

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and Country Strategy Papers and their relationship to the combat against desertification

The role of parliaments

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This paper was prepared for the Fifth Parliamentary Round Table taking place as a parallel event to the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), scheduled from 25 August to 5 September 2003. The paper is a literature survey and analyses Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and Country Strategy Papers; no field studies were carried out. The Round Table is jointly organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (www.ipu.org) and the UNCCD secretariat (www.unccd.int) with the assistance of the Government of Cuba, and will take place in Havana, Cuba, on 3 and 4 September 2003.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	Africa Caribbean Pacific
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CRIC	Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
CSS	Country Support Strategy
CST	Committee on Science and Technology
DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
DANIDA	Danish Agency for Development Assistance
EC	European Commission (also: European Community)
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HDI	Human Development Index
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
IDA	International Development Association
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEA	multilateral environmental agreement
MP	Member of Parliament
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	non-governmental organization
PNoUNCCD	Parliamentary Network on the UNCCD
PRS	poverty reduction strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RSP	Regional Strategy Paper
SAP	structural adjustment programme
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCOD	United Nations Conference on Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

I. DEFINITIONS AND AIMS

Desertification

Desertification means² degradation of land and vegetation, soil erosion and the loss of topsoil and fertile land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, caused primarily by human activities and climatic variations.³ Drought can trigger or aggravate desertification. The term “desertification” (somewhat misleadingly) does not apply to hyper-arid zones (deserts).

The United Nations Conference on Desertification (UNCOD) held at Nairobi in September 1977, addressed desertification as a worldwide problem for the first time and adopted a Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. In 1992, the United Nations General Assembly, as requested by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), adopted Resolution 47/188 calling for the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the elaboration of a convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa.

On 17 June 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was adopted in Paris.⁴ June 17 became the world's combat desertification day. The UNCCD entered into force in 1996 December 90 days after the 50th ratification was received. There are currently 186 Parties to the Convention.⁵ The UNCCD secretariat is located at Bonn, Germany.

The UNCCD identifies approaches and concrete measures to combat desertification. Combating desertification “includes activities which are part of the integrated development of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas for sustainable development which are aimed at: (i) prevention and/or reduction of land degradation; (ii) rehabilitation of partly degraded land; and (iii) reclamation of desertified land.” (UNCCD, Article 1. b)

It is thus the first international agreement to mandatorily define a common understanding of desertification, as well as the principles, objectives and key focuses of coordinated action to fight it. It is to be implemented through action programmes. These programmes are the core of the Convention. At the national level, they address the underlying causes of desertification and drought, and identify measures to prevent and reverse them. National action programmes (NAPs) are complemented by subregional and regional programmes, particularly when transboundary resources

² United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, “desertification means land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors, including climatic variations and human activities“ Article 1.a. - available at <http://www.unccd.int>.

Jagdish C. Katyal and Paul L.G. Vlek, “*Desertification - Concept, Causes and Amelioration*”, *ZEF-Discussion Papers in Development Policy*, No. 33, Bonn, October 2000, p. 16, propose the following definition: “Desertification is a condition of human-induced land degradation that occurs in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid regions (...) and leads to a persistent decline in economic productivity (>15% of the potential) of useful biota related to land use or a production system. Climatic variations intensify the decline in productivity, restorative management moderates it.”

³ Such as land over-exploitation, poor management of grazing areas and livestock, mechanized farming, bad irrigation practices, mismanagement of inputs and neglect of land improvement, inappropriate land use systems and policies, illegal and excessive logging, bush and forest fires and deforestation due to population increases; along with these anthropocentric factors, a range of natural factors are believed to influence the process of land degradation (year-round aridity, high variability in rainfall, recurrent drought etc.).

⁴ The Convention's text is available at <http://www.unccd.int/convention/menu.php>.

⁵ <http://www.unccd.int/convention/ratif/doiif.php> - Bhutan, Estonia, Lithuania, the Russian Federation and Timor - Leste are to be expected to become Parties to the Convention in the near future.

such as lakes and rivers are involved. The five regional implementation Annexes to the Convention set out action programmes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Northern Mediterranean, and Central and Eastern Europe.

The UNCCD combines environmental protection, land improvement and the fight against soil erosion with poverty eradication, through its focus on sustainable development, and can thus contribute to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).⁶

A World Bank and International Monetary Fund Development Committee paper recognizes:⁷ The MDGs have proved an effective vehicle for rallying public support for development and poverty reduction. But despite important areas of progress, the risks of not attaining the MDGs are considerable, and major remedial efforts are needed. There will be a number of opportunities in coming months to press ahead with the commitments made at Doha, Monterrey, and Johannesburg, and also to follow up on Rome, Kyoto, and other international fora. These opportunities must be pursued aggressively by both developing and developed countries if the agreed goals are to be met.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

After the Cologne G7/G8 Summit in June 1999, the World Bank Group and the IMF agreed at the Annual Meeting of September 1999 that nationally-owned participatory poverty reduction strategies should provide the basis for all World Bank and IMF concessional lending, and for debt relief under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.⁸ This approach, building on the principles of the Comprehensive Development Framework,⁹ is reflected in the elaboration of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

The shift to PRSPs and the loss of confidence in the previous policy of economic reform, structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), has occurred since the World Bank and other advocates of adjustment policies have come to acknowledge that many adjustment measures generated losses among the poor, and that there was a connection between adjustment programmes and growing poverty and inequality.¹⁰

⁶ In particular to the following MDGs: ensure environmental sustainability, eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, promote gender equality and empower women. The goals are based on the United Nations Millennium Declaration (September 2000), and the United Nations General Assembly has approved them as part of the Secretary General's road map towards implementing the Millennium Declaration.

⁷ Joint Ministerial Committee of the Boards of Governors of the Bank and the Fund On the Transfer of Real Resources to Developing Countries meeting on 13 April 2003, where a joint paper was submitted entitled "Achieving the MDGs and Related Outcomes: a Framework for Monitoring Policies and Actions" prepared by the staff of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, March 26, 2003.

⁸ <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/index.htm>.

⁹ Based on the World Bank's 1998 report "Assessing Aid", World Bank President James Wolfensohn put forth his proposal for a "Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF)" in January 1999. The CDF represents a widening of perspective, from a focus on macro economic indicators, to include structural, human, physical and country-specific factors in development planning, and to increase the transparency of activities and plans between different actors (government, civil society, the private sector, and the donor community) in the planning process. The basic principles of the CDF are ownership of the framework by the countries concerned, a holistic approach, a long-term vision, and a broad involvement of all relevant actors. MPs are not mentioned explicitly.

¹⁰ The Policy Roots of Economic Crisis and Poverty - A Multi-Country Participatory Assessment of Structural Adjustment, based on results of the Joint World Bank/Civil Society/Government Structural Adjustment Participatory

PRSPs add two new elements to the conventional SAPs: firstly, there is scepticism towards the trickle-down assumption, leading to the recognition that the poor's access to human, physical and financial assets need to be facilitated and, secondly, short-term adverse impacts of SAPs on the poor are recognized, leading to the advocacy of social safety nets to accompany structural adjustment.¹¹ However, what is worrying about this is the lack of real change: a close examination of the macroeconomic and structural adjustment policy contents of PRSPs shows that there is no fundamental departure from the kind of policy advice handed out under what has come to be known as the "Washington Consensus".¹² Current policy advice continues to contain all the main elements of the first generation of economic reforms, designed to "get prices right". The second generation of reforms now advocated, rather than revising and improving the economic policy framework so far pursued, principally adds new elements, emphasising the importance of "getting institutions right" or simply "good governance".¹³

PRSPs describe a country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programmes that aimed at promoting growth and reducing poverty, as well as associated external financing needs and major sources of financing. PRSPs may include core techniques (poverty diagnostics, monitoring and evaluation, etc.), sectoral issues (health, education, infrastructure, macroeconomic policy), and cross-cutting issues (gender, environment, etc.).

PRSPs are prepared by governments through a participatory process involving civil society and development partners, including the World Bank and the IMF. A joint staff assessment accompanies the PRSP to the Boards of Executive Directors of the Bank and the IMF. This document is an assessment of whether or not the strategy presented in the PRSP constitutes a sound basis for concessional assistance and debt relief from the World Bank and the IMF.

Review Initiative (SAPRI), and the Citizens' Assessment of Structural Adjustment (CASA), prepared by the Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network (SAPRIN), Washington D.C., April 2002, p. 194. SAPRI's criticism (cf. Tillmann Elliesen, *Structural Adjustment under Fire*, in: *D+C (Development and Cooperation)* 5/2002, p. 30f) is that blind faith in supposedly development-promoting market forces and one-sided concentration on export-oriented growth, have led to local industries in the countries being disadvantaged or even destroyed. The opening of the markets as part of the export-oriented growth strategy propagated by the World Bank has above all resulted in a sharp rise in imports in the affected countries. The imports have displaced local goods and led to a decline in domestic production and a rise in unemployment. True, exports have increased, but in general not so strongly as imports. In addition, export growth focuses on a few raw materials and on finished goods which transnational companies produce with cheap, low-skilled labour. Another SAPRI criticism concerns the privatization of public services such as electricity and water supply which was promoted in the context of SAP. It says privatization has not improved public access to these assets. Rather, in most cases the prices for them have risen sharply with far-reaching consequences. SAPRI's third main point of criticism targets the cuts in public spending made under SAP, such as in education and health care. It says these, too, affect mainly poor people. The cuts usually are justified by citing the affected countries' high indebtedness. In cases such as Uganda, where the government maintained its level of spending on social services or even aimed to increase it, this was financed mostly by development assistance.

¹¹ UNCTAD: *Economic Development in Africa – From adjustment to poverty reduction: What is new?*, New York – Geneva 2002, available online at: www.unctad.org/en/docs/pogdsafricad2.en.pdf.

