first



The Government of Sri Lanka is implementing a neo-liberal, non-sustainable development model that has displaced and impoverished people and has no regard for environmental needs. Already ravaged by the longest civil war in Asia and by natural catastrophes such as the 2004 tsunami, Sri Lanka currently faces severe environmental issues including deforestation and loss of biodiversity. Meanwhile the gap between rich and poor grows wider. The defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has led to strong feelings of dissatisfaction among minority ethnic communities, who feel their control over their lands has been reduced. The Government's military victory has nullified civil society's political expectations.

Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reform (MONLAR)

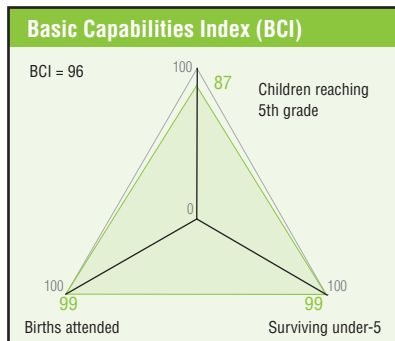
Sarath Fernando

The neo-liberal model currently in place in Sri Lanka continually displaces people from their livelihoods. It breaks up social cohesion and disrupts the collaborative relationship between nature and humanity as it strives to extract more and more resources from the environment in an aggressive and destructive approach.

In 1996, for example, the Government considered shifting rural agriculture from low-value crops (domestic food production) to high-value crops (for export). It was also suggested that farmers should be encouraged to sell their land plots and move out of the villages to seek non-farm employment. A subsequent policy document stated that the Government expected migration from the countryside to make rural/urban proportions 50:50 by 2010.¹

A tsunami that hit the island in December 2004 led to a death toll of 35,322 and displaced 516,150 people. In 2005 plans for rebuilding the country suggested the expulsion of all coastal fisher people.² Their land was to be used for the development of tourism zones and modernized cities, designed for a rich elite. It was also intended to switch into large-scale industrial fishing that would replace the small-scale, beach-based fishing on which people's livelihoods depended. Labour protection laws were to be revised to enable the free hiring and firing of workers, since it was assumed that investors were unlikely to come to countries where labour was protected by law.

Supporters of the neo-liberal economic growth model assume that the best way to make it work is by expanding exports through attracting foreign investment and promoting the private sector by providing more infrastructure facilities such as express highways, international airports, harbours, mega city developments, large tax holidays and cheap labour.

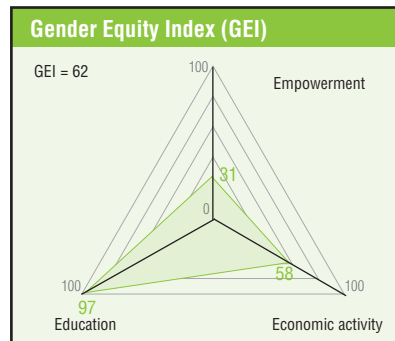


However this model has clearly failed to achieve its declared objectives over the last 33 years. Sri Lanka needs a different strategy, which has to address serious issues including poverty, unemployment, hunger and malnutrition.

Environmental issues

Sri Lanka is featured in several lists of "biodiversity hotspots" – meaning regions both biologically rich and endangered – along the Indian Western Ghats. It is home to as many as 140 endemic species of amphibians, for example.³ But now the country is facing important environmental issues, among them the loss of biodiversity. A report by Conservation International states that only 1.5% of the island's original forests remain.⁴

Most of these forests were lost during British colonial rule when they were cleared for rubber, coffee and tea plantations, but deforestation also took place during the 1980s and early 1990s when Government soldiers cleared the rainforests because they served as refuges for rebel forces. This also displaced small-scale farmers. Between 1990 and 2005 Sri Lanka had one of the highest deforestation rates of primary forest in the world with more than 18% of the remaining forest cover lost in that period.⁵ Over 2.5 million palmyra trees, for example, were felled for construction purposes alone. Reconstruction efforts in the wake of the



2004 tsunami also increased the pressure on the country's forests.

The impact of climate change is a major concern in Sri Lanka as well. For example, very heavy rains that continued from 2010 to early 2011 caused serious floods in many districts with huge losses in agricultural yields. This will intensify food shortages in 2011.⁶ Many reservoirs and waterways have been damaged and will require a large allocation of money for repairs. Erosion is making the soil much less fertile, so producers will need to spend more money on fertilizers. All these issues have led to increasing food prices, which are becoming almost unaffordable by the poorer sections of society.

Political unrest

The military victory achieved in the north over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (see box) has created an appearance of peace in the country, but minority ethnic communities have a strong feeling of dissatisfaction since their control over their lands has been reduced. It is feared that the continued military control of the area is set to provide opportunities for businesses, including foreign investment, that will take control of the land and other natural resources.

People's political expectations (such as for transparent elections and commissions for better functioning of the judicial system and civil service) have been nullified by the Government's military victory, which enabled the presidency to extend its powers and period of rule.

1 Government of Sri Lanka, "Connecting to Growth: Sri Lanka's Poverty Reduction Strategy," in *Regaining Sri Lanka: Vision and Strategy for Accelerated Development*, (2002), p. 83.

2 Amnesty International, "Sri Lanka – Waiting to go home, the plight of the internally displaced," (2006), <www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA37/004/2006/en>.

3 Conservation international, *Western Ghats and Sri Lanka*, <www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/hotspots/ghats/Pages/default.aspx>.

4 Ibid.

5 Mongabay.com, *Sri Lanka*, <rainforests.mongabay.com/20srilanka.htm>.

6 S. Patranobis, "Flood situation worsens, impending food shortage", *Hindustan Times*, (13 January 2011), <www.hindustantimes.com/Flood-situation-worsens-impending-food-shortage/Article1-649962.aspx>.

ASIA'S LONGEST CIVIL WAR

The Sri Lankan civil war was fought between 1983 and 2009. The parties involved were the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a separatist militant organization.

The Tamil people, an ethnic group native to the southern regions of the Indian subcontinent, have historically occupied the northern and eastern parts of the island of Sri Lanka. They share the Tamil language and a long cultural tradition including poetry, sculpture and architecture, one of the best-known examples being the art of the Chola dynasty, which ruled southern India from 848 to 1249 AD.

The roots of the conflict go back to British colonial rule, when the country was known as Ceylon. A national liberation movement of Sinhalese people (the ethnic group that comprises the majority of the island's population) arose in the early 20th century calling for political independence, which was eventually granted by the British imperial authorities after peaceful negotiations. One of the policies adopted by the new State was to make Sinhalese the official language, and the 1956 Sinhala Only Act led to ethnic riots that escalated into the civil war.

The first documents regarding the establishment of an independent Tamil Eelam state began to circulate in 1963, and the Tamil New Tigers

(TNT) emerged in 1972 when several groups that had adopted the tiger emblem of the Chola Empire as their icon joined together.

In 1976 the TNT changed its name to Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and started a campaign of assassinations that included members of parliament. The beginning of the civil war was triggered by a LTTE ambush aimed at a Sri Lanka army patrol, which was followed by retaliations against the Tamil people including the killing of several civilians.

The war ended officially in 2009 when the LTTE admitted defeat. The conflict had a severe impact on the population, the environment and the economy, with an estimated 100,000 casualties of which more than 27,000 were Tamil militants.¹ The final stages of the war displaced almost 300,000 people from their homes into camps.² Allegations of war crimes committed on

both sides of the conflict include attacks on civilians, executions of combatants and prisoners, enforced disappearances, shortages of food, medicine and clean water for civilians trapped in the war zones and also child recruitment.³

The US-based Tamils Against Genocide group has presented evidence of discrimination, prosecution and even genocide against Tamils in Sri Lanka before, during and after the war, including embargos of food and medicine, disappearances, implementation of race-based citizenship laws, pogroms (in 1956, 1958, 1977 and 1983)⁴ and cultural genocide such as destruction of books and temples.⁵

1 ABC News, *Up to 100,000 killed in Sri Lanka's civil war: UN*, (20 May 2009), <www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/05/20/2576543.htm>.

2 Amnesty International, *Unlock the camps in Sri Lanka: safety and dignity for the displaced now. A briefing paper*, London, (2009), <www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA37/016/2009/en/5de112c8-c8d4-4c31-8144-2a69aa9fff58/asa370162009en.html>.

3 Human Rights Watch, *Sri Lanka: US war crimes report details extensive abuses*, (22 October 2009), <www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/10/22/sri-lanka-us-war-crimes-report-details-extensive-abuses>.

4 Tamil Mirror Canada, "Anti-Tamil pogroms in Sri Lanka – M. K. Eelaventhan," (15 January 2011), <tamilmirrorcanada.blogspot.com/2011/01/dec-2010-feature-anti-tamil-pogroms-in.html>.

5 Tamils Against Genocide, "Genocide in Sri Lanka 101: Sheet 2", <www.ptsrilanka.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=6&Itemid=16>.

Conclusion

The current growth model relies on improving the economy through competition in the international market. However the last 33 years show that this approach has failed to reduce poverty in Sri Lanka. Government figures showed 15% of the population living below the official poverty line in 2010, but the World Bank put the figure at 23%.⁷ Moreover economic disparities have been increasing; the richest 10% of the people hold nearly 40% of the wealth and the poorest 10% hold just 1%,⁸ and while the GINI index for 1985 ranked in the vicinity of 0.32, it climbed to almost 0.36 in 1995 and reached 0.41 in 2005.⁹

The social problems that have resulted from this model could be solved by the adoption of sustainable small-scale ecological agriculture. Based on an overall vision of developing a friendly relationship between nature and human society, the strategy would utilize people's creative potential to improve their livelihoods and life situations in a manner that protects and improves the environment. It could regenerate nature and its resources and enable the country to mitigate and adapt to climate change issues.

This approach is also based on understanding the way ecology principles could be applied to enhance soil fertility, maximizing the absorption of

sunlight by plants, allowing and enhancing natural biological control of pests by adopting principles of integrated pest management, improving the use of microbial activity and recycling of organic matter, preventing erosion, and timing farming seasons with greater understanding of natural cycles of rain and sun. This approach could be adopted very effectively to improve the productivity of land even in plots as small as 1/8th of an acre. It has the potential to reduce rural poverty while also addressing important environmental issues and becoming a much more sustainable model than the one that has been historically applied. ■

7 M. Hardy, "Poverty in Sri Lanka," *The Sunday Leader*, (4 April 2010), <www.thesundayleader.lk/2010/04/04/poverty-in-sri-lanka/>.

8 Ibid.

9 Trading Economics, *Gini index in Sri Lanka*, (2009), <www.tradingeconomics.com/sri-lanka/gini-index-wb-data.html>.

Two countries, more challenges



The secession of South Sudan will have severe impacts on both the northern and southern States. Development plans in North Sudan will be seriously at risk due to its dependence on oil revenues, while South Sudan faces major economic and social hardships that could turn the new country into a failed state. Although some gender indicators have improved, there is still a long way to go to bridge the gap between women and men, especially since bias against women is deeply rooted in society. The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 paved the way for civil society organizations to play an effective role in monitoring elections and referendums and to establish parliamentary watch groups.

National Civic Forum

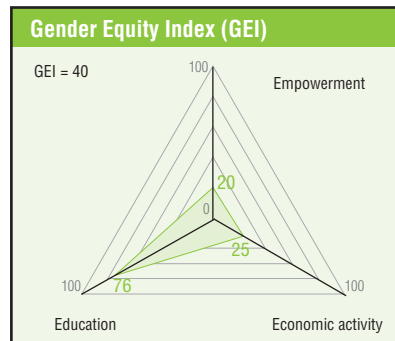
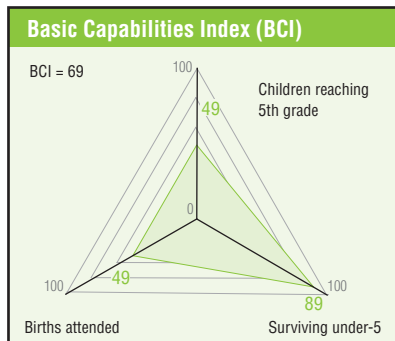
Mdani Abbas Medani
Afaf Awad

2010 marked a turning point in Sudan's political history. Presidential and parliamentary elections were held and preparations were made for the South Sudan Independence Referendum, which included a census in order to determine the nature and number of the electorate. The referendum took place from 9–15 January 2011 and the results, published on 7 February, showed that 98% of voters were in favour of independence. As a result, it was agreed that the Republic of South Sudan would be officially declared a new sovereign State in July of the same year.

