

Insights on Natural Resource Management and Rural Development in Zambia: Moving From Research Evidence to Action

Collaborating Partners in Organizing this Public Forum – 03 December, 2009
NRCF (Natural Resources Consultative Forum),
CBNRMF (Community-Based Natural Resource Management Forum),
UNZA (University of Zambia),
ACF (Agricultural Consultative Forum) and
FSRP (Food Security Research Project)

POLICY SUGGESTIONS TO THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES, AND OTHERS

Stakeholders from a broad array of perspectives deliberated on a number of human, environmental, as well as food security development issues in Zambia. Due to overwhelming interest some issues were recommended for further discussion. Feedback will be conveyed on presentations, discussions and outstanding issues in a larger forum proceeding report. In the meantime from the presentations and plenary discussions the forum was able to conclude with the following policy statements and related recommended actions.

1. Governance of Natural Resources

1.1 Discussion: Economic growth and urbanisation in Zambia coexist with persistent high levels of rural poverty and food insecurity that have increased demands on natural resources and contributed to accelerated environmental degradation. Service delivery at all levels of governance needs to be restructured if the promotion of economic development and management of natural resources is to improve. Improved broad-based human welfare and environmental outcomes are possible. New strategies based on appropriate resource management systems which promote broad-based participation and address household benefits are more likely to be appreciated and offer incentives for more effective community-based natural resource management. At present, benefits are captured mostly by non-poor members who dominate the membership in local-level management structures.

1.1 Recommended Actions:

- (a)** Build more local-level capacities to effectively participate in decision-making, benefit-sharing, and natural resource management. This may be done in public-private-NGO-community partnerships;
- (b)** Review and strengthen the incentive structure for community-based natural resource management. This calls for a restructuring of the benefit sharing schemes;
- (c)** Carry out comparative country studies on the impact of the CBNRM model, and effectiveness of participation by poor households.

1.2 Discussion: Stakeholders are strongly concerned about the weak performance of government agencies with respect to effective development as well as enforcement of laws and regulations. The Forest Department was identified as one good example of such failure as charcoal production and trade seems to be taking place with almost no controls. In fact, at the moment, the only sub-sector where some policing is evident is wildlife.

1.2 Recommended Actions:

- (a)** Improve management capacity and to strengthen enforcement of laws and regulations in relation to all natural resources. This may entail training, increased awareness, increased human and financial resource allocation, improved coordination with other institutions, and harmonisation of legal and policy frameworks among other possible actions.
- (b)** Explore more innovative approaches to resource development and enhancement through partnerships. This will require creating an enabling policy environment for other stakeholders (NGOs,

private sector, communities) to effectively participate in managing natural resources. Some rights of ownership need to be gradually devolved.

1.3 Discussion: Resources in open areas (land, watersheds, biodiversity) have been neglected as they are considered common property. Soil erosion, gully formation, deforestation, and cultivation on hill slopes and watershed areas are not checked or controlled. No institution seems responsible for managing land and the environment in general. Some chiefs do not reside on their lands and hence have no authority on how its resources are used.

1.3 Recommended Actions:

- (a) Strengthen options for custodianship of natural resources in open areas by local chiefs and their communities. This may entail legislative changes and their strict implementation.
- (b) Promote farming practises that do not degrade the environment and natural resources. This requires significant strengthening of extension as well as stricter monitoring in key resource use areas. The MACO and the MTENR will need to draw upon each other's synergies and work together if this is to be achieved. There is need for a government agency under the MTENR that is tasked to monitor land-use practices and that reinforces leadership by provincial government authorities to help lead and coordinate provincial land use plans. Such monitoring can be implemented in partnership with local government and community-based institutions to contribute local land use planning efforts.

2. Policy and Law Review Processes

2.1 Discussion: Policy review processes are argued not to be transparent enough. For example, some chiefs have expressed ignorance of the just-ended wildlife and forestry policy review processes. The House of Chiefs and the private sector are among the stakeholders whose interests are argued to be undermined by weak enforcement of laws in the natural resource sector.

2.1 Recommended Action:

- (a) Be more transparent and inclusive when reviewing policies and laws. The just-ended reviews of the forestry and wildlife policies should be re-opened and subjected to further consultations with a wider set of stakeholders, who feel left out. Engage with the house of chiefs when conducting reviews of policies.

2.2 Discussion: Lease agreements for hunting concessions will expire in 2012. There are clauses in the concessions that are linked to the Wildlife Act. Reviewing the Act may lead to some of the clauses become legally unsupported. Thus, the review of the Wildlife Policy and Act must be completed in good time to allow for tendering and drafting of new concessions and marketing before the existing ones expire. New leaseholders must have enough time to market their areas to avoid loss of revenue to ZAWA.

2.2 Recommended Action:

- (a) Commence the review of the Wildlife Policy and Act soon to allow preparations of the tender process and lease agreements. A technical committee of qualified experts knowledgeable about wildlife management issues in game management areas should advise MTENR on how to i) restructure the safari hunting industry to better support conservation and community needs and ii) reduce the cost of wildlife management by ZAWA.

