

Participatory forest management in Africa: an overview of progress and issues

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Introduction

The objective of this paper is to provide an overview of where and how local involvement in forest management is occurring at this time in Africa and to identify trends and constraints. Local involvement occurs in diverse forms, but is broadly encompassed by the term “participatory forest management” (PFM). The generic term “forests” is used to encompass diverse types, from dry woodlands to moist tropical forests, coastal mangroves and plantations. “Community” in the context of PFM refers to people living within or next to forests.

This paper draws on a host of project documents, publications, policy documents and legislation and the author’s own experience. A number of people have been helpful in making documents available or answering questions, and I express my gratitude to them here.¹

The general conclusion of this overview is that PFM is sufficiently widespread and effective in Africa today to be recognized as a significant route towards securing and sustaining forests. While each state is arriving at more participatory approaches, especially to natural forest management, broad commonalities among processes and paradigms are notable. Root causes of failures in twentieth-century forest management are relatively common, as are the forces now driving action. Prime among these is widening sociopolitical transformation on the continent towards more inclusive norms in the governance of society and its resources. More than any other new strategy in the forest sector, PFM embodies this emergent democratization. Recognition that forest management is itself primarily a matter of governance is crystallizing, with technically driven functions reassuming their proper place as support functions to sound forest governance regimes.

The character of PFM is by no means fixed and is in significant transition at this early stage of its evolution on the continent, in frequently contested ways. Early developments tended to engage communities as local users whose cooperation was sought and bought through making some of their forest access legal and/or through sharing with them a portion of the income generated from forest enterprises. Buffer zone developments also flourished, with the intention of helping communities turn their eyes from the forest. Forestry administrations have begun to find, however, that local participation becomes a great deal more meaningful and effective when local populations are involved not as cooperating forest users but as forest managers and even owner-managers in their own right. So far, this shift is seeing most delivery in respect of unreserved forests, those that have not been formally drawn under government jurisdiction and/or tenure.

Empowerment of local communities as owner-managers of emergent “community forests” is gaining particular impetus from corollary land reform strategies that endow customary land interests with much-improved status in state law. State readiness to empower local people in respect of classified or reserved areas is less, as is readiness to devolve to communities significant jurisdiction over resources that are of high biological diversity or commercial value, such as those in which timber or wildlife are dominant products. Local licensing and revenue sharing still tend to define PFM in such areas, with limited local roles in overall decision-making as to the use and control of the resource. Gathering practice nonetheless suggests that even limited platforms of benefit sharing tend to engender increased power sharing over time, not least through local demand, catalysed through even limited forms of participation. Participation as a whole is visibly moving from

1. Elijah Danso in Ghana; Bruno Rajaspera, Peter Schachenmann and Tom Erdmann in Madagascar; Andy Roby, Andy Brock-Doyle and Patrice Bigombe Logo in Cameroon; Zelalem Temesgen, Guenther Hasse and Berhanu Mengesha in Ethiopia; Dara Akala and Robert Spencer in Nigeria; Wolfgang Thoma in the Gambia; Julien Radoux in Morocco and Cecilia Polansky in Zambia. Any mistakes in describing PFM in these countries – and indeed others – are entirely my own.

consultative and collaborative norms to those in which partnerships between state and community are being forged and, in a growing number of cases, for the purpose of enabling communities to operate as effectively autonomous forest authorities. Evolution of African PFM as a whole is thus increasingly characterized by devolution. Custodianship, not access, is becoming central to agreements and relations.

In the process, institutional issues increasingly concern PFM developments and pose the main challenge to the development of effective and democratic norms of local-level governance over forests. A main trend is towards defining local community in more inclusive terms and less user-centred contexts. The need for a stronger and more legal institutional form to entrench local roles is everywhere being felt to enable formal divestment and the exercise of meaningful jurisdiction. Issues of accountability are becoming pivotal, both to those with whom management agreements are signed and, internally, to make local forest managers accountable to the wider communities on whose behalf they act.

Benefits that are useful to people, state and forest conservation may be seen in these paradigm shifts and go beyond the cost and efficiency benefits of sharing responsibility for forest security and management with citizens. First, livelihood concerns may be more profoundly and less paternalistically addressed. Generally poor forest-local populations move from positions of subordinate beneficiaries (receiving a share of access, products or other benefits) into positions where they may themselves regulate this source of livelihood, with longer-term perspectives.

Second, forests identified and placed under local jurisdiction are gaining sociospatial boundaries that help remove them from the open-access ills that are so widely associated with public properties. The declaration and demarcation of community forests, more than any other development under PFM, embodies this trend. Policy and legal provision for their creation now exists in more than 20 African states, notwithstanding significant differences in the level of jurisdiction and tenure implied.

Third, democratization, a common objective in Africa at this time, is being amply served through PFM

practice. Moreover, this is increasingly targeted at the grassroots level, which has tended to be bypassed in conventional governance developments focusing on the district or commune level. Frequently, it is the case that local-level institutional formation for the purposes of forest management is providing a platform for wider local-level governance development.

Fourth, PFM is contributing to growing respect on the continent for majority land rights, including those that relate to customary communal properties, such as forests and pasture. Through constructs such as community forests, emergent land reform processes are encouraged to give concrete form to unregistered communal interests as modern constructs of private group property. In the process, these lands gain redefinition as modern community estates, with clearer boundaries and owners. Rights, and potentially millions of hectares of especially unreserved forests, may be secured.

Fifth, PFM demonstrates an increasingly sound development process that goes well beyond the fact that its focus is on some of the poorest and most remote rural poor. It embodies an unusually high level of praxis of policy and practice, and steady maturation through learning by doing. The contention that PFM practice engenders from time to time may be seen as an indicator of the substantive change it provokes, for PFM presents challenge not only to moribund norms and inequities between state and people, but also to comparable inequities internal to the emergent forest-managing community. In such ways, the gains from PFM go beyond forest conservation or livelihood to issues of the more inclusive and effective management of society itself. Of such social transformations, PFM is part.

PFM in Africa

Natural forests of moist, coastal and especially dry types represent a massive resource of more than 500 million ha, found in all 56 states of Africa, ranging from 135 million ha in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to 2 000 ha in St Helena (FAO, 2001b). Thirty-seven states have more than 1 million ha and 17 states have more than 10 million ha of forests. Plantations constitute less than 9 million ha.

A wave of change to forest management practice is under way. This is manifest in its most precise and binding terms in promulgation of new state forest laws. Since 1990, at least 35 countries have enacted such new codes, or have these in draft in early 2002 (Box 1).



BOX 1 • New forest laws in Africa since 1990

Enacted: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central Africa Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zanzibar.

In draft: Chad, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Morocco, the Niger, Nigeria, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda.

In new forest laws, the most common changes are the following:

- marked increase in national programming and individual forest planning requirements;²
- more rigour and control over the way in which governments themselves administer national forest properties;³
- legal encouragement for private sector roles, particularly in the plantation sector;⁴
- change in the character of central forestry administrations, with wider civil society input in decision-making, sometimes with relocation of forestry departments into semi-autonomous institutions, and varying degrees of decentralization to local governments;⁵
- policy commitment and new legal opportunity for forest-local populations to participate in forest management, which is the subject of this paper.

The main “drivers” towards these changes are well known, especially the continued loss of forest on the continent of up to 1 million ha each year (FAO, 2001a; 2001b; Mathews, 2001) and resultant added pressure for action being exerted through global environmentalism launched with the Rio Declaration of 1992.

Less acknowledged are the effects of the changing sociopolitical climate, as African states adopt more

devolved and inclusive ways of managing society and its resources (Wily, 2000a). This is a trend broadly encompassed by the term “democratization” and having legal expression not only in new environmental, forestry and wildlife laws but also in founding constitutional, land and local government laws, as is the case in South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal and Benin, among others. Sometimes these reforms proceed hand-in-hand with forest reform (for example in the *gestion de terroir* - village land management approach - of countries such as Mali and the Niger). Even where this is not the case, land and governance have a direct impact on the handling of local forest rights.

PFM on the ground

Action to involve forest-local communities in the management of forests is well under way in Africa (Box 2). Most of these developments have, or quickly acquire, policy and legal support through national forestry policies, national forest management plans and particularly the new forestry legislation already noted.

Without assessing the manner of participation at this point, a cursory overview of developments shows, for example, that a major programme in the Rif recently

2. This is especially widespread in new laws with widespread new statutory requirements for national forest management plans (e.g. Lesotho, Ethiopia, the Gambia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Guinea, the Niger, Togo). A novel feature is the inclusion of listed policy principles in the law (e.g. the United Republic of Tanzania, the Gambia, Uganda, Mozambique, South Africa). Texier (forthcoming) is a main source for information for French-speaking states.

3. New forest laws have distinctly stronger environmental controls and less leeway in the excision of national forest reserves, especially in the case in Kenya, which outdoes other African states in the steady reduction of total hectares of forest reserves, including montane forests critical to water catchment (IUCN, 1996; WRM, 2001c).

4. Especially pronounced in Uganda's draft law and Mozambique's and Zambia's new laws in 1999. Incentives for landholders to create private planted forests or to sustain natural forests are also widely heightened, sometimes with tax exemptions offered (e.g. Kenya, Benin, Madagascar).

5. Civil input into higher decision-making is best illustrated in South Africa's National Forests Act 1998, which recruits members of the new National Forest Advisory Council through public advertisement, also proposed in Uganda's draft law. Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia are the most recent states to plan to turn their forestry departments into semi-autonomous agencies (already undertaken, for example, in Nigeria, Ghana and Zimbabwe). The decentralization of powers to local governments is more complicated, as discussed shortly, but briefly it can be noted that this is a main objective in Mali (1994) and Senegal (1998).