According to a survey on poverty conducted in 2009, 46.5% of the Sudanese population currently lives below the poverty line.¹ Critical issues include conflict, displacement and food insecurity, to which major contributing factors are natural and partly human-made disasters such as drought, desertification and floods.²

A brief history of the civil conflicts

Sudan has faced two great civil wars since independence, the first between 1955 and 1972 and the second (considered a prolongation of the first) between 1983 and 2005. The roots of the conflicts can be traced back to colonial times when the British established separate administrations for the northern part, which was more akin to Islamic Egypt, and the southern part, which was similar to Kenya and Tanganyika (now Tanzania). The independence process took place without the participation of emissaries from the south, so their demands and needs were not considered. This led to the First Sudanese Civil War, which started after the Government attacked southern protesters and political dissidents, bringing about increased violence and mutinies that transitioned



into a full-scale war. This phase of the conflicts ended with the Addis Ababa Accord, which was meant to grant the south a good deal of autonomy.

The terms of the agreement were not fully implemented, however, and so the Second Civil War broke out. This was officially ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 between the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). In its aftermath the South Sudan Independence Referendum was proposed.

Environmental challenges

The Sudanese territory faces some critical environmental challenges, including soil erosion, land degradation, deforestation and desertification, which threaten prospects for lasting peace and sustainable development. Expanding settlements, for example, have already compromised the country's forests. Almost 75% of its energy supply is provided by traditional fuels such as wood, which (in addition to the demand for charcoal) has led to the clearing of many forests. This is speeding the process of desertification as the Sahara advances onto previously arable and forested land.³ The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has also identified two other major causes of desertification: climate-based conversion of semi-desert to desert; and degradation of existing desert environments, including *wadis* and oases, through human activity.⁴

Although the Government designated nearly 4% of the land as protected areas, there is still severe poaching, threatening animal populations throughout the country. Many conservation efforts were jeopardized by the civil conflicts, especially since military forces took control of ecologically rich woodlands in South Sudan.⁵ According to the UNDP, there are clear linkages between environmental problems and the wars that have afflicted the country: "Competition over oil and gas reserves, Nile waters and timber, as well as land use issues related to agricultural land, are important causative factors in the instigation and perpetuation of conflict in Sudan. Confrontations over rangeland and rain-fed agricultural land in the drier parts of the country are a particularly striking manifestation of the connection between natural resource scarcity and violent conflict."⁶

Despite serious water shortages, flooding is common – both flash floods caused by heavy rains and more widespread floods caused by the overflow of the Nile and its tributaries – and results in widespread damage, including riverbank erosion and the corresponding loss of crops.⁷

1 Ministry of Welfare and Social Security and National Population Council, *Sudan Millennium Development Goals Progress Report 2010*, <www.sd.undp.org/doc/Sudan%20MDGs%20Report%202010.pdf>.

2 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Sudan: Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment*, (Nairobi: 2007), <postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP_Sudan.pdf>.

3 Countries Quest, *Sudan, Land and Resources, Environmental Issues*, <www.countriesquest.com/africa/sudan/land_and_resources/environmental_issues.htm>.

4 UNEP, op. cit.

5 Countries Quest, op. cit.

6 UNDP Sudan, *Environment and Energy for Sustainable Development*, (2011), <www.sd.undp.org/focus_environment.htm>.

7 UNEP, op. cit.

TABLE 1

Summary of general education in Sudan

Level	Institutions	Pupils			Teachers
		Males	Females	Total	
Whole Sudan	3,4301	3,174,809	2,641,668	5,816,477	194,800
Preschool education	8,648	228,944	221,188	450,132	14,964
Basic education	14,071	2,332,612	1,967,125	4,299,737	141,315
Academic secondary education	2,268	306,184	305,395	611,579	32,917
Technical secondary education	114	18,230	8,003	26,233	1,143
Private education	48			6,821	184
Adolescent education	570	10,111	9,330	19,441	159
Adult education	8,582	49,784	130,627	180,411	4,118

Source: Sudanese Studies Center, *Strategic Report on the Sudan, 2007–2008* (Jartum).

Fresh challenges for the two Sudans

North Sudan and South Sudan have been discussing pending issues such as border demarcation, especially concerning the oil-rich Abyei region, which by 2003 contributed more than a quarter of the country's total crude oil output, although production volumes have declined since and some reports suggest that the region's reserves are nearing depletion.⁸ A referendum was planned to decide whether Abyei would be part of the Bahr El Ghazal region of South Sudan or the South Kordofan region of North Sudan. Originally, it was intended to hold this referendum simultaneously with the independence referendum, but it had to be postponed due to severe disagreements over the process, and violence has escalated since then.

The economy of North Sudan, highly dependent on oil revenues, will be negatively affected by the secession, while the South will face several obstacles in its path to establishing itself as a viable State. For example, despite the fact that the southern territory holds three quarters of the oil production sites, nearly all of the refineries and pipelines are in the north. In addition, the question of nationality

and integration remains open. Will the Government in South Sudan be able to forge a national identity uniting the peoples inhabiting its territory, which are among the most linguistically and culturally diverse in the world? Even greater challenges for South Sudan are poverty, lack of access to healthcare and rampant maternal and child mortality.⁹

Gender inequality

Female enrolment in primary education increased from 64.4% during 2006–2007 to 69.9% in 2009, while female enrolment in secondary education increased from 30% in 2005 to 35.5% in 2009.¹⁰ In addition, Sudanese women have made some progress in terms of representation and political participation: in the 2010 elections women won 28% of parliamentary seats.

Despite this encouraging data, however, there is still great inequality when it comes to women's chances of being promoted to higher positions and also getting access to training opportunities and most of the activities run by Sudanese women are in agriculture and the informal sector. Also, due mostly to the armed conflicts and civil wars, Sudanese

women have been suffering from the lack of basic services, especially healthcare. Maternal mortality, for example, stands at 509 per 100,000 live births.¹¹ In addition, social and cultural norms, beliefs and traditional practices continue to hinder women from engaging actively in all walks of life.

The role of civil society

The signing of the CPA in 2005 paved the way for civil society organizations (CSOs) to engage effectively in addressing key issues, and many have been participating in monitoring Sudan's elections and South Sudan's referenda, observing the entire electoral process in terms of voter education, voter registration and electoral campaigning, and providing technical assistance for the training of domestic observers. Also some CSOs have started establishing parliamentary watch groups charged with monitoring the performance of parliament at State and Federal levels.

However CSOs have not engaged actively in decision-making and major policy issues. This is mostly due to their tense relationship with the Government, especially regarding restrictions on their activities.

Conclusion

Both North and South Sudan face serious developmental and environmental challenges that can only be exacerbated by continuing conflict, and agreement still needs to be reached on key issues such as oil rights, water rights and citizenship. Donor countries have urged both countries to reduce their reliance on oil, increase their food security through agricultural development, and expand health, education, water and sanitation services.¹² Stability and increased trade between north and south as well as with their neighbours would provide economic opportunities for young people, who make up more than half of the population, and for women and girls, whose educational and job opportunities have been limited to date.¹³ ■

8 R. Hamilton, "Oil-rich Abyei: Time to Update the Shorthand for Sudan's Flashpoint Border Town?," *Christian Science Monitor*, (3 November 2010), <pulitzercenter.org/articles/oil-rich-abyei-sudan-accuracy-label>.

9 A. Thurston, "Five Challenges South Sudan Will Face After Referendum," *Christian Science Monitor*, (27 January 2011), <www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/Africa-Monitor/2011/0127/Five-challenges-South-Sudan-will-face-after-referendum/(page)/3>.

10 Trading Economics, *Sudan World Bank Data*, (2010), <www.tradingeconomics.com/sudan/indicators>.

11 UNICEF, *Sudan Statistics*, <www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sudan_statistics.html>

12 E. Solheim, A. Mitchell and R. Shah, "Sudan at a Crossroads," *The Guardian*, (7 May 2011), <www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/may/07/sudan-at-crossroads-south-unresolved>

13 Ibid.

Stuck in poverty



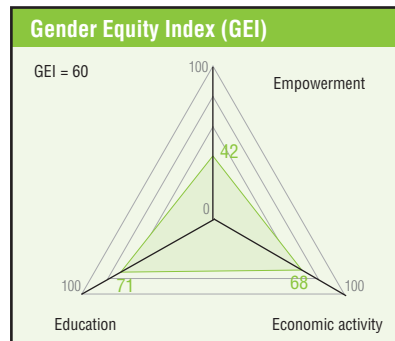
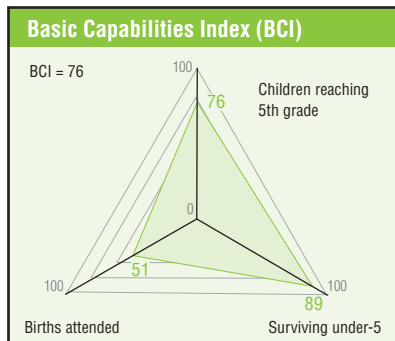
Food insecurity and poverty are the main challenges Tanzania faces today. Environmental issues such as deforestation, desertification, soil erosion and air pollution are not given appropriate attention by the Government, while small farmers continue to be displaced by foreign enterprises and the country's resources are exploited nearly to depletion. Inadequate and unsustainable policies, inappropriate technologies and insufficient rural infrastructure and institutions – combined with factors such as desertification, deforestation and the high incidence of pests and diseases – have led to increasing poverty, food insecurity and stalled development. If the present policies are not corrected, Tanzanians will be doomed to more poverty and hunger.

SAHRiNGON Tanzania
 Armando Swenya
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The Tanzanian economy depends heavily on agriculture, which employs some 80% of the workforce, contributes more than 40% of gross domestic product (GDP) and provides 85% of exports.¹ In 2010 74% of the population lived in rural areas while 26% were based in urban areas.² However rural-to-urban movement is increasing due mostly to the unequal distribution of social services. Farming and livestock production, which are among the key driving forces for poverty alleviation in the country, are therefore increasingly being jeopardized. The Government is doing very little to address the issues of poverty, food security and development, despite various policies and strategies including the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (better known locally by its Kiswahili acronym MKUKUTA) and the National Development Vision 2025.

Poverty is spreading

Tanzania is among the world's least developed countries, ranking 128th out of a total of 169 countries in the 2010 human development index.³ Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 6.0% in 2009 compared to 7.4% in 2008, a slowdown attributed by the Government to the impact of the global financial crisis as well as the 2008–09 drought, which affected agricultural production, hydro power generation and industrial production.⁴ Moreover, although agriculture employs a huge number of people in Tanzania, for at least six years no more than 7% of the entire national budget has been allocated for that purpose. According to the 2007 House Budget Survey, about 33.6% of mainland Tanzanians live below the basic



needs poverty line, while 16.6% live below the food poverty line.⁵ The number of poor people has increased in recent years by 1.3 million,⁶ and the rate of unemployment is rising: about 11.7 million people who are able to work are unemployed.⁷ Moreover, the gap between the poor and the rich is getting wider.⁸

Although Tanzania has legislation on investment issues, there are a number of problems relating to foreign direct investment. This is the case, for example, with the signing of dubious mining contracts (e.g., Buzwagi, Richmond and Dowans, and IPTL) between the Government and foreign investors.⁹ Also, land grabbing by State bodies in favour of foreign investors is on the rise. The open door policy of the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC), which is committed to attracting foreign investors, has been detrimental to local people. Small and medium-sized enterprises are unable to compete because they do not have enough capital and business expertise, while villagers are forcefully evicted to make room for foreign enterprises.

