

Participatory forest management in Africa. An overview of progress and issues

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INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

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 upon 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 to whom I express here my gratitude.¹

The general conclusion of this overview is that participatory forest management (PFM) is sufficiently widespread and effective in Africa today to be recognised as a significant route towards securing and sustaining forests. Whilst each state is arriving at more participatory approaches to especially natural forest management, broad commonalities among processes and paradigms are notable. Root causes of failures in 20th century forest management are relatively common, as are the forces now driving action. Prime among these is widening socio-political transformation on the continent towards more inclusive norms in the governance of society and its resources. PFM more than any other new strategy in the forestry sector most embodies this emergent democratisation. Recognition that forest management is itself primarily a matter of governance is crystallising 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 in significant transition at this early stage of its evolution on the continent and 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 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

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.

and effective where 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 significant jurisdiction to communities over resources that are of high biodiversity or commercial value, such as where timber or wildlife are dominant products. Local licensing and revenue sharing tend to still define PFM in such areas and 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 increase in power sharing over time, not least through local demand, catalysed through even limited forms of participation. Participation as a whole is visibly moving from consultative and collaborative norms into those where 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 characterised by devolution. Custodianship, not access, is beginning to centre agreements and relations.

In the process, institutional issues increasingly concern PFM developments and pose the most 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 stronger and more legal institutional form to entrench local roles is everywhere being felt to enable formal divestment and 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 upon whose behalf they act.

Benefits that are useful to people, state and forest conservation may be seen in these paradigm shifts and which 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 as subordinate beneficiaries, receiving a share of access, products or other benefits, into positions where they may themselves regulate this source of livelihood and with longer-term perspectives.

Second, forests identified and placed under local jurisdiction are gaining socio-spatial boundaries that help remove them from the open-access ills so widely associated with public properties. 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 upwards of twenty African states, significant differences in the level of jurisdiction and tenure implied notwithstanding.

Third, democratisation, a common objective in Africa at this time, is being amply served through PFM practice. Moreover this is increasingly targeted at the grassroots, a level that has tended to be bypassed in conventional governance developments focusing upon 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 like forests and pasture. Through constructs like *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 increasingly sound development process that goes well beyond the fact that its focus is upon 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 to comparable inequities internal to the emergent forest-managing community. In such ways the gains from PFM go beyond forest conservation or livelihood into issues of more inclusive and effective management of society itself. Of such social transformations, PFM is part.

PART I 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 DRC to 2,000 ha in St. Helena (FAO 2001b). Thirty-seven states have more than one million ha and seventeen more than ten million ha of forests. Plantations constitute less than nine million ha.

A wave of change to forest management practice is underway. This is manifest in 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 ONE].

In new forest laws, these changes are most common –

- Marked increase in national programming and individual forest planning requirements;²
- More rigor 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 relocation of forestry departments into semi-autonomous institutions, and variant degrees of decentralisation to local governments;⁵ and -

BOX ONE NEW FOREST LAWS IN AFRICA SINCE 1990

Enacted:

Ethiopia, South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, Lesotho, Mozambique, Senegal, The Gambia, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Mali, Madagascar, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Benin, Algeria, Tanzania, Cape Verde, Mauritania, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana

In draft:

Kenya, Uganda, Namibia, Swaziland, Nigeria, Chad, Morocco, Togo, Niger, DRC, Comoros, Congo

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

³ New forest laws have distinctly stronger environmental controls and less leeway in the excision of national forest reserves – most deservedly the case in Kenya which out-rates other African states for steady reduction in the total hectareage 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).

- Policy commitment and new legal opportunity for forest-local populations to participate in forest management - the subject of this paper.

Main 'drivers' towards these changes are well known – especially the continued loss of forest on the continent of up to one 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 socio-political climate as African states adopt more devolved and inclusive ways of managing society and its resources (Alden Wily 2000a). This is a trend broadly encompassed in the term democratisation and seeing legal expression in not only new environmental, forestry and wildlife laws but also in founding constitutional, land and local government laws - the case in South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Uganda, 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 like Mali and Niger). Even where this is not the case, land and governance directly impact upon the handling of local forest rights as elaborated shortly.

PFM ON THE GROUND

Action to involve forest-local communities in the management of forests is well underway in Africa [BOX TWO]. 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 noted above.

BOX TWO PFM IN AFRICA IN 2002
<input type="checkbox"/> Underway in 30+ countries
<input type="checkbox"/> Largely within 100+ projects
<input type="checkbox"/> Involves around 5,000 communities
<input type="checkbox"/> Affects 100+ national forests
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduces more than 1,000 new protected areas (Community Forests)

Without at this point assessing the manner of participation, a cursory overview of developments shows for example, that a major programme in the Rif recently ended in **Morocco** with several smaller developments ongoing, such as a pasture/woodland management project in respect of Taskart Forest near Khenifra.⁶ A 1976 forest law is under review. Developments in **Niger** began with co-management of Gusselbodi Forest in 1986, now suspended but leading to larger fuel wood marketing programmes which issue licences to local associations on the basis of sustainable harvesting of inventoried resources (1989-1996). It is estimated that around 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 to bring 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**, also with new forestry laws (1995, 1999), has adopted a similar fuel wood markets programme; fifteen villages for example now manage Kelka Forest through registered associations. Community based management of woodlands in Bankass District is also being

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, 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, Zimbabwe). The decentralisation 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).