BOX 2 • Participatory forest management in Africa in 2002

- Under way in more than 30 countries
- Largely within more than 100 projects
- Involves about 5 000 communities
- Affects more than 100 national forests
- Introduces more than 1 000 new protected areas (community forests)

ended in **Morocco** with several smaller ongoing developments, such as a pasture/woodland management project in respect of Taskart Forest near Khenifra.⁶ A 1976 forest law is under review. Developments in **the Niger** began with co-management of Gusselbodi Forest in 1986, which is now suspended but had led to larger fuelwood marketing programmes that issue licences to local associations on the basis of sustainable harvesting of inventoried resources (1989–1996). It is estimated that about 350 000 ha of degraded bush (*brousee tigre*) is encompassed. Direct community-based management extends over less than one-fifth of such areas. Communities are also being assisted in bringing more than 34 000 ha of riverine palm groves and the Takieta Forest (6 720 ha) under local management, using the terms of new forest laws (1993, 1999).⁷ **Mali**, with new forestry laws (1995, 1999), has adopted a similar fuelwood markets programme; 15 villages, for example, now manage Kelka Forest through registered associations. Community-based management of woodlands in Bankass District is also being supported.⁸ In **Burkina Faso**, a form of co-management of Kabore Tambi Park (85 440 ha) with 23 communities has been started. Another project assists 170 villages in managing local woodlands (Patecore). Twelve communities in Bam Region have established community management of the Goada woodlands, both constrained and aided by the terms of the new forest code (1997).⁹

In **Guinea**, three co-management initiatives now operating involve three reserves totalling 39 000 ha

(Nialama, Souti Yanfou and Bakoun), following the somewhat complex terms of the 1999 Code Forestier.¹⁰ PFM developments are especially well advanced in the Gambia, where more than 500 communities are involved and at least 230 community forests (24 000 ha) have been declared and are being managed autonomously by communities. Forty of these communities have received full ownership rights, with the remainder under survey or related processes. In addition, co-management is being tested in seven pilot areas involving 13 000 ha of national parks, but with no agreements yet signed. Two other pilots involve communities as designated managers of state forests. Neither co-management nor designated management approaches (community-controlled state forests) are yet considered successful, particularly in comparison with community forest development. The programme is being implemented virtually nationwide and follows laid-out procedures (1998) backed up by the new forest law and regulations (1998).¹¹

Three programmes operate in Cross River State in **Nigeria**, and one in Bayelsa State; together they work directly with about 50 communities. The first project in Cross River State was the Ekuri project, which was begun in 1992 and assisted communities in bringing 33 000 ha of rain forest under some degree of local management. Pilots are under way in seven of an intended 40 community developments, focused on the formation of forest management committees to bring largely degraded unreserved forests in their own lands and adjacent government forest reserves under state–people collaborative management. Although

6. J. Radoux, personal communication; see Melhaoui, 2002, in this volume for a review of the Rif Programme.

7. Babin and Bertrand, 1998; Kerkhof, 2000; Vogt and Vogt, 2000; Hesse and Trench, 2000a and b; Montagne and Mamoudou, 2000.

8. Kerkhof, 2000; Ribot, 1999, passim; Bocoum, 2000; Lavigne Delville, 2000; Hesse and Trench, 2000a and b, passim. Also see Bocoum, 2002 in this volume for details of the Koro Circle developments.

9. Nana, 2000; Dorlochter-Sulser, Kirsch-Jung and Sulser, 2000; Banzaf, Drabo and Grell, 2000; Ribot, 1999, passim; Kerkhof, 2000, passim.

10. Bush, 2000; M. Bush, personal communication.

11. Sonko and Camara, 2000; Reeb, 1999; Schindele, 2001; GGFP, 2001; FDCFU, 1998.

the State Forest Commission still issues licences and collects royalties, communities are now empowered to control where felling in their local forests occurs and to receive 70 percent of the royalty and 50 percent of the revenue from felling in reserves. A new state law is under preparation.¹² A project in Bassila subdistrict in **Benin** has drawn up participatory management plans with four villages adjacent to Penessaulou Reserve and has assisted 18 other villages in developing plans for smaller forests in the area.¹³ A new forest act has been passed (1993). The Government Forest Development Agency of **Côte d'Ivoire** has established 69 farmer-forest commissions as routes for local consultation with more than 30 resulting plans of action for forested areas.¹⁴

In **Ghana**, two communities were assisted to declare Dedicated Forests (215 ha and 190 ha) in 1994, a development that has not yet been replicated. A Community Forestry Management Unit (1992) promotes the creation of community forestry committees as a contact point for consultation in forest reserve planning. Boundary maintenance contracts are being issued to adjacent communities and the *taungya* regime has been modified to allow foresters to pay farmers who tend seedlings in planted areas. A new timber management law (1997) requires concessionaires to provide 5 percent of the royalty value to local communities and to secure the permission of landowners prior to harvesting on their lands. Several companies have begun to aid communities within their concession areas.¹⁵

Eight distinct projects operate in **Cameroon**, variously assisting communities in creating community forests, now following the law of 1994 and an official manual of procedures (1998). A central supporting Community Forestry Unit was created by decree in 1999. By early 2001, more than 80 applications for community forests involving 273 000 ha had been received, mainly from the south, where commercial timber harvesting, around which community forests are mainly fashioned, is a core objective. Their declaration is subject to detailed inventory and mapping and, where relevant,

to harvesting plans. By November 2001, 40 agreements were signed, with another 170 applications under consideration. Aside from the recent simplification of procedures, innovations include expansion of the process to involve wildlife management areas, trial use of mobile sawmills by communities and increased requirements on logging companies to share a small percentage of revenue with local councils and communities, a plan that is still poorly realized in practice.¹⁶

In the **Sudan**, an NGO project assisted 18 villages in reclaiming forests as discrete community forests, but some of these have allegedly been "returned" to government custody now that they are restored.¹⁷ Six substantial PFM projects operate in **Ethiopia**, mainly piloting buffer zone-cum-co-management developments in state forests in Oromiya Region. A particularly innovative approach is emerging in respect of the Adaba-Dodola Forest Priority Area (53 000 ha), in which forest dweller groups receive full rights over specific blocks of the forest on payment of rent for unforested areas in those blocks and on agreement to use the forest in a sustainable manner. A PFM Working Group (2000) is prompting finalization of new policy begun in 1998, which will probably increase the participatory requirements of the new 1994 federal forest law.¹⁸ In **Madagascar**, a range of programmes promote state-people agreements, which transfer some management powers to communities for first three- then ten-year terms. Only national parks and strict protection areas may not be subject to such collaboration. A new supporting law (1996) was simplified in 2001. More than 50 contracts are now signed and operating. Another 50 agreements have been made under earlier legislation, and they are distinctive for recognizing local tenure interests over the subject forest (Gelose).¹⁹

There is little PFM development in **Kenya**, where the legal passage of a new forest bill providing for people who live within 5 km of forest reserves to form associations to manage or use parts of the forest is delayed. Field projects are few and tend to be

12. Saarela-Kaonga, 2001; Enuor, no date; CFN, passim; CRSCFP, passim; ERM and SWK, passim; D. Akala and R. Spencer, personal communication.

13. Djodjouwin, 2000.

14. Ibo and Leonard, 1997; Lorn, 2000.

15. Amanor, passim; Asare, passim; Appiah & Pedersen, 1998; Wily & Hammond, 2001.

16. Abbot, Nebu and Khen, 1999; Auzel et al., 2001; Birdlife, passim; Djeumo, 2001; Egbe, passim; Fomete, 2001; Milol, 2000; Gardner, DeMarco and Asanga, 2001; Klein, Salla and Kok, 2001; Nkengela, 1999; Olsen et al., 2001; Malleson, 2001; MINEF, 1998.

17. Kerkhof, 2000.

18. Farm Africa, 2000; Shiterek, Manaye and Abebe, 2001; Hesse and Trench, 2000a; PFMWG, passim; Z. Temesgen, G. Hasse, B. Mengesha, personal communication. See Kubsa in this volume for details of the Adaba-Dordola Project.