Environmental and health challenges

Deforestation is one of the main environmental problems that threaten the country. Despite 40% of the territory being preserved in parks, forests are rapidly shrinking in some regions. Overall forest cover fell by 15% between 1990 and 2005, but deforestation rates have increased significantly since 2000.¹⁰ Also, there is concern about soil degradation (as a result of recent droughts), desertification and loss of biodiversity, with 22 of Tanzania's mammal species – along with 30 bird species and 326 plant species – endangered as of 2001.¹¹ Marine habitats are also threatened by damage to coral reefs caused primarily by the use of dynamite for fishing.¹²

Soil erosion and pollution are of particular concern in mining sites. In January 2009, for example, North Mara Gold Mines piled up about 2,000 tonnes of toxic debris without any precaution or assessment of its impact on the surrounding communities. When the rain came, the debris was washed into River Tighite, which serves the villages of Nyakunsuru, Nyamone and Weigita in the Mara Region, causing fish and trees to die.¹³

1 CIA, *The World Factbook, Tanzania*, (May 2011), <www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tz.html>.

2 Ibid.

3 UNDP, *Human Development Report 2010 – The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development*, (New York: 2010), <hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2010/chapters/en>.

4 Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, *The Economic Survey 2009*, (Dar es Salaam: June 2010), <www.tanzania.go.tz/economicsurvey1/2009/THE%20ECONOMIC%20SURVEY%202009.pdf>.

5 Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), *Tanzania Human Rights Report 2009*, (Dar es Salaam: 2009), <www.humanrights.org.tz/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Tanzania-Human-Rights-Report-2009.pdf>.

6 World Bank, *Tanzania: Country Brief*, <go.worldbank.org/7SUHE823VO>.

7 Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania: Maoni ya Watananzia Kuhusu Ukuaji wa Uchumi na upunguzaji Umaskini na Kipato, Hali yao ya Maisha na Ustawi wa jamii na Utawala Bora na Uwajibikaji, (2007).

8 Trading Economics, *Gini Index in Tanzania*, <www.tradingeconomics.com/tanzania/gini-index-wb-data.html>.

9 The Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania's Hansard of the 44th meeting, (14 August 2007), <www.ere-to-npp.org/.../Walsh_2007_Pastoralism_and_Policy_Processes_in_Tanzania.pdf>.

10 Mongabay.com, *Tanzania*, <rainforests.mongabay.com/20tanzania.htm>.

11 Encyclopedia of the Nations, *Tanzania – Environment*, <www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Tanzania-ENVIRONMENT.html>.

12 Ibid.

13 LHRC, op. cit., pp. 134–35.

Agriculture and food security

Challenges in the agricultural sector include a lack of appropriate agricultural policies and practices and the lack of funds in – and poor utilization of – the agriculture budget. In addition, the agricultural field technicians are unmotivated and inexperienced.

Dependence on development partners is another obstacle to the sustainability of agriculture, since most of the budget for development comes from donors. In fact, for the 2010 budget, all the funds that were to be allocated came from development partners.¹⁴ With this poor limited budget farmers and livestock keepers are unable to fight food insecurity, while their very low incomes do not meet even the minimum standard of life.

The country has a number of policies and laws focused on food security. The Food Security Act of 1991, for example, established a Food Security Department to oversee the establishment and management of a strategic grain reserve. Other institutional mechanisms in this regard are the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) and the National Food Security Division. The aim of the former is to maintain an optimum national level of food reserves to address local food shortages and respond to emergency food requirements as well as to guarantee national food security by procuring and reserving food stocks in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

However despite all these efforts the challenge is still looming. For instance, in June 2009 the Ministry of Agriculture announced a severe lack of food in the Chamwino district in Dodoma region, with a total of 17,080 households being unable to afford daily food. In order for the district to satisfy its basic needs 63,501,000 kg of food are required, while the realized production for 2008/09 was only 12,178,000 kg.¹⁵

Partly this is due to the inadequate measures undertaken by all the institutions set up under the food Security Act, together with the use of inappropriate technologies, desertification, deforestation and the incidence of pests and diseases together with inadequate rural infrastructure, as well as weak and underfunded rural institutions.

Sustainability challenges

Since 1990, Tanzania has been implementing a sustainable development strategy that pays special attention to environmental issues. A National Environmental Action Plan was established in 1994, leading to the adoption of the 1997 National Environmental Policy and to the drafting of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development in 2000.¹⁶

Nevertheless, despite this policy framework, the country has not succeeded in coping with environmental challenges. This is due mostly to insufficient institutional frameworks for coordination, limited government capacity for environmental management,

and insufficient involvement of local authorities and communities in environmental management and conservation. Poverty is also a key factor: it adds to environmental degradation, through for example, the use of wood as a source of energy, which contributes to deforestation and soil erosion, while environmental degradation contributes to the intensification and perpetuation of poverty. Throughout the country, energy utilization is characterized by a high consumption of traditional energy sources such as wood for cooking and kerosene for light. In addition, high prices for petroleum products (especially kerosene) and increasing electricity prices could turn urban and rural energy demand back to traditional fuels.¹⁷

Conclusion

To achieve sustainable economic development, the Government needs to focus on issues such as rural development, agricultural improvement and economic empowerment of the rural population. It also needs to increase transparency in contracts with foreign investors and at the same time give legal and economic empowerment to local producers and traders. Problems such as unemployment and the widening gap between the poor and the rich also need to be tackled. While issues such as the budget allocation for agriculture and food security remain only partially addressed, Tanzanians will continue to suffer from hunger and poverty. ■

14 Policy Forum, *The Citizens' Budget: A Simplified Version of the National Budget 2010/11*, (Dar es Salaam: 2010), <www.policyforum-tz.org/files/CBenglish2010.pdf>.

15 LHRC, op. cit., p. 121.

16 B. Makiya Lyimo, *Energy and Sustainable Development in Tanzania*, (Helio International/ Sustainable Energy Watch, 2006), <www.helio-international.org/uploads/Tanzania-EN.pdf>.

17 Ibid.

Coastal resources in danger



Over the past 40 years, the country has undergone tremendous changes in its pursuit of economic growth, and at the local level there has been a movement away from subsistence livelihoods to an increased focus on monetary income. The main challenges the country now faces are the rapid degradation of marine and coastal resources and the multiple consequences of urbanization and industrial and tourism development. The unsustainable development models in use are placing a tremendous strain on the limited marine and coastal resources and the livelihoods of small-scale fishers, while policies and legislative, institutional and operational frameworks fail to support local communities in exercising their constitutional rights.

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Jonathan Shott

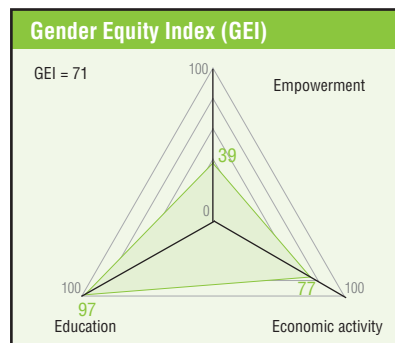
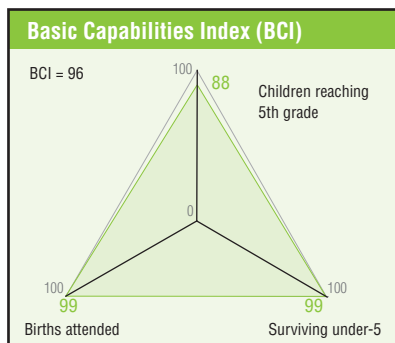
The lives and livelihoods of around 13 million Thai are directly dependent on the use of marine and coastal resources. Thailand's waters cover an area of around 350,000 km² and the country has some 35,000 km² of coastal land.¹ Important natural habitats and natural resources include beach forests, sea grass beds, minerals, ores, oil and natural gas. The country also has an estimated 12,000 km² of coral reefs with a biodiversity of at least 240 different species, and 1,964 km² of mangrove forests comprising 35 different species.²

Major industries dependent on marine and coastal resources include capture fishery, aquaculture fishery, tourism, transportation of produce and merchandise, heavy industry and power generation. Thailand is estimated to derive some THB 7,500 billion (around USD 250 million) from its marine and coastal resources each year.³

Thailand's coastal waters have traditionally been rich and productive, characterised by high biodiversity and large, healthy populations. These abundant resources have contributed to the development of a robust fisheries sector. Both capture fishery and aquaculture fishery are important to the country's economy, with Thailand accounting for 3% of total fish catch and nearly 2% of total aquaculture production globally in 2003. Its annual marine fish catch is valued at over THB 120 billion (around USD 4 billion).

Small-scale fishing

Thailand's 2007 Constitution enshrines the rights of traditional or local communities to participate in the conservation, care, management and balanced and sustainable use of natural resources and the environment. However implementation and operation by Government agencies at the local level often fail



to promote, support and facilitate local communities in exercising their constitutional rights, and in many cases the approaches employed by Government agencies contradict those rights.

That is, for example, the situation in the case of small-scale fishers. Over 60,000 households from 4,000 villages are engaged in fishing, of which around 93% are small-scale fishers who account for around 9% of the country's annual catch.⁴ They make use of traditional, handmade fishing boats and fishing gear, which effectively limit them to fishing only in waters within 3 to 5 km of the shore. This makes them especially vulnerable to local changes in the condition of marine and coastal resources.⁵

Sustainability challenges

Marine animal populations in Thailand's waters are in a degraded state as a result of fishing beyond the sea's carrying capacity. The Gulf of Thailand has been particularly affected, and the country has been exceeding the highest sustainable annual catch (1.4 million tons) since 1972.⁶ Other challenges include the failure to eradicate the use of push nets, the

lack of control over the use of dragnets, and the fuel subsidies and low-paid migrant labour that allow the commercial fishery sector to maintain artificially low costs.

Aquaculture fishery has also greatly affected the condition of marine and coastal resources. The Department of Marine and Coastal Resources reports that nearly 74,640 hectares of mangrove forest have been used for aquaculture fishery, in particular shrimp farms.⁷

In the Trang province (on the Andaman Sea coastline), large commercial fishing boats employing destructive fishing gear such as push-nets and dragnets have devastated local marine resources, drastically reducing fish populations in a very short period of time and bringing damage and destruction to invaluable marine ecosystems such as coral reefs and sea grass beds. Such large commercial fishing boats have been found operating within the 3,000 metres nearshore zone reserved specifically for small-scale fishing, and even within the boundaries of local marine protected areas.

In the Nakorn Sri Thammarat province on the Gulf of Thailand coastline, illegal dredging for surf clams has caused rapid degradation of the marine environment.⁸ The illegal dredgers tend to operate during the monsoon season (when small-scale fishers are unable to put to sea) and excavate material from the seabed to a depth of 1 metre or more. An area dredged in this way can take five or six years to return to its previously abundant state. Furthermore, illegal dredging can also cause

1 Thailand Reform Office, *Reforming the Structure of Marine and Coastal Resource Management*, (Bangkok: March 2011), pp. 1–2.

2 Ibid., p. 1

3 C. Cheung, et al. (comp.), *Marine Protected Areas in Southeast Asia* (Los Baños, Philippines: ASEAN Regional Center for Biodiversity Conservation – Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 2002), p. 86.

4 M. Unkulvasapaul, et al., *Thailand Environment Monitor 2006: Marine and Coastal Resources* (Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2007), pp. 8–10.

5 R. Prasertcharoensuk and J. Shott, *Samudra Mongraph: Time for a Sea Change – A Study of the Effectiveness of Biodiversity Conservation Measures and Marine Protected Areas Along Southern Thailand's Andaman Sea Coastline*, (Chennai, India: International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, 2010), <www.icsf.net/icsf2006/uploads/publications/monograph/pdf/english/issue_110/ALL.pdf>.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

damage and destruction to the fishing gear of local small-scale fishers.⁹

When marine and coastal resources become degraded, small-scale fishing tends to be more severely affected than commercial fishing. Unlike commercial fishers, small-scale fishers are unable to venture further out into deep offshore waters. While in theory they might decide to travel daily to neighbouring areas where resources are less severely degraded, in practice they have very meagre incomes, so additional fuel costs could threaten their livelihoods.