⁶ Pers. comm. J.Radoux and see Melhaoui 2002 in this volume for a review of the Rif Programme.

⁷ Babin & Bertrand 1998, Kerkhof 2000, Vogt & Vogt 2000, Hesse & Trench 2000, Montagne & Mamoudou 2000.

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 to manage 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 Conarkry** three co-management initiatives now operate in respect of 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 have been declared (24,000 ha) 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 to 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 and which together work directly with around fifty communities. The first project in Cross River State was the Ekuri begun in 1992 and which assisted communities bring 33,000 ha of rain forest under some degree of local management. Pilots are underway in seven of an intended forty 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 the State Forest Commission still issues licences and collect 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 revenue from felling in reserves. A new state law is under preparation.¹² A project in Bassila Sub District in **Benin** has drawn up participatory management plans with four villages adjacent to Penessaulou Reserve and assisted 18 other villages develop plans for smaller forests in the area.¹³ A new forest act has been passed (1993). The Government Forest Development Agency of **Ivory Coast** 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 & 190 ha) in 1994, a development yet to be replicated. A Community Forestry Management Unit (1992) promotes 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 five 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

⁸ Kerkhof op cit., Ribot *passim*, Bocoum 2000, Lavigne Delville 2000, Hesse & Trench *passim*. Also see Bocoum 2002 in this volume for details of the Koro Circle developments.

⁹ Nana 2000, Dorlochter-Sulser et al. 2000, Banzaf et al. 2000, Ribot *passim*, Kerkhof op cit.

¹⁰ Bush 2000 and pers. comm. M. Bush.

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

¹² Saarela-Kaonga 200, Enuor undated, CFN *passim*, CRSCFP *passim*, ERM & SWK *passim* and pers. comm. D. Akala and R. Spencer.

¹³ Djodjouwin 2000.

¹⁴ Ibo & Leonard 1997, Lorn 2000.

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

Eight distinct projects operate in **Cameroon**, variously assisting communities to create 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 is a core objective - and around which Community Forests are mainly fashioned. Their declaration is subject to detailed inventory and mapping and where relevant, harvesting plans. By November 2001 forty agreements were signed with another 170 applications under consideration. Aside from recent simplification of procedures, innovations include the expansion the process to involve wildlife management areas, trial use of mobile sawmills by communities and increased requirements upon logging companies to share a small percentage of revenue with local councils and communities, a plan still poorly realised in practice.¹⁶

In **Sudan** an NGO project assisted eighteen villages reclaim a forest as discrete community forests but some of which 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) wherein forest dweller groups receive full rights over specific blocks of the forest on payment of rent for un-forested areas in those blocks and upon agreement to use the forest sustainably. A PFM Working Group (2000) is prompting finalisation of new policy begun in 1998 and 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. New supporting law (1996) was simplified in 2001. More than fifty contracts are now signed and operating. Another fifty agreements have been made under earlier legislation and which are distinctive for recognising local tenure interests over the subject forest (Gelose).¹⁹

There is little PFM development in **Kenya** and where the legal passage of a new Forest Bill that provides for people who live within five 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 launched by non-government bodies. A prominent early case was the formation of the Ngong Forest Sanctuary Trust, since 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 modification 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 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

¹⁶ Abbot et al. 1999, Auzel et al. 2001, Birdlife *passim*, Djeumo 2001, Egbe *passim*, Fomete 2001, Milol 2000, Gardner et al. 2001, Klein et al. 2001, Nkengela 1999, Olsen et al. 2001, Malleson 2001, MINEF 1998.

¹⁷ Kerkhof op cit.

¹⁸ Farm Africa 2000, Shitarek et al. 2001, Hesse & Trench 2000a, PFMWG *passim* and pers. comm. Z. Temesgen, G. Hasse, B. Mengesha. See Kubsu this volume for details of the Adaba-Dordola Project.

¹⁹ Manantsara & Garreau 2000, Rabetaliana & Schachenmann 2000 and pers. comm. B. Rajaspera.

²⁰ Alden Wily & Mbaya op cit. Pers. comm. H. Gibbon.