19. Manantsara and Garreau, 2000; Rabetaliana and Schachenmann, 2000; B. Rajaspera, personal communication.

launched by non-government bodies. A prominent early case was the formation of the Ngong Forest Sanctuary Trust, which has since been given management control over a diminishing urban reserve. Three donor-funded projects have come to an end with no real change on the ground. The Kenya Forest Working Group is attempting various developments in several forest reserves. As in Ghana, taungya has been revived with modifications to improve local relations in some of the more stressed forests. The traditional owners of the Mau forests, the Ogieki, are currently taking government to court over their eviction and the reallocation of these moist montane reserves to other settlers. Local millers and other private sector agents have formed the Friends of Mau Watershed (Fomauwa) to lobby government to reconsider its strategies in the same area. One or two Maasai and coastal communities are trying to bring threatened forest areas under stronger local control (Loita, Kaya) but with uneven legal or official support.²⁰

Tourist-related benefit sharing represents the extent of PFM in **Rwanda**, in respect of Nyungwe Forest Reserve (96 000 ha). More formal initiatives towards state–people cooperation (not co-management) have been launched in **Uganda** in three forest parks. Pilot co-management has been advanced in two forest reserves, planned for replication to several other reserves. The draft new forest law provides clearly that communities declare community forests in their own communal lands and that communities apply to co-manage forest reserves together with the soon-to-be-formed autonomous Forest Authority.²¹

A much greater degree of progress is found in **the United Republic of Tanzania**. Since 1995, more than 500 village forest reserves (VFRs) have been declared by communities out of communal lands. In addition, several thousand households, clans or groups have demarcated private forests (*ngitiris*). Together these developments have brought more than 0.5 million ha into protected status. In addition, a national Forestry Programme is piloting state–people co-management in more than 30 national forest reserves, and three other donor-funded initiatives are establishing co-management in another ten or so reserves. A national programme of support for PFM in all rural districts is getting under way and government

has issued formal guidelines for assisting communities in bringing either reserved or currently unreserved forests under community-based management (2001). A new National Forest Policy (1998) and new Law (2002) make community-based forest management a main focus.²²

A new National Forest Policy (1998) and Law (1999) in **Zambia**, providing for multistakeholder co-management of local forests, have been slow to deliver results. Indeed, a ten-year-old programme of community-managed harvesting and sale of timber and honey products (*Muzama*) has lost official support, with proposed reallocation of the 1 million ha of woodland to more lucrative harvesting interests. Joint forest management continues as the objective of a donor-funded programme in four districts with five village forest management area committees established in respect of one reserve so far (Chikulire, 12 000 ha). One or two smaller initiatives operate, largely involving forester–community cooperation (e.g. Chinyunyu) and more widespread buffer zone developments (PFAP II).²³

In **Malawi**, PFM efforts are directed to non-government forest reserves, where communities are assisted in bringing largely degraded woodlands under management as village forest areas. Generally, these are small areas of only a few hectares. A Southern African Development Community (SADC)-funded wildlife society project has helped communities identify five areas, followed by a larger social forestry project, which has so far helped communities set aside 13 small areas. Benefit sharing and legalization of minor access is operating in three forest reserves (Chimaliro, Kaningina and Madinga). Woodlots established around Blantyre are now being transferred to communities. A new National Forest Policy (1996) and Law (1997) guide developments.²⁴ In **Zimbabwe**, despite widespread wildlife-centred developments under the Community Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) programme, direct forest/woodland management initiatives involving communities are limited to self-started efforts in a few communal woodland areas (Chihota, Seke, Chambatamba and especially Ntabazinduna). In addition, communities assist the Forestry Commission in managing Mafungabusi Forest Reserve and the Pumula Forest

20. Wily and Mbaya, 2001; H. Gibbon, personal communication.

21. Scott, 2000; Hinchley, Turyomurugyendo and Stonewall, 2000; Wild and Mutebi, 1996; UFD, 2000.

22. Wily, 2000c, 2001a; Iddi, 2000; Massawe, 2000; FBD, 2001; TFCG, 2001. Also see Iddi, 2002 in this volume for overview.

23. Uchi Makula Trust, 2000; Robertson, 2000; Lukama, 2000; Zambia Department of Forestry, 2000; P. McCarter and C. Polansky, personal communication.

24. Mauambeta, 2000; Dubois and Lowore, 2000.

Block, to the extent that they protect mainly peripheral parts of the forests in return for agreed access to them, mainly for fuelwood and grazing.²⁵

In contrast, there are at least 18 forest-centred projects operating in **Mozambique**. These adopt various focuses for local participation; two deal only with fire control, six with charcoal and fuelwood production and seven with reforestation. One is a buffer zone project and two are founded on sharing revenue derived from commercial hunting or safari operations in the forests. Of 11 main projects, six operate in forest reserves and five in unreserved forest areas. A community support unit has operated within the government since 1997. The new Forest and Wildlife Law (1999) favours commercial over local interests, although it does require that concessionaires consult with local people and permit access for subsistence use. Minor forest areas may come under local control as sites of cultural heritage.²⁶

In **South Africa**, PFM developments in both state lands and homelands pre-date the new Forest Law of 1998, which formally provided for communities to apply to manage any forest by agreement. Projects adopting diverse formulae are under way in respect of the forests of Makuleke, Dwesa-Cwebe, Ngombe, Dukuduku, Pirie, Wavecrest and Port St Johns. While communities may retrieve ownership of forests through the restitution programme, the state retains control over licensing and may manage the forest on the community's behalf. Benefit sharing and development projects tend to dominate the approaches. A participatory forest management strategy and support unit operate under the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, operating through focus groups in various parts of the country. Several significant outgrower ventures between private companies and communities are evolving in the paper and pulp industry.²⁷

Movement towards more community-based forest management is evolving in **Namibia**, where three vast woodlands originally demarcated to become state forests are now being handed over to local owner-management (more than 200 000 ha). Several community forests are already declared within these areas. A community woodlot is also operational. The new Forest Policy (1998) and Law (2002) provide

support. Wildlife-centred conservancies provide another route through which communities may indirectly increase their jurisdiction over local woodland with state support; 11 now operate.²⁸ In neighbouring **Botswana**, more than 40 community trusts and other forms of local organization have been created and certain wildlife and other natural resource rights are divested to them by agreements. Most focus on the creation of safari camps, hunting, harvesting and the sale of wild foods and handicrafts, with local conservation a backdrop initiative. Communities compete with the private sector to gain leases, and there are some joint community-private ventures.²⁹

Commonalities

Certain commonalities pertain among these diverse participatory developments. First, everywhere PFM is a youthful development; most initiatives are less than five years old and the remainder are usually less than ten years old. Most begin under the aegis of discrete, donor-funded projects. These currently number more than 100 projects or programmes, virtually all of which are backed up with bilateral or international NGO support. Few countries have yet moved into national programming (the Gambia is a main exception), although official guidelines for application nationwide increasingly exist (e.g. Cameroon, the United Republic of Tanzania and Senegal). Creation of support units in central forestry administrations is becoming common (e.g. South Africa, Uganda and Ghana). Several countries now issue newsletters to communicate and coordinate the rising number of projects and interest groups (e.g. Ethiopia, Nigeria and Cameroon). PFM is proving a rich field for NGO and community-based organization (CBO) involvement. Nonetheless, PFM is largely a movement that is being sponsored by and from government forestry administrations themselves, much prompted by supporting donors (a main exception is Kenya, where official support for PFM is still ambivalent). Often, local participation treads uneasily between the need for state support, particularly in respect of legal norms and permission to operate in respect of prime estates, and the independence from state control that it inherently seeks. As a general rule, forestry administrations aim towards collaborative arrangements with community

25. Clarke et al., 1996; Vudzijena, 1998; Campbell et al., 1999; Katerere, Guveya and Muir, 1999.

26. Negrao, 1998; Filimao, Mansur and Namanha, 2000; Anstey, 2000; Boyd et al., 2000; Mushove passim; Wily and Mbaya, 2001.

27. Wily and Mbaya, 2001; Boyd et al., 2001; Mayers, Evans and Foy, 2001.

28. Jones, 1999; Corbett and Jones, 2000; Boyd et al., 2001; Shiweda, 2000.

29. White, 1998; Boyd et al., 2001.

rather than the more devolutionary regimes to which such collaboration often leads.

PFM as a whole is considered innovative and sometimes risky. Administrations prefer to refer to early projects as “pilots” to avoid forcing permanent changes on an uncertain administration. Many projects draw support in the earliest stages through reference to other PFM developments, and especially to the catalytic experiences of Nepal and India.³⁰ In reality, African PFM has its own, similar, catalysts and momentum. In addition, with each passing year, African PFM advances on South Asian paradigms in at least two critical respects: first, as to where local roles may be promoted; and second, as to the attention given to underlying forest tenure interests, both discussed below. African PFM shares with PFM developments worldwide a natural focus on the remote rural poor, given the location of most forests. There is also widespread common policy justification that local involvement in management is essential for livelihood purposes, despite the almost uniformly weak exploration of this linkage in overriding national poverty reduction strategies.³¹ Another strong commonality internationally is in the similar role being played by PFM initiatives country to country, in prompting wider local-level institution building at the grassroots, notwithstanding differences in form and empowerment (see below).

Approaches to PFM

Locus of PFM: where may communities participate?

Differences among PFM developments are altogether more significant, especially in terms of strategic intentions and approach. One of the more visible differences simply regards where forest-local communities are permitted or encouraged to participate in forest management. The conventional distinction between forests that have already been drawn under state aegis (“reserves”, “classified forests” or “permanent forest estate”) and unreserved areas, comes into play here.

Some countries, such as Zambia, Cameroon and Burkina Faso, restrict local roles to unreserved or

other “poorer” forest areas, much in the way that has been contentiously sustained in Nepal and India.³² In contrast, PFM has gained its start in national forest reserves in Uganda, Guinea and Ethiopia.³³ Most other states do not prescribe where PFM may be practised, and developments have begun in both the reserved and the unreserved sectors, but with somewhat different constructs and processes. The question of locus is of course moot in those states where the intention is to transfer nationally owned and administered forests into local hands; this is most explicitly the case in Lesotho, and is partially the case in the Gambia, Namibia and South Africa (the last driven by land restitution policies).³⁴

In Africa, moreover, there is rarely an objection in principle to involving communities in the management of commercially important forests such as industrial plantations, which is a matter of considerable contention at this point in Nepal. Privatization procedures under way in South Africa have explicitly extended privatization to include communities and not only companies.³⁵ Malawi, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania all propose various forms of local participation in future commercial plantation management, and one co-management initiative is already under way in Tanzania.³⁶

Types of PFM: who is participating with whom?