¹² "World Development Report 2000/2001: *Attacking Poverty*", p.4 World Bank, Washington D.C. 2001, p. 63 (box 4). The Washington consensus of market-friendly reforms refers to the following ten objectives of policy: fiscal discipline; redirection of public expenditure toward education, health and infrastructure investment; tax reform – broadening the tax base and cutting marginal tax rates; interest rates that are market determined and positive (but moderate) in real terms; competitive exchange rates; trade liberalization – replacement of quantitative restrictions with low and uniform tariffs; openness to foreign direct investment; privatization of state enterprises; deregulation – abolition of regulations that impede entry or restrict competition, except for those justified on safety, environmental and consumer protection grounds, and prudential oversight of financial institutions; legal security for property rights.

¹³ UNCTAD: "Economic Development in Africa – From adjustment to poverty reduction", p. 6.

There are seven core process and content principles underlying the drafting and implementation of poverty reduction strategies. The strategies should be:

- a) Country-driven. The country concerned, not the donors, should be the driving force in the drafting of the strategies (country ownership of development goals and actions);
- b) Participatory. Broad-based participation by the poor, governmental and administrative institutions, civil society and the private sector in all operational steps;
- c) Partnership-oriented. Co-ordinated participation of development partners (bilateral, multilateral and non-governmental);
- d) Comprehensive. Recognizing the multidimensional nature of poverty;
- e) Results-oriented. Focused on outcomes that would benefit the poor;
- f) Prioritized. Implementation should be feasible, in both fiscal and institutional terms; and
- g) Based on a long-term perspective for poverty reduction.

Many countries are currently not in a position to fully complete the key steps to develop a PRSP. In order to prevent delays for countries seeking debt relief under the HIPC initiative, an Interim PRSP (I-PRSP) can be formulated. An I-PRSP is meant to outline a country's existing poverty reduction strategy and to provide a road-map for the development of the full PRSP (a timeline for poverty diagnostics, recognition of policy areas that need evaluation and reform, envisaged participatory process, etc.). As of April 2003, 26 countries had presented PRSPs and 45 countries had presented I-PRSPs to the World Bank and IMF Boards.¹⁴

Country Assistance Strategy

The World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (CAS)¹⁵ is the central vehicle for board review of the Bank Group's assistance strategy for International Development Association (IDA) and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) borrowers. The CAS is the World Bank's main policy instrument for defining country programmes and investments. The CAS indicates how the Bank's objective of helping countries to reduce poverty, and its sectoral objectives – such as human resources development (including gender issues), environmentally sustainable development, and private sector development – are incorporated into a strategy and reflected in the policy dialogue.

Each CAS presents a comprehensive picture of a country's economic development, identifies the government's principal concerns, and makes the case for new World Bank services. The CAS document (a) describes the Bank Group's strategy based on an assessment of priorities in the country, and (b) indicates the level and composition of assistance to be provided based on the

¹⁴ <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/boardlist.pdf>.

¹⁵ <http://www.worldbank.org/html/pic/cas/whatis.htm>.

strategy and the country's portfolio performance (in general on a soft loan basis). The CAS is prepared with the government in a participatory way; its key elements are discussed with the government prior to Board consideration. However, it is not a negotiated document. Any differences between the country's own agenda and the strategy advocated by the Bank are highlighted in the CAS document.

Usually, CASs are undertaken every two to three years. CAS and CAS updates should be timed to follow PRSPs and I-PRSPs along with their accompanying joint staff assessments (JSAs). From July 2002, all CASs in IDA countries have been based on a PRSP. The CAS represents the Bank's lending and non-lending programme in support of the country's agenda as outlined in the PRSP. CASs are available for more than 80 countries.¹⁶

Country Strategy Papers

A new partnership agreement between the European Union (EU) and the African-Caribbean Pacific (ACP) countries was signed at Cotonou, on 23 June 2000,¹⁷ it entered into force on 1 April 2003. The partnership is based on five interdependent pillars: a comprehensive political dimension; promotion of participatory approaches; development strategies and priority for the objective of poverty reduction; the establishment of a new framework for economic and trade cooperation; and reform of financial cooperation.

The Cotonou agreement foresees the preparation of Country Support Strategies or so-called Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) to provide a framework for European Commission (EC) development assistance towards the ACP countries, covering the period 2001-2007. Based on the spirit and principles upheld in the Cotonou agreement, and building upon the experiences with participatory approaches gained in the preparation of PRSPs, the ACP Governments, jointly with the EC, have prepared such CSPs in close consultation with state and non-state stakeholders and key donors, notably EU member states.

The overall objective underpinning the CSPs – as well as the Regional Strategy Papers (RSPs) – is to reduce poverty through accelerating the process of sustainable development. The strategies provide a comprehensive and coherent framework for future EC-ACP cooperation, and combine, to the extent possible, all relevant resources and instruments.

The programme of EC-funded interventions proposed under the CSPs will seek coherence and complementarity with all other existing community instruments from which the ACP countries could benefit. Further, coherence between development policy and other EC policies (notably fisheries and trade but also agriculture, environment, etc.) will be permanently assessed during project or programme identification and appraisal.

The year 2001 was a year of fundamental reform for the management of EC external assistance. The reform aimed at improving the speed, quality, impact and visibility of EC-projects

¹⁶ <http://www.worldbank.org/cas/caslist1.htm>.

¹⁷ Directorate General for Development ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, (signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000) EU in a special issue of the ACP-EU Courier, September 2000
cf. http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/development_old/cotonou/index_en.htm.

and programmes throughout the world.¹⁸ On 1 January 2001, the EuropeAid Cooperation Office was created, bringing together in a single organisation the responsibility for managing the whole life cycle of projects, from identification to evaluation. Programming follows priorities set out in Country/Regional Strategy Papers, which define a “strategic framework” for the EC’s cooperation priorities in a given country or region.

The Commission has begun the process of establishing Country and Regional Strategy Papers for partners in all regions covered by the different regulations: ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific), ALA (Asia and Latin America), CARDS (for the Balkans), MEDA (for Mediterranean), TACIS (for Eastern Europe and Central Asia). These strategies have been developed in collaboration with national governments, member states, other bilateral multilateral donors and, wherever possible, with representatives of civil society.

A new Inter-service Quality Support Group was set up to contribute to improvements in programming and the Commission presented more than a hundred new CSPs to it establishing coherent multi-annual frameworks for defining relations with third countries. As of May 2003, CSPs for 61 ACP countries were published.¹⁹

The PRSP process and CSPs

The European Commission²⁰ believes strongly that ownership by partner countries of the strategies for sustainable development and poverty reduction is the key to the success of development policies. Consistent with this belief, the Commission strives to integrate its support, as outlined in its CSPs, into a wider framework.

EC programmes are thus closely linked to signature or satisfactory progress of agreement with the IMF, and sometimes with the World Bank (sound macroeconomic framework), and progress on the PRSP process.

For low income countries, the key framework is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the process that accompanies it. The Commission’s efforts have been made difficult by the lack of full PRSPs. When CSPs are updated, however, they can be adapted to reflect progress in the country concerned in developing a full PRSP.

Development of the PRSP approach offers a major opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of the global development effort. The Commission has contributed substantially to the development of the approach, both through its own strategic refocusing (including a shift towards direct contributions to the budgets of partner countries where necessary conditions are met), and through its contribution to international policy development. This contribution is further reinforced by the Commission’s role as co-chair of the Technical Group of the Strategic Partnership for Africa, and as

¹⁸ Commission of the European Communities Annual Report 2001. On the EC Development Policy and the Implementation of External Assistance (from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Com(2002) 490 final), Brussels, 12.09.2002.

¹⁹ http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/csp_rsp/csp_en.cfm. CSPs for other 53 countries and 9 Regional Strategy Papers are available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/sp/index.htm.

²⁰ Commission of the European Communities.

Annual Report on the EC Development Policy and the implementation of the External Assistance (from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Com(2002) 490 final), Brussels 2002.

leader of the Burkina Faso – based pilot project on reforming the conditions imposed on partner countries to trigger the provision of macro-economic support. If PRSPs are to become an effective framework for external assistance, however, they need to have stronger performance indicators.

With regard to CSPs, the definition of the Commission's support to ACP countries' development and poverty reduction challenges generally takes into consideration:

- a) the development priorities of the respective government, as reflected in the (I-) PRSP and EC development policies and priorities;
- b) the financial requirements and implementation capacities in a particular sector;
- c) the existence of a sector development policy;
- d) the historic development relationship between the EC and the ACP country and its strengths and weaknesses;
- e) complementarity with other donors; and
- f) the comparative advantages of the EC as a donor.

II. POVERTY REDUCTION AND COUNTRY ASSISTANCE STRATEGIES: ENVIRONMENT, LAND DEGRADATION AND DESERTIFICATION IN PRSPs

There is a fairly absurd proliferation of comprehensive and holistic strategies which compete with each other down to the level of individual countries: National Strategies for Sustainable Development, Comprehensive Development Frameworks, and PRSP and CAS initiatives.²¹ None of them are objectives in themselves. Rather, they are means to promote sustainable development, poverty reduction, and strategic planning. (Our review will be restricted to some PRSPs and CASs; later on CSPs.) It is therefore essential to prevent a further proliferation of national planning processes with their associated reporting requirements, which stretch the capacity problems of many developing countries. The process dimension is crucial in all national planning processes that are not intended as requirements but as processes of change and the complexity of this dimension should by no means be underestimated. It has consequences for the duration of such processes, for their design and for the role of donors. Dynamic planning processes at the national level require a certain degree of pluralism; they need qualified organizations at all levels, and articulate stakeholder representation.

The World Bank Sourcebook²² is a guide to assist countries in the development of poverty reduction strategies. Chapters are available on core techniques, on sectoral issues, and on cross-cutting issues (e.g. the environment). The Sourcebook has been prepared mainly by World Bank and IMF staff, and reflects their experience working in various sectors and regions. It has benefited from feedback provided by government officials in several African countries and from the staff of

²¹ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ (editor.), Bonn Eschborn 2000. Strategies for sustainable development in the thicket of national planning processes. From convergent concepts to coherent actions in development cooperation.

²² <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/sourcons.htm>.

United Nations organizations. While the drafts were reviewed by the heads of the relevant sectors at the Bank and the Fund, they do not necessarily represent official World Bank or IMF policy.

It is important to note that the Sourcebook is intended only to be suggestive and to be selectively used as a resource to provide information about possible approaches. It does not provide “the answers”. Those can emerge only as a result of analysis and dialogue at the country level.