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 for communities to declare community forests in their own communal lands and for communities to 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 **Tanzania**. Since 1995 more than five hundred Village Forest Reserves (VFR) have been declared by communities out of communal lands. In addition, several thousand households, clans or groups have demarcated private forests (*ngitiri*). Together these developments have brought more than half a million hectares into protected status. In addition, a national Forestry Programme is piloting state-people co-management in more than thirty 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 underway and Government has issued formal guidelines for assisting communities to bring either reserved or currently unreserved forests under community based management (2001). New national forest policy (1998) and new law (2002) makes community based forest management a main focus.²²

A new national forest policy (1998) and new law (1999) in **Zambia** providing for multi-stakeholder co-management of Local Forests has 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 one million hectare 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 (Chiulukire, 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 targeted to non-Government Forest Reserves where communities are assisted to bring largely degraded woodlands under management as Village Forest Areas. Generally these are small areas of only a few hectares. A SADC-funded wildlife society project has helped communities identify five or areas, followed by a larger Social Forestry Project, which has so far helped communities to set aside 13 small areas. Benefit-sharing and legalisation of minor access is operating in three Forest Reserves (Chimaliro, Kaningina, 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 Campfire programme, direct forest/woodland management initiatives involving communities is limited to self-started efforts in one or two communal woodland areas (Chihota, Seke, Chambatamba and especially Ntabazinduna). In addition, communities assist the Forestry Commission to manage Mafungabusi Forest Reserve and the Pumula Forest Block, to the extent that they protect mainly peripheral parts of the forests in return for agreed access to these, mainly for fuel wood and grazing.²⁵

In contrast there are at least eighteen forest-centred projects operating in **Mozambique**. These adopt various foci for local participation; two deal only with fire control, six with

²¹ Scott 2000, Hinchley et al. 2000, Wild & Mutebi 1996, UFD 2000.

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

²³ Uchi Makula Trust 2000, Robertson 2000, Lukama 2000, Chiulukire Plan 2000, and pers. comm. P. McCarter & C. Polansky.

²⁴ Mauambeta 2000, Dubois & Luwore 2000.

²⁵ Clarke et al. 1996, Vudzijena 1998, Campbell et al. 1999, Katerere et al. 1999.

charcoal/fuelwood production and seven with reforestation. One is a buffer zone project and two are founded on sharing revenue derived by commercial hunting or safari operations in the forests. Of eleven main projects, six operate in Forest Reserves and five in unreserved forest areas. A Community Support Unit has operated in Government since 1997. The new forest and wildlife law (1999) favours commercial over local interests although it does require concessionaires to consult with local people and to 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 provided formally for communities to apply to manage any Forest by agreement. Projects adopting diverse formulae are underway in respect of the Forests of Makuleke, Dwesa-Cwebe, Ngombe, Dukuduku, Pirie, Wavecrest and Port St. Johns. Whilst 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 out-grower 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 (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; eleven now operate.²⁸ In neighbouring **Botswana** more than forty community trusts and other forms of local organization have been created and to which certain wildlife and other natural resource rights are divested by agreements. Most focus upon creation of safari camps, hunting, wild foods harvesting and sale 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 with most initiatives less than five years old and the remainder usually less than a decade old. Most begin under the aegis of discrete, donor-funded projects. These currently number more than one hundred 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 being a main exception) although official guidelines for application nationwide increasingly exist (e.g. Cameroon, Tanzania, Senegal). Creation of support units in central forestry administrations is becoming common (e.g. South Africa, Uganda, Ghana). Several countries now issue newsletters to communicate and coordinate the rising number of projects and interest groups (e.g. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Cameroon). PFM is proving a rich field for NGO and CBO involvement. Nonetheless, PFM is by and large 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 needing state support particularly in respect of legal

²⁶ Negrao 1998, Filimao et al. 2000, Anstey 2000, Boyd et al 2001, Mushove *passim*, Alden Wily & Mbaya op cit.

²⁷ Alden Wily & Mbaya op cit., Boyd et al op cit., Mayers et al. 2001.

²⁸ Jones 1999, Corbett & Jones 2000, Boyd et al op cit., Shiweda 2000.

²⁹ White 1998, Boyd et al op cit.

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 rather than the more devolutionary regimes that such collaboration often leads too.

PFM as a whole is considered innovative and sometimes risky. Administrations prefer to refer to early projects as ‘pilots’ to pre-empt them forcing permanent changes upon 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 if similar catalysts and momentum. In addition, with each passing year, African PFM advances upon South Asian paradigms in at least two critical respects; first in where local roles may be promoted and second, in the attention given to underlying forest tenure interests - both elaborated shortly. African PFM shares with PFM developments worldwide a natural focus upon 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 - this 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, differences in their form and empowerment notwithstanding (see below).

PART II APPROACHES TO PFM

LOCUS OF PFM – Where may communities participate?

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

Some countries like 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 proscribe where PFM may be practised and developments have begun in both the reserved and unreserved sector 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 – most explicitly the case in Lesotho, and partially the case in The Gambia, Namibia and South Africa (the last driven by land restitution policies).³⁴

Moreover in Africa there is rarely an in-principle objection to involving communities in the management of commercially important forests such as industrial plantations - a matter of considerable contention at this point in Nepal. Privatisation procedures underway in South Africa have explicitly extended privatisation to include communities not just companies.³⁵ Malawi, Uganda and Tanzania all propose various forms of local participation in future

³⁰ Refer Enters et al. 2000 and Poffenberger (ed) 2000 for details of PFM in Asia.

³¹ Alden Wily & Hammond 2001.