Management agreements represent the primary construct of PFM. These frame whatever arrangement has been reached between community and state, which in itself says a great deal about the permissive nature of PFM at this point: it evolves largely by agreement with the traditionally dominant forest authority, the state. It is rarely the case that communities autonomously declare management regimes in which the state’s role is largely advisory. The closest example to this is found in the creation of village forest reserves in the United Republic of Tanzania, where village governments inform the local district government of the actions they propose to take and will implement with or without formal support. Should they wish to add legal force to their decisions, however, they need to secure district

30. See Enters, Durst and Victor, 2000 and Poffenberger, 2000 for details of PFM in Asia.

31. Wily and Hammond, 2001.

32. Shrestha passim; Kumar, 2000.

33. In Ethiopia, priority forest areas have largely been devolved to regional state government control.

34. Wily and Mbaya, 2001.

35. Mayers, Evans and Foy, 2001.

36. Iddi, 2002.

council approval of their village-made legislation (by-laws). Support from the central state is only required in respect of national forest reserves.

What is actually agreed in the terms of management agreements or contracts varies greatly. It can be said, with some oversimplification, that the following types broadly apply, sometimes within one country:

- *consultation* (e.g. as expressed in the Forest–Farmer Commissions in Côte d'Ivoire or the Forest Committees in Ghana);
- *cooperative management*, in which community roles and powers are limited (e.g. Zimbabwe, Zambia and Benin);
- *contractual partnership*, in which community roles are more substantial but are still inequitable (e.g. Cameroon, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Madagascar, the Sudan, the Niger, Mali and Guinea);
- *consigned management*, in which the community has all operational powers except ultimate authority (e.g. as is being promoted in the Gambia and the United Republic of Tanzania in respect of national forest reserves);
- *community-based forest management*, in which jurisdiction is fully devolved and sometimes includes ownership of the estate (e.g. as in the Gambia, Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania, Lesotho and, potentially, Namibia, South Africa and Uganda).

**Focuses of PFM:
product- or protection-centred?**

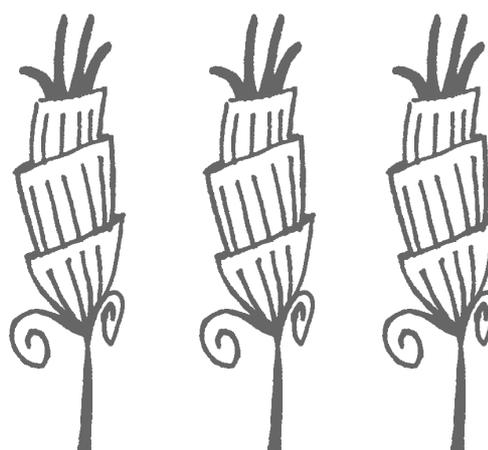
PFM initiatives tend to be mainly either product- or protection-centred in their early focus and are accordingly built mainly around either use or conservation management issues. Wildlife, and not the woodland environment within which it is found, provided the launching pad for community involvement throughout most of southern Africa, led by the catalytic CAMPFIRE programme of Zimbabwe, which was subsequently adapted for the early conservancy projects of Botswana, Namibia and Mozambique.³⁷ Fuelwood extraction has equally strongly fashioned PFM initiatives in the Niger and has since expanded to Mali, Burkina Faso and Senegal.³⁸ Timber harvesting drives PFM in Cameroon, with the conducting of an inventory being

a crucial step towards the award of a community forest.³⁹ The dry character of Sahelian and North African woodlands dictates that grazing management is often the focus of PFM in these states.⁴⁰ Emerging rural land laws in these states (e.g. the Niger's Code of 1993) and related pastoral charters (e.g. Mauritania's Code Pastoral 2000 and Mali's Charte Pastorale 2000) deal with woodland and grazing rights as a matter of course. Frequently, the central management agreement is less an agreement to manage than a licence to use the forest. Local-level identification of the community in such cases is disposed towards an interest group or user group focus rather than towards membership of the community residing within or next to the resource as a whole.

In contrast, PFM that begins with protection objectives tends more strongly towards management-centred decision-making and inclusive local groups, irrespective of which members use or do not use the forest. Definition of the community proceeds on a sociospatial rather than a user basis. This is the evolving norm in the Gambia, Lesotho, Uganda, Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zanzibar, and it is the foundation of more recent projects in Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa. It is also partially the case in Madagascar, Ethiopia and Guinea. This is not to say that issues of forest use are immaterial, but that custodial/managerial roles, rather than use rights, are central to agreements.

**Objectives of PFM:
sharing benefits or authority?**

The above reflect a more fundamental distinction in the strategic intentions of PFM. Broadly, these are mainly disposed either to share forest access or revenue with local populations (benefit sharing) or to share authority over the resource with them (power sharing). The former seeks less to alter the source of



37. White, 1998; Jones, 1999; Filimao, Mansur and Namanha, 2000.
38. Babin and Bertrand, 1998; Ribot, 1999; Montagne and Mamoudou, 2000.
39. MINEF, 1998.
40. Kerkhof, 2000; Hesse and Trench passim.

jurisdiction than to procure local cooperation to it. The latter focuses on precisely this transformation; it seeks to turn local people into forest managers themselves, as a matter of right and/or to share burdens of conservation and management on the state. Two different paradigms result (Box 3).

Benefit-sharing strategies

In practice, the line between the two approaches becomes less clear, because even the least transformational approach evolves towards more sharing of rights and responsibilities with local communities, albeit inequitably and often only tentatively at first. Classical forms of benefit sharing, meanwhile, continue to abound. Buffer zone developments have the longest history and are designed to reduce local dependence on the forest, especially by substituting wood supplies and sources of livelihood. On-farm tree planting programmes usually feature, along with credit opportunities and – often – hand-in-hand with environmental education programmes.⁴¹ Another route to acquiring local cooperation is to offer employment opportunities, as

in Ghana, where forest-local populations are now contracted to clear boundaries and are paid to tend tree seedlings in forest reserves.⁴² As a whole, PFM in French-speaking Sahel is strongly oriented towards providing labour opportunities and income rather than forest ownership or management rights.⁴³

Revenue sharing is another popular means to engage local community support, or rather to appease local resentment of the substantial incomes being made in the area by commercial logging, hunting or safari developments. PFM in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana and Namibia have origins in wildlife-based revenue sharing. Apart from the decline in income share when tourism declines (as in Zimbabwe and Kenya), conflict over shares occurs frequently between government and people and within the ranks of the community itself, where shares may be disputed.⁴⁴ Other difficulties arise where local governments are the conduit for community shares and/or deliver them in the form of social services; supervision costs tend to be high, defeating the need to reduce the burdens on the administration (Mozambique),⁴⁵ may be “mired in corruption”

BOX 3 • Broad distinctions in paradigms		
	BENEFIT-SHARING APPROACHES	POWER-SHARING APPROACHES
Community as	Beneficiary User Consultee Rule follower	Actor Manager Decision-maker Rule maker
Local involvement as	Income-centred Use-centred Permissive	Rights-centred Management-centred Empowerment
Management objective	To gain cooperation with management	To devolve management
Livelihoods objective	To share products with communities	To put forest sources of livelihood in community hands

41. For example, the LENF programme in Nigeria (Saarela-Kaonga, 2001) the Malawi programmes (Mauambeta, 2000) the Ijum-Kilum Project in Cameroon (Gardner, DeMarco and Asanga, 2001), the Arabuko-Sokoke Project in Kenya, the Chinyunyu Project in Zambia (Lukama, 2000) and the Kabore Tambi Park Project in Burkina Faso (Nana, 2000).

42. Asare passim.

43. Ribot passim.

44. Negrao, 1998.

45. Negrao, 1998.

(Cameroon)⁴⁶ or may be considered locally as irrelevant or the duty of local governments to provide (Zimbabwe).⁴⁷ Powerful timber interests may delay arrangements through which they are directly to contribute to the welfare of people within their concession areas (Ghana).⁴⁸

The *legalizing of local forest use* is another means towards raising local collaboration but it constrains associated managerial roles. In Zimbabwe, joint forest management of Mafungabusi Forest Reserve permits adjacent communities to cut grass, collect wild foods, keep beehives and graze stock in specified peripheral areas of the reserve, but not to manage the forest.⁴⁹ Managers of Chimaliro Forest Reserve in Malawi and Bwindi National Forest Park in Uganda allow even lower levels of extraction.⁵⁰ Communities, in effect, pay for their access by reporting strangers to the forest authorities and/or by clearing firebreaks.

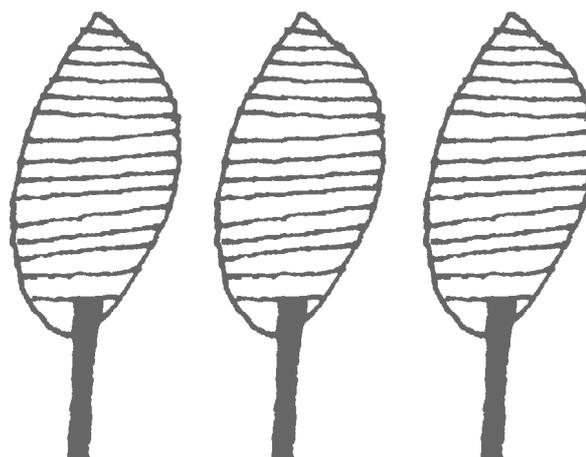
A more sophisticated approach provides for communities to gain *licensee status*, competing with private sector interests. As already noted, fuelwood extraction rights are central to PFM efforts in the Niger, Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso. Sustainable harvesting may result by limiting felling to trees of certain sizes and by rotating felling by coupe. Such community-implemented efforts should not be confused, however, with community-based management. Decision-making as to quota, let alone issue of licences and control of revenue, remains in the hands of forest authorities or their agents (often local governments at levels higher than the community level). As Ribot (2001) points out, production and marketing permits are still under forest service control and are mainly allocated to powerful, usually urban-based, merchants. Licence-based participation is mirrored elsewhere. In Botswana, for example, more than 70 community-based organizations have been formed, not to receive management powers but to receive licences to use mainly wildlife resources, in ways that are determined by the state.⁵¹ In Mozambique, communities may harvest wood resources, but again only through obtaining licences and in competition with obviously better-sourced private sector interests.⁵²

Such regimes largely depart from the past only in making this opportunity more definitively available to adjacent populations. The terms on which communities are involved are rarely those of their choice. Community is usually defined in terms of people with relevant user interests, excluding large sections of the forest-local community, and this generates other tensions. In addition, it may take time for local communities to recognize that, by entering user-bounded agreements, they are implicitly accepting the government's recognition of their interests as limited to their rights of use. As a result, they may be abandoning more deeply rooted tenurial claims to forests.