3. Public-Private Sector Partnerships (PPPs)

3.1 Discussion: Capacity to manage natural resources is limited at many levels. Communities are limited in terms of technical knowledge and their abilities to understand investment initiatives and to negotiate²

effectively with investors and programme implementers. The capacity of CBOs to adopt business approach requires a lot of training to transfer entrepreneurship skills. Public resources, both human and financial, are limited, rendering the government incapable of effectively managing the natural resource estate on its own. Increased capacity to manage natural resources requires substantial financial resources, which often is more easily mobilised by the private sector and NGO partners. Therefore, one of the strategies commonly advocated in recent years is to facilitate pooling of resources and interests among the public sector, private sector players, non-governmental organizations and communities. If well-designed and well-managed, these partnerships could generate useful synergies.

3.1 Recommended Actions:

- (a)** Expedite and facilitate participation of all stakeholders in the legislative review processes. The success of PPPs requires improvements on existing policies and legal frameworks.
- (b)** For new legislation, consider more innovative models of conservation and rural development. For example, models that foster private sector investment in forestry establishment and wildlife conservation should be considered.
- (c)** The public sector needs to find more and effective ways to position itself as a facilitator, monitor and regulator, while encouraging active but regulated participation of other key stakeholders, including the communities, NGOs and private sector.

4. Business-Oriented Approach From a Strengthened Private Sector Involvement

4.1 Discussion: Natural resources management at the moment relies heavily on support from the government, the private sector and donors. However, private sector and donor support are short-term and largely uncoordinated and unpredictable. There is need to streamline private sector investment and contributions.

4.1 Recommended Actions:

- (a)** Pool and coordinate private sector support and contributions. Zambia can learn from innovative approaches used by other countries. South Africa, for example, pools resources from banks and other private contributors under the Tourism Enterprise Promotion (TEP) initiative.
- (b)** Undertake comparative studies that involves visiting and learning from other countries. This should be undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team comprising professionals comprising researchers, business individuals and houses, and the government.

4.2 Discussion: There is a lot of emphasis at the moment on wildlife resources in GMAs. Other natural resources are not given as much attention and their potentials are virtually unexplored such as medicinal plants. Phytotrade estimates a potential regional value of US\$ 3 billion for eight oil producing species of wild fruit, from recent surveys, provided reliable markets can be established. Some of these species are found in most forest types of Zambia

Business-oriented natural resource management needs to explore and fully exploit a wide set of available opportunities.

4.2 Recommended Actions:

- (a)** Revamp and enhance research that is aimed at identifying nature-based business opportunities and ways to exploit them.
- (b)** Proactively cultivate an enabling business environment, including increased avenues for accessing financing at low interest rates, and tax incentives. This is especially important for local entrepreneurs with no access to cheaper external funding but would like to venture into natural resource-based enterprises.

- (c) Undertake marketing and promotion activities for the nature-based products, as a country. For example, South Africa markets the Victoria Falls as if it were within its borders. Zambia needs to be more aggressive in penetrating markets for her natural resources.

5. Land Access and Security of Tenure for Improved Smallholder Food Security

5.1 Discussion: Zambia is generally regarded as a land-abundant country. Yet research evidence indicates that the majority of smallholder farmers own and cultivate very small portions of land, and farm sizes are decreasing with time. Research also shows that smallholder households with larger portions of land are better off, and those with small portions are generally poor. Moreover, land productivity is generally very low among smallholder farmers. It appears, therefore, that poverty reduction in rural areas is closely related to land access among other factors. Even when one has access to land, they typically do not have security of tenure and other complementary land-enhancing and settlement productivity services are often lacking. Displacements to give way for large-scale investors and wildlife are common occurrences. Ability to secure funding with land as collateral is even further fetched.

5.1 Recommended Actions:

- (a) Devise more effective ways to improve access to land on the part of smallholders. Complement the policy of farm blocks with more localized programmes. Zoning, for example, has been proposed to increase land access for smallholder households in GMAs.
- (b) Raise the value of land in these remote areas by improving infrastructure such as roads, and communication facilities. Doing so would also attract private-sector investment and improve settlement of existing farm blocks in GMAs.
- (c) Find more effective ways of securing individual (smallholder) household tenure and communal rights to land and other natural resources. The idea of traditional certificates of title from chiefs being is being considered by the National Constitution Review Commission (NCC), and was proposed during the outreach forum.
- (d) Develop enhanced approaches to raise productivity of smallholders' agricultural land through greatly expanded applied research and extension.

5.2 Discussion: Co-existence with wildlife cannot be without human-wildlife conflicts. These need to be minimized to the extent possible. GMAs still have land parcels where agriculture can be promoted. However, migration into wildlife habitats and other protected areas must be strictly controlled. Animal habitats and area that have to be placed under agriculture must be clearly mapped out. Now is the time to prioritise conservation areas and strengthen protection of animal habitats, while also finding ways to improve smallholder welfare.

5.2 Recommended Actions:

- (a) Review and analyse the status of GMAs in view of expanding human settlements.
- (b) Develop more effective ways to safe-guard animal habitats with legal instruments.
- (c) Develop and implement regional and local integrated land use plans.
- (d) Define resource rights for institutions, individuals and communities to make regulation easy.
- (e) Coordinate with local government to resolve land conflicts among chiefs so as to increase land access by historically displaced groups.
- (f) Assist communities to invest their land in wildlife use with reciprocal rights to own majority shares or revenue benefits that might accrue from PPP ventures.