The Sourcebook is an evolving document that will be revised in light of the comments and feedback received, as well as country experience in developing and strengthening poverty reduction strategies.

In the context of a PRSP, environment and poverty are linked in two major ways. One is that poverty alleviation should not damage the environment of the poor, which would only undercut gains in one area with losses in another. The other main link is that improving environmental conditions can help to reduce poverty.²³

The many links between environmental management and poverty alleviation provide the rationale for systematic mainstreaming of environment in PRSPs and their associated processes. Environmental activities can also provide effective ways to empower the poor.

The scope of environmental concerns is quite broad, and includes water supply and wastewater disposal, solid waste removal, indoor and urban air pollution, and natural resources issues such as land degradation, deforestation, loss of coastal ecosystems and fisheries.

However, it is important that “environment” does not only bring restrictions and problems to mind. Better environmental management provides many opportunities to build sustainable livelihoods. Natural resources can be put to more productive use to alleviate income poverty.

Environment and economic opportunities are linked. Property rights, communal or private, formal or informal, lay the foundation for natural resource utilisation. Incentives by way of regulated prices, taxes and subsidies send important signals to resource users about economic opportunities.

Natural resource utilisation should not be seen only in the context of limiting access and exploitation, but should be viewed from the perspective of sustainable opportunities for poverty reduction.

Unfortunately, few I-PRSPs and CASs have paid much attention to environmental matters and links to poverty. It is encouraging to note that the full PRSPs and the latest CASs tend to score better in this respect.²⁴ Full PRSPs tend to focus on environmental issues in greater detail than do interim PRSPs. Improvements can be seen in such areas as the description of poverty – environment

²³ <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/chapters/environment/environ.htm>.

²⁴ Jan Bojö and Rama Chandra Reddy, Poverty Reduction Strategies and Environment. A Review of 40 Interim and Full Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers *Environment Department Paper, No. 86*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., June 2002 (also Jan Bojö and Rama Chandra Reddy, *Mainstreaming Environment in Poverty Reduction Strategies* (World Bank Environment Strategy Notes, No. 4), World Bank, Washington D.C., August 2002 (8 PRSPs and 32 I-PRSPs are considered). Arati Belle, Priya Shyamsundar and Kirk Hamilton, *Country Assistance Strategies and the Environment — Taking Stock*, World Bank, Washington D.C., February 2002.

linkages, policy and legislative measures supporting environmental management capacity, and the setting of targets and indicators relating to environmental health.

The main findings on the mainstreaming of the environment in eight PRSPs and 32 I-PRSPs are:²⁵

- a) Environmental issues and opportunities. Many PRSPs do not explicitly address the overwhelming dependence of the poor on natural resources, although they do pay considerable attention to environmental health. The discussions, however, often focus on water pollution and land degradation.
- b) Poverty-environment links. Although these do not rank highly, it does appear that despite weak discussion of environmental issues, some PRSPs do recognize the links between poverty and environment (see Box 1). Explicit reasoning to belittle environmental issues was not encountered in the PRSPs.
- c) Environmental management responses and indicators. Most PRSPs present a very general description of responses. The discussion of the costs of interventions, sources of funding, relationships between inputs and outcomes, and legislative, institutional and regulatory interventions for environmental management is often inadequate.
- d) Participatory process. Although PRSPs describe the process of stakeholder participation, it is difficult to determine the extent to which environmental constituencies have been involved in it and the concerns of the poor voiced.

²⁵ Jan Bojö and Rama Chandra Reddy: Mainstreaming Environment in Poverty Reduction Strategies World Bank Environment Strategy Notes, No. 4, World Bank, Washington D.C., August 2002.

Every anti-poverty strategy needs to take into account the fact that the majority of the world's poor people live in rural areas²⁶ and depend directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihoods. Agriculture is the primary link between human beings and the environment. Agricultural activities such as encroachment on wildlife habitat and forest clearing, can threaten long-term sustainability. Natural resource degradation goes unchecked in many less-favoured areas of developing countries, which are home to millions of poor people.

Research is needed on policies for landscapes and land use that protect the world's soil fertility, promote integrated nutrient management and ensure that poor farmers have the necessary information. With respect to the integration of research into combating desertification, the UNCCD Committee on Science and Technology (CST) is a driving force. The main issues for desertification research are: how can the enhanced understanding be applied to reducing or eliminating desertification and how can it be integrated into development work? How can the research results – to be obtained with the help of local researchers, of resource users and of people involved in development programmes – be made accessible to and used by decision makers at all levels?²⁷

The MDG of halving poverty by 2015 cannot be achieved without progress in poverty reduction in rural areas, linked to environmental management and political reforms.²⁸

²⁶ International Food Policy Research Institute, IFPRI: IFPRI's strategy Toward Food and Nutrition Security, Washington, April 2003 - <http://www.ifpri.org>; International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD: Rural Poverty Report 2001, 2001.

²⁷ Mary Seely and Helmuth Wöhl Research competence in combating desertification, in: *Entwicklung + ländlicher Raum* 3/2001 p. 15-19.

²⁸ Dossier "Rural Development" in the *ACP-EU Courier*, No. 195, November-December 2002.

Box 1. Poverty-environment links highlighted in PRSPs

Bolivia. Poverty in rural areas is as high as 82 per cent, and 59 per cent of the population is extremely poor. Water pollution is the country's greatest environmental quality problem. Poor sanitation is a major cause of infectious diseases such as Chagas disease, malaria, and tuberculosis.

Burkina Faso (I-PRSP). Soil degradation is most marked in the northern and central regions, where most of the rural population is caught in a vicious cycle of soil degradation, poverty, and food insecurity.

Honduras. There is a correlation between deforestation from slash-and-burn agriculture and persistent poverty. Deforestation affects 61 per cent of the forest area in the western and southern regions and 55 per cent in the Atlantic region. The annual economic loss from deforestation, as seen in damage to timber and non-timber products and in losses to biodiversity, water resources, and ecotourism, is estimated at US\$112 million.

Source: Jan Boj  and Rama Chandra Reddy: *Mainstreaming Environment in Poverty Reduction Strategies World Bank Environment Strategy Notes, No. 4*, World Bank Washington D.C. August 2002, p. 3

Desertification, land degradation and parliaments' involvement in PRSPs in selected countries

The PRSPs of four countries, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, were studied from the point of view of their analysis, particularly of environmental issues, whether they made the link between poverty and the environment, the proposed planning and environmental management responses; and the extent of the participatory process. This leads to some general observations, after which each individual PRSPs will be examined in greater detail. Generally speaking:²⁹

- a) *Analysis*. PRSPs do not consider land degradation, soil erosion and desertification to be main factors for poverty.
- b) *Poverty-environment links*. The picture is mixed. Some PRSPs recognize the links between poverty alleviation and the restoration or sound management of natural resources while others do not. Neither the economic significance of desertification and its impact on the poor population, nor the poverty/land degradation downward spiral are mentioned.³⁰
- c) *Planning / environmental management responses*. Not a single PRSP regarded the combat against desertification as a priority area. While the PRSPs represent a significant effort to bring together the full set of public actions that countries intend to pursue to

²⁹ Based on the analysis of the texts of some PRSPs. I am grateful to Erik D. Holtz from the University of Applied Sciences Bonn-Rhein-Sieg for data collecting as regards PRSPs and ACP-EU Country Strategy Papers (CSPs). See also Deutsche Gesellschaft f r Technische Zusammenarbeit/GTZ (ed.): *Poverty Reduction and Environment in Strategic Planning Processes in Four African Countries: Mauritania - Mali - Senegal - Cameroon*, draft, February 2003, and Jan Boj  and Rama Chandra Reddy: *Mainstreaming Environment in Poverty Reduction Strategies* (World Bank Environment Strategy Notes, No. 4), August 2002.

³⁰ Report of the Panel of Eminent Personalities, *The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification: A Useful Tool for Sustainable Development and Poverty Alleviation*, UNCCD, Bonn 2002 available at <http://www.unccd.int/meetings/global/agadez2002/report-eng.pdf>: The report states "There is a complex cause-effect relationship between desertification, population growth and poverty that is best illustrated as a poverty/land degradation downward spiral, whereby growing and impoverished populations overexploit their already stressed land resources, thereby further degrading a shrinking resource base and exacerbating poverty. In that cycle, poverty is both a cause and a consequence of land degradation, and the poor are both agents and victims of the process."

reduce poverty, they generally are weak regarding the *prioritisation* and *specificity* of these actions.³¹

- d) *Participatory process.* In all analysed countries more or less satisfactory and broad participation processes took place. However, parliaments were not really involved in the consultation, elaboration and decision-making process of the PRSPs. Their role was too often the traditional role of formal approval (“rubberstamp”). Political parties were rarely invited to participate the process (see Boxes 2 and 3).

Box 2. Parliaments and the PRSP process

- In a joint declaration in Dakar in September 2001, African members of parliament involved in the PRSP forum (see Box 3), stressed that “parliament must not be marginalized in the formulation and implementation of poverty reduction strategies”. Examples of this marginalization are common. Uganda, for instance, has been especially energetic in assuring civil society participation in PRSP development and monitoring, but formal parliamentary review of plans and progress has been neglected. In contrast, the Burkina Faso PRSP was presented to parliament for ratification prior to its official transmission to the Bank and the Fund. And in Mauritania, parliamentarians were members of the PRSP working parties and of the committee monitoring the PRSP process; a debate was held in parliament with NGOs, other civil society organizations and development partners, and parliament approved the PRSP.

- Parliaments will be involved in the PRS, if only ex-post, because they have the constitutional mandate in most countries to approve government budgets and monitor government actions. The question remains, is this sufficient? The Utstein group of bilateral donors³² have urged that the PRSP process reinforce the representative and electoral processes in low-income countries.

Source: Review of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) Approach: Early Experience with Interim PRSPs and Full PRSPs. Prepared by the Staffs of the World Bank and IMF. Approved by Gobind Nankani and Masood Ahmed, March 26, 2002 (<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/review/earlyexp.pdf> - p. 24)

With respect to the individual country PRSPs, the detailed findings follow:

Burkina Faso PRSP³³

Analysis / environmental issues. The PRSP identifies the key factors for the urban poor as being in order of importance: climate-related hazards, low purchasing power, old age and large family size. Poor people in rural areas attribute their situation mainly to laziness or lack of initiative, persistent failure, physical handicaps and social decay – and not to losses of topsoil and land.