Moreover, as licensees or registered user groups, their rights may be withdrawn, as has already occurred in the case of the Muzama initiative in northwestern Zambia. Muzama was begun more than a decade ago to assist beekeepers and pit-sawing groups to export bee and wood products, following sustainable harvesting guidelines, within 800 000 ha of prime *miombo* woodland.⁵³ In practice, the relationship between the Forest Department and the user groups was manifested only in the issue of harvesting licences. The department decided not to renew these in 1999 in order to reallocate the area to more lucrative commercial activities. The disadvantages of founding a project based on products rather than on a management agreement were immediately apparent, as was the failure to better promote and secure local tenure of this vast commonage area.

Power-sharing strategies

Declared *joint forest management* is widely under way and may embody the transfer of a gradually increasing array of decision-making powers to the community level. In the example of Nigeria, given



46. Fomete, 2001.

47. Campbell et al., 1999.

48. Wily and Hammond, 2001.

49. Vudzijena, 1998.

50. Dubois and Lowor, 2000; Wild and Mutebi, 1996.

51. Boyd et al., 2001.

52. Boyd et al., 2001.

53. Uchi Makula Trust, 2000; Robertson, 2000.

above, determination of which, if any, trees in a local forest are harvestable is now a local decision, although the issue of licences remains with the state.⁵⁴ In Madagascar, Zambia, Guinea, Senegal, Malawi and some cases in Mozambique, decisions regarding harvesting are also devolved, but only in reference to non-wood and other non-commercial uses, and licensing and policing functions are again retained by the state. A greater measure of authority is granted to communities in countries such as Cameroon, where the purpose of a community forest is to demarcate an area where the community may potentially benefit from harvesting but where it also gains managerial control and may decide not to harvest the forest at all.⁵⁵ At this point, the term of the agreement is still limited (to ten years). In Ethiopia, piloting in Adaba-Dodola Regional Forest is using contractual agreements to endow specified community groups (forest dweller associations) with authority to limit the use of the sustained incremental yield to themselves. A carrot and stick incentive for the association to promote restoration of the forest is provided in the form of rent charged for all degraded and bare areas.⁵⁶

Such programmes make devolution of controlling jurisdiction their explicit purpose. They do this not only to relocate management as near to the resource as possible but also to place jurisdiction in the hands of those perceived as having the most lasting vested interest in the forest's survival, for environmental (especially water catchment), socioritual and customary reasons, as well as for livelihood benefit. As a matter of course, the approach builds on local custodial interests, and agreements reached focus on issues of jurisdiction and sometimes tenure, rather than access.

Cases where devolution of authority goes hand in hand with devolution or recognition of local ownership of the forest are still not widespread. Strategies being pursued in Lesotho, South Africa, the Gambia and the United Republic of Tanzania are most illustrative. In the first three states, most forest ownership is currently under the state as public or government lands, and transfer of the forest land is therefore a key stage in the process. In Tanzania, most of the currently unreserved forest estate is within lands that are broadly acknowledged as being locally owned, and the process of declaring a community forest is

therefore one of helping the community to formalize this, rather than a process of transfer.

In all four states, the process itself is a matter of empowerment, helping the community to claim or organize latent jurisdiction and to formalize this in a working regime of authority over the forest. Typically, it is laid out in steps that assist the community in defining and demarcating the forest area and in developing a rational and sustainable management plan for its protection and use, to be operated at the community's cost and through regimes that it devises. The process is particularly well developed in the Gambia and the United Republic of Tanzania.⁵⁷ Often the decision is made *not* to harvest the forest at all, or to limit harvesting to certain areas and to certain categories of user, usually giving priority to those who live within the forest managing community. Crucially, the end result in both country processes is recognition of the community as owner-manager of the community forest, rather than only licensee, user or even manager. As already recorded, more than 200 community forests have already been created through this process in the Gambia, and more than 500 in Tanzania.

The process is equally applied to national or state-owned forests, although it leads not to community owner management but to *designated* or *consigned management* and it is subject to formal agreement between state and community. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the construct of the "village forest management area" is provided to encompass this, and it is known as "community-controlled state forest management" in the Gambia. Depending on the terms of the agreement made, the community may either work as co-manager with the forestry administration or be charged with management responsibility.

Trends and issues in PFM

The steady but hesitant movement towards devolution

Among the plethora of early PFM developments, key trends have been observed. These include the increasing empowerment of local communities in forest management, and the emergence of these populations as a cadre of forest managers in their own right. It has been noted that this stems in part from local demand, crystallized through participation.

54. CRSCFP, 2001a.

55. Klein, Salla and Kok, 2001; MINEF, 1998.

56. PFMWG, 2001; Kubsu, 2002 in this volume.

57. For the Gambia, see guidelines in Schindele, 2001; GGFP, 2001. For the United Republic of Tanzania see FBD, 2001.

It also arrives through recognition by forestry administrations of the sizeable, and perhaps needless, amount of time and investment incurred through sustained operational roles and/or supervising community roles.

While some programmes have begun with power sharing in mind, most have come to this position through learning by doing and, increasingly, through some degree of observation as to what works and what does not work in neighbouring states. This manner of transition has been evident in the changing character of projects in Nigeria, Ethiopia, Malawi, Burkina Faso and Mozambique.⁵⁸ It is likely to continue as PFM practice continues to be refined. This may well include programmes in Zambia, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, where committees established so far are more for consultation than for sharing decision-making, even though these efforts are called "joint forest management".

Community forests

Indisputably, the flagship of this transition (and of PFM overall) is the community forest. As already observed, the construct is most developed in Cameroon, the Gambia and the United Republic of Tanzania but the construct exists more widely and with increasingly legal definition (see Table 1).

While the overall notion of community forests is fairly consistent throughout the continent, its development is still curtailed in a range of ways: (1) for example, while most communities define the community forest area themselves, in some states limitations are placed on its size (Cameroon); (2) declaration of community forests is almost everywhere accompanied by important socio-institutional developments at the community level, in the form of variously constituted bodies, mandated to implement the forest management plan agreed on or devised by community members; (3) while community tenure, albeit usually of a customary and unregistered nature, is implied, formal recognition of it is still rare and/or is expressed in ambivalent terms – one main exception is the Gambia, where a formal transfer of tenure is an integral part of finalization of a community forest; (4) in both legal and operational terms, fully autonomous community jurisdiction is rarely attained – most community forests come into being only with and through the formal agreement of the state and under

terms largely set by it, which is the case even in the Gambia. In countries such as Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Togo, Malawi, Ghana, Benin and Mozambique, recognition of local tenure is, conversely, overlaid by stringent state control over how the forest is actually used. Nonetheless, community forests represent a significant departure from twentieth-century forest management practice and the related classification of forests. Among other things, they open the way for a widening range of gazetted non-government forest estates.

The helping hand of tenure reform

The question of tenure is crucial, given that there may hardly be a more stable and rooted foundation for community-based management than recognized ownership of the forest land in the first instance. In this development, tenure reform processes are playing an important role. Several thrusts to this development deserve brief comment.

The first is that many new land tenure laws (and new national constitutions before them) are placing more rigorous constraint on use of the routine right by governments to appropriate land for public purposes, including the creation of government forest reserves.⁵⁹ Procedures are being made more publicly accountable and almost everywhere require fuller consultation with those affected. A special disincentive to wanton appropriation of local commons, such as forested areas, is the now much higher rates of compensation that must be paid to those who lose rights. Some new laws are endowing unregistered customary and community occupation with improved protection. The new land laws of Uganda (1998), the United Republic of Tanzania (1999), Mozambique (1997) and South Africa (1991, 1996, 1997) are exceptional examples; they are likely to be followed by proposed new legislation in Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia and Malawi. Comparable developments are under way in French-speaking West Africa, versions of which are being delivered in Côte d'Ivoire (1998), Mali (2000) and the Niger (1993).

The relevance to PFM is that these developments do not only provide for recognition of individually held customary rights to be upheld as private rights, but they also provide that properties held in common are also to gain this new legal support. In such circumstances, communities may secure local forests

58. See Mauambeta (2000) for the Mwanza East Project in Malawi; Filimao, Mansur and Namanha. (2000) for Tchuma Tchato in Mozambique; Anstey (2000) and Mushove (2001) for the Chipanje Chetu Project in Mozambique; Dorlochter-Sulser, Kirsch-Jung and Sulser (2000) for the Bam Region Project in Burkina Faso; and Hesse and Trench (passim) for other Sahelian projects. See also the transition from environmental education and buffer zone developments in Ethiopian projects (Farm Africa, 2000); PFMWG (passim) and a similar maturation in Cross River State projects in Nigeria (Saarela-Kaonga, 2001), R. Spencer (personal communication).

