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Commodity Dependence, Resource Curse and Export Diversification in Africa
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Most African countries continue to be heavily dependent on the export of a few, mostly unprocessed raw materials. These include classic commodities, such as mineral products, e.g. copper and nickel, precious metals and gemstones, e.g. gold and diamond, agricultural commodities, e.g. cotton and leather, and semi-luxury foods, e.g. coffee or cocoa. Even the new export economies in Africa that are exporting crude oil display a high level of resource dependence. In contrast to other developing regions there has been little progress in reducing resource dependence in Africa. The reasons are political, institutional and economic, but the insufficiently enabling global economic framework and initiatives for Africa are also to blame. The consequences have been severe: high macroeconomic vulnerability to fluctuations in price and demand, a high risk of internal and cross-border conflicts over these resources and the danger of export revenues being appropriated by the state apparatus, the elite or other interest groups at the cost of the poor. These potentially negative impacts of natural resource wealth on the political environment, state apparatus, economic structure and society at large find expression in the term "resource curse". The risks affect both traditional commodity exporters as well as the numerous new oil-exporting countries in Africa. Many African nations have developed plans for more effectively utilizing export revenues and for achieving sustainable production and export diversification. These include processing raw materials and using local inputs, developing new products, upgrading quality standards and introducing product branding. A comprehensive diversification of the industrial and service sectors is also planned. However, there has been little success in implementing these plans by way of strategies and policies. Just a few African countries, such as South Africa and Mauritius, have been able to effectively diversify production and exports. Ghana and some other countries are showing initial successes in "non-traditional" export products. Even relatively prosperous African nations such as Botswana and Namibia have achieved only limited – and possibly unsustainable – progress in bringing about the necessary diversification for the future.

The 12th edition of the African Development Perspectives Yearbook published in April 2007 is entitled "Africa – Commodity Dependence, Resource Curse and Export Diversification". It contains detailed analyses and development theory perspectives on the challenges at the policy and economic level in managing the high dependence on natural resources in numerous African states.

Case studies from Côte d'Ivoire, Angola, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon and Nigeria have been drawn upon for an in-depth analysis and evaluation of country-specific commodity dependencies. The report highlights the problems faced by these countries in managing their natural resources. It also outlines the repercussions of the resulting low resistance to economic and social crises, military conflicts and environmental degradation. It goes on to suggest areas for intervention by governments on the one hand and the international community on the other to help manage this problem.
The high resource dependence of these countries coupled with poor handling of resource wealth, especially with regard to resources of high geostrategic significance like oil, are primarily responsible for the above problems. The term "resource curse" was coined in the context of this apparent paradox. The country case studies have been used to illustrate the general and specific manifestations of this resource curse. Concrete areas for action have been identified for overcoming these problems in the long term. Apart from actions relating to economic policy, such as structural adjustment programmes and sustained export diversification programmes, the suggested solutions include steps to develop efficient institutions for good governance (at the national, sub regional and local levels). In addition to the comparative country case studies, the report also contains discussions of relevant publications and documentation relating to important research programmes, pertinent projects and organizations active in this field.

Volume 11 of the African Development Perspectives Yearbook entitled "Africa – Escaping the Primary Commodities Dilemma" is a supplement to Volume 12. It contains further fundamental insights into the opportunities and options available to overcome Africa's resource curse and enhance Africa's position in global supply chains in the long term.

Both Volumes 11 and 12 of the Yearbook offer comprehensive background information, educative insights and inspiration as well as constructive and realistic recommendations for action with regard to growth and development strategies at the national, sub-regional and local level. They are addressed at economic and political decision-makers, researchers, experts from international organizations, members of the press and all those actively involved in bringing about sustainable growth and pro poor development in the African continent.

The African Development Perspectives Yearbook vol. 1-13 are available at http://www.iwim.uni-bremen.de/africa/africanyearbook.htm

Further information about the activities of the Research Group on African Development Perspectives and links to further studies are available at http://www.iwim.uni-bremen.de