Poverty-environment links. In contrast to education and health, the links between the environment and poverty are not seen. For the PRSP, the main determinants of rural poverty are low

³¹ Weak prioritization thus reflects limited country capacity to cost programmes and policies, and limited public expenditure management capacity. It is also partly the product of the demands generated by donors and by domestic constituencies through the participatory process. <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/review/findings.pdf>.

³² The Utstein group was formed in 1999, during a meeting at Utstein Abbey on the west coast of Norway. The group received the 2003 Commitment to Development Award in Washington D.C. because its “dedication, vision and leadership in reducing global poverty and inequality, challenging the norms of the development ‘establishment’ and highlighting the importance of policy coherence made it the best choice.” The award was given to the four original members of the group: the former United Kingdom Minister for International Development, Ms. Clare Short, the former Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation, Ms. Eveline Herfkens, the German Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, Ms. Heidmarie Wiczorek-Zeul, and the Norwegian Minister of International Development, Ms. Hilde F. Johnson.

³³ PRSP 2000 available at http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/Burkina_Faso_PRSP.pdf.

productivity of agricultural activities, sharp price fluctuations and minimal openness of villages to the outside, or non-functioning markets.

Planning / environmental management responses. The poverty reduction strategy is supposed to be in line with the existing Letter of Intent for Sustainable Human Development.³⁴ The PRSP sets targets in four priority sectors: education; health; drinking water; and agriculture and livestock, here, as a minor point “Generalise and strengthen sustainable natural resource management by rural communities”).

Participatory process. The Government had decided to prepare the PRSP in cooperation with the various stakeholders: the Government, the private sector, civil society and the country’s development partners. (Parliament was not regarded as a stakeholder. Before officially transmitting the PRSP to the international financial institutions, the Ministry of Economy and Finance presented it to both chambers of the parliament of Burkina Faso.)

Mali PRSP³⁵

Analysis / environmental issues. The Mali PRSP does not discuss environmental factors in any depth; environmental problems are mentioned time and again.

Poverty–environment link. Links are made between poverty and health and poverty and education, but those between poverty and the environment are not emphasized. Desertification is seen as an environmental problem (“a major threat” to environmental protection).

Planning / environmental management responses. The PRSP is built around three pillars: institutional development and improved governance; human development and strengthening the access to basic social services; and development of infrastructure and support for key productive sectors (including a “new vision for rural development”). Environmental policy is given low importance. As regards controlling desertification, the PRSP talks of four interventions: countering soil erosion; development of cultivable and grazing lands; concerted implementation of the Multilateral Environmental Agreement; and development of an active partnership at all levels.

Participatory process. Civil society participation was dominated by representatives of leading non-governmental organizations umbrella organisations not necessarily representatives of the poor rural population. Parliament played no specific role in the overall process of formulating the PRSP; a Policy Committee chaired by the Prime Minister consisted of nine ministers and seven members of civil society (employers’ organisations, unions, agricultural organisations, associations of NGO but no members of Parliament (MPs).

³⁴ Burkina Faso’s PRSP “is based on seven major principles that will underpin the Government’s actions in the future: redefinition of the role of the state; sustainable development of natural resources; promotion of a new partnership between the state and donors; promotion of good governance; participation of women; consideration of regional disparities; and continuation of the process of integration within WAEMU.” Available at [http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/Burkina Faso PRSP.pdf](http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/Burkina_Faso_PRSP.pdf).

³⁵ PRSP 2002 available at http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/13967_Mali_PRSP.pdf.

Box 3. Participation of members of parliament in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper processes in Africa Declaration of Dakar, September 2001

1. Out of 300 or so delegates from 30 countries at the Dakar Forum for Poverty Reduction in Africa, only 7 parliamentarians attended. At an earlier forum in Addis Ababa there were only 5 parliamentarians from 3 countries. Parliament has a traditional function, that of a watchdog, but is increasingly also an agent of change. It needs to forge alliances with civil society and others in the development process. Parliamentarians therefore wish to make a case for a strong presence and participation of representatives of the people in the designing, implementation and monitoring of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). This participation must go beyond the traditional role of formal approval. Members of parliament must not be marginalized in the formulation and implementation of poverty reduction strategies.
2. The PRSP process is required to be participatory and therefore should not exclude representatives of the poor themselves. Modern constitutions on the continent also require the executive to be transparent and accountable. Parliaments cannot therefore be expected to be rubberstamps.
3. Parliamentarians request governments and the donor community to ensure that parliamentarians are part of the processes leading to the development and implementation of PRSPs and that their presence is ensured at international, regional and local forums on the PRSP (see Box 4). Some parliamentarians have experiences obtained from their previous undertakings in Government and elsewhere. This should be tapped in the context of PRSPs.
4. Where necessary, professional training programmes for parliamentarians should build into them skills to enable them to engage effectively on Poverty Reduction Strategies. These courses should be supplemented with specially designed courses on basic economics and government budgeting skills because a significant portion of the resources for combating poverty must come from national budgetary provisions. Parliamentary budget committees and other oversight committees must be involved in monitoring the budgets to ensure that valuable resources are available for poverty reduction.
5. Support is required for the conduct of workshops to enable parliamentarians to share views on the problem of poverty. A necessary complement for such support is hiring of experts in budget analysis so that parliamentarians are exposed to ways in which national budgets can be part of the solution of poverty. Thereafter researchers are necessary to keep track and follow up.
6. Regional cooperation and integration efforts offers possibilities of networking in the combat against poverty as they do in the fight against other such development challenges as HIV/AIDS and corruption. Development partners are sensitized to the need for parliaments in Africa to work together in the fight against poverty. The SADC Parliamentary Forum, ECOWAS Parliament and other regional parliamentary groupings in Africa, as well as the Pan African Parliament when it is operative, will be irrelevant to the cause of the poor if their agenda does not include networking on priority concerns such as poverty reduction.
7. Development partners should help organize regional and/or regionally based forums for parliamentarians on the PRSP processes, and help build the capacity to Parliamentarians in their budgeting functions, e.g. budget formulation and analysis, public expenditure reviews in the context of medium term expenditure frameworks, and they should assist in designing institutional frameworks for a strong participation of parliaments in government financial decisions.
8. Not all countries on the continent are part of the PRSP process, and yet poverty levels in some such countries are just as worrying as in those participating countries. Some of these other countries have their own programmes for fighting poverty. They may be in a position to finance them without recourse to HIPC resources. Their blue prints may not, however, be participatory. It is suggested that such countries should not be excluded and that their parliamentarians should be invited to share experiences in the PRSP forums. Ownership and participation in these matters offers hope for success in combating poverty.

Signed: G Y Amoah, MP Ghana
R Bazeruka, MP Burundi
A H Malugeta, MP Ethiopia
Loveness Gondwe, MP Malawi
L J Chimango, MP Malawi

Source: <http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/attackingpoverty/activities/parldeclaration.pdf>.

Mauritania PRSP³⁶

Analysis / environmental issues. The PRSP comprehensively describes the poverty situation comprehensively described in its zonal variations. The diverse topographical conditions, especially of deserts and wetlands, and their impact on agricultural productivity are briefly explained.

Poverty–environment links. There are only a few references to the links between poverty and environment.

Planning / environmental management responses. The PRSP identifies five priority areas identified under the PRSP for 2001-2004: rural development; urban development of neighbourhoods located on the fringes of large cities and the main secondary towns; education; health; and water supply. The PRSP refers to previous poverty reduction strategies and to the National Environmental Action Plan which was developed in line with the relevant conventions, notably United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD). However, the fact that the UNCCD and the UNCBD are an integral part of national policy is not reflected clearly enough in the PRSP.

Participatory process. The Government of Mauritania involved besides the administration, aside from local authorities, representatives of socio-professional organizations (management, labour unions), organizations belonging to civil society, universities and many other resource persons. In all, 12 working groups contributed to the PRSP. A consultative committee consisting of representatives of Government and civil society, and a donor committee representing all development partners were likewise closely involved in the entire process. In addition the draft PRSP was discussed with the entire World Bank and IMF country team. There was no strong parliamentary involvement.

Niger PRSP³⁷

Analysis / environmental issues. The causes of poverty most frequently cited by people in the June 2001 qualitative survey were: the greater number of mouths to feed, successive droughts, poor harvests, declining production capacity, isolation, significantly less solidarity and mutual assistance, the shortage of capital and income and out-migration.

Poverty–environment links. The PRSP recognises that drastic climatic constraints, intense population pressures, reduced soil fertility, degradation of natural resources such as water, farmland, pasture land and forests, over-exploitation of wood resources and overgrazing have accelerated the process of desertification. A clear correlation between poverty and desertification is not established.

Planning / environmental management responses. Preparation of the PRS coincided with that of the 9th European Development Fund and the Common Country Assessment under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. This allowed for fruitful exchanges of views with these agencies. The PRSP identifies the following priority actions 2002-04 related to the macroeconomic framework, to the productive sectors (rural sector; road transport, mines, and energy sectors), in the social sectors (education and health), in the area of access to safe water and

³⁶ PRSP 2000 available at http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/mauritania_prsp.pdf.

³⁷ PRSP 2002 available at http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/9355_NigerPRSP.pdf.

sanitation and priority action in support of improving governance and building up human and institutional resources. With respect to the rural sector, priority actions will be undertaken in three strategic areas: agro-sylvo-pastoral development; control of desertification and management of natural resources; and development of revenue generating activities in the rural economy.

Participatory process. The PRS was prepared on the basis of a broad development consensus involving all parties to the process: the Government over “assemblies representing all elected bodies”, civil society organizations, labour unions, farmers’ groups (farmers and/or herders, and fishermen), the private sector, development partners, political parties, institutions and university resource persons, religious denominations and traditional structures. The participatory process will also be used to implement, monitor and evaluate the PRS. Broad stakeholder involvement will guarantee greater transparency in decision-making and empowerment of the players, which is meant to instill in the people a sense of ownership of the programme.

Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) and the environment

Given that environmental improvements are closely tied to development and poverty reduction strategies and actions, it is important to consider how environmental activities are incorporated into CASs. The Environment Department at the World Bank is charged with the responsibility of integrating environmental issues into World Bank Country Assistance Strategies (CASs).³⁸

The Country Assistance Strategies and the Environment work programme of the Bank’s Environment Department aims to facilitate the integration of environmental issues into CASs.³⁹ It does so and then by providing support to the World Bank’s regional environment departments and country teams throughout the process of CAS preparation, reviewing the draft CASs from an environmental perspective.

In seeking to improve the treatment of environment in the CAS, the goal is not to insist on every CAS including an environmental component. Rather, there is a need for a strategic approach to the CAS itself. In cases when a country decides to focus all its efforts during the CAS preparation on one or two key issues (such as governance or macroeconomic stability), or when there is a heavy involvement of bilateral donors in environmental areas, it may not make sense for the World Bank’s CASs to be “greened” in a conventional manner. However, even in those cases where there is no need to highlight environmental problems and identify solutions in the CAS, it will still make sense for country teams to try to mainstream environmental concerns into other non-environment sector strategies.

The Bank’s Environment Department undertook a review of 28 CASs in fiscal years 2000 and 2001, to examine the specific ways in which environmental issues were addressed and whether there were any marked changes in the CASs compared with previous years.⁴⁰ Eight of the CASs

³⁸ <http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/essdext.nsf/41ByDocName/MainstreamingCountryAssistanceStrategies>.

³⁸ <http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/essdext.nsf/44ByDocName/EnvironmentalPolicyCountryAssistanceStrategiesandtheEnvironment>.

³⁹ Arati Belle, Priya Shyamsundar and Kirk Hamilton, Country Assistance Strategies and the Environment — Taking Stock, World Bank, Washington D.C. February 2002.

reviewed were from Africa, three from the Middle East and North Africa, five from Eastern Europe and Central Asia, seven from Latin America and the Caribbean, two from East Asia and three from South Asia.

Here are the results of the review and the suggestions it makes for greater attention to be paid to environmental issues in CASs.

Do CASs identify environmental concerns?

In general, this review suggests that most CASs do take the environment into account as an issue. Desertification issues given into consideration, e.g. in the case of Niger, “Encroaching desertification has been exacerbated by high rates of population growth, deforestation, and overuse of already marginal soils”.⁴¹

Does problem identification translate into bank action?

By and large, most CASs feature the environment in their programmatic activities – in lending, grants, or Global Environment Facility services.

How do CASs mainstream environmental action?

In this review, the term “mainstreaming” refers to the extent to which environmental issues are incorporated into sectoral activities and policy dialogue. CASs were ranked on mainstreaming of the environment in three respects: (1) linkages to macro and growth policies, (2) cross-sectoral links, and (3) use of incentive mechanisms (such as pricing, property rights reform) to treat environmental concerns. The Burkina Faso CAS, for instance, recognizes that land degradation (loss of soil nutrient, deforestation & biodiversity loss) is the main rural environment issue impacting on poverty and vulnerability. However, land degradation is not consistently mainstreamed.⁴²

Cross-sectoral linkages, present in 82 per cent of the CASs, were the most common strategy used for mainstreaming. Approximately 60 per cent of the CASs reviewed were found to address macro policies that impacted or were impacted on by environmental considerations. Countries where macro-environment linkages were explored typically include those with significant ecosystems, small and island states, and/or countries where the potential for economic growth depends on natural resources. Many African states are in this last group.

Do CASs focus on environmental policy reforms?

Institutional and regulatory capacities of client countries are important determinants of many environmental initiatives supported by the Bank. The review evaluated CASs on their analyses of

⁴¹ Niger Country Assistance Strategy. Public Information Notice. World Bank Board discusses Niger Country Assistance Strategy On January 14, 2003, the World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors discussed the Bank Group’s Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for the Republic of Niger covering the period 2003-2005. Available at <http://www.worldbank.org/html/pic/cas/cpin89.htm>.

⁴² CAS Public Information Notice, 2001/02/27: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSContentServer/2001/03/03/000094946_01030108012677/Rendered/INDEX/multi0page.txt.

environmental policies, and found that on average they pay attention to environmental policy and institutional issues.

To what extent do CASs address poverty – environment linkages?

As the World Bank's new environment strategy suggests, poverty is often linked to environmental degradation. These links are not well elucidated in CASs. This suggests a need for greater focus on (a) the dynamics of poverty – environment interaction and (b) incorporating the environment into the design of poverty reduction schemes.

An important poverty – environment issue is insecure property and land-use rights. This question is of relevance in most developing countries. While several CASs mention securing titles as a step toward improved land-use planning, greater attention needs to be paid to the effects of these policies on the poor and how they manage natural resources.

Has the environmental aspect of CASs improved over time?

A comparison of CAS performance with previous CAS reviews by International Development Association and the Environment Department suggests that their environment focus has improved over time. An evaluation of Fiscal Year 1999 CAS reports assigned CASs an average score of 2.35, while the present review (of 2000/2001 CASs) assigns a higher score of 2.65. Improvements were detected in the discussion of environmental concerns, in mainstreaming, in environmental policy issues and in showing of the links between poverty and the environment.

Discussion

The 2000–2001 CAS review suggests that the environment is increasingly considered to be an important aspect of CASs. CASs performed best in the category of “issue identification” and did least well in discussing linkages between poverty and the environment. Countries in the East Asia and South Asia regions were among the best performers. The CASs that obtained the highest overall score included Chad, Tunisia, Belize and Bhutan.

Given that the CAS document is the end result of a long and complex process of negotiation inside and outside the Bank, successful mainstreaming the environment into CASs will largely depend on how well the environment is integrated into poverty reduction strategies, sector strategies and other bank activities in the course of staff and client discussions and actions taken prior to the CAS process.

Based on current understanding of the environmental content of CASs, the review makes the following suggestions:

- a) Mainstream the environment by focusing on economic incentives and identifying cross-sectoral and macro linkages.
- b) Conduct more discussions of environmental issues between regional environmental staff and CAS teams before and during CAS preparation.
- c) Give greater attention to poverty-environment linkages.

- d) Include environmental indicators for monitoring progress.
- e) Use the best practice cases among the 2000/2001 CASs as examples for future CAS exercises.

III. AFRICA CARIBBEAN PACIFIC – EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPERS

The principle of sharing the Country Support Strategy (CSS), respectively the Country Strategy Paper (CSP), with the ACP country, is a departure from the former situation, wherein the European Community (EC) formulated its support strategies unilaterally.⁴³ The CSS and CSP concerned include an analysis of the political, economic and social context of the country and outline its own development strategies. They also pay close attention to the ongoing activities of the EC and other major donors. On the basis of this analysis, a suitable orientation for the use of Community aid is pinpointed. The country strategy focuses on a limited number of sectors where the Community is deemed to have a comparative advantage. The Community can also decide to co-finance operations in sectors where another donor has the overall responsibility for policy dialogue and implementation.

Each country is allocated a lump sum, from which a range of different types of operations can be financed. It is possible to use these resources for macroeconomic support, sector programmes, traditional projects and programmes, debt relief, additional assistance in case of shortfalls in export earnings, decentralised cooperation and (in exceptional circumstances) humanitarian aid.

The second important difference is that no resources are locked with to a specific purpose, which allows for flexibility and the redeployment of resources as necessary. Such redeployment may involve reallocation within a country programme to respond to the part frequent in developments or reallocations between countries in order to steer the resources to where they are most needed and put to best use.

An annual review is provided for in order to adjust the strategy, the operational programme or the resources allocated. The annual review also includes assessments of the cooperation strategy, halfway through and at the end of the period of application of the financial protocol. The volume of resources allocated to the country concerned may be adjusted as a result. Provision is made for local actors to be involved in the annual review, in accordance with the principle of decentralization.

The Regional Strategy Papers (RSPs) and programmes are also subject to a system of rolling programming based on the same components.

Resources from the grant facility (Envelope A) are allocated on the basis of an evaluation of needs and performance. In order to allowing for planning of resource flows, each ACP state and region receives an indication of the amount of resources it may benefit from during a five-year period. The allocation is, however, not an entitlement and may be reduced or increased at the midterm and end-of-term reviews of the CSS.

⁴³ http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/development/cotonou/overview_en.htm.

The criteria for the evaluation of needs and performance are negotiated between the ACP and the Community and used for a shared assessment. Needs criteria include: per the capita income, population size, economic and social development indicators (for example, Human Development Index, HDI), level of indebtedness and dependence on export earnings.

Performance is assessed on the basis of:

- a) Progress in implementing institutional reforms. Relates to efforts of the country concerned in reforming its institutions to ensure respect for human rights and create a climate of democracy and the rule of law to fight against corruption. Links up to essential elements without creating a double conditionality;
- b) Country performance in the use of resources. Transparency and accountability in the management of resources and quality of budget management;
- c) Effective implementation of current operations. Efficiency in the implementation of Community assistance, quality of dialogue with the Community in programming and implementation, respect of timetables for implementation and reviews;
- d) Poverty alleviation or reduction. Public expenditure in social sectors and quality of anti-poverty strategies, in particular in the social sectors. Commitment to programmes for raising the status of women and enforcing labour and social standards;
- e) Sustainable development measures. Commitment to principles for environmentally sustainable management of the environment and natural resources;
- f) Macroeconomic and sectoral policy performance. Policies and institutional framework for fiscal balance, debt sustainability and external economic and trade balance. Policy and institutional framework for encouraging competition and private sector development.

Poverty, desertification and land degradation in CSPs

The previous remarks have made it clear that the ACP countries are relatively free to set priorities in their respective country strategies. The EC has encouraged them to link poverty reduction with environmental issues by adopting in 2000 new development policy guidelines, The European Community's Development Policy – Statement by the Council and the Commission, and by formulating in 2001 an EC strategy for Integrating the Environment into EC Economic and Development Cooperation.