59. Wily and Mbaya, 2001: Wily, 2001b.

TABLE 1 • Community forests in Africa in 2002

COUNTRY	NAME	COMMUNITY AS OWNER	COMMUNITY AS SOLE DECISION-MAKER
Gambia	Community forest	Yes	Yes
Tanzania	Village land forest reserve	Yes	Yes
	Community forest reserve	Yes	Yes
Zanzibar	Community forestry management area	No	Yes
Uganda	Community forest	Yes	Yes
Lesotho	Community forest	Yes	Yes
	Cooperative forest	Yes	Yes
Namibia	Community forest	Yes	Yes
Mozambique	Area of historical and cultural value	Yes	Yes
Cameroon	Community forest	No	No
Guinea	Community forest	Yes	No
Nigeria	Community forest	Yes	No
Malawi	Village forest area	Yes	No
Senegal	Community forest	Yes	No
Mali	Village forest	Yes	Yes
Ghana	Dedicated forest	Yes	Yes
Burkina Faso	Community forest	Yes	No
Ethiopia	Community forest	No	No
Chad	Community forest	Yes	No
South Africa	Community forest	Yes	Yes
Sudan	Community forest	No	No
Benin	Village forest	Yes	No
Togo	Community forest	Yes	No

as group-held private property and even register them as such.⁶⁰ It is helpful that the definition of what is “customary” is being determined less by tradition than by operating community-supported norms. In countries such as Eritrea and Ethiopia, where customary rights are eschewed in principle, ample provision is being made to gain registrable form for communal holding.⁶¹

An upshot of these developments is that many new forestry laws, of necessity, now lay out more cautious procedures for declaring or classifying forests (as government reserves) and are encouraged to provide alternative routes to securing still unreserved or undemarcated forests as formally dedicated to the purposes of forest conservation and sustained use. Community forests provide this route. Even where governments remain determined to bring certain forests under their jurisdiction, consultation with local communities is now widely obligatory, as is evident in most new forest enactments.⁶² A particularly elaborate and locally accountable procedure for creating new national forest reserves is found in the new Forest Act of the United Republic of Tanzania (2002). The burden is laid on the state to appoint an investigator to ensure that every person affected is properly assisted in making compensation claims. More critical, the investigator is legally bound to investigate whether declaration of a community forest would not be “a more efficient, effective and equitable route to balance the maintenance of existing rights with the protection and sustainable use of forest resources”.⁶³

Improving but still limited empowerment

Participation rather than devolution is also still the majority norm. While practical and legal opportunities for communities to re-secure certain forest reserves on a case-by-case basis exist in principle in several new laws (the United Republic of Tanzania, Namibia, Zambia, Uganda), the stronger trend is towards a hardening of the distinction between those estates that governments will continue to control, and those where local management of various types may evolve. There is also much unevenness in the kind of management authority communities may receive. It is apparent that the local right to determine if and how

the forest under the community’s supposed jurisdiction will or will not be utilized is legally provided for only in the case of Uganda, Tanzania (and Zanzibar), Lesotho and the Gambia, and less explicitly in Senegal. In these countries, it is the community that may develop the management plan of which the zoning, utilization and protection actions are inclusive; inputs from foresters are strictly advisory, although almost everywhere persuasively so. In contrast, management plans elsewhere are either strictly dependent on official approval or formulated by officials with local input; this was the case in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana.

There is as much hesitancy in empowering communities to take on licensing and enforcement functions. While local forest managers or partners are frequently allowed to make rules as to use, protection and rehabilitation or any other managerial aspect of the forest, the legal weight of these rules is often limited, with courts unable to uphold them when challenged. The extent to which a local forest manager may enforce compliance beyond the membership of the forest-managing community is thus often restricted. Or, the rules are justiciable law (usually as by-laws under a main act) only in respect of certain agreed managerial functions; in many PFM developments, for example, the community has the legal right to protect the forest but must bring offenders to the government partner to deal with. Or, the divisions are made in a different way, providing for the community to apprehend, fine and retain the fines derived from certain (minor) offences, while government retains this power in respect of major contraventions, especially relating to illegal timber or wildlife harvesting.

A complicated route to securing management authority

PFM policy and practice also suffer at this early point from a tendency towards overcomplicated procedure in the establishment of local roles, responsibilities and rights. Demands on communities to conduct surveys, plan and implement boundary demarcation, zoning, protection and similar often go beyond the requirements that administrations have conventionally placed on themselves, have actually implemented in

60. Wily and Mbaya, 2001: Wily, 2001b.

61. In Ethiopia, this is less so in the Federal Land Law (89/1997) but is amply provided for in emerging state laws, such as the Amahara National Region Land Law (46/2000) and the Environment and Land Administration Law (47/2000).

62. For example, Textier (undated) shows this in respect of these French-speaking draft or enacted forest laws: Benin (Article 14-22), Central African Republic (Article 63-67), Chad Bill (Article 19), Togo Bill (Article 16-20), Burkina Faso (Article 29), the Congo (Bill 2000 Article 15-20), and Senegal Decree Article 43). In Ethiopia the 1994 Forest Proclamation and subsequent state laws (e.g. Amhara Land Law 2000, s. 7[2]), prevents eviction without the agreement of those affected. The case is similar in English-speaking Africa (e.g. Uganda Forest Bill 2001, Namibia Bill 2001, s. 13[4], and Zanzibar 1996, s.19-22).

63. Forest Act of the United Republic of Tanzania 2002, clause 30(4).

the forests they manage or currently demand of private sector managers (Cameroon, Ghana). By far the greater number of new forest management plans derive directly from PFM developments.

We do not need to search far for the reasons for these demands. First, the emergence of PFM coincides with a concomitant emergence of much stronger requirements for overall planning in the sector, as the ubiquitous National Forest Management Plan itself illustrates. Second, in the frequent absence of existing local-level institutions through which local roles may be operated, a crucial element of PFM almost everywhere involves the creation of entirely new institutions at the community level, in itself a complicated process, which engenders planning. Third, official confidence in local capacities to manage is rarely strong, and much attention is typically devoted to establishing conditions and requirements that both test and bind the local-level management authority to certain practices. Finally, in some countries forestry administrations are wary of the growing involvement of facilitating non-government agencies in this arena and may delay, restrict or control it through bureaucratic measures.⁶⁴ This problem is of course not unique to PFM but is common to governance paradigm shifts overall.

The result, however, may be time-consuming, expensive and discouraging for local actors. Cameroon is an example of this. Communities plans for recognizing a community forest involve a lengthy application procedure that is centralized and requires formal surveying and mapping of the proposed area, in addition to the formation and registration of a legal entity and a certified copy of its statutes and regulations. Also required are CVs of the persons to be given management roles, and minutes of the community consultation meeting.⁶⁵ A draft management plan is also required. Once accepted by the Ministry, a simple management plan must be prepared, which includes conducting a forest inventory for systematic survey in 10 m-wide belts covering 2 percent of the forest. All trees of more than 40 cm DBH have to be inventoried. They also have to be located on a map sheet and their scientific or vernacular names noted. The costs are considerable for communities, often exceeding several thousand

dollars for a management regime that is only granted a ten-year time horizon.⁶⁶ Not surprisingly, even some years after the new law was enacted (1994) and its application detailed (1995), the Ministry reported that although 82 communities had submitted requests, only seven community forests had been finalized; 11 others were in process and 42 applications had been approved only to the first stage.⁶⁷ Action has recently been taken to speed up the process and to limit inventory requirements to those forests with evident harvesting potential only.

Procedures may be almost as cumbersome in other countries such as Guinea, Nigeria, Ethiopia and South Africa, particularly in respect of establishing a community trust, association or other legal entity. Both Guinea and Madagascar have made recent efforts to simplify the procedures, quite dramatically in the case of Madagascar by legal decree.⁶⁸ Consequently, processing of community applications to manage forests has speeded up, with more than 50 signed contracts by end-2001.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, the term of agreements remains at a meagre three years. Refinement of procedures has also been undertaken in the Gambia,⁷⁰ although the final step in the handover of forests to communities is being delayed by unduly sophisticated survey, mapping and authentication procedures. Refinement of procedures is also under way in Malawi. For its part, the United Republic of Tanzania has made a conscious effort to keep procedures simple and its survey free and decentralized to enable as many of the registered 10 500 village communities as possible to establish village forests and/or take on management of adjacent government reserves.⁷¹ In short, a trend towards simplification to ease PFM implementation is widely evident.

The definition of "community" and the resulting determination of powers

Constraints on power sharing remain, not least in the ambivalent authority that local populations may attain in respect of local forests. This exists against a backdrop wherein formal, democratic governance institutions already exist at the community level, and into which local forest management roles may be divested (see Table 2).