POLICY & RESEARCH

The New Face of Hunger: Unrest and Conflicts

The latest dramatic increase in basic foodstuff prices since the beginning of the year threatens food security in many countries and has led to growing mass protests and violent clashes. The Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), Josette Sheeran, describes the causes of this "new face of hunger" as a "perfect storm" of mutually intensifying factors. The rising demand for animal feed and meat in India and China, high oil prices, increased conversion of arable land for biofuel production, and climate change are driving prices further up. Following a crisis meeting in February the WFP warned that it was barely in a position to contain the problem of global hunger. "We will have a
significant financial gap if prices remain this high, and we will need an extra half billion dollars just to meet the existing need for food aid."
Jacques Diouf, Director General of FAO, had warned as early as October last year, "If prices continue to rise I would not be surprised if we began to see food riots." The risk of famine and social conflict has increased even more since then, with no signs of a trend reversal. In several countries demonstrations and strikes against high oil and food prices resulted in rioting that left many dead. In Yemen at least 12 persons were killed when protesting against the near doubling of food prices within a period of four months. Even in Cameroon at least 24 persons died during riots and over 1600 were arrested. Some governments have taken countermeasures and raised subsidies on foodstuffs, frozen prices of basic foods or imposed export bans. In the long term however, dwindling food stock reserves can be replenished and prices stabilized only through more efficient utilization of agricultural land, i.e. using it primarily for food production and only then for growing biofuels or animal feed for meat products. (Christiane Roettger)
Further information can be accessed at the WFP website: http://www.wfp.org/german/?NodeID=43&k=346#IDAFBPKCIDAGBPKC

Using All Means - the EU's Response to Climate Change
"The risks posed by climate change are real and its impacts are already taking place," is the opening statement of the joint report by the European Commission and the High Representative Javier Solana, which was commissioned under Germany's EU Presidency in June 2007 and submitted to the Council of the European Union on 14 March 2008. The report outlines the current debate on climate change and security. It concludes that climate change is a 'threat multiplier', which exacerbates existing tensions and instability. The report analyses those threats, touching upon a number of issues, among them (potential) conflict over resources, environmentally-induced migration, loss of territory along with potential border disputes and risks to critical infrastructure, covering virtually all regions of the world. However, despite the potentially negative repercussions, the paper does not paint a highly alarmist scenario. The report points out that it takes the entire range of instruments available to the EU to meet the challenge. Apart from strengthening existing systems and building additional capacities for early warning and analysis, this would imply that issues of adaptation would need to be more strongly integrated in EU regional strategies than previously was the case so far. The paper also proposes developing an EU policy for the Arctic. It places special emphasis on cooperation in bilateral and multilateral contexts as well as exchanges with third countries in all areas. However, the paper is just a beginning. It does not yet offer a concrete strategy for potential security threats arising from climate change. The decision on implementation now lies with the Council. (Achim Maas)
Sustainable Economic Solutions to Water Conflicts

It is both possible and affordable to overcome the major environmental challenges of today, ranging from climate change to water scarcity. At least this is what the recently published *OECD Environmental Outlook to 2030* claims. The *Outlook* analyzes the impacts of economic and social developments on the global environment based on key economic and environmental trends. If no new policies are adopted, damage to the environment and natural resource foundation could be irreversible and entail high costs. The impacts of political idleness are clearly illustrated in projections about exacerbated water scarcity as a result of the non-sustainable use of this resource and climate change. In the BRIC countries alone, i.e. Brazil, Russia, India and China, the percentage of people affected by acute water scarcity will increase by one third to reach 2.3 billion by 2030. That would comprise almost a third of the projected world population in 2030. In addition to taking stock of environmental challenges, the report also focuses on the required policy actions. The OECD applies a hypothetical global policy package to demonstrate that ambitious environmental protection measures are also financially viable. The same holds true for security policy, as demonstrated in a newly published policy paper by the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF). The paper deals with the consequences of growing water scarcity and develops recommendations for international cooperation to prevent or manage potential conflicts over this scarce resource. The author, Annabelle Houdret, suggests measures to enhance conflict prevention, among them the need to constructively engage the private sector in finding solutions so as to ensure the sustainability of environmental and technical investments. (*Anja Wittich*)

An executive summary of the OECD Environmental Outlook can be accessed at: [www.oecd.org/environment/outlookto2030](http://www.oecd.org/environment/outlookto2030)

INEF Policy Brief 3/2008: [http://inef.uni-due.de/page/documents/PolicyBrief03.pdf](http://inef.uni-due.de/page/documents/PolicyBrief03.pdf)

### New Advisory Group on Environment, Conflict and Peacebuilding

United Nations organizations unanimously approves the work of the UN Environment Program (UNEP) on peace and conflict. This was the principal message from a meeting in New York on 11 and 12 February 2008, at which the UNEP Advisory Group on Environment, Conflict and Peacebuilding was introduced for the first time. A number of potential areas for collaboration with individual UN organizations were discussed during the meeting. These include training UN employees, deploying experts for peacebuilding missions, early warning and conflict prevention as well as extending support during mediation and peace negotiations. The UNEP Advisory Group will play a key role in developing the required tools and training modules. It was also decided to test the first of these – among them an analysis tool for determining the role of the
environment and natural resources in conflicts – on a series of case studies. Nepal, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea-Bissau and Côte d’Ivoire were discussed as potential test locations.