³² Shrestha *passim*, Kumar 2000.

³³ In Ethiopia Priority Forest Areas have largely been devolved to regional state government control.

³⁴ Alden Wily & Mbaya 2001.

³⁵ Mayers et al. *op cit*.

commercial plantation management and one co-management initiative is already underway in Tanzania.³⁶

TYOLOGIES OF PFM – Who is participating with whom?

Management Agreements represent the primary construct of PFM. These en-frame whatever arrangement has been reached between community and state - a fact which in itself says a great deal about the permissive nature of PFM at this point; the fact that it evolves largely by agreement with the traditionally dominant forest authority, the state. It is rarely the case that communities declare management regimes autonomously and within which the state's role is largely advisory. The closest example to this is found in the creation of Village Forest Reserves in Tanzania where village governments inform the district local 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 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. With over-simplification, these typologies broadly apply, sometimes within one country -

- *consultation* (e.g. as expressed in the Forest-Farmer Commissions in Ivory Coast or the Forest Committees in Ghana)
- *cooperant management* where community roles and powers are limited (e.g. Zimbabwe, Zambia, Benin)
- *contractual partnership* where community roles are more substantial but still inequitable (e.g. Cameroon, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Madagascar, Sudan, Niger, Mali, Guinea Conakry)
- *consigned management* where the community has all operational powers save ultimate authority (e.g. as being promoted in The Gambia and Tanzania in respect of National Forest Reserves)
- *community based forest management*, where jurisdiction is fully devolved and sometimes including ownership of the estate (e.g. as found in The Gambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Lesotho, and potentially Namibia and South Africa and Uganda).

FOCI OF PFM – Product or protection centred?

PFM initiatives tend to be either mainly *product* or *protection* centred in their early focus and accordingly built mainly around either *use* or *conservation management* issues. *Wildlife*, not the woodland environment within which it is found, provided the launching pad for community involvement over most of southern Africa, led by the catalytic Campfire programme of Zimbabwe and subsequently borrowed into the early conservancy projects of Botswana and Namibia and Mozambique.³⁷ *Fuel wood* extraction has as strongly fashioned PFM initiatives in Niger and since expanded to Mali, Burkina Faso and Senegal.³⁸ *Timber* harvesting drives PFM in Cameroon, with conduct of an inventory a crucial step towards 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 those states.⁴⁰ Emerging rural land laws in these states (e.g. 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

³⁶ Iddi op cit.

³⁷ White op cit., Jones op cit., Filimao et al. op cit.

³⁸ Babin & Bertrand op cit., Ribot 1999, Mamoudou op cit.

³⁹ MINEF op cit.

⁴⁰ Kerkhof op cit., Hesse & Trench *passim*.

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 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 upon a socio-spatial rather than user basis. This is the evolving norm in The Gambia, Lesotho, Uganda, Malawi, Tanzania, Zanzibar and 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, centre the agreement.

OBJECTIVES OF PFM - Sharing benefits or authority?

The above reflect a more fundamental distinction in strategic intentions of PFM. Broadly these are either mainly disposed to share forest access or revenue with local populations (*benefit-sharing*) or to share authority over the resource with them (*power-sharing*). The former route seeks less to alter the source of jurisdiction than to procure local cooperation to it. The latter focuses upon precisely this transformation; it seeks to turn local people into forest managers themselves, either as a matter of right and/or to share burdens of conservation and management on the state. Two different paradigms result (BOX THREE).

BOX THREE 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 to management	To devolve management
Livelihoods Objective	To share products with communities	To put forest source of livelihood in community hands

Benefit-sharing stratagems

In practice a clear line between the two approaches decreasingly exists with even the least transformational approach evolving towards more sharing or 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 upon the forest by substitution of especially wood supplies but also 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* such as in Ghana where forest-local populations are now contracted to clear boundaries and *paid* to tend tree seedlings in forest reserves.⁴² As a

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

⁴² Asare *passim*.

whole, PFM in Francophone 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 their 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 income share declining when tourism declines (such as the case in Zimbabwe and Kenya), conflict over shares is frequent, 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 burdens on the administration (Mozambique),⁴⁵ may be 'mired in corruption' (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 to directly contribute to the welfare of people within their concession areas (Ghana).⁴⁸

The **legalising of local forest use** is another means towards raising local collaboration but with associated managerial roles constrained. 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 periphery areas of the Reserve – not to manage the forest.⁴⁹ Managers of Chimaliro Forest Reserve in Malawi and Bwindi National Forest Park in Uganda allow yet 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 noted earlier, fuel wood extraction rights centre PFM efforts in Niger, Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso. Sustainable harvesting may result by limiting felling to certain sized trees and rotating felling by coupe. Such community implemented effort 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 higher than community level). As Ribot (2001) is at pains to point out, production and marketing permits are still under Forest Service control and mainly allocated to powerful, usually urban-based merchants. Licence-based participation is mirrored elsewhere. In Botswana for example, more than seventy Community Based Organisations have been formed, but not to receive management powers but to receive licences to use mainly wildlife resources and in ways 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 upon which communities are involved are rarely those of their choice. Community is usually defined in terms of those with relevant user interests, excluding large sections of the forest-local community, generating other tensions. In addition it may take some time for local communities to recognise that by entering user-

⁴³ Ribot *passim*.