The aim has been to put an emphasis on the links between poverty reduction and the environment and to integrate the environment into the six priority areas of EC development policy for which Community action provides added value: trade and development; regional integration and cooperation; support to macroeconomic policies and equitable access to social services; transport; food security and sustainable rural development; and institutional capacity building, good governance and the rule of law. At every stage of execution of its activities in these six priority areas, the Community also intends to mainstream cross-cutting concerns. The cross-cutting themes identified in the 'Statement on the European Community's Development Policy' are – besides the

environment – the promotion of Human Rights, equality between men and women and conflict prevention.

Furthermore in 2001, the Commission made substantial contributions to a range of multilateral environmental agreements. It moreover adopted four biodiversity action plans, including a biodiversity action plan for development and economic cooperation.

The Commission also played a key role in ensuring the success of the negotiations in the context of the UNCCD and of the Bonn and Marrakech agreements (under the Kyoto Protocol), which contained items of particular relevance for developing countries (on the Clean Development Mechanism and on technology transfer).

The new ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000 which entered into force 1 April 2003, stipulates that cooperation shall also take account of the worsening drought and desertification problems, especially of least developed and land-locked countries.⁴⁴

On the one hand, the Commission recognises that: A general description of the EU policy and practice on the environment and development may be found in 2001 report on the EC development policy.⁴⁵

“Environmental deterioration, including depletion of natural resources, continues apace in developing countries. Land degradation and soil erosion, loss of forests, habitats and biodiversity, depletion of fish stocks and pollution represent serious permanent threats to sustainable development in many countries. Developing countries are likely to be particularly vulnerable to the impact of global climate change, despite their small relative contribution to this phenomenon“.

“With roughly seventy per cent of the world’s poor living in rural areas, Community policies and strategies in the rural development and natural resources sectors (agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry) have to ensure their effective contribution to the poverty reduction objective. For both areas, food security and rural development (including the main natural resource sectors), operational guidelines for programming have been developed and disseminated“.

On the other hand, the Commission’s report states and deplores that:

Of the 44 ACP CSPs presented in 2001, 23 countries – almost all of them in Africa – proposed transport, transport infrastructure or roads as a priority sector, for a total of approximately €1.7 billion. Efforts have been made to ensure the integration of natural resources issues in the context of programming. However, while most of the CSPs provide a good analysis of food security and rural concerns, these concerns are sometimes missing from the programming perspective.

One of the constraints on the Commission’s activities in this area is the lack of attention on the part of some developing countries to the protection of their natural environment. This has made it difficult for the Commission to ensure that appropriate attention is given to this issue in the

⁴⁴ Article 32.2 > http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/development/development_old/cotonou/index_en.htm.

⁴⁵ Commission of the European Communities: *Annual Report 2001. On the EC Development Policy and the Implementation of the External Assistance* (from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Com(2002) 490 final), Brussels, 12.09.2002.

programming dialogue. One of the ways in which the Commission tries to strengthen the environmental dialogue with developing countries is through the promotion of specific opportunities. Unfortunately, this has not produced encouraging results so far. The Commission has also resorted to high-level political commitments to take action forward in this area in the partner countries.

Nonetheless, one has to admit that the Commission in moving increasingly – and rightly – towards results-oriented development assistance, is issuing guidelines for staff programmers to introduce development indicators⁴⁶ in CSPs that are so numerous as to contribute to making prioritization difficult.

A further example of the results-oriented approach is budgetary support for PRSPs. In ACP countries, the European Commission has an innovative approach, one that links the amounts of aid given directly to the level of performance of the country in social sectors (mainly health and education) and public finance management (specific budgetary support for anti-desertification measures are, however, not foreseen).

To all intents and purposes, indicators monitored by the Commission should be based on the national processes taking place in a country e.g. PRSPs in those countries for which they are relevant). This should be a process of reciprocal influence and experience sharing, as well as a valuable tool for discussing policy issues and increasing governments' domestic accountability.

Ongoing EC projects with at least six months of implementation and another six months duration) of a certain minimum size (approximately €1 million) are monitored.⁴⁷ By the end of 2001, about 500 projects with a total value of €4.7 billion had been monitored in development countries and the Balkans. It was possible, during the conception and test phase, to monitor some projects twice; the number of monitoring reports is therefore higher than 500. With the conception and test phase that ended in January 2002, first insights – to be regarded with caution – have been gained on what works and what can be improved. One finding relevant for our subject was that environmental, socio-cultural (including gender), and technological issues were frequently considered to be good or very good but that financial and economic soundness was often weak.

The totality of financial resources made available by the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) for implementing country strategy will be channelled through two instruments: one envelope (the A-envelope) for providing grants (grants constitute one of the great advantages of EU aid over World Bank / IDA funding), and a second envelope (the B-envelope) for providing risk capital and loans to the private sector (including the Investment Facility managed by the European Investment Bank).⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Working closely with Member States, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee, and other donors.

⁴⁷ Commission of the European Communities, "Annual Report 2001 on the EC Development Policy and the implementation of External Assistance" (from the commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Com(200) 490 final), Brussels 2002.

⁴⁸ CSPs for the 61 ACP countries are available at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/csp.rsp/csp.en.clm>. CSP for the other 53 countries and the 9 regional Strategy Papers are available http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/sp/index.htm (as of May 2003)

CSPs have been prepared for 61 ACP countries (as well as 53 other countries) and nine regional strategy papers are also available. Some of the CSPs are still drafts, while others have been signed or even approved.⁴⁹ An examination of the CSPs of Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Senegal and Tanzania – all of them are least developed African countries and severely affected by desertification and drought does not provide the whole picture but permits some preliminary observations to be made with respect to the place of environmental issues in the analysis; whether the CSPs make the link between the environment and poverty, and whether the allocate funds to combat desertification. The preliminary findings are as follows:

- a) Analysis. CSPs pay more or less attention to land degradation, soil erosion and desertification.
- b) Poverty – environment links. CSPs are weak in recognizing the links between poverty reduction and the restoration or sound management of natural resources, including anti-desertification measures.
- c) Allocation of funds. It turns out that the negotiation process between the European Commission and the respective country falls short of attracting additional resources in support of UNCCD implementation. This is due particularly to the inadequate level of mainstreaming of UNCCD objectives into CSPs, planning and budget processes and to an overall decline in official development assistance.

The fight against soil erosion and land degradation is not at all a priority focal area in the CSPs, not even in the CSPs of countries severely affected by desertification. To some extent this may be explained by the fact that other donors are active in this field and that some priority sectors such as rural development or food security may lend support to the combat against desertification.⁵⁰

The two main focal areas of the CSPs examined are – with one exception – transport / infrastructure and macroeconomic support⁵¹ (see Table 1).

Burkina Faso CSP⁵²

The Burkina Faso – European Community CSP covers the period 2001 to 2007.

⁴⁹ The financial resources of the 9th EDF (2000-2005) under the Cotonou Agreement are as follows: €13.5 billion, of which long-term allowance 10 billion and regional allowance 1.3 billion, Investment Facility 2.2 billion. To which EIB own resources of 1.7 billion and remaining balances from previous EDF of about 10 billion are to be added.

⁵⁰ Jacques Diouf, World Food Security in the New Millennium. Paper presented to Parliamentary Agricultural Committees of EU Member-States and EU Accession Countries on 16.11.2001, Berlin. In the 1990s, the decline in funding for agriculture and rural development was quite dramatic. In 1990, World Bank lending for agriculture represented 18 per cent of total lending, in 1996, it stood at 12 per cent and in 2000 at 7 per cent. Bilateral aid of all donors went down from US\$ 7 billion in 1986 to 3 billion in 1999. Nowadays it plays a greater but not sufficient role in the EU/EC's development policy, as well as in the development policy of other donors. See also Claudia Gorihs and Renata Mienkowska: The European Development Policy in the areas rural development and food aid/food security – Framework, strategies and evaluation. Paper presented at the University of Bonn, 14 February 2003.

⁵¹ Macroeconomic support often means budgetary support which is highly welcomed by the developing countries. supporting macroeconomic reforms, the EC will give special attention to the objective of poverty reduction, particularly with a view to ensuring equitable access to social services.

⁵² Burkina Faso-Communauté Européenne, Document de stratégie de coopération et programme indicatif pour la période 2001-2007, signed.

Analysis / environmental issues: Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world. 94 per cent of the poor live in rural areas. Only two sentences of the CSP are devoted to the environment. The Government underlines the high priority given to the environment because the socio-ecological balance contributes partly to sustainable development. The fight against desertification will continue.

Poverty – environment links: Ecological and geographical factors are also held to be responsible for the persistent poverty.

Allocation of funds: The country Strategy Paper and Indicative Programme set out the €351 million cooperation programme for 2001 – 2007. The indicative allocation in terms of programmable resources (A-envelope) amounts to €275 million, while the B-envelope, meant to cover unforeseen needs, in particular in the macroeconomic field, totals €76 million. The grant will be used mainly for the following sectors: macroeconomic support (55 per cent); transport (35 per cent); and institutional support (10 per cent). The CSP refers to bilateral assistance (Germany and Italy) when it comes to environmental protection and anti-desertification.

Ethiopia CSP⁵³

The Ethiopia – European Community CSP covers the period 2002 to 2007.

Analysis / environmental issues: Poverty in Ethiopia is both deep and widespread. The CSP recognizes that in rural areas, poverty is closely related to agro-ecological conditions. Food insecurity is caused by a sharp reduction in the supply of food, due to crop failure (often related to adverse climatic conditions), natural or man-made disasters and interruptions in food trade. Many environmental problems exist, caused in part by the daily struggle for survival and intensive use of arable land. Soil erosion and deforestation are taking place at a rapid pace, affecting the country's biodiversity and flora and fauna.

Poverty – environment links: Contrary to the Interim-PRSP where environmental aspects are almost completely lacking, the CSP recognises the crucial character of the environment for Ethiopia's fight against poverty. To fight environmental degradation, the Government has adopted the Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia as well as an environmental policy. The strategy states that there is a clear and urgent need to integrate environmental protection and sustainable resource management with development policies and strategies and their implementation. Ethiopia has also established an Environmental Protection Authority. Lack of human resources and institutional capacity, however, are constraints for a swift implementation of environmental policies and action plans. Nevertheless, some progress has been made in soil protection, inter alia through watershed management in agricultural production and the promotion of eco tourism.

