

Report

Future Workshop on Resource Governance in Southern Africa

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Facilitation and documentation:

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Sunday, 21st of April

Excursion around Johannesburg's West Rand mining fields

Mining in the West Rand Goldfields began after the discovery of gold in 1886. The area forms part of the Witwatersrand goldfields, the world's largest gold and uranium mining basin with the extraction, from more than 120 mines, of 43 500 tons of gold in one century and 73 000 tons of uranium between 1953 and 1995.



Mariette Liefferink of the Federation for a Sustainable Environment took the workshop participants on a tour to experience the social and environmental legacy that more than a century of mining has left in the area. Issues encountered included, among others, the pollution of wetlands and river systems through acid mine drainage, the exposure of poor communities to radioactive dust from old tailings dams, and the degradation of land due to un-rehabilitated mines. The tour left a lasting impression on the participants and served as a good starting point for the deliberations during the workshop.

Introduction into the process and the methodology/ getting to know each other

As part of the process of getting to know each other, all participants were asked to state what they expected from the workshop. Expectations included:

- Learning and sharing with the group the different and innovative approaches to natural resources management: what has worked and what has not worked?
- Networking with like minded individuals and organisations.
- Coming up with innovative ideas for natural resources management for the region.
- Leave the workshop with a vision.

Monday, 22nd of April

Problem Phase

After the main problem areas were identified, participants joined one of the four working groups according to their preferences. Due to the large interest of participants in the extractive industries sector, the thematic area was split into two sub-themes. The discussions in each working group are summarised below:

1. Extractive Industries and the Environment

Participants agreed that environmental considerations still take the backseat in decision making processes related to the extractive sector. Debates on mining are still largely focused on questions of foreign direct investment, ownership and revenue creation. Judging from their experiences in Zimbabwe and Malawi – both traditionally agrarian based economies where the extractive sector is starting to play an increasingly important role – the group discussed issues around the lack of institutional capacity (i.e. in terms of skills, finance and technology) and lack of effective oversight mechanisms. This situation has made it possible for mining companies not to comply with minimum standards that would ensure an adequate protection of the environment. The submission of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) by companies to government that remain unverified and the lack of an adequate provision of funds for post-closure rehabilitation activities by mining companies were cited as some of the most common problems. Linked to this discussion was the question of adequate legal frameworks and their implementation. Some of the mining policies in both countries originate from as far back as the 1960s and fall short of the best practices that are available today. In addition, the issue of inconsistent and conflicting legal provisions that do not provide a clear prioritisation between nature conservation and the expansion of mining was mentioned. The members of the working group agreed that the lack of genuine consultation with local communities and broader civil society exacerbate the above cited problems. Contaminated rivers, dust pollution and land degradation are regular manifestations of the above shortcomings.

2. Socio-Economic Impacts of Extractive Industries

This working group discussed the economic, political, cultural and social impact of mining in Zimbabwe and Malawi. Questions of tax justice, corruption, revenue transparency and the lack of diversification in the economy took centre stage. Other impacts discussed included human rights violations related to the destruction of socio-cultural systems within mining impacted communities (including negative impacts on graves, shrines and the family unit), conflicts around the terms and conditions of relocations and compensations, poor labour conditions and the lack of freedom of movement in some affected communities. The Marange diamond fields in Zimbabwe were an often cited example used to reference these and related issues. The participants concurred that a lack of channels for public participation, patronage and a lack of political will are some of the main reasons why governments are not able to act as guardians for local communities vis-à-vis multinational companies.

Questions/ remarks during the discussions included among others:

- Legal harmonisation at a regional level would help to prevent investors from exerting pressure on countries to lower their legal and tax requirements – yet the 1997 SADC protocol on mining gathers dust on the shelves of national governments.
- International organisations and Western civil society should do more to watchdog multinational corporations.

- Does corporate social responsibility go far enough? Need to move toward a system of corporate social accountability.
- Government environmental agencies (i.e. for the submission/ verification of EIAs) need to become more autonomous.