⁴⁴ Negrao op cit.

⁴⁵ Negao op cit.

⁴⁶ Fomete op cit.

⁴⁷ Campbell et al.

⁴⁸ Alden Wily & Hammond op cit.

⁴⁹ Vudzijena op cit.

⁵⁰ Dubois & Luwore op cit., Wild & Mutebi op cit.

⁵¹ Boyd et al. op cit.

⁵² Ibid.

bounded agreements, they are impliedly accepting the government's recognition of their interests as limited to their rights of use. As a result, they may be abandoning more profound tenurial claims to forests.

Moreover, as licensees or registered user groups, their rights may be withdrawn - such as has already occurred in the case of the Muzama initiative in North Western Zambia. Muzama began 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 concerns. The disadvantages of founding a project upon product rather than management agreement were at once apparent – as was the failure to better promote and secure local tenure of this vast commonage area.

Power-sharing stratagems

Declared *joint forest management* is widely underway and may embody transfer of a gradually increasing array of decision-making powers to the community level. The example of Nigeria was given above where 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 Mozambiquan cases, decision as to harvesting is 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 communities in countries like Cameroon where the purpose of a *Community Forest* is to demarcate an area where the community may potentially benefit from harvesting but where also the community gains managerial control and may determine not to harvest the forest at all.⁵⁵ At this point the term of the agreement is however still limited (10 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 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), socio-ritual and customary reasons, as well as for livelihood benefit. As a matter of course, the approach builds upon local custodial interests and agreements reached focus upon 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 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 broadly acknowledged as being locally owned and the process of declaring a community forest is therefore one of helping the community formalise this rather than a process of transfer.

⁵³ Uchi Makula Trust op cit., Robertson op cit.

⁵⁴ CRSCFP 2001a.

⁵⁵ Klein et al. op cit., MINEF op cit.

⁵⁶ PFMWG 2001, Kubsu 2002 this volume.

In all four states, the process itself is a matter of empowerment, helping the community claim or organise latent jurisdiction and to formalise this into a working regime of authority over the forest. Typically it is laid out in steps that assist the community to define and demarcate the forest area and to develop a rational and sustainable management plan for its protection and use, to be operated at their cost and through regimes that they themselves devise. The process is particularly well developed in The Gambia and 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 recorded earlier more than 200 Community Forests have been created in The Gambia through this process thus far and more than 500 in Tanzania.

The process is equally applied however to national or state owned forests although leading not to community owner-management but *designated* or *consigned management* and subject to formal agreement between state and community. In Tanzania, the construct of *Village Forest Management Area* is provided to encompass this and *Community Controlled State Forest Management* in The Gambia. Depending upon the agreement made, the community may either work as co-manager with the forestry administration or be charged with management responsibility.

PART III TRENDS & ISSUES IN PFM

STEADY IF HESITANT MOVEMENT TOWARDS DEVOLUTION

Key trends among the plethora of early PFM developments have been observed. These include increasing empowerment of local communities in forest management, and 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, crystallised through participation. It also arrives through recognition by forestry administrations of the heavy and perhaps needless time and investment incurred through sustained operational roles themselves and/or supervising community roles.

Whilst some programmes have begun with power sharing in mind, most have come to this position through learning by doing, and increasingly, some degree of observation as to what works and does not work in neighbouring states. This manner of transition has been quite 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 refine. This may well include programmes in Zambia, Ghana and Ivory Coast where committees so far established are more for consultation than sharing decision-making, naming of those efforts as 'joint forest management' notwithstanding.

⁵⁷ For The Gambia, refer guidelines as described by Schindele op cit. and GGFP op cit. For Tanzania refer FBD op cit.

⁵⁸ For example, see Maumbeta for the Mwanza East Project in Malawi (op cit.), Filimao et al. op cit. for Tchuma Tchato in Mozambique (op cit.), Antsey op cit. & Mushove 2001 for the Chipanje Chetu project in Mozambique, Dorlochter-Sulser et al. op cit. for the Bam Region project in Burkina Faso and Hesse & Trench *passim* for other Sahelian projects. See also the transition from environmental education and buffer zone developments in Ethiopian projects (Farm Africa op cit., PFMWG *passim*) and a similar maturation in Cross River State projects in Nigeria (Saarela-Kaonga op cit., pers. comm. R. Spencer).

COMMUNITY FORESTS

Indisputably, the flagship of this transition (and PFM overall) is the **Community Forest**. As already observed, the construct is most developed in Cameroon, The Gambia and Tanzania but the construct exists more widely and with increasingly legal definition [BOX FOUR].