64. White (1998) records this problem in Botswana and Saarela-Kaonga (2001) for the LENF programme in Nigeria.

65. MINEF, 1998.

66. Klein, Salla and Kok, 2001; Djeumo, 2001.

67. Klein, Salla and Kok, 2001; Djeumo, 2001.

68. No. 2001-122.

69. B. Rajaspera, personal communication.

70. Schindel, 2001; FDCFU, 1998.

71. FBD, 2001.

TABLE 2 • PMF institutions at the community level in Africa

	AGENCY	LEVEL AND MEMBERSHIP	REPRESENTS COMMUNITY, USER OR INTEREST GROUPS?	HAS RIGHT TO DETERMINE USERS AND TO EXCLUDE UNWANTED USERS?	HAS LICENSING POWERS?	HAS ENFORCEMENT POWERS?
Uganda	Communal land association Village council Parish council	Community members only	All community	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tanzania	Village council Forest management committee	Community members only	All community	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zanzibar	Community forest management group	Community members only	Varies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kenya	Association	Any persons living within 5 km, can include outsiders	Interest groups	Yes	No	No
Zambia	JFM committee	Government, chiefs, loggers and other interests included	Interest groups	Varies	Some	Some
Ethiopia	Forest dweller association JFM committee	Varies: user groups or community	Varies	Varies	Some	Some
Malawi	Village natural resource management committee	Community	Varies	Yes	No	Minor
South Africa	Communal property association Trust Cooperative	Varies: Community or wider levels	Varies	Yes	Some	Some

Table 2 continued

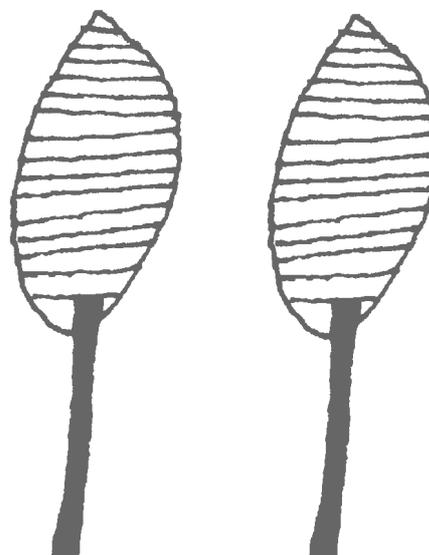
	AGENCY	LEVEL AND MEMBERSHIP	REPRESENTS COMMUNITY, USER OR INTEREST GROUPS?	HAS RIGHT TO DETERMINE USERS AND TO EXCLUDE UNWANTED USERS?	HAS LICENSING POWERS?	HAS ENFORCEMENT POWERS?
Namibia	Management authority	Community or wider levels	Interest groups	Yes	Some	Minor
Lesotho	Village council Natural resource committee Cooperative	Community	All community	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ghana	Forest committee	Community and outsiders	Interest groups	No	No	No
Gambia	Forest committee	Community	All community	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cameroon	Association Common initiative group Cooperative Economic interest group	Varies community or user groups with outside interests possible	Varies	Yes	No	Some
Mali	Rural council Village council Cooperative Corporation Association	Village and wider levels	Interest groups	No	No	Some
Niger	Forest committee	Community	All community	No	No	No
Burkina Faso	Forest committee	Community User groups Cooperatives	Interest groups	Varies	No	Minor
Nigeria	Management committee	Community and others	Varies	Yes	No	Some
Senegal	Rural council	District/ commune	Varies	Yes	Some	Yes

There have been exceptions. Prominent among these is the United Republic of Tanzania, where the community has gained identity as a registered village and, for more than 25 years, has been able to elect its own government (village council). This government holds both executive and legislative powers to act on behalf of the community, including the authority to make justiciable by-laws on any issue affecting the community or its local resources.⁷² Smallholder associations in Ethiopia, village councils in Uganda, Burkina Faso and Mali and local administrative units in Ghana are other exceptions. None of these, however, holds the same level of authority as that held by superior levels of local government (communes, sub-county or district councils). Where less formal agencies exist, such as village development committees in Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia, these have even fewer powers.

However, community-level governance is precisely what is required in order for communities to take on and properly to use the powers of forest management traditionally exercised by foresters and forestry administrations. A common debate in early PFM practice centres on the relative utility of chiefs and traditional councils for this purpose, even where local government developments have been put in place.⁷³ Where chiefs and traditional councils have strong adherence (e.g. parts of Cameroon, Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso and Malawi), they may present obvious conduits for organized local-level forest management. In Cameroon, for example, some commentators have expressed regret that these agencies were bypassed in the community forestry movement in favour of new authorities.⁷⁴ This is especially true, given that these new associations, cooperatives or other bodies often depend on traditional village councils to uphold community forest rules.⁷⁵ Others sometimes find that traditional authorities do not now exert the same level of authority over community members as in the past and are unable to fulfil their commitments to enforce the access and use rules that they make (e.g. Zambia, Nigeria).⁷⁶ Local-level authority falls into a vacuum, with the result that both community members and foresters are frustrated.

Even where powerful agencies are created or exist at the local level, into whose hands forest management powers are given or acknowledged, representational questions often arise. Early efforts may engender conflict among clans, leaders, interest groups and other divisions in the community where community contact and roles have been focused on opportunities for income-generating harvesting of the forest (timber, wildlife). Implicit inequities within the community may become explicit as different interest groups, including social as well as economic elite groups, may compete for access and benefit. The problem is exacerbated when the institutional formation advocated is fashioned around user or other interest group formation rather than the comprehensive inclusion of all members of the community in the vicinity of the forest.

Again, Cameroon is an example. The 1998 Manual advises that all sections of the community must be consulted and the legal entity must be representative of all sections,⁷⁷ but it also encourages the formation of a Common Initiative Group, an Economic Interest Group and an Association of Cooperatives for management purposes. Each of these has its own natural constituency, which rarely fully includes the poor or women.⁷⁸ In practice, projects now pay more attention to questions of inclusivity, after early cases in which community forests were taken over by local elite groups, to the detriment of both community and forest.⁷⁹ In other countries, such as Botswana, community trusts still frequently come into conflict with more widely based community village development committees, which are nonetheless powerless entities.⁸⁰



72. Wily, 2000c.

73. Ribot, 1999; Onibon & Logo, 2000.

74. Diaw, 2000; Vabi, 1999.

75. Gardner, DeMarco and Asanga, 2001.

76. C. Polansky, R. Spencer, personal communication.

77. MINEF, 1998, Article 2.2.1.

78. There have also been problems of consistency among the various directives of the law (1994), decree of application (1995) and procedures (1998) (Vabi, 1999).

79. Vabi, 1999; Djeumo, 2001; Klein, Salla and Kok, 2001.

80. Boyd et al., 2001.

Community as user or manager?

Confused thinking as to whether the community is being involved as a forest user or as a forest manager is often the root of the problem. In those cases where local people are being involved only to regulate their own forest use, and where the forest has few non-product values of use to the wider community (such as water catchment functions), the founding of management or user groups may be workable. However, this is decreasingly the purpose of PFM development, which looks more and more to wider managerial functions on the one hand, or to the organization of significant income generation and/or revenue receipt on the other. In either case, a wider construction of community and its representation in management is required. The interests of the user group and the forest-local community as a whole do not necessarily converge. This may be seen in the process of setting quotas, determining which areas should be open for access, and so on. Management may also lose key actors who are not forest users in user-defined management regimes. User-centred management also tends to give too little attention to critical socio-environmental functions of the forest in its decision-making in favour of extraction.

The focus on user interests overall has its roots in a perception that the poverty of most forest-local populations means that they are only interested in the immediate income potential of the forest. Accordingly, local custodial and socio-environmental interests in the forest are ignored, reinforcing the focus on product use and distribution on the one hand, and on institutional formation, shaped around the forest user constituency, on the other. Returning to the Cameroon example, Gardner, DeMarco and Asanga (2001) instructively observe that:

“those more familiar with the forests of southern Cameroon with their potential for income through timber exploitation, are often surprised at the high degree of motivation for forest management exhibited by the population around Kilum-Ijim Forest, despite the forest’s low potential for income generation. The experience of Kilum-Ijim clearly shows that communities value their forests for far more than cash to the extent that they are willing to contribute the significant time and effort needed to manage the forest in the long term as well as voluntarily give up

the option of converting the forest to other land uses which produce greater cash benefits.”

Projects report similar findings in the United Republic of Tanzania and the Gambia, where power sharing is most complete and implemented within management regimes that define the community as a whole as the source of decision-making.⁸¹

Issues of internal accountability tend to arise in all types of new community-level institutions. This is true to the extent that most new PFM initiatives now make capacity and systems building a priority task of facilitation. The main need seems to be to assist communities to form management systems that allow for constructive debate and are fully accountable to community membership. In the process, a good deal of restructuring of community norms often occurs, generally towards more democratic and transparent norms. Many projects report that PFM is highly empowering to this kind of community-level capacity building.⁸² In Tanzania, for example, the creation of active and effective forest management committees has quite often resulted in unfavourable comparison with the lethargy of founding village councillors, resulting in calls for new elections, especially of village chairpersons.⁸³ Questionable record keeping by forest management committees, particularly in respect of income from fines and fees, also leads eventually to stronger reporting regimes and firmer measures for transparency, often more rigorous than community members ever imagined they would require.