The Advisory Group took up its work in the end of 2007. The Group is expected to provide strategic advisory inputs and extend support to UNEP in setting up a programme on environment, conflict and peacebuilding. The Group currently comprises representatives from Adelphi Research, the Earth Institute of Columbia University, Environmental Law Institute, Global Witness, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Woodrow Wilson Center as well as the University of California and Duke University.

During this and a follow-up meeting on 17 February it was also resolved that various UN organizations would enhance collaboration with the European Commission in the field of environment, conflict and peacebuilding. (Achim Maas)

More information on UNEP’s activities in this field is available at: http://postconflict.unep.ch/

The meeting was also attended by the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR): http://www.undp.org/cpr/

CONFERENCE REPORTS

The Security-Migration Nexus

"Security for whom" was the central topic at the conference on "The Security-Migration Nexus: Challenges and Opportunities of African Migration to EU Countries," which was attended by over 100 participants. The conference took place in Bonn from February 22-23 and was organized by the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC). Security in relation to migration was considered to encompass 'traditional' security perceptions ranging from security for the countries of origin and residence to the concept of "human security", which focuses on sustainable security of the individual. During the conference the concept of security was also discussed with regard to the causes and impacts of migration.

The potential increase in environmentally-induced migration was only touched upon fleetingly. It has been identified by Steffen Angenendt (German Institute for International and Security Affairs) as one of six migration trends, although this finding still needs empirical backing. It is this lack of supporting data and methods of measurement that led to cautious conclusions and statements about the rise in environmentally-induced migration. Tamer Afifi (UN University) faces the same problem. He is working on a case study on Niger under the EU Commission project on Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios (EACH-FOR). One of the study's interim observations is that economic migration in Niger is caused by environmental factors.

Apart from the question whether migration can be conclusively traced back to environmental or economic factors, one point that was repeatedly emphasized during the conference was that people who cross national boundaries do not necessarily pose a security threat. Rather, the (mis)management of migration can result in security problems. To prevent this – and there was unanimity among the participants on this
issue – it would be necessary to enhance ongoing interaction between all stakeholders from academia, politics and civil society in the countries of origin and residence. (Meike Westerkamp)

Further information on the conference can be accessed here http://www.bicc.de/events/mig_conf/content.php

Women Up in Arms for Human Right to Water

The impacts of water privatization, pollution and wastage as well as the gender sensitivity of international water policy were discussed at an international conference organized by Ecomujer, ver.di, genanet and FIAN held in Berlin from 22-24 February 2008. The conference was attended by 120 representatives from research institutions, trade unions, women’s, environmental and human rights organizations.

Women bear the brunt of water scarcity and disputes over water allocation. Yet the role of women tends to be ignored in policy-making, as Christine Bauhardt of the Humboldt University stressed in her opening presentation. Problems of access to and control over water resources were examined from different perspectives during the conference. Case studies from Peru and Bolivia illustrated the situation Carmen Herrera from Mexico described the impact of water scarcity and pollution on the daily routine of women. The long distances for fetching water do not just increase the risk of violent attacks against women but also hinder their participation in development projects or decision-making processes. Women are further disadvantaged when girls stay away from school due to the lack of sanitary facilities. Juana Vera Delgado from Peru outlined how water privatization marginalizes the rights of the indigenous peoples, especially women. Their active participation could be increased by raising awareness on such issues.