Whilst the overall notion of ‘community forests’ is fairly consistent around the continent, its development is still curtailed in a range of ways. *First*, for example, whilst most communities define the community forest area themselves, in some states, limitations are placed upon its size (Cameroon). *Second*, 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 to or devised by community members. *Third*, whilst community tenure, albeit of usually a customary and unregistered nature, is implied, formal recognition of this is still rare and/or expressed in ambivalent terms. A main exception is The Gambia where a formal transfer of tenure is integral to finalisation of a Community Forest. *Fourth*, 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

BOX FOUR COMMUNITY FORESTS IN AFRICA IN 2002			
COUNTRY	NAME	COMMUNITY AS OWNER	COMMUNITY AS SOLE DECISION MAKER
The Gambia	Community Forest	YES	YES
Tanzania	Village Land Forest Reserve	YES	YES
	Community Forest Reserve	YES	YES
Zanzibar	CF 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 Hist. & 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

the state and under terms largely set by it – the case even in The Gambia. In countries like Nigeria, Burkina, Faso, Togo, Malawi, Ghana, Benin and Mozambique, recognition of local tenure is conversely overlaid by quite stringent state control over how the forest is actually used. Nonetheless, Community Forests represent a significant departure from twentieth century forest management practice and related classification of forests. *Inter alia*, 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 recognised ownership of the forestland 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 upon the 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 like 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), Tanzania (1999) and Mozambique (1997) and South Africa (1991, 1996, 1997) are exceptional examples, but likely to be followed by proposed new legislation in Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia and Malawi. Comparable developments are underway in Francophone West Africa, versions of which are being delivered in Ivory Coast (1998), Mali (2000) and 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 for properties held in common to also gain this new legal support. In such circumstances communities may secure local forests as group-held private property and even register it as such.⁶⁰ Helpfully, definition of what is ‘customary’ is being defined less by tradition than by operating community-supported norms. In countries like Eritrea and Ethiopia, where customary rights are eschewed in principle, ample provision is being made for communal holding to gain registrable form.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 un-demarcated 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 a certain forest under its jurisdiction, consultation with local communities is now widely obligatory as illustrated 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 Tanzania (2002). The burden is laid upon the state to appoint an investigator to ensure every affected person is properly assisted to make 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. Whilst practical and legal opportunities for communities to re-secure certain forest reserves on a case-by-case basis

⁵⁹ Alden Wily & Mbaya op cit., Alden Wily 2001b.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ In Ethiopia, this is less so in the Federal Land Law (89/1997) but amply provided in emerging State laws, such as the Amhara 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 Francophone draft or enacted forest laws: Benin (Art. 14-22), Central Africa (Art 63-67), Chad Bill (Art 19), Togo Bill (Art. 16-20) Burkina Faso (Article 29), Congo-Brazzaville (Bill 2000, Art. 15-20), Senegal Decree Art. 43). In Ethiopia the 1994 Forest Proclamation and following state laws (e.g. Amhara Land Law 2000 s. 7(2) prevents eviction without the agreement of those affected. The case is similar in Anglophone Africa (e.g. Uganda Forest Bill 2001, Namibia Bill 2001 s. 13 (4) and Zanzibar (1996 s.19-22).

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

exist in principle in several new laws (Tanzania, Namibia, Zambia, Uganda), the stronger trend is towards a hardening of the distinction between those estates which Governments will continue to control, and those where local management of various ilk 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 their supposed jurisdiction will or will not be utilised, is legally provided for only in the case of Uganda, Tanzania (and Zanzibar), Lesotho, The Gambia and less explicitly, in Senegal. In these countries, it is the community that may develop the management plan of which the zoning, utilisation 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 upon official approval or even formulated by officials with local input; the case for example in Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Ghana.

There is as much hesitancy in empowering communities to take on licensing and enforcement functions. Whilst local forest managers or partners are frequently allowed to *make rules* as to the 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 the rules 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 by-law 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; that the community may apprehend, fine and retain the fines derives from certain (minor) offences, whilst 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 suffers at this early point from a tendency towards over-complicated procedure in the establishment of local roles, responsibilities and rights. Demands upon communities to conduct surveys, plan and implement boundary demarcation, zoning, protection and the like, often go beyond the requirements administrations have conventionally placed upon themselves or actually implemented in the forests they manage - or even currently demand of private sector managers (Cameroon, Ghana). By far the greater number of new Forest Management Plans is deriving directly from PFM developments.

We do not need to search far for the reasons of these demands. *First*, the emergence of PFM coincides with a concomitant emergence of much stronger requirements for planning overall 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 and 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 it is the case that forestry administrations are wary of the growing involvement of facilitating non-government agencies in this arena and may delay, restrict or control this through bureaucratic measures.⁶⁴ This problem is of course not unique to PFM but common to governance paradigm shifts overall.