Urbanization, industrial development and tourism

Thailand's coastal provinces have been transformed by urbanization, industrialization and tourism development, which have had a range of negative effects on both marine and coastal resources and the livelihoods of small-scale fishers. There is increased demand and competition for land, with the privatization of coastal land and nearshore waters restricting access. Moreover, environmental changes and pollution have affected the availability and condition of marine and coastal resources and have exacerbated existing issues such as coastal erosion.

Small-scale fishing communities must, through necessity, be located on the coastline, because they typically moor their boats on sandy beaches or in coastal inlets. Even relatively small developments that affect the navigation of nearshore waters, such as the construction of privately owned marinas, can have a profound impact on them because of the additional fuel, and therefore additional expenditure, required to navigate around such structures.

Mangrove forests have been threatened by encroachment for settlement and industry as well as by the use of timber for firewood, charcoal, furniture and construction. Thailand's almost 10,400 hectares of sea grass beds have been negatively affected by sediment arising from coastal construction, deforestation and agriculture, the release of waste water in coastal areas and the use of illegal fishing gear such as push-nets. Severe coastal erosion causes Thailand to lose 3 km² of land to the sea each year, at an estimated cost of THB 6 billion (around USD 200 million). Although coastal erosion is brought about by a combination of both natural and human influen-

ces, factors related to coastal development include activities that disrupt the natural accumulation of sediment, including dam construction, sand mining and dredging deep-water channels to facilitate marine transportation.¹⁰

The country's coastal areas have been earmarked for the development of mass transportation systems and heavy industry under the Government's Southern Seaboard Development Plan. There are 37 projects planned, including deep-water ports, oil rigs, fuel depots, fuel transportation pipelines, heavy industry and power plants. The plan has emphasized the development of heavy industry without considering alternative forms of development potentially more appropriate to the socioeconomic circumstances and cultural ecology of the targeted areas, the economies of which are founded on fishery, agriculture, tourism, education and minor industry.¹¹

Thailand has witnessed many examples of inappropriate and unsustainable tourism development, as well as tourism activities that directly affect marine and coastal resources such as 'coral walks', which involve walking directly on coral reefs. But for many small-scale fishing communities living in some of Thailand's most important tourist areas, problems and conflicts relating to land and land rights are a much bigger issue. Conflicts have arisen between local communities and tourism operators who have been issued title deeds, or who have encroached on land without any right of ownership, in areas that overlap with community terrestrial forests, community mangrove forests, community settlements and public roads.¹²

Changing global, national and local socioeconomic contexts are placing increasing strains on limited marine and coastal resources. Over the past 40 years, Thailand has undergone tremendous changes in its pursuit of national-level economic growth, while at the local level rapidly changing expectations regarding standards of living and quality of life have moved away from subsistence livelihoods to an increased focus on monetary income. Despite great advances generally at the policy level,¹³ small-scale fishers still have no formal, established identity within existing policy and legislative frameworks, meaning that there is frequently a failure to identify and address the issues that affect their livelihoods and well-being.

New policies, but the same old practices

There is a significant gap between national level policies and legislation and implementation at the local level. Promising changes in policy direction¹⁴ fail to bring about tangible, widespread and lasting change at the local level because the intervening legislation, bureaucracy and administration are resistant. There is also lack of coordination, cooperation and integration between the various organizations and agencies related either directly or indirectly to the management of marine and coastal resources, which leads to at best inefficient and incoherent, and at worst conflicting and counterproductive implementation and operation at the local level. The lack of coherence between the approaches and practices of the diverse organizations and agencies highlights the need to rationalize the overlying and complex legislative framework applicable to the management of natural resources and the environment.

In many cases legislation has not been updated to reflect positive policy changes at the national level. In other cases existing legislation, that could potentially be beneficial to marine and coastal resources as well as to small-scale fishers, fails because enforcement is either poor, and so individuals are able to flout the law, or else it is arbitrary, with different standards being applied in different circumstances. Specific issues include legal loopholes that allow offenders to escape prosecution, penalties too lenient to act as useful deterrents, and insufficient resources or bureaucratic hindrances that prevent regular, comprehensive patrols from being carried out.¹⁵

Conclusion

Unsustainable development practices are having a negative impact on marine and coastal resources and the livelihoods of small-scale fishers. Although changing socioeconomic contexts at the global, national and local levels are certainly placing increasing strain on the limited marine and coastal resources, a range of other underlying issues are also to blame, all related to policy, legislative, institutional and operational frameworks that fail to support local communities in exercising their constitutional rights and also fail to control and suppress illegal, inappropriate and unsustainable practices. ■

9 S. Jitpiromsri, and Sustainable Development Foundation, "Strengthening the Capacity of Vulnerable Coastal Communities to Address the Risks of Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events: Community Study Report," reference document for Global Environment Facility / Special Climate Change Fund project development process, (Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani Campus, 2009), p.16.

10 Thailand Reform Office, op. cit., pp. 3–4.

11 Ibid., p. 6.

12 Ibid., pp. 5–6.

13 For example the policy to control the number of fishing vessels. See <www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/AC790E/AC790E02.htm>.

14 For health policies' changes see <www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12595131>; for monetary policies see T. Subhanji, *Household sector and monetary policy implications: Thailand's recent experience*, (Economic Research Department, Bank of Thailand, 2010), <ideas.repec.org/p/bth/wpaper/2009-06.html>.

15 Prasertcharoensuk and Shott, op. cit.

Wanted: a new economy and a new social contract



The multiple crises facing the United States and the world are rooted in the prioritization of economic growth over human well-being. The consensus that current economic priorities and unsustainable consumption patterns are deeply flawed, unjust and *compromise the human rights and well-being of future generations in the United States and globally is growing*. The Occupy Wall Street movement has given voice to the growing number of Americans demanding a new social contract and a completely different approach to the economy.

Global-Local Links Project

Tanya Dawkins

Center of Concern

Aldo Caliari & Julia Wartenberg

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Karen Hansen-Kuhn & Alexandra Spieldoch

From the Arab Spring to the Occupy Wall Street movement, millions of the world's citizens are raising their voices to demand human rights, real democracy, dignity and a just economic order. Together they are finding ways to harness the forces of technology and globalization to communicate and advance the demands of the rapidly growing numbers of citizens marginalized by an economic model that has not and cannot prioritize their interests.

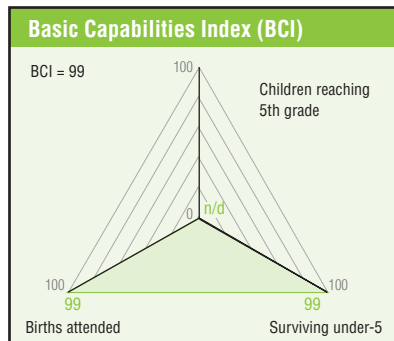
The human and community impacts of the 2008 crisis and its predicated economic policies are intensifying as access to the basic necessities of life exceed the grasp of more and more Americans. Deep poverty, the share of the population with incomes below half the poverty line, is on the rise in the United States. The number of people in deep poverty rose to 20.4 percent in 2010, up 25 percent or 4 million since 2007.¹

In what some are calling the "Lost Decade" in America², the 2010 U.S. Census portrays a chilling picture of the deteriorating fortunes of working families, children, youth, women, and minorities in the last ten years. In 2009, over one-third of black children (35.7%) and nearly one-third of Hispanic children (33.1%) were living in poverty. Families (with children) headed by single mothers hit 38.5% in 2009. Of the 6.6 million families living in poverty, 3.8 million of them were headed by a single mother. During that same period African American incomes dropped by 4.4% and an additional 3.7 million Americans slipped below the poverty line, as the poverty rate increased from 13.2% to 14.3%, the highest rate since 1994.³

1 See: <www.offthechartsblog.org/deep-poverty-on-the-rise>

2 Elise Gould and Heidi Shierholz, (Economic Policy Institute Economic Indicators Report, September 16, 2010).

3 U.S. Census Data, as reported by the Economic Policy Institute.

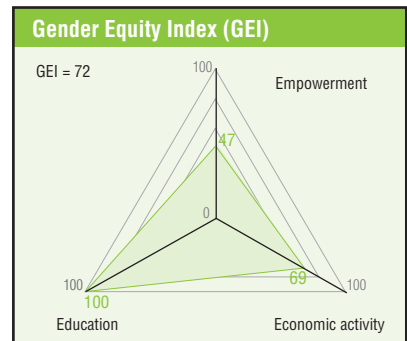


Access to Healthy Food at Home and Abroad in Focus

Access to nutritionally adequate food has emerged as a serious and growing problem in the United States. Agriculture and food policies have created what physicians call an "obesogenic" environment, in which much of the food available to consumers is simultaneously high in fat and calories and low in nutrition. Processed foods, meat, and dairy have become relatively cheaper than more nutritious fruits and vegetables, contributing to rising obesity rates and declining health among children and adults. The United States currently has the highest rate of obesity in the world, at 33%, closely followed by its NAFTA partner Mexico.

The overwhelming majority of farm supports encourage production of grain for processed foods, meat and biofuels, limiting consumers' choices. Prices for farmers have been volatile, and the number of small, but commercially viable farms has dropped by 40%, from half of total farms in 1982 to less than a third in 2007. Expenses have risen to offset higher sales revenues, and government payments have declined because some are triggered by lower prices. With the recession, off-farm income has declined dramatically, leaving family farm households worse off than they were earlier when crop prices were low.

There is a growing movement of food activists in the United States committed to sustainable local production and healthier foods. The 2008 Farm Bill expanded programs to encourage purchases of sustainably grown fruits and vegetables in school lunch programs. First Lady, Michelle Obama's focus on bringing awareness to the need for healthy foods and lifestyles has been a significant contribution.



At the international level, the Obama administration has continued its support programs to bolster food production, with special emphasis on women and smallholder farmers. Funding for the Feed the Future initiative as well as the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (a trust fund administered by the World Bank) has continued to flow even with current budget constraints. The potential gains for small scale farmers and healthy food production in the US and around the world can only be maintained if the Administration's push to double U.S. exports breaks with the trade policies of the past.

The Debt Ceiling Debacle Ignored the Real Issues

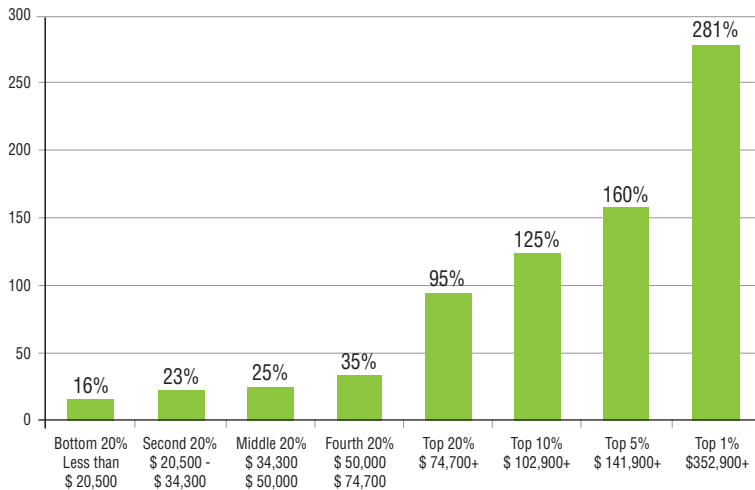
Until now, raising the debt ceiling has been a largely administrative policy matter. This year, congressional Republicans threats to push the country into default kicked off a protracted, partisan debate that kept America's Congressional gridlock on the global stage for months.

It should come as no surprise that with poverty and income inequality at historic levels and a debt debate that largely revolved around preserving the Bush-era tax cuts and dramatically cutting social spending that an unprecedented 84% of Americans disapprove of Congress' handling of the economy.

There is little doubt that without the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 the recession would be even worse. Now, as states and communities reel from the most recent round of federal funding cuts to vital programs, a so-called Congressional "Super Committee" has been tasked with developing legislation that will recommend additional cuts in discretionary funding and direct spending by USD 1.5 trillion through 2021.

FIGURE 1

Increase in after-tax income by income group, 1979-2007 (in 2007 dollars)



Source: Congressional Budget Office, Average After-Tax Household Income, June, 2010 as compiled by www.inequality.org.