Allocation of funds: The Country Strategy Paper and Indicative Programme set out the €538 million cooperation programme for 2002 – 2007. The indicative allocation in terms of programmable resources (A-envelope) amounts to €384 million, while the B-envelope, meant to cover unforeseen needs which may arise for instance because of a fall in export earnings, budget deficits or emergency situations, is €154 million. The grant will be mainly used in three focal

⁵³ Ethiopia-European Community: CSP and Indicative Programme for the Period 2002-2007, signed.

sectors: transport / infrastructure (55 per cent), macroeconomic support and capacity building for economic reform (2 per cent), and food security (14 per cent). The three focal sectors will be complemented by other activities which all have a common thematic approach: capacity building for governance and civil society. Co- or parallel-financing with other donors, specifically EU member states and the Bretton Woods institutions, will be a distinct possibility in all sectors, programmes and projects.

Mali CSP⁵⁴

The Mali – European Community CSP covers the period 2003 to 2007.

Analysis / environmental issues: Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world and suffers from several “geographic handicaps”: it is land-locked, highly dependent on climatic variations, has a huge territory (two thirds of which is desert), and insufficient infrastructure, etc.

Poverty – environment links: In the sphere of rural development, the CSP mentions environmental protection and the sustainable management of natural resources it touches upon the problems caused by drought and desertification but soil erosion and desertification are not seen in a direct relationship to poverty.

Allocation of funds: The Country Strategy Paper and Indicative Programme set out the €375 million cooperation programme for 2003-2007. The indicative allocation in terms of programmable resources (A-envelope) amounts to €294 million, while the B-envelope, meant to cover unforeseen needs including emergency assistance, is €81 million. The grant will be mainly used in the following sectors: transport (35 per cent); macroeconomic support (34 per cent); and support for decentralisation and political structures (24 per cent).⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Mali- Communauté Européenne: Document de stratégie de coopération et programme indicatif pour la période 2003-2007, approved.

⁵⁵ In this CSP, too, the combat against desertification is not a focal area. In the case of Mali, Germany will concentrate for the future its cooperation assistance in three areas: (i) agriculture; (ii) water supply; (iii) decentralisation. An overarching goal is to contribute to conflict prevention through the support for natural resource protection and anti-desertification measures.

Table 1. Allocation of funds in CSPs (A-envelope)
(Percentage)

Country	Transport	Macroeconomic support	Rural development / food security	Other areas
Burkina Faso	35	55		10 (Institutional support)
Ethiopia	55	25	14	
Mali	35	34		24 (Decentralisation)
Namibia			60	30 (Human resources development)
Niger	30-40	35-45	12-15	10-15 (Good governance)
Senegal	35	26		17 (Good governance) 15 (Water sanitation)
Tanzania	40	35		15 (Basic education)

Namibia CSP ⁵⁶

The Namibia – European Community CSP covers the period 2002 to 2007.

Analysis / environmental issues: Namibia is considered the driest country south of Sahara. The CSP states that its overwhelming features are low soil fertility, desertification and scarcity and unpredictability of rainfall. These are further aggravated by overgrazing, pressure on land and population growth.

Poverty-environment links: There are severe environmental constraints to development.

Allocation of funds: The Country Strategy Paper and Indicative Programme set out the €91 million cooperation programme for 2002-2007: A-envelope: €48 million; B-envelope: €43 million, in particular to cover unforeseen needs. Under the agreement, the grant will be used in two focal sectors: rural development (up to 60 per cent) and human resources development (up to 30 per cent). However, there is still no integrated policy framework to guide the direction of rural development for which decentralisation and land reform are central challenges.

Niger CSP ⁵⁷

The Niger – European Community CSP covers the period 2001 to 2007.

Analysis / environmental issues: Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world with a very low ranking HDI. It is largely a desert and severe droughts in 1973 and 1984 have damaged the environment. Because of climatic changes, the extreme poverty the high demographic pressure, the CSP acknowledges that Niger is a country of structural food insecurity.

Poverty-environment links: The country's Operational Food Security Strategy (SOSA) identifies five objectives and priorities, among them the sustainable management of natural resources and the fight against desertification. The CSP does not establish a clear link between poverty and the environment.

⁵⁶ Namibia-European Community: CSP and Indicative Programme for the period 2002-2007, signed.

⁵⁷ Niger- Communauté Européenne: Document de stratégie de coopération et programme indicatif 2001-2007, signed.

Allocation of funds: The Country Strategy Paper and Indicative Programme set out the €346 million cooperation programme for 2001-2007. The indicative allocation in terms of programmable resources (A-envelope) amounts to €212 million, while the B-envelope, meant to cover unforeseen needs in particular export stabilisation, is €134 million. The grant will mainly be used in the following sectors: macroeconomic support (35-45 per cent); transport (30-40 per cent); rural development and food security (12-15 per cent); and good governance and institutional support (10-15 per cent).

Senegal CSP⁵⁸

The Senegal – European Community CSP covers the period 2001 to 2007.

Analysis / environmental issues: In Senegal, since 2001 a least developed country, poverty is widespread and to a large extent located in the rural areas. The chapter dealing with the economic situation refers to external factors (deterioration of terms of trade) as well as to demographic pressures and droughts – both leading to environment degradation and desertification.

Poverty – environment links: Surprisingly, there is no chapter dealing with poverty – environment links. Special emphasis is given to education, health and water sanitation. The Government reshaped its development efforts in line with New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) orientations.

Allocation of funds: The Country Strategy Paper and Indicative Programme set out the €282 million cooperation programme for 2002 – 2007. The A-envelope amounts to €178 million, while the B-envelope is €104 million. The grant will be mainly used in the following sectors: transport / infrastructure (35 per cent), macroeconomic support (26 per cent), good governance (17 per cent), and water sanitation (15 per cent).

Tanzania CSP⁵⁹

The Tanzania – European Community CSP covers the period 2001 to 2007.

Analysis / environmental issues: Poverty affects over half the population and is largely a rural phenomenon. Traditionally, agriculture has been the backbone of Tanzania's economy. Eighty per cent of the population finds employment in this sector, generating 60 percent of the country's GDP. Thus, the CSP considers agriculture, water and natural resource conservation to be of high relevance as does the PRSP. A certain priority is accorded to implement the national action plans to combat desertification and for biodiversity conservation.

Poverty – environment links: The CSP causes of rapid depletion of natural resources and destruction of the environment enumerates the: extensive agricultural and livestock production with associated burning, overgrazing and deforestation, as well as the felling of trees for various uses (energy, construction etc.), and uncontrolled tourism. The CSP fully recognises the pivotal role of the agricultural sector, both in terms of economic growth and poverty reduction.

⁵⁸ Sénégal-Communauté Européenne: Document de stratégie de coopération et programme indicatif pour la période 2002-2007, signed.

⁵⁹ Tanzania-European Community: CSP and Indicative Programme for the Period 2001-2007, signed.

Allocation of funds: The Country Strategy Paper and Indicative Programme set out the €355 million cooperation programme for 2001 – 2007. The A-envelope amounts to €290 million, while the B-envelope is €65 million. The grant will mainly be used in the three following sectors: transport / infrastructure (40 per cent); macroeconomic support (35 per cent); and basic education (15 per cent). Tanzania, which is highly dependent on external aid accounting for 10 per cent of GDP and 33 per cent of the Government's budget in 1999/2000 may hope that other donors will support other important sectors.

IV. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

This review of PRSPs and CSPs leads to the conclusion that poverty reduction and country strategies are not sufficiently mainstreamed with anti-desertification needs and that they do not establish the appropriate relationship with the UNCCD objectives and tools despite the often broad-based participatory approaches and the encouraging "aid philosophies". (Between (1998-2000), less than three per cent of ODA was directed towards objectives of the Rio Conventions - UNCCD, UNCBD, UNFCCC.⁶⁰ State and non-state actors, governments and donors share the responsibility for this.)

The well known fact that the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification links land improvement, environmental protection and the fight against soil erosion to poverty eradication through its sustainable development focus is not reflected in PRSPs and CSPs. The multi dimensional relevance of UNCCD does not receive due recognition. It is not surprising that we have to deplore the fact that most PRSPs and CSPs will not pave the way for new additional financial resources in support of UNCCD implementation. In future, a holistic, multisectoral approach rather than a sectoral one should be pursued.

Developing countries themselves have to lay more emphasis on rural development and on combating rural poverty. Progress in this area depends on fulfilling a number of basic conditions,⁶¹ institutional reforms must allow the rural poor to increase their control over and access to natural resources in the areas in which they live. They must therefore help them to improve their ability to manage these natural resources more efficiently and sustainably. Governments must also ensure steady investment - not disinvestment - in rural productivity. Policies and incentives favouring urban areas must be reversed to provide a steady stream of financial, technical and human resources to rural areas and political structures need to be reformed to ensure that rural populations and rural issues are better represented.

Parliaments and parliamentarians were not really involved in the consultation, elaboration and decision-making process of PRSPs and CSPs.⁶² The former tendency for donors and international organizations to engage civil society and NGOs at the expense of parliaments is

⁶⁰ Preliminary findings of a study by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development "Aid Targeting the 1998-2000".

⁶¹ David Reed; The rural poor and their natural resources - understanding the link between poverty and the environment in a globalised economy in. *The ACP-EU Courier*, No. 189, November-December 2001, p. 30/31.

⁶² Sometimes though their own fault: MPs have been known to claim to have other engagements even when the consultations were taking place in their own constituencies. The contribution of MPs in the development of Kenya's PRSP was disappointing, according to the non-governmental organization Action Aid. More than 60,000 Kenyans attended countrywide workshops and seminars during the formulation of the PRSP, but the majority of MPs was absent. In Gumisai Mutume: A new anti-poverty remedy for Africa?, in: *Africa Recovery*, Vol.16, No. 4 (February 2003), p. 12-14.

neither acceptable nor prudent. They have to engage with parliaments, which have the last word on laws and budgets and are the representative institutions that provide the political base for policy and institutional arrangements.