Issues of process

More general issues of PFM process arise. Many concern replication at this point, with the need to scale up from donor-funded efforts that are often cost- and time-intensive, as well as limited in their time horizons. All too many pilots have invested inordinate amounts of time and money on extensive studies, surveys and inventories that are difficult to replicate, and have, more seriously, lost critical opportunities to develop approaches that do not require sophisticated tools.⁸⁴ In addition, survey-driven projects may be unintentionally disempowering rather than empowering of local-level engagement, as community members await the findings of experts for studies in which they have only supporting roles. With the

81. Reeb, 1999; Massawe, 2000; Kerkhof, 2000; Scott, 2000; Vogt and Vogt, 2000.

82. For example, Massawe, 2000; Kerkhof, 2000; Gardner, DeMarco and Asanga, 2001.

83. Wily, 2000c; Iddi, 2000; Massawe, 2000.

84. This has been especially evident in some World Bank- and United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded initiatives in West and Sahelian Africa, Malawi and Zambia but, to one degree or another, is quite widely the case.

departure of lead facilitators, interest in extending the development may also dwindle.⁸⁵ Or, involved foresters who have proved themselves unusually competent in this field may leave the government for the greener pastures of unrelated NGO work.⁸⁶ As PFM enters the mainstream, foresters who have played only a minor role in its development or who do not approve the direction in which participation is moving, often vote with their feet and hinder widespread entrenchment of new norms. None of these issues are unique to African PFM.⁸⁷

PFM and the forest sector as a whole may confront stark contradictions between national policies and laws applying to minerals and wildlife found within forests. Mineral policy in Africa on the whole excludes community roles in management, let alone tenure, and legislative improvements focus largely on post-mining rehabilitation requirements.⁸⁸ Wildlife strategies widely proclaim participatory approaches but usually, in practice, limit them to benefit sharing and local protection roles that only permit the reporting of poachers to the authorities. Arrangements through which the community is permitted a significant decision-making and management role in respect of wildlife, as in Namibia⁸⁹ and on a pilot basis in Cameroon,⁹⁰ are in fact rare. Even in the United Republic of Tanzania, communities that own and manage village forest reserves are not generally permitted to regulate the use of wildlife or even to hunt minor species in return for ensuring the security of rarer species; instead they are urged to support the management and policing roles of the Wildlife Department and are rewarded with periodic deliveries of meat.⁹¹ While the Forest Department in neighbouring Kenya has yet to launch significant participatory regimes, it does propose to do so in ways that the Wildlife Service finds excessive; this is currently a matter of dispute in respect of the important Mount Kenya Forest and Wildlife Park.⁹²

PFM also regularly confronts competition with unbridled private sector interests, particularly in respect of commercial logging of natural forests. Studies continue to report deforestation and the loss of sacred forests, local land rights and livelihoods at the hands of internationally sponsored logging in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Central African Republic.⁹³ New community-sensitive policies do not make adequate adjustment to industrial licensing regimes to enable community forests to operate in such areas without interference from commercial interests. Furthermore, the latter may be favoured as operators; in Cameroon concessionaires need only submit a management plan within three years of beginning an operation, while communities may not harvest until their management plans have been approved. Penalties for illegal activities show a similar pattern of inequality. These are more far-reaching for communities and result in cancellation of the community forest. Logging companies rarely see their licences withdrawn. A long-planned regulation to allow communities priority in forest access of local areas has not yet been approved, but its proposed existence suggests that the issue is at least on the agenda.⁹⁴

Backtracking and backlash

Finally, emergent PFM is experiencing its fair share of retrenchment on commitments. Sometimes forestry administrations appear to regret having allowed the rights or powers that they permit local actors and seek to retrieve them. The fate of the Muzama initiative in Zambia is a case in point. It is reported that the Sudanese Government may reallocate rehabilitated community forests to commercial interests.⁹⁵ In early 2001, the Botswana Government ordered CBOs working in natural resource management to deliver their incomes to district councils to manage; although not yet implemented, this has induced considerable insecurity.⁹⁶ Comparable resentment of local PFM successes and steps to limit development have also

85. Arguably the case in Uganda at this time.

86. Arguably the case in the United Republic of Tanzania at this time. See also Massawe, 2001.

87. For example, in respect of India, see Jodha, 2000; Kumar, 2000.

88. Wily and Mbaya, 2001.

89. Boyd, et al., 2001.

90. Olsen et al., 2001.

91. Gillingham, 1998; SIDA, 2000.

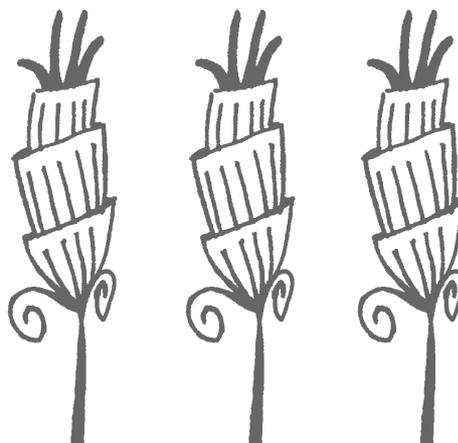
92. H. Gibbon, personal communication.

93. WRM, *passim*.

94. WRM, 2001a; Vabi, 1999.

95. Kerkhof, 2000.

96. GoB, 2001; Bocobnet, 2001.



been recorded in India, Nepal and Viet Nam.⁹⁷ Nor has it been unusual for administrations to delay final enactment of new forestry laws, not least because of their permissive clauses in support of community interests and roles (Kenya).

Nor is the international arena consistently supportive of advancing local roles. Conservationists show signs of dividing into two groups: those who recognize PFM as a route to forest security, and those who consider local management tantamount to unleashing further degradation. Actions designed to avoid any obligation to involve local populations are beginning to appear, particularly in efforts to exempt forests of exceptional biological diversity from participatory approaches or propositions to pay people for conserving local environments, thus removing questions of rights and local interests into straight contractual regimes.⁹⁸ Experts unfamiliar with PFM often still promote recruitment of more forest guards and better pay for them as the route to forest security.⁹⁹

Conclusion

Despite its youth and difficulties, PFM shows signs of emerging as a competitive route through which Africa's forest may be secured and managed. The *State of the World's Forests* acknowledges as much.¹⁰⁰ FAO experts jointly predict that coming years will see "increased trends towards decentralization and devolution of forest management. Power will be devolved to lower levels The administration of a large part of forest resources ... will be in the hands of private companies and civil society...." (*Unasylva*, 204[76]).

It is also evident that PFM is far from a fixed set of parameters and is continuing to evolve through learning by doing. The trend is towards more rather than less power sharing with communities. Latent or explicit custodial rights of communities may come to form a more common foundation on which their managerial roles are negotiated and sustained.

Just how much of Africa's vast forest estate will come under community-based or state–community (or private sector–community) management remains to

be seen. At this point, such management represents less than 1 percent. The signs are that coming decades will see significant numbers of at least unreserved forests come under local governance and a steady increase in the number of national forests that include some level of local management roles. NGO roles in this development are likely to increase.

Many lessons are emerging, especially of a socio-institutional nature. Community-based efforts need to be encompassed in a strong local-level institutional framework. The need for that framework to be sociospatially inclusive is increasingly acknowledged. There is also growing recognition that the primary function of local-level roles is for forest management purposes and that local institutions are mistakenly developed solely on the basis of user interests. This paves the way for "community" to be more readily defined on the basis of adjacency and its historical relationship with the resource. Determination of how the forest may safely be used becomes a managerial decision and one with which users, either local or from more distant areas, need to negotiate. Issues of customary custodianship are playing a clearer role in determining support for local-level management, and PFM as a whole is positioning communities less as client users to be appeased than as populations who have not only interests but also rights over resources in their vicinity, and as a matter of course must have the major say in sustaining their future.

It is also apparent that local-level participation in forest management only becomes meaningful when it is given real power to manage. Failure to do so does little to alter the existing flawed management regimes, may exacerbate tensions between those who still control the forest and those who protect it, and raises questions as to the purpose of local-level participation in the first place. More singular definition of the "manager" is also advantageous. Multistakeholder approaches that include a host of different actors from central and local government, such as chiefs, timber harvesters, user groups and NGOs, show signs of being self-defeating, engendering competition, weak decision-making and the failure to perform that is generic to diffused responsibility. It is also apparent that community forest management roles need legal entrenchment to assure actors' security in their

97. Kumar, 2000; Shrestha, passim; PROFOR, 2001.

98. Pollex reporting on Ferraro's Global Habitat Protection: Limitations of Development Interventions and a Role for Conservation Performance Payments July 2001.

99. For example, examining 16 protected areas with high biological diversity in Africa, Struhsaker (2001) made not a single observation relating to protected area–people relations as either cause or solution to shortfalls.

100. FAO, 2001b.

decision-making and accountability to both partners and to their own local constituencies.

As a whole, PFM demonstrates that issues of forest management are as much matters of governance as of the technical management of woody biomass. Because it tackles such issues, sooner or later, PFM is inevitably contentious, and progress is inevitably awkward and uneven. Learning to use problems and conflict as points for constructive change is a task that faces one project after another. Ultimately, the process is helpful, for basically PFM is a force for democratization, giving reality to declamatory policies towards decentralization and more inclusive governance. As such, it is essentially empowering. Those who are empowered are mainly some of the poorest people on the continent, remote rural dwellers. Administrations, too, are empowered in the release from the burden of policing and the transition to technical advisory and monitoring roles. Governance as a whole is served. Issues of technical forest management remain and will continue to bind communities and foresters in increasingly joint problem solving. The kind of partnerships forged, however, will almost certainly be different from those of the past; from paradigms within which communities participate in the management regimes of the state, the state will in due course participate in community-driven regimes. Through such transitions, an improved forest future may well be secured.

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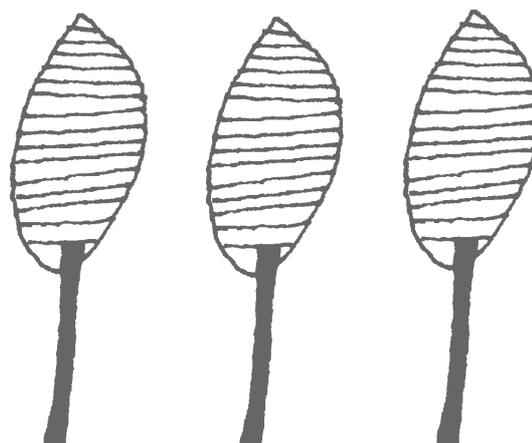
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