Getting Real About Social Protection and the Social Contract

A recent report found that 65.7 million Americans provide unpaid care to a family member; the majority of these care-givers are women (66.6%). Additionally, three-quarters of caregivers are employed in addition to their care-giving responsibilities. The value of these services is estimated at USD 375 billion a year. Despite these numbers, 47% of working caregivers report that they have had to use their savings to cover the high costs of care-giving.

The United States can and must move beyond the current shortsighted debate about so-called entitlement spending to embrace the reality that investing in children, communities, eldercare and healthcare are fundamental features of a modern democracy and strong, resilient economy. A recent International Labor Organization's (ILO) report, noted that ensuring basic social protections can be a powerful tool for ensuring sustainable growth, addressing poverty and mitigating the impact of the economic crisis. The report goes on to frame social

protection as both a human right and a human need. These rights' based approaches to economic development are likely to find resonance in the current environment.

Getting Serious About Sustainability

The primary goal of domestic and international economic and development policy must be to ensure must place human and community. Redesigning the economic model through this lens is an undertaking that has global, national and community dimensions. It requires, for example, rethinking the increased reliance by US-based companies on global supply chains that have profit maximization as their sole objective.

The inherent risk and potential for abuses of human rights and global ecosystems in global production chains has reignited interest in relocalization and other more sustainable business practices. The recent tragedy in Japan and the spike in oil prices of 2007-08 have prompted some reexamination of these trends among the business community. The time has long since passed for questioning whether the United States

and the world can afford the continuation of approaches that have profit maximization as their prime directive.

Interest in solidarity economy and responsible business movements, worker owned companies and cooperatives that bring high quality economically and ecologically sustainable living wage jobs to their communities is increasing. Cities like Cleveland and Detroit, hard hit by past, short-sighted trade policy and the recession are reinventing their economies by focusing on the express goal of building wealth, decent jobs and anchoring capital in the community. Others still, are exploring the benefits of community food security initiatives, community-owned banks and participatory budgeting. Fiscal and monetary policy measures that encourage these trends are needed in order to bring these efforts to scale.

Changing American consumption patterns is key to achieving sustainable development and addressing the devastating impacts of climate change domestically and globally. The United States is home to 5% of the world's population, yet it consumes 25% of the world's energy and is responsible for 22 % of the world's industrial carbon dioxide emissions, a leading cause of global warming. The daily consumption of 19,150,000 barrels of oil per day is more than all of Europe and twice that of China.

The United States has a unique responsibility and opportunity to make aggressive and affirmative efforts to pursue domestic and international policies that are geared toward the well-being of Americans and the rest of the human race.

Citizens Must Take Center Stage

The consensus that the current economic models are deeply flawed and act to deepen and reproduce harmful inequalities is growing. The Occupy Wall Street, domestic human rights and other citizens' movements have given voice to the growing number of Americans demanding a completely different approach to the economy and a new social contract.

The task of building and re-imagining a new economy is urgent and will not be achieved by mere tinkering around the edges of the failed model which created the current crisis. As long as citizens continue to demand and take their rightful place in the democratic and policy processes, America's best years can still be ahead of her. ■

The unfortunate consequences of extraction-based growth



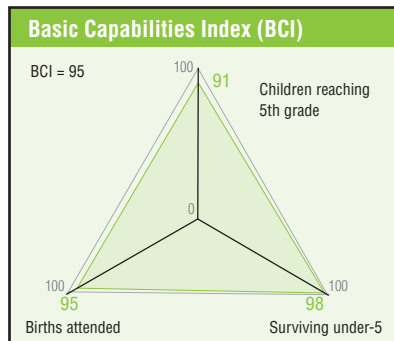
The economic model pursued under the Government of President Chávez bears the stamp of neoliberalism and is in fact a continuation and expansion of resource extraction. It has had serious negative environmental consequences and has proved unable to meet people's needs. There has been some improvement in education but other areas of basic rights like health and housing have regressed. Social development programmes have been cancelled or neglected and the Government, which disdains dialogue with the opposition or with critical civil society organizations, is weakening democracy by implementing far-reaching changes to the 1999 Constitution. The country needs to design a development model that is genuinely sustainable.

Programa Venezolano de Educación-Acción en Derechos Humanos (Provea)
Rafael Uzcategui

Since the early 20th century development models in Venezuela have been based on an extractive economy and the export of energy resources. When Hugo Chávez became president in 1998 he criticized past governments and claimed that his model was a new departure and that, unlike previous ones, it was “supportive” and “endogenous.” He summed up his overall policy as “Oil Socialism ... This is our model ... We have this oil wealth ... We cannot think of Oil Socialism without the oil industry... [and this resource] gives our economic model an unusual form.”¹

Various social and human rights organizations warned that this policy was not sustainable, as the social programmes or “missions” that benefit large sectors of the population depend on inflated profits stemming from high oil prices on the world market. According to the 2011 budget law,² income from exports in the energy sector would account for 27.6% of the total money available for expenditure so long as the oil price remained at or above USD 40 per barrel, which was near the previous year's price. However, experts such as José Guerra, former president of the Central Bank, argued that this estimate did not reflect the real situation since oil prices were oscillating around USD 100, which meant the Government had considerable additional funds to manage at its discretion and were difficult for civil society organizations to keep track of.

International prices for crude oil have now recovered, but there was a recent period of economic crisis during which, according to official figures,³ the Venezuelan economy contracted for 18 consecutive months. This resulted in spending cuts for social policies (except the education sector) and as a result the “missions” stagnated and social conflict worsened. According to reports by two human rights organiza-

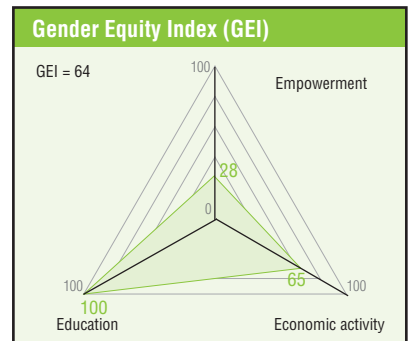


tions in Venezuela, Espacio Público and PROVEA, in 2010 there were at least 3,114 protest meetings and marches in the country, continuing a steady rise in the number of demonstrations.⁴

Development based on oil

The basis of the Government's development model is large oil, gas, mining and infrastructure development projects, but these have serious socio-environmental impacts and are not sustainable in the long term because they are based on extraction-led growth. This exploitation of the country's oil and gas resources has also interfered with policies that would benefit various sectors of society. One clear example is the project to mark out the boundaries of indigenous lands in compliance with article 119 of the Constitution. This demarcation process was due to have been completed in 2002 but the initiative is now at a standstill.

One well-known critic points out that while President Chávez and other members of the governing institutions claim to have renounced capitalism and neoliberalism, the country's development model is continuing and expanding the extractive system that was in place previously, which has serious detrimental effects on the environment.⁵ This situation has been aggravated by the Government's moves to break off dialogue with its critics, both in the opposi-



tion parties and in civil society. Sustainable development is not possible unless the warnings that people are sounding about the social and environmental consequences of oil and gas exploitation are heard and taken into account. Unlike in other oil-producing countries in the region, Venezuela has no ecology organization studying pollution caused by the oil industry in various parts of the county. Other environmental problems including deforestation⁶ and serious pollution in the Valencia Lake are not being addressed.⁷

Social unrest

Some 36% of the demonstrations in 2010 were by people demanding labour rights. Critics of the Government have claimed that it has tried to shift the burden of the effects of the world economic crisis onto the workers' shoulders, and at the same time is stalling on talks about collective bargaining in the public sector and in State enterprises. For the second year in a row the increase in the minimum wage –currently about USD 462– has not been enough to cover the cost of the basic consumer basket or compensate for the national currency's loss of purchasing power. Venezuela has persistently had the highest inflation in the region and according to official sources the rate in 2010 was 30.9%.⁸ To make matters worse, after several consecutive years in

1 Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Comunicación e Información, *Programa Aló Presidente 288*, <alopresidente.gob.ve/informacion/7/248/programa_alopresidente_288.html>.

2 Ministerio del Poder Popular de Planificación y Finanzas, *Ley de Presupuesto para el Ejercicio Fiscal 2011*, <www.ocepre.gov.ve>.

3 See <www.bcv.org.ve/>.

4 PROVEA, *Public Demonstrations Report 2010*, <www.derechos.org.ve/proveaweb/wp-content/uploads/Manifestaciones-P%C3%BAlicas-Informe-2010.pdf>

5 M.P. García-Gaudilla, “Ecosocialismo del siglo XXI y modelo de desarrollo bolivariano: los mitos de la sustentabilidad ambiental y de la democracia participativa en Venezuela,” *Revista venezolana Economía y Ciencias Sociales*, Vol.15, no.1 (2009), 187-223.

6 Informe21.com, *Denuncian que la deforestación en nuestro país es la segunda en América*, (22 April 2010), <informe21.com/actualidad/denuncian-deforestacion-nuestro-pais-segunda-america>.

7 Infocudadano.com, *Situación del Lago de Valencia*, (16 August 2010), <www.infocudadano.com/2010/08/16/situacion-del-lago-de-valencia/>.

8 See: <ipsnoticias.net/inflacion.asp>.

which unemployment decreased, since the end of 2009 the number of people out of work has been on the rise. Between that time and August 2010 unemployment increased from 6.8% to 9.6%.⁹

In response to this worsening situation the Government should review and revitalize the Ché Guevara Mission, initiated in 2004 under the name of "Misión Vuelvan Caracas," to help people who had dropped out of the workforce to reenter the labour market and to bring unemployment down to 5%. However, although this initiative has not reached its targets in the six years it has been in operation, its budget was drastically cut from USD 59 million to USD 7 million in 2011.¹⁰

Regression in health and housing

In 2006, the Barrio Adentro Mission was initiated, raising hopes for health services for large sectors of the population. Some 13,000 doctors were brought in from Cuba and 8,573 health care centres were built across the country. While this helped to improve basic health care provision, there were big problems with these modules and 2,000 of them were closed down. In September 2009 Chávez declared a state of emergency in health.¹¹

In 2011, the Government announced a plan to revitalize the Barrio Adentro Mission and made a budget allocation of USD 195 million. However, this policy initiative is not coordinated by the Ministry of Health as would have been expected given the nature of the task, but by the Ministry of the Office of the President, which is an eloquent testimony to the lack of coordination between institutions in the health field.

The old hospital network, which consists of 299 centres throughout the country, is fraught with structural defects including a lack of medical supplies, insufficient personnel and serious deficiencies in health care infrastructure all of which means that large sectors of the population are being denied their right to health services. In the 1999 Constitution a time frame of not more than one year was stipulated for the introduction of an Organic Health Law to unify the system and put it in order, but today, 11 years later, there has still been no legislation to bring this about.

Another sector the President has called a "problem for the State" is housing. In 2009 the Government built 23,649 housing units, for a total 324,588 units over its 11 years in office. This falls far short of the goal to build 150,000 per year to remedy the country's housing shortage, estimated at around 3,000,000 units, in 10 years.¹² There are a variety of reasons for the delay, including the fact that the Ministry was only set up in 2005, its institutions

are fragile, its top directors are rotated frequently, it neglects to supervise or monitor the projects or the funds invested in them adequately, and it lacks a housing construction and land urbanization plan with clear targets for the short, middle and long term.

In spite of this dismal performance, and in spite of cutting back on policies that have already shown themselves to be inadequate, President Chávez has announced plans to build two million housing units in the next six years.¹³

Progress in education

At present the Government is still achieving positive results in education, moving up from 64th to 59th in the UNESCO ranking,¹⁴ with an Educational Development Index (EDI) rating of 0.956, which is higher than its 1999 rating of 0.910.¹⁵

However, the quality of the education provided must be improved. The main problem is that Venezuela does not have a national system to evaluate progress in learning so there are no parameters against which to implement improvements. In addition, in 2010 some 44% of the teachers were temporary staff or substitutes.¹⁶ The situation is worse in less developed areas such as Amazonas state, where half the teachers lack teaching qualifications.