Greater parliamentary involvement helps to ensure that the country's poverty reduction and development programmes are generated, implemented, and evaluated through national institutions with adequate political legitimacy to ensure ownership and sustainability (see Box 4).

Governments and parliaments have to take the lead in mitigating drought and desertification.⁶³ This requires the institution of long-term strategies, in line with the UNCCD and leading to the sustainable development of dryland regions. Important pillars on which this strategy should stand:

- a) creating appropriate framework conditions (laws and regulations promoting and facilitating anti-desertification measures and pro-farmer land ownership policies, a positive approach to agricultural development and agroforestry systems, population control, etc.);
- b) setting up of sustainable land and water management systems (incl. small-scale irrigation schemes);
- c) strengthening communication systems and information dissemination (e.g. news bulletins on the expected pattern of rainfall, seeds of short-season varieties);
- d) building up people's skills (e.g. for optimising land use or on new production systems for risk management) and
- e) creating good infrastructure and conditions for mobility and trade.

⁶³ Jagdish C. Katyal and Paul L.G. Vlek: Desertification - Concept, Causes and Amelioration, *ZEF-Discussion Papers in Development Policy*, No. 33, Bonn, October 2000.

Box 4 Greater parliamentary involvement in the PRSP process

Bearing in mind the core principles underlying the PRSP demonstration can be made of how legislative involvement reinforces the potential for effective, sustainable economic development. The PRSP process is required to be:

- a) **Participatory, country driven and owned.** Under most constitutions, legislatures are the most representative element of a country's national government. The representative responsibilities of parliament, as assigned by each country's constitution, provide a greater level of ownership and legitimacy than other participatory methods, such as stakeholder workshops.
- b) **Results-oriented.** While the PRSP is designed to ensure that realistic targets for poverty reduction have been made in advance of legislative implementation, the success of a country's poverty reduction initiative depends on actual budget reallocations and the passage of appropriate supporting legislation. Parliament plays a critical role in both of these areas of implementation.
- c) **Comprehensive.** Considering the geographic spread, political coverage, and sector - specific committee structure of national parliaments, legislatures (and legislative structures) offer a potential space in which to debate a nationally comprehensive view of poverty or the non-quantitative impact of poverty reduction initiatives. Even if parliamentary debate is motivated by geographic- or constituency-specific interests, the airing of such views contributes to a more comprehensive national poverty reduction strategy.
- d) **Prioritized for feasible implementation.** While economic factors and rational decision-making can logically prioritize poverty relief for certain regions or sectors, such decisions have significant impact on popular support for the political parties or individuals in executive offices. Parliaments, which typically include a range of political factors and are vested with constitutional authority to serve as a check on the decisions of the executive, may serve to balance the ruling party's political interests in PRSP formulation. Engaging the parliament in the PRSP prioritization process acknowledges the political impact of economic decisions, and reinforces both sustainability and **Partnership-Oriented**, another core principle of the PRSP.
- e) **Based on medium- and long-term perspectives.** Building non-partisan support for poverty reduction strategies among national leaders engenders greater continuity in the medium- and long- term. Because the PRSP process takes place over time and within a political environment, broad support for the PRSP by MPs from both governing and opposition parties is important in ensuring that the PRSP's success will not be derailed by changes in the political environment. In most PRSP countries, national parliaments include representatives of all major political factions, and therefore provide a forum for political actors to debate and participate in the PRSP process. To ensure the parliamentary cooperation needed to enable broader support for PRSP among diverse national leaders, parliaments must be included in the PRSP process well in advance of their examination of the national budget or prior to PRSP approval.

Source: K. S. Hubli and A. P. Mandaville: *Parliaments and the PRSP Process*, World Bank, Washington 2002, available at <http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance/parliament/resources.htm> > <http://64.124.46.12/documents/prsp.pdf>

The local people should be deliberately involved. People's participation is a unique way to develop demand-driven, location specific plans toward managing natural-resources and responding to the unequal needs of disparate stakeholders such as farmers and herders. Greater democratisation and decentralisation will be necessary to make the strategy happen. Administrative powers should be vested in village-based institutions. With the transfer of administrative and monitoring responsibility to community-based institutions, government officials are likely to become more responsive in conducting the programme to success.

MPs rightly request governments and the donor community to ensure that parliamentarians are part of the processes leading to the development and implementation of poverty reduction

strategies. They ask where necessary for professional training programmes to enable them to engage effectively in poverty reduction strategies (see Box 3).

There are some stimulating initiatives in this field:

- a) The World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, in collaboration with the Parliamentary Centre (Canada) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), have launched a pilot programme designed to assist parliaments to better understand the PRSP process, and to determine for themselves how they can best ensure high performance of the government. A pilot workshop for parliamentarians was held in Ghana, which has already resulted in closer parliamentary – civil society interactions on the PRSP and a greater focus by parliament on the budgetary issues relating to the poverty reduction.⁶⁴
- b) For the past two years, with funding from the United Kingdom Department for International Development, the United States Agency for International Development and DANIDA and the NDI has been working with both parliament and civil society to increase citizen input into the legislative and governance processes in Malawi, particularly with respect to the country's PRSP. To increase parliament's capacity to function as an independent and representative body, NDI focuses on committees as venues for building relationships between MPs, government officials and civil society.⁶⁵
- c) The German Agency for Technical Cooperation is also convinced that parliamentary involvement in PRSP processes must be enhanced. Since January 2003, GTZ has been promoting a PRSP training programme for MPs in Ethiopia. Similar programmes are planned for parliamentarians in Armenia, Ghana, Madagascar, Nicaragua and Zambia.
- d) The Global Mechanism provides support for partnership building, mainstreaming of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification-National Action Programmes into national development strategies and national budgets, and strengthening the involvement of civil society and parliamentarians.⁶⁶

Considering the high political relevance of land degradation, soil erosion and desertification issues, there is – a need, on both the national and international levels – for better parliamentary participation and continuity, greater parliamentary involvement, capacity strengthening and parliamentary networking.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ cf. Review of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) Approach: Early Experience with Interim PRSPs and Full PRSPs. Prepared by the Staffs of the World Bank and IMF. March 26, 2002 available at <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/review/earlyexp.pdf>.

⁶⁵ NDI is providing training and technical assistance in advocacy and lobbying to parliamentary committees that have oversight of government ministries. Prior to NDI's involvement, most of these committees were dormant. NDI also trains and provides technical assistance for clerks and other parliamentary staff to improve support for MPs. see NDI for International Affairs, Southern Africa: Malawi at <http://www.ndi.org/worldwide/safrica/malawi/malawi.asp>.

⁶⁶ Kwame Awere's contribution to the 1st CRIC session in Rome from 11 to 22 November 2002, in: Earth Negotiations Bulletin, published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Vol. 4, No. 162, 25 November 2002 available at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/desert/cric1>

⁶⁷ U. Holtz: The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and its Political Dimension, Bonn, May 2003.

Parliaments can contribute to providing for effective policy formulation, coordination, implementation and monitoring the process of sustainable human development including the UNCCD process. The concept of “sustainable human development” can be defined as a process aimed at eradicating poverty and allowing human progress without compromising environmental and natural resources for future generations.

The UNCCD Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) at its first session in November 2002⁶⁸ came to the following conclusions relevant for a parliamentary follow-up:

- a) Mainstreaming the fight against desertification into national development plans, key sectors or strategies has taken place in some countries but does not appear to be a sufficient condition for securing the required national or external support;
- b) Weak institutional capacities, often combined with policy inconsistencies and poor harmonisation of environmental laws hamper the implementation process;
- c) The progress made on synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies is insufficient; and
- d) The review and harmonization of relevant legislation on natural resource management, land and water rights and decentralisation remain a daunting but necessary task.

As the Convention to Combat Desertification enters a more intensive implementation phase, it will contribute to implementation of the commitments to eradicate poverty spelled out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD, and those entered into at the World Food Summits at Rome in 1996 and 2002.

The WSSD outcomes include the parliamentary declaration *Toward Sustainability: Implementing Agenda 21*, adopted by acclamation on the occasion of the Parliamentary Meeting organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliament of South Africa (Johannesburg, 29-30 August 2002).⁶⁹ In this declaration, MPs inter alia pledge to formally review in their respective parliaments the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD and to speedily implement through legislation, including budgetary measures, the provisions of the Plan. MPs recognise the unique role of parliamentarians in scrutinizing, monitoring and holding national governments to account in respect of the implementation of international agreements.

Parliamentarians should work⁷⁰ for the strengthening of national legislation, its harmonization with the provisions of the UNCCD and the mainstreaming of anti-desertification needs into PRSPs, national action plans and country programmes supported by the donor community. They also need to build more synergies between the three Rio conventions (climate, biodiversity, desertification), as these are important tools for sustainable human development and

⁶⁸see Report of the committee on its first session, held in Rome from 11 to 22 November 2002. <http://www.unccd.int/cop/officialdocs/cric1/pdf/10eng.pdf>

⁶⁹ <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/Jbrg02/final.pdf>

⁷⁰ U. Holtz: The previous four Round Tables of Members of Parliament on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification - Achievements and Challenges, Bonn, May 2003.

poverty eradication. They need to be empowered by influence and capacity strengthening, by pooling and exchanging information and by sharing experiences and examples of good practice using the new information technologies wherever it is effective to do so.

It is of great merit that with the support of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the UNCCD secretariat - a parliamentary dimension has been added to the UNCCD process and to its Conferences of the Parties. The Parliamentary Round Tables (the fifth one in to be held at Havana on 3 and 4 September 2003) have become a platform for exchange of views and interaction among parliamentarians on desertification issues. The Havana Round Table's declaration should include a parliamentary action plan and propose the creation under the auspices of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, of a Parliamentary Network on UNCCD (PNoUNCCD) (a network of information, interaction and influence), with the aim of increasing parliamentary involvement and efficiency in the fields of combating desertification, soil erosion and land degradation, of pooling information; and of ensuring greater parliamentary input into international negotiations and organizations.

The ambitious MDGs which pre suppose improvements in rural development, can only be achieved if there is a dedication to development efforts on all levels of political and individual, state and non-state action. Members of parliament should do everything to avoid losing momentum in this critical phase of UNCCD implementation: they must be agents of change.

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