The result may however be time-consuming, expensive and discouraging for local actors. Cameroon may illustrate the case. Whilst communities prepare their own plans towards

⁶⁴ E.g. White op cit. records this problem in Botswana. Saarela-Kaonga op cit. records this for the LENF programme in Nigeria.

recognition of a Community Forest, this involves a lengthy application procedure which is centralised and which requires formal survey and mapping of the proposed area, the formation and registration of a legal entity and a certified copy of its statutes and regulations; CVs of the persons to be given management roles, and minutes of the community consultation meeting.⁶⁵ In addition a draft management plan is in effect required. Once accepted by the Ministry, a 'Simple Management Plan' must be prepared, which includes the conduct of a forest inventory for systematic survey in 10m wide belts covering two percent of the forest. All trees of more than 40 cm DBM 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 and 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 finalised; eleven 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 only those forests with obvious harvesting potential.

Procedures may be almost as cumbersome in other countries such as Guinea Conakry, 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 Processing of community applications to manage forests has speeded up as a consequence with more than fifty 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 underway in Malawi. For its part, Tanzania has made a conscious effort to keep procedures simple, survey free and decentralised to enable as many as possible of the registered 10,500 village communities in Tanzania 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 resulting determination of powers

Constraints upon 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.

There have been exceptions. These prominently include Tanzania where community has gained identity as a registered village and has been able now for more than 25 years to elect its own government (Village Council). This is a government that 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 Peasant Associations in Ethiopia, Village Councils in Uganda, Burkina Faso and Mali and Local Administrative Units in Ghana, are other exceptions. None of these however hold the same

⁶⁵ MINEF op cit.

⁶⁶ Klein et al op cit., Djeumo op cit.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ No. 2001-122.

⁶⁹ Pers. comm. B. Rajaspera.

⁷⁰ Schindele op cit., FDCFU 1998.

⁷¹ FBD op cit.

⁷² Alden Wily 2000c.

level of authority as 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 lesser powers.

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

Even where powerful agencies are created or exist at the local level and 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 has been focused upon 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 elites - may compete for access and benefit. The problem is exacerbated where the institutional formation advocated is fashioned around user or other interest group formation rather than comprehensive inclusion of all members of the community in the vicinity of the forest.

Cameroon is again an example. The 1998 Manual advised that all sections of the community must be consulted and the legal entity must be representative of all sections,⁷⁷ but also encourages the formation of a Common Initiative Group, Economic Interest Group, Association of Cooperative for management purposes – each of which has its own natural constituency and rarely fully includes the poor or women.⁷⁸ In practice, projects now pay more attention to questions of inclusivity following early cases where Community Forests were sometimes overtaken by local elites, to the ill-effect of both community and forest.⁷⁹ In other countries such as Botswana, Community Trusts still frequently conflict with more widely based community Village Development Committees, which are nonetheless powerless entities.⁸⁰

⁷³ Ribot 1999, Onibon & Logo 2000.

⁷⁴ Diaw 1999, Vabi op cit.

⁷⁵ Gardner et al. op cit.

⁷⁶ Pers. comm. C. Polansky, R. Spencer.

⁷⁷ GoC 1998; 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 op cit., Djeumo op cit., Klein et al. op cit.

⁸⁰ Boyd et al. op cit.

BOX FIVE						
	AGENCY	PFM INSTITUTIONS AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL & MEMBERSHIP	REPRESENTS COMMUNITY OR USER OR INTEREST GROUPS	MAY DETERMINE USERS AND 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	CF 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 & 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 Management Authority	Varies: Community or wider levels	Varies	Yes	Some	Some
Namibia	Village Council, Natural Resource Committee, Co-operative	Community or wider levels	Interest groups	Yes	Some	Minor
Lesotho	Forest Committee	Community	All community	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ghana	Association, Common Initiative Group, Cooperative Economic Interest Group	Community and outsider	Interest groups	No	No	No
The Gambia	Forest Committee	Community	All community	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cameroon	Rural Council Village Council, Cooperative, Corporation, Association	Varies, community or user groups with outside interests possible	Varies	Yes	No	Some
Mali	Forest Committee	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, Coops	Interest groups	Varies	No	Minor
Nigeria	Management Committee	Community & others	Varies	Yes	No	Some
Senegal	Rural Council	District/commune	Varies	Yes	Some	Yes

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 little non-product

values of use to the wider community (such as water catchment functions), the founding of management upon user groups may be workable. However this is decreasingly the purpose of PFM development that looks more and more to wider managerial functions on the one hand, or to the organisation 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 under-attend to critical socio-environmental functions of the forest in its decision-making in favour of extraction.

The focus upon 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 product use and distribution focus on the one hand and institutional formation shaped around the forest user constituency on the other. Continuing the Cameroon example, Gardner et al. op cit. 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 Tanzania and The Gambia where power-sharing is most complete and implemented within management regimes which 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 so to an 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 – and 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, 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 of especially village chairmen.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 often cost and time intensive donor-funded efforts that are also limited in their time horizons. All too many pilots have invested inordinate amounts of time and

⁸¹ Reeb op cit., Massawe op cit., Kerkhof op cit., Scott op cit., Vogt & Vogt op cit.

⁸² e.g. Massawe op cit., Kerkhof op cit., Gardner et al. op cit.