Making protest illegal

Social conflict is becoming increasingly serious as the Chávez Government has failed to address people's complaints and demands, and instead has responded by making demonstrations illegal. It has closed institutional channels for negotiation, conducted campaigns to discredit demonstrators and social leaders, violently repressed and used the law against people who mobilize, and promoted legal action against them with no evidence. In 2010, some 135 street demonstrations were met with violence by the military and police security forces and 438 people were arrested and 386 injured.¹⁷

Perhaps the most worrying aspect of this escalating conflict is the fact that legal action has been taken against demonstrators. PROVEA has calculated that more than 2,400 people have been hauled before the courts, including 125 union activists and 1200 peasants, both women and men. This was made possible by the promulgation of a series of regulations that make protest in the country illegal:

13 See: <www.correodelorinoco.gov.ve/nacionales/inicia-alo-presidente-numero-370-estado-vargas/>.

14 Ministerio del Poder Popular para Relaciones Exteriores, *Venezuela es la nación que más ha disminuido la desigualdad social y económica en América Latina y el Caribe*, (15 October 2010), <venezuela-us.org/es/2010/10/15/venezuela-es-la-nacion-que-mas-ha-disminuido-la-desigualdad-social-y-economica-en-america-latina-y-el-caribe/>.

15 Abrebrecha.com, UNESCO: *Venezuela a punto de lograr metas educativas*, (13 April 2010), <www.abrebrecha.com/50753_Unesco-Venezuela-a-punto-de-lograr-metas-educativas.html>.

16 PROVEA, *Informe Anual 2010 Derechos Humanos en Venezuela*, <www.derechos.org/ve/proveaweb/?page_id=9235>.

17 PROVEA and Espacio Público, *Informe de Protestas en Venezuela año 2010*, <www.derechos.org/ve/proveaweb/?p=11272>.

article 357 of the reform to the Penal Code, articles 47 and 56 of the Organic Law of the Security of the Nation, articles 139 and 141 of the Law for the Defence of People's Access to Goods and Services, and articles 24 and 25 of the Special Law to defend the people against monopolies, boycotts or any other conduct that may affect the consumption of food or products that are subject to price controls.

These laws make it illegal to engage in street protests, which is one of the ways people's movements have traditionally demanded their rights, and set up various "security zones" where it is forbidden to disturb public order. The best known case of using the law against social leaders is that of trade unionist Rubén González, who was jailed from September 2009 to March 2011 for supporting a shutdown in the State enterprise Ferrominera in the state of Bolívar over a series of labour demands. On 28 February 2011 González was sentenced to seven and a half years in prison for conspiracy, incitement to commit illegal acts, violation of a security zone and interfering with the right to work. Five days later, after widespread demonstrations, the Supreme Court of Justice overturned the sentence and ordered a retrial in the city of Caracas, and González was allowed out of custody during the trial.¹⁸

Weakening democracy

In December 2010 a law was passed giving the President extraordinary powers for a period of 18 months. A further set of 24 laws was promulgated that confirmed moves to push ahead with a project called "Socialism of the 21st Century." Two human rights coalitions, Foro por la Vida and Sinergia, claim these "seriously affect the rule of law and the full enjoyment of human rights" in Venezuela.¹⁹ The package is in effect an initiative to impose a Constitution different from that passed by popular vote in 1999. The new laws deny the right to association by making it illegal to receive funds from international organizations.

On 22 December 2010 a Law of Political Sovereignty and Self-Determination²⁰ was hurriedly passed, which explicitly prohibits organizations "with political ends" from receiving funds from abroad. Two of the three activities the law classes as initiatives of a political nature can be interpreted to cover nearly all popular and social initiatives in the country, since they include promoting people's participation in public spaces and exercising control over political decisions. A second piece of legislation, the Law of International Cooperation, gives the President the power to take resources sent to civil society organizations into Government hands. ■

18 See: <www.derechos.org/ve/?s=rub%C3%A9n+gonzalez&x=0&y=0>.

19 Foro por la Vida and Sinergia, *Ley habilitante coloca en serio riesgo los derechos humanos*, (2010), <www.derechos.org/ve/proveaweb/?p=9494>.

20 See: <www.minamb.gob.ve/files/leyes-2011/No6013ledespan.pdf>.

9 See: <economia.noticias24.com/noticia/34229/ine-tasa-de-desempleo-en-venezuela-repunto-al-96-durante-agosto>.

10 Calculations based on the official exchange rate of 4.3 bolivars to the dollar.

11 La CI@se.info, *Chávez admite cierre de módulos de Barrio Adentro y declara en emergencia la salud*, (20 September 2009), <laclase.info/nacionales/chavez-admite-cierre-de-modulos-de-barrio-adentro-y-declara-en-emergencia-la-salud>.

12 Latest available figures from the Ministry of Housing and Habitat, (2007).

Civil society should be consulted



Through strong economic growth Vietnam has reached lower middle-income country status, but the Government has to make more efforts to meet people's long-term needs. Poverty and environmental challenges such as worsening pollution, rising sea levels and increasing soil erosion need to be addressed, together with risk factors for corruption such as unequal access to information and officials' discretionary powers over land compensation. Civil society and independent experts must be involved in developing strategies to tackle the challenges of sustainable development.

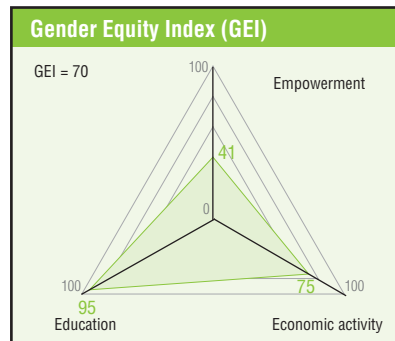
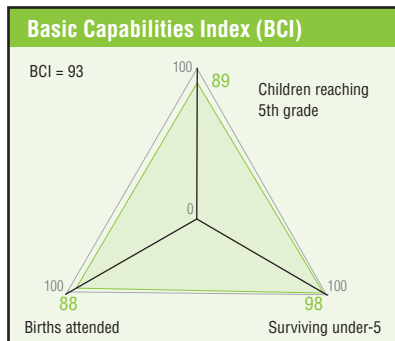
VUFO-NGO Resource Centre

Vietnam has achieved an impressive rate of economic growth in the past 15 years. Real gross domestic product (GDP) grew on average by 7.3% a year from 1995 to 2005.¹ In 2009 in the aftermath of the global financial crisis Vietnam still registered a real GDP growth of 5.3% and has been one of the fastest-growing economies in East Asia and the Pacific.² Whether this development is sustainable, and how it is affecting the environment and the livelihoods of the current and future generations, are key questions for the nation.

Support for pro-poor economic growth has been widespread. Growth has brought relative prosperity to many after the years of war and post-war privation. However while mainstream development has reduced poverty it is also degrading the environment on which many poor people depend.³

In 2010 Vietnam reached lower middle-income country status. The 2009 gross national income (GNI) was USD 1,010, which put the country at the bottom end of the World Bank's middle-income range. While this is a notable achievement, there are concerns that Vietnam will not implement the further reforms needed for sustainable development.

There are concerns that this growth is creating new challenges, including increasing social inequality, inadequate services, more pollution and industrialization leading to the loss of agricultural land.⁴ In addition, current policies do not support the modernization of the rural economy. Rural infrastructure and other services lag behind those provided to the cities.⁵



Environmental impacts and climate change

The country's rapid economic growth is placing tremendous strains on the natural environment, but while legislation protecting the environment is strong, its implementation is often weak. As the population, economy and process of urbanization all grow, the main threats to the environment include overexploitation of forests, loss of arable land, water and air pollution, soil erosion due to unsustainable land practices, loss of biodiversity through – among other factors – poaching in national parks and environmental damage due to mining.⁶

There has been strong opposition to bauxite mining in Central Highlands due to concerns about environmental damage. There is concern about slurry reservoirs of alkaline sludge produced by two mines being constructed in the Lam Dong and Dak Nong provinces in this region, and that flooding or earthquakes could provoke toxic spills. These concerns were heightened when a reservoir at an iron ore mine in Cao Bang Province last year spilled untreated waste into 50 farms. Scientists and intellectuals signed a petition asking the Government to halt the projects to conduct further research.⁷

Vietnam's average temperature rose by about 0.5 - 0.7°C between 1958 and 2007 while the sea level rose by 20 cm.⁸ Its long coastline makes the

country very vulnerable to the impact of climate change and rising sea levels, which are likely to affect the three pillars of sustainable development: economics, society and environment. Progress made in reducing the incidence of poverty – from 58% of the population in 1993 to 12.3% in 2009⁹ – might not be sustained.

Vietnam is largely an agricultural country: 75% of its population live in rural areas, most of them making their living through small-scale farming, with little technical input, leaving them heavily dependent on the weather.¹⁰ Any rise in temperature will have a huge impact on agricultural production. Poor rural communities have weak infrastructure and finances, making it harder for them to adapt to climate change. Global warming may also lead to more frequent and intense natural disasters such as typhoons, floods, droughts and saltwater intrusion.

The Government has developed extensive policies and programmes on climate change, but some policies do not have the legal backing that would facilitate implementation. There are no bodies to coordinate ministries, local governments and other public and private entities, nor are there effective ways of ensuring that all communities can participate in these programmes.¹¹

In terms of the country's own impact on global warming Vietnam produces relatively low carbon

1 World Bank, *Vietnam Country Overview*, (June 2008), <www.worldbank.org/vn>.

2 D. Mishra, et al., *Taking Stock: An Update on Vietnam's Recent Economic Developments*, prepared by the World Bank for the Annual Consultative Group Meeting for Vietnam, (Hanoi: 8 December 2010), <www.worldbank.org/vn>.

3 S. Bass, et al., *Integrating Environment and Development in Viet Nam: Achievements, Challenges and Next Steps*, (London: IIED, and Hanoi: UNDP, March 2009), <pubs.iied.org/pdfs/17505IIED.pdf>.

4 VUFO-NGO Resource Centre, *International Non-Governmental Organizations' Statement for the Consultative Group Meeting*, (paper prepared for the Annual Consultative Group Meeting for Vietnam, Hanoi, 7-8 December, 2010), <www.ngocentre.org.vn>.

5 C. Kirkpatrick, N. J. Freeman and K. N. B. Ninh, *Managing Risk and Attaining Equitable Growth*, (Hanoi: UNDP, 2010).

6 VUFO-NGO Resource Centre, op. cit.

7 Thanh Nien, *Bauxite Mining Projects Cost-effective: Official*, (7 November 2010); Thanh Nien, *Lawmakers Inspect Bauxite Sites, Call for Further Measures*, (12 November 2010), <www.thanhniennews.com>.

8 Vietnam Aujour'hui, *Vietnam Makes Active Contribution to Fight Climate Change*, (5 September 2009), <blog.vietnam-ajourdhui.info/post/2009/09/05/Vietnam-makes-active-contribution-to-fight-climate-change>.

9 AusAID, *Australia's Strategic Approach to Aid in Vietnam*, (December 2010), <www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/strat-approach-vietnam-2010-15.pdf>.

10 World Bank, *Rural Development and Agriculture in Vietnam*, (February 2007), <go.worldbank.org/O4CQBWJP00>.

11 ActionAid Vietnam, *Losses and Damages: Research on Climate Impacts on Poor Communities in Vietnam and Their Responses*, (Hanoi: 29 November 2010).

emissions. It is important that emissions are kept low as the country develops, rather than to try reducing them later. However, rapid economic development is increasing demand for energy and Vietnam is still building polluting coal-fired power stations.