Topics such as the human right to water or the role of agricultural fuels were taken up in workshops. In the closing session the need for further strengthening the network of resistance against all forms of unwarranted water use was underlined. The demand for enshrining the human right to water in national constitutions and mainstreaming gender perspectives in international and national water management concluded the conference. (Christiane Roettger)

The conference programme and all presentations are available at the genanet (centre for gender, environment, sustainability) website: http://www.genanet.de/download-wasser.html

More information on the conference is also available at: http://www.rosalux.de/cms/index.php?id=14051&type=0&ftu=ca95bd5d#bericht

Building Competencies for Conflict Transformation

In conflicts where the power balance is highly skewed, strengthening the competence of weaker actors is key to successful conflict transformation. This was the conclusion of the third Latin American Forum on the Transformation of Environmental and Resource Conflicts held in Quito, Ecuador from 21-22 February. The Forum was organized by
InWEnt, the German Development Service (DED), Futuro Latinoamericano Foundation (FFLA), PLASA, Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Simon Bolivar University, and was attended by 160 experts, representatives of governmental organizations, indigenous peoples' representatives and development organizations. Enhancing competency involves more than just organizing seminars, as Marvin Fonseca (CoopeSoliDar) illustrated by taking up the conflicts over the exploitation of marine resources in Costa Rica. In his view, stable, long-term relationships based on solidarity are a prerequisite for acquiring the competencies necessary for successful conflict transformation. Other speakers highlighted the lacunae in imparting relevant competencies, such as obtaining access to important information, strengthening ethnic identities, organizational development and process planning.

The third Latin American Forum provided significant conceptual and practical inputs for strengthening competencies in conflict transformation processes. At the same time, however, it pointed to new questions. How can the imbalance between the “teachers” and those being “taught” be levelled so as to achieve a process of solidarity and mutual learning? In what way can previously coexisting indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms and "occidental" methodologies be used for developing innovative forms of conflict transformation? Which impact measurement methodology can be applied to competence-enhancing processes?

The organizers have set up a virtual discussion forum to facilitate continuation of the debate between the regional groups. The forum provides access to interviews with experts and downloads of presentations. A compilation of papers of the third Latin American Forum on Environmental and Resource Conflict Transformation will also soon be published. (Volker Frank, DED)

The forum can be accessed at http://www.ffla.net/foros/index.php

UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming events are also regularly published at http://www.ecc-platform.org/.


This Wilton Park Conference addresses the following questions: How are developments in the Black Sea region impacting upon the region’s growing importance as an energy transit route from Central Asia and the Middle East to the EU? What role is Russia playing? How are political dynamics affecting the location of new proposed pipelines and how will supply patterns change? What are the implications of price volatility, supply uncertainties, and the Kyoto Protocol for EU energy security?

The Conference is organized by the Warsaw School of Economics and University of Washington to evaluate potential impacts of globalization on the natural environment and global environmental policy. The primary theme focuses on the relationship between energy and the environment in a global context. The conference is going to pick up on the debate on the interrelationships between trade/investment and environment as well as the quality of natural environments in countries exporting environmental goods and services, including developing and transition economies.

For more information, please see http://akson.sgh.waw.pl/~trusek/gee//index.php
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"European Neighbourhood Policy and the South Caucasus" in Tbilisi (2-5 June 2008)
Another Wilton Park Conference deals with the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in the South Caucasus. What are the prospects for investment, trade, aid, energy and environmental cooperation in the region? Which policies can best help promote stability, democracy, and prosperity? What are the prospects for conflict resolution in the region? How can Black Sea regional co-operation contribute to closer relations?

For more information, please see http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/themes.eu/conference.aspx?confref=WP915
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"International Conference on the Theme of Mining and Sustainable Development in Africa" in Conakry (9–13 June)
Environmentally conscious mining operations have experienced both successes and failures, which should contribute to the development of a sustainable mining sector. This conference is organized by the Environmental Studies and Research Centre (CÉRE), the University of Conakry and the International Francophone Secretariat for Environmental Assessment (SIFÉE). It will give stakeholders from various backgrounds the opportunity to meet, share and compare experiences, and together propose solutions to environmental issues in the mining sector.

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IN BRIEF

Environmental Peacebuilding, Water in Central Asia, Conflict Monitor

Friends of the Earth Middle East recently published a new report on the basic theoretic principles of the concept of "Environmental Peacebuilding". In the second part of the study, the authors apply the results to the case of the Israeli community Zur Hadasa cooperating with the Palestinian community Wadi Fukin. The report is available at http://www.foeme.org/index_images/dinamicas/publications/publ93_1.pdf


The Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) has launched a new website for research and information on the nexus between natural resources and violent conflict: the Resource Conflict Monitor (RCM). The RCM compares data on 90 resource dependent countries to test how a better understanding of the way in which natural resources are governed could contribute to conflict prevention and transformation measures. The Resource Conflict Monitor can be accessed at http://www.bicc.de/rcm/index.php.

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