⁸³ Alden Wily 2000c, Iddi op cit., Massawe op cit.

money on extensive studies, surveys, and inventories that are difficult to replicate and more seriously lost critical opportunities to develop approaches that do not require sophisticated tools.⁸⁴ Survey-driven projects may in addition be unintentionally disempowering rather than empowering of local level engagement as community members await the findings of experts of studies in which they have only supporting roles. With the departure of lead facilitators, interest to extend the development may also dwindle.⁸⁵ Or, involved foresters who have proven themselves unusually competent in this field may depart Government for the greener pastures of unrelated NGO work.⁸⁶ As PFM enters the mainstream, foresters who have played little 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 forestry sector as a whole may confront stark contradictions between national policies and laws for minerals and wildlife found within forests. Mineral policy in Africa on the whole excludes community roles in management let alone tenure, and legislative improvements largely focus upon post-mining rehabilitation requirements.⁸⁸ Wildlife strategies widely proclaim participatory approaches but usually in practice limit this to benefit-sharing and local protection roles that only permit the reporting of poachers to the authorities. Arrangements where the community is permitted a significant decision-making and management role in respect of wildlife as in Namibia⁸⁹ and evolving on a pilot basis in Cameroon⁹⁰ are in fact rare. Even in 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 more rare 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 Whilst the Forest Department in neighbouring Kenya has yet to launch significant participatory regimes, it does propose to do so in ways which the Wildlife Service finds excessive, 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, loss of sacred forests, local land rights and livelihoods at the hand of internationally sponsored logging in Cameroon, DRC 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. Further, the latter may be favoured as operators; in Cameroon concessionaires need only submit a management plan within three years of beginning an operation whilst communities may not harvest until their management plan is 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 to have 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

⁸⁴ This has been especially evident in some World Bank and USAID funded initiatives in West and Sahelian Africa, Malawi and Zambia but to one degree or another is quite widely the case.

⁸⁵ Arguably the case in Uganda at this time.

⁸⁶ Arguably the case in Tanzania at this time. And refer Massawe 2001.

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

⁸⁸ Alden Wily & Mbaya op cit.

⁸⁹ Boyd et al. op cit.

⁹⁰ Olsen et al. 2001.

⁹¹ Gillingham 1998, Sida 2000.

⁹² Pers. comm. H. Gibbon.

⁹³ WRM *passim*.

⁹⁴ WRM 2001a, Vabi op cit.

Back-tracking and backlash

Finally, emergent PFM is experiencing its fair share of retrenchment on commitments. Sometimes forestry administrations appear to regret the rights or powers they permit local actors and seek to retrieve these. The fate of the Muzama initiative in Zambia cited earlier 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 Community Based Organisations working in natural resource management to deliver their incomes to district councils to manage, which whilst not yet implemented has induced considerable insecurity.⁹⁶ Comparable resentment of local PFM successes and steps to limit the development has also been recorded in India, Nepal and Vietnam.⁹⁷ Nor has it proven 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 those who recognise 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 biodiversity 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 with better pay as the route to forest security.⁹⁹

PART IV CONCLUSION

Despite its youth and difficulties, PFM does show 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 decentralisation 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 upon 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 it represents less than one 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 or other level of local management roles. NGO roles in this development are likely to increase.

⁹⁵ Kerkhof op cit.

⁹⁶ GoB 2001, Bocobnet op cit.

⁹⁷ Kumar op cit., Shrestha passim, PROFOR 2001.

⁹⁸ Poles 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 biodiversity in Africa, Struhsaker 2001 made not a single observation relating to PA-people relations as either cause or solution to shortfalls.

¹⁰⁰ FAO 2001b.

Many lessons of especially a socio-institutional nature are emerging. Community based efforts need to be encompassed in a strong local level institutional framework. The need for that framework to be socio-spatially inclusive is increasingly acknowledged. Related, there is growing recognition that the primary function of local level roles is for forest *management* purposes and that local institutions are mistakenly developed on the basis of user interests alone. 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 be safely used becomes a managerial decision and one with which users, local or from more distant areas, need to negotiate. Issues of customary custodianship are playing a clearer role in determining to support local level management and as a whole PFM is positioning communities less as client users to be appeased than populations who have not just interests but 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 real power to manage is given it. 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 that protect the forest and raises questions as to the purpose of local level participation in the first place. More singular definition of ‘the manager’ is also advantageous. Multi-stakeholder approaches that include a host of different actors from central and local government, chiefs, timber harvesters, user groups, NGOs etc. show signs of being self-defeating, engendering competition, weak decision-making and the failure to perform that is generic to diffused responsibility. So too is it apparent that community forest management roles need legal entrenchment to assure actors security in their 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 technical management of woody biomass. Because it tackles – sooner or later – such issues, PFM is inevitably contentious and progress, 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 at root, PFM is a force for democratisation, giving reality to declamatory policies towards decentralisation and more inclusive governance. As such it is essentially empowering. Those who mainly are empowered are some of the poorest people on the continent, remote rural dwellers. Administrations too are empowered in the release of burdens upon and their transition from policing 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. Of such transitions, an improved forest future may well be secured.

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