Hydropower plants are a low-carbon energy source, and already account for 20% of energy consumption, but also demonstrate some of the difficulties faced in achieving sustainable development. In central Vietnam vast forests are being sacrificed to build these plants, and experts have warned that there will be serious environmental and social consequences.¹² Local media have repeatedly reported how residents displaced by power plant construction are struggling to live in sloppily constructed resettlement areas where they no longer have land for farming.¹³ The Government has issued strict procedures for dams including environmental impact assessments, but some provincial administrations responsible for approving small and medium sized plants have breached these regulations.¹⁴

Transparency and corruption

The lack of government transparency is a key obstacle to sustainable development. To give one important example, the nature of land rights including the extent to which they are perceived as predictable and secure, plays a key role in shaping economic options and livelihood strategies across society. Vietnam has progressed towards a sound legal framework for integrity and anti-corruption, but key risk factors in the system remain. Information on the issuing of land-use rights and asset ownership certificates is incomplete and hard to understand, the application process is complicated and the appeals process against perceived irregularities is often improper, slow and only partially transparent. In the process for land acquisition and allocation, corruption risks include unequal access to information and the potential for abuse of officials' discretionary powers over land compensation and the recording of land inventories.¹⁵

Little space for civil society

Civil society's influence on government policy is limited. For the thousands of formal and informal organizations, the Government generally allows and even encourages daily activities, while retaining a detailed regulatory structure and making it clear

that it has control over the pace and direction of growth in activity.¹⁶ International and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may be invited to make input into the development of policy. However, there is little advocacy for change in policies and legislation already in place, or opportunity to influence policies without first being invited by the Government.

Another restriction on local NGOs occurs through the detailed regulation of the use of funding from foreign donors, as set out in Decree 93/2009. Regulations govern how such money can be used, how its use is reported, and how it is monitored and regulated by government agencies. These guidelines have the effect of limiting funding from foreign donors to local NGOs because many will not have the capacity to comply with the regulations. Vietnamese companies have not yet assumed a corporate social responsibility role, and therefore are not an alternative source of funding for civil society. Therefore local NGOs lack funding sources and opportunities to be able to make much of a contribution to policies that affect sustainable development.

The voice of experts is also restricted. The Government's Decision 97/2009 limits the areas in which science- technology-, research-, and service-oriented organizations can operate by specifying what are considered legitimate areas of activity. Economic, public, governance and environmental policies are excluded.

All these restrictions have the effect of stifling, narrowing and hindering the input of civil society into sustainable development policies. In an increasingly complex economy the policy formulation process is too closed to be able to deal with challenges and solutions for equitable and sustainable development. The public debate that would help find those solutions is severely constrained, although people do raise their voices, and there is sometimes vocal opposition to projects that threaten the environment and people's livelihoods. The media is playing a role in throwing light on the Government's action - and inaction - and reporting on community opposition to environmental threats.

Bilateral donors, United Nations agencies and international NGOs have a responsibility to support Vietnam to move towards a more open relationship between the Government and civil society. However they have focused more on building government ca-

capacity and less on building the capacity of local NGOs and civil society and assistance is still needed for the country to implement institutional reform and policy renewal, and to pursue greater public transparency and accountability. Due to Vietnam's ascension to middle-income status some NGOs and donors are leaving despite these challenges.¹⁷

Conclusion

Many voices and different approaches are needed to find solutions for equitable sustainable development in Vietnam's increasingly complex economy and society. A change in government attitude is needed in order to allow civil society and independent experts the space and capacity to contribute. The capacity of civil society needs to be strengthened, while technical and research institutions need more freedom to publicly comment on issues of public concern. Communities know about problems in their locality but often do not know how to report them: their capacity to monitor pollution or other obstacles to sustainable development needs to be improved. Governance standards and capacity building for local authorities also need to be enhanced.

Practical procedures are needed to integrate climate change adaptation into provincial and district development plans. Local authorities and civil society organizations in the community need to be involved in developing, implementing and monitoring mitigation and adaptation plans. Technical support at the local level for analyzing local vulnerability to climate change and how to plan adaptation and mitigation should be provided to provincial departments. More training for local people about climate change should be provided so that they can make the necessary changes in their communities. There should be easier access to bank loans, especially for those near the poverty line. This could make people's economic situation more sustainable, and less vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

The country needs mechanisms and legal procedures to encourage transparency. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment should be strengthened to enable it to better enforce existing environmental laws. Some NGOs are already working with local organizations, students and young people to build their capacity to monitor local administrative systems and on attracting the attention of the media to poverty and environmental issues.¹⁸ ■

12 Thanh Nien, *Dammed and Damned*, (3 November 2009), <www.thanhniennews.com/2009/Pages/2009113124411053447.aspx>.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 World Bank, *Recognizing and Reducing Corruption Risks in Land Management in Vietnam*, (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House – Su That, 2011).

16 M. Sidel, "Maintaining Firm Control: Recent Developments in Nonprofit Law and Regulation in Vietnam," in *The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law*, Volume 12(3), (May 2010), <www.icnl.org/knowledge/ijnl/vol12iss3/art_1.htm>.

17 VUFO-NGO Resource Centre, op. cit.

18 ActionAid Vietnam, op. cit.

On the brink of becoming a failed State



Little progress can be made towards sustainable development because the country is teetering on the edge of civil war and faced with widespread famine and social catastrophe. Its problems are endemic: the population is being impoverished, political corruption is rife, agriculture and food production is feeble, the economy is over-dependent on oil, water resources are scarce, and all this has been aggravated by a general state of insecurity brought on by anti-Government demonstrations and the threat of total collapse. If Yemen cannot find a balance between its citizens' demands and its structural needs, sooner or later it is going to become a failed State.

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Arafat Alroufaid

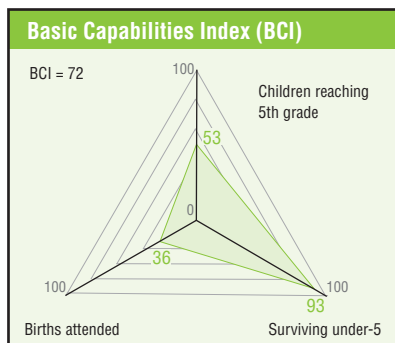
The agitated months of demonstrations by the Yemeni Youth Popular Revolution against President Ali Abdullah Saleh have shaken the country to its foundations and have made sustainable development less likely than ever. In 2011 the United Nations Security Council sounded the alarm when it expressed "deep concern" about the deteriorating situation of the country and said it could be heading for a massive economic and humanitarian disaster. In October 2011 UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) warned that Yemen could go the way of Somalia and become so irreparably fragmented that it would become a failed State.¹

The economy is paralysed, poverty is increasing, unemployment has doubled, public services are failing, the prices of basic products have trebled since the start of the year and about 60% of the country's 24 million people are living below the poverty line with an income of less than a dollar a day. Inflation is running at over 35%. If this goes on the economy will collapse and famine will come, especially in rural areas.

The aim of the popular youth protest movement is to bring down President Saleh, who has been in power for more than 30 years. His administration has been exploiting the country's oil deposits for export but a large part of the population has been sliding into extreme poverty and Yemen is now the poorest country in the Arab world. It is evident this decline has been caused by bad administration and generalised corruption. Yemen is placed 146th (out of a total of 178) on the Transparency International 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.²

More people, more poverty

One of the biggest obstacles to sustainable development is demographic. Yemen has a relatively high birth rate, population growth is 3.2% per year, and if this continues the economic and social problems

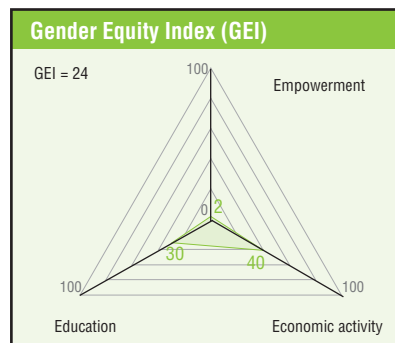


will get worse as the country's rate of development simply cannot keep pace. And the outlook is alarming because the population is expected to increase to 43 million by 2025. As the economic crisis has worsened, poverty has increased, there are more beggars in the streets and hundreds of thousands of families are unable to obtain even the most basic food they need.

The Government, in cooperation with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)³, has drawn up a plan for a National Food Security Strategy, and this has shown that 32% of the people do not have food protection. This means that almost a third of Yemenis, some 7.5 million people, cannot get enough food and are going hungry. Some 57% of the children are suffering from malnutrition.

Census data show that the overall poverty rate jumped from 33.8% in 2009 to 42.8% in 2010. The situation is particularly serious in rural areas where, according to official figures, some 47.6% of the people were living in poverty in 2010, up from 38.5% in 2009. This is worse than in urban areas, where the increase over that year was from 19.7% to 29.9%.

Yemen is classed as a low growth country. It was ranked 133rd out of the 169 countries in the United Nations Development Programme 2010 Human Development Report.⁴ Some 15.7% of the people are living on less than a dollar a day and 45.2% on less than two dollars a day.



The country produces less than 20% of the food it consumes and it imports around 75%, including 2.1 million tons of grain per year. A lot of agricultural land and huge amounts of water are devoted to the cultivation of the drug khat (*catha edulis*), a stimulant that is very popular in East Africa and the south of the Arabian Peninsula.

In 2010, 60% of State revenues came from oil. Production was around 300,000 barrels per day but this has decreased in 2011 because of the Yemeni Youth Popular Revolution. Similarly, the economic growth rate fell from 4.5% in 2010 to 3% in the first half of 2011 and then to 1.5% after June. Activity in the building and trade sectors has fallen by 80 to 90% and tourism has practically come to a stop. At the start of the year private sector profits of 17 thousand million dollars were forecast, but the actual result is far less.

Internal and external tourism have fallen by 95%, transport services, many development and investment projects, business and sales in various sectors of the economy have decreased significantly, while construction work, the property market and imports are completely paralysed.

Water is running out

Only 3% of the land is fertile enough for agriculture and this sector is fraught with difficulties like the serious depletion of water resources and the fact that there is little credit and little investment in infrastructure for production and commercialization. Only 1.25% of total investment goes to agriculture. The State subsidises the sector, and these funds go mainly to pay for livestock feed, fertilizers and diesel fuel for tractors and irrigation pumps. A Government report shows that agriculture's low growth rate, only

1 UN News Centre, *UNICEF and WFP warn of danger of humanitarian disaster in Yemen*, (24 October 2011), <www.un.org/spanish/News/fullstorynews.asp?newsID=22074&criteria1=hambre>.

2 Transparency International, *2010 Corruption Perceptions Index*. <www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2010/results>.

3 See: <www.ifpri.org/publication/health-nutrition-and-risk-management>.

4 See: <hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2010_ES_Table1_reprint.pdf>.

3%, is due not only to its small size but also to the exhaustion of water resources and delays in implementing a plan to reduce the amount of land devoted to khat. At the moment some 25% of agricultural land is sown with this crop and it consumes 30% of water in this sector, and the target is to reduce its share to 10% of the land and water.

The National Water Strategy administration has calculated that to meet the country's needs the water sector will require investment of around 4,430 million dollars over the next ten years. The Government has tried to raise these funds from donors like the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), but this body has made a series of conditions including improving administrative capability to process the aid, implementing good practices, and that water reserves must be managed in a rational way.

According to the Fourth Economic and Social Development Plan for the Reduction of Poverty 2011-2015, cited in the United Nations (September 2011)⁵ draft for a programme for Yemen (2012-2015), the water sector is in serious difficulties caused by lack of finance, and if it is to reach its targets it will need an enormous injection of funds. The main problems are that fresh water is in short supply, pollution levels are rising, there are floods, the dry season is getting longer, drought is affecting more areas, there is increasing competition for water from all sectors of society, access to potable water and sewage services is limited, and the institutions that organize and administer this resource are feeble and fragmented. This bleak scenario is further aggravated by a lack of coordination and

THE MINUSCULE ROLE OF WOMEN

Several studies show that women make up more than half the population of the country but less than 20% of the workforce. Half the women who work are in agriculture, and in Yemen's public administration and services sectors less than 0.9% of the employees are female.

Women are also seriously under-represented in the other sectors of the economy and there are several reasons for this including social custom - the idea of women working is not completely accepted - and the fact that a high proportion of women, some 79.2%, are illiterate, as against a rate of 36% among men.

A mere 17.3% of primary school teachers are women and 82.7% are men, and in secondary education the figures are only slightly better at 22.8% and 77.2% respectively. In the field of education administration only 11.5% of employees are female. In the legal sector there are very few women indeed, only 0.06% of the total, and in all the branches of the communications industry put together only a paltry 16.7% of the workers are women.

cooperation among the various parties involved in managing the water sector, whose responsibilities are unclear and often overlap.⁶

The above-mentioned report also shows that at the end of 2010 only around 60% of city dwellers had access to potable water and only 30% had sewage facilities. The amount of water produced in 2010 for the main and secondary cities was estimated at 148 million cubic metres, which was an increase of 21 million cubic metres over the 2005 total, but an estimated 104 million cubic metres were consumed, which was an increase of 20 million cubic metres. This difference between production and consumption means that up to 30% of what was produced was lost.⁷

At the end of 2010, some 50% of the rural population had potable water and only 25% had sewage services.

The country's renewable water resources have been estimated at 2,500 million cubic metres per year, of which 1,500 million are underground and 1,000 million are surface water. But an estimated 3,400 million cubic metres a year are being consumed, which means there is a shortfall of around 900 million cubic metres. It is believed that the excessive pumping out of underground reserves is contributing to the country's water scarcity. Levels in the various aquifers differ but some of them are being over-exploited by an estimated 250 to 400%. There are also around 45,000 privately owned wells in Yemen and some 200 drilling platforms. ■

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

5 See: <www.undp.org/execution/pdf/DPDCPYEM2s.pdf>.

Deforestation and sustainable development



The country's economy has been growing since 2000, but poverty continues to be a pressing issue while life expectancy remains very low. Although the Government has shown some concern regarding environmental challenges, the plans put in place lack coordination and have failed to create public awareness about soil erosion, loss of biomass, climate change and deforestation. The country has lost 6.3% of its forests in the last 20 years. High poverty levels and lack of alternative sources of livelihoods exacerbate environmental degradation resulting from the dependence of poor people on natural resources. It is time for the Government to establish more adequate policies and strengthen coordination in the environment sector.

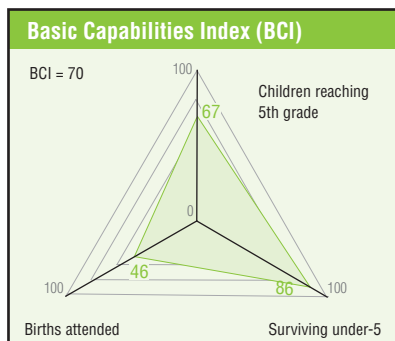
Women for Change

Lumba Siyanga
Lucy Muyoyeta

From 2000 onwards Zambia experienced strong economic growth at an average rate of 5% per annum.¹ Poverty levels decreased from 68% in 2004 to 64% in 2006, but 53% of the population remained in extreme poverty, which is most common in female-headed households. The rural population is predominantly poor, with an overall poverty rate of 78%.² Levels of extreme poverty are also high in rural areas (where two thirds of the extremely poor live) and in households with the least formal education. In fact, households headed by those with no formal education have a poverty incidence of 81%, and of these 70% are extremely poor.³

Providing access to education is still a challenge for the country, particularly at higher and tertiary levels. In 2004, only 11% of the population managed to complete their senior secondary education. This problem is more acute for women and girls; in 2006 only 8.6% of females had finished senior secondary level.⁴ Moreover, although tertiary education is crucial for long-term economic development as well as strengthening democracy and achieving social cohesion, only 2% of the population had completed a Bachelor's degree or above.⁵

The attainment of good health among the population, an essential factor for social and economic prosperity, faces a number of challenges despite the Government's introduction of various measures and programmes to improve the quality of life. There is a high prevalence of infectious



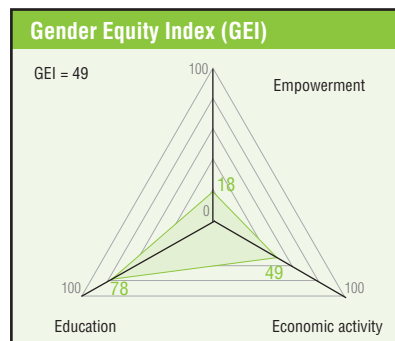
diseases, including an HIV rate of 13.5% among adults, and life expectancy at birth is 52.36 years.⁶

Sustainable development and environmental issues

The Government's goal since 2006 has been to ensure environmental sustainability by reversing environmental damage, maintaining essential biological processes and ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources. However a number of factors continue to constrain the achievement of this goal, including:

- Coordination problems.
- Lack of comprehensive policies on environmental issues.
- Limited public awareness about environmental issues.
- An inadequate legal framework and lack of implementation of the Forest Act of 1999.
- Inadequate budget allocations and investment.
- Poor maintenance of biological diversity and limited local participation.
- Inadequate mainstreaming of environmental and climate change issues into other sector policies and programmes.
- Slow implementation of the National Policy on Environment to reduce conflicts related to land use (including those between humans and animals).

The issue of climate change also needs to be addressed. The main local indicator of climate change is the



modification of temperature and rainfall patterns. The consistent warming trend shown by mean annual temperatures for 1961–2000, for example, has had several negative effects, including limited crop yields and increased risk of malaria transmission at higher altitudes. The latter is especially important in Zambia, where malaria accounts for 47% of all deaths annually.⁷

The impact of higher temperatures on rainfall is not easy to assess, especially since the country is affected by the periodic El Niño phenomenon, the complexity of which is beyond the scope of current climate models. Nevertheless, the Government's National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) reported that drought and floods had increased in frequency, intensity and magnitude over the previous two decades.⁸

In terms of biodiversity, Zambia has 1,234 known species of amphibians, birds, mammals and reptiles according to figures from the World Conservation Monitoring Centre. Of these, 1.5% are endemic and 1.9% are threatened. The country is also home to at least 4,747 species of vascular plants, of which 4.4% are endemic.⁹

7 IRIN, "Zambia: Decreasing Cases Cause for Optimism", in *In Depth: Killer Number One – The Fight Against Malaria*, (January 2006), <www.irinnews.org/InDepthMain.aspx?InDepthId=10&ReportId=58010&Country=Yes>.

8 Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, *Formulation of the National Adaptation Programme of Action on Climate Change*, Government of Zambia, UNDP Zambia and Global Environment Facility, (September 2007), <www.preventionweb.net/english/policies/v.php?id=8581&cid=192>.

9 Mongabay.com, *Zambia Forest Information and Data*, (2010), <rainforests.mongabay.com/deforestation/2000/Zambia.htm>.

1 Imani Development International Ltd, *2007 Update Survey of Non Tariff Barriers to Trade: Zambia*, (Regional Trade Facilitation Programme, July 2007), 5.

2 allAfrica.com, *Zambia: Poverty Levels Go Down*, (20 November 2009), <allafrica.com/stories/200911200074.html>.

3 Ibid.

4 R. Siaciwena and F. Lubinda, *The Role of Open and Distance Learning in the Implementation of the Right to Education in Zambia*, (The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, February 2008), <www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/481/995>.

5 Ibid.

6 CIA, *The World Factbook: Zambia*, (May 2011), <www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/za.html>.

The national biomass (above and below ground) is estimated at 5.6 billion tonnes, with an additional 434 million tonnes of dead wood biomass, for a total biomass estimate of 6 billion tonnes. Of this, approximately 2.8 billion tonnes of carbon is stored in forests. The forests therefore hold a considerable amount (90%) of the country's total above-ground biomass.

Deforestation and its impacts

Over the last 40 years the forests have been depleted due to population increase, economic imperatives, charcoal production, demand for new land for agriculture and uncontrolled fires. The rate of deforestation that for decades was said to be about 300,000 hectares per annum was reported in 2008 to be 800,000 hectares per annum.¹⁰ Between 1990 and 2010, Zambia lost an estimated 6.3% of its forest cover or around 3,332,000 hectares.¹¹

Commercial exploitation of indigenous woods started during the third decade of the 20th century. Increasing activities in mining and construction also contribute significantly to deforestation. The practice of slash-and-burn agriculture to feed a growing population is widespread. Logging is also increasing. The hardwood forests of the western grasslands, which had been reasonably well conserved, have in recent years come under pressure.¹²

Households and industries are major consumers of forest resources. The main commercial product from indigenous forests is charcoal for cooking – 27% of households in Zambia use it as their main source of cooking energy while 56% use firewood. Electricity is used by 16% of households for cooking and by 19.3% of households as their main source of lighting. The charcoal industry provides employment for about 50,000 people in rural and urban areas.¹³

Forests provide an important source of livelihood for rural communities. In particular, poorer households show a higher dependency (44%) on wood fuel than those who earn more. The demand for wood fuel is increasing exponentially while there are severe local shortages. Poorer households also have a greater dependence on wild plants for medicinal purposes and food. Other uses of forest products include animal grazing and provision of construction materials such as poles and thatching grass. Overall most forests fall under traditional customary management and have no formal management arrangements: 41% fall under traditional management; 36%

are recorded as not having a known management plan; and only 23% have formal management arrangements (national parks and forest reserves).

Although both men and women play critical roles in managing natural resources in Zambia, women's relationship with the environment is critical to their daily lives as they are responsible for the provision of domestic water and fuel as well as for cooking. Women play major roles in forest resource management as gatherers and users of various forest products including grass for thatching. The high poverty levels and lack of alternative livelihoods sources, especially in rural areas, exacerbate environmental degradation resulting from poor people's dependence on natural resources for survival.

Forest destruction is leading to soil erosion, loss of bio-diversity and biomass, dwindling water supplies, reduced agricultural productivity and environmental degradation. There are also widespread negative impacts on food security, energy supply and social welfare. Customary lands are increasingly degraded and deforested because they are under the most pressure for alternative land uses. The use of charcoal and wood fuel is not only harmful for the environment but also bad for people's health.¹⁴

The country cannot afford to continue losing forests at the current rate. Forests are important for carbon restoration, which helps to mitigate climate change.

Key policies and programmes

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources was created in 1991 as the primary institution for environmental management. Successive efforts to deal with the challenges in the sector have included adoption of the National Conservation Strategy, the National Policy on Environment (2007), the National Environmental Action Plan, the Zambia National Biodiversity and Action Plan, the Forestry Policy of 1998, the Zambia Forestry Action Plan and the Forest Act of 1999.

To deal with ozone layer depletion, the Government enacted Statutory Instrument No. 27 of 2001, and the country signed and ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and subsequently prepared a national plan of action in 2002.

Zambia also implemented its Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP) from 2006 to 2010, the key policy objectives of which included the promotion

of sustainable forest management by encouraging private sector and civil society participation in forest resource management. A number of activities were introduced to deal with forestry matters during this period, but in the final analysis it was difficult to monitor progress because of a lack of data and information. The deforestation rate, the only indicator available, showed that FNDP objectives in that area were not achieved in full. In fact, it is clear that the pace of forest depletion has accelerated.

Furthermore, there are inadequate macroeconomic policy incentives or disincentives to promote sustainable management of environmental resources and discourage unsustainable consumption patterns.

Conclusions and recommendations

Development cannot be sustained in a deteriorating environment, and the environment cannot be protected when economic growth does not take into account the cost of environmental destruction. The high poverty levels, limited access to basic rights such as education and health, and continued degradation of the forests mean that sustainable development is under threat in Zambia despite high economic growth.

The Zambia Social Watch Coalition therefore recommends the following:

- To ensure sustainable forest management, and mitigation of or adaptation to climate change, Zambia must recognize the importance of land tenure and ownership, especially with respect to customary lands, which account for nearly two thirds of forest land.
- Government must accelerate the pace of adopting the revised draft forest policy and the subsequent revision of the Forest Act of 1999.
- In revising existing policies, laws or programmes or developing new ones, gender mainstreaming must be strengthened to ensure both women and men are not adversely affected and they both benefit equally.
- Coordination in the environment sector should be strengthened and environmental issues mainstreamed in all sectors.
- Government and other key stakeholders in the field must embark on massive public education campaigns on the environment. ■

10 European Commission, *Governance Profile – Zambia*, (2008), <www.programming.eu/wcm/dmdocuments/gover_08_zambi_fi_en.pdf>.

11 Mongabay.com, op. cit.

12 Ibid.

13 World Bank, *Delivering Modern Energy Services for Urban Africa – Status, Trends and Opportunities for Commercially Sustainable Interventions*, (2003), <info.worldbank.org/etools/bspan/presentationView.asp?EID=239&PID=501>.

14 Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR), *The Path Away from Poverty: An Easy Look at Zambia's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2002–2004*, <www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000280/index.php>.