3. Biodiversity

The discussions in the biodiversity group focused on questions of land use, climate change and the need for development. Some of the main reasons for biodiversity loss identified by the group were population growth and the quest for perpetual economic growth, exerting pressure on finite natural resources. Land use conflicts were identified as another major concern arising from tensions between the need for conservation and other sectors of the economy such as fishing, mining and subsistence agriculture.

Climate change further compounds these problems with the poor being most vulnerable to its impacts.

The lack of a comprehensive policy framework and corruption, leading to elite capture of resources were other aspects emphasised during the discussions. These aspects coupled with the fact that communities are not involved in decision making processes about the use of natural resources has led to increased poaching activities in many countries in the region.

Questions/ remarks during the discussions included among others:

- How do we balance development in the extractive sector with conservation of biodiversity?
- How do we place a value on a resource that is invaluable? How do we understand the value of these resources - monetarily and culturally? What should be the trade-offs?
- Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) approaches such as the Campfire initiative in Zimbabwe are examples that can be used as a tool for conservation. However, adaption to local circumstances is important.

4. Agriculture

Food insecurity is a real issue in Southern Africa and the question of how to feed everyone is highly relevant. Reasons identified for food insecurity included extreme climatic events as a result of climate change and inappropriate food production systems and value chain systems which disadvantage small-scale farmers.

In addition, international trade and market speculation put food prices under pressure and lead to price volatility which has a negative impact on access to food. Further, the group argued that the recent riots in the South African agricultural sector are an example of the lack of fairness in compensation of most farm workers.

Another underlying driver of food insecurity identified by the group was the question of poor governance which manifests itself, among other things, in a lack of infrastructure, inadequate government support for emerging farmers, lack of technology transfer, and inappropriate education and training to support the agricultural sector. A lack of coordination between government departments and a lack of research informed policy formulation further compound the problem.

Questions/ remarks during the discussions included among others:

- Subsidies can and have worked in some countries, such as Malawi. However, subsidies need to be supported and sustained. In the case of Malawi, the country could not sustain subsidies and people were pushed deeper into poverty. Subsidies designed as social grants did not help Malawians, instead it made them dependant and created a burden for the state.
- Agricultural research is not sufficiently supported by governments in the region.
- Women's land rights is an important issue: because of patriarchal societal structures, women are often excluded from decision making and ownership of land.
- Land grabbing is an issue of increasing concern in the region: what systems are in place to support and protect subsistence farmers from large multinational companies and the state?

Tuesday, 23rd of April

Vision Phase

The topics selected by the participants for the vision phase of the workshop included:

1. Adequate policy and legal frameworks for the extractive industries sector

The legal and policy framework governing the extractive industries sector in 2050 is transparent, enforced, based on inputs by all relevant stakeholders (including government, business and the public at large), coherent in its approach in relation to the other sectors (including the environmental sector), and harmonised at a regional level.

It facilitates improved revenue generation through a fair, equitable and transparent tax system; enables infrastructure development and improved provision of public services (especially in health and education); ensures a sustainable extraction process that protects the environment to the extent possible; and provides the basis for the diversification of the economy through value-addition activities.



2. Improving the implementation of sustainable land management strategies

The sustainable land management group's vision for 2050 focused on the issue of information flows. The group pictured a scenario where research and information on policies and strategies flows freely and is informed by all relevant stakeholders, including communities holding indigenous knowledge and practising traditional ways of farming. Civil society functions as a knowledge broker between government, academia and (small-scale) farmers.

The comprehensive and integrated planning process also helps avoid land use conflicts that may arise between the various stakeholders involved.

The vision embraces a world that does not farm GMOs and that promotes sustainable farming methods supported by alternative technologies.

3. Protecting biodiversity resources from GDP-led economic growth

By 2050, the GDP has ceased to be an indicator of economic development. A new set of indicators that is focused on human development has been put in place. Efficiency enhancements and alternative technologies in production together with deliberate efforts to shift consumption patterns and to reconnect society to nature have helped to reduce resource consumption and improved biodiversity protection in the region. The period of overreliance on the extractives sector has been overcome and its social and environmental legacy addressed. Corporations have become citizens whose objective has ceased to be profit maximisation only. A decentralised governance structure ensures inclusive decision making processes.



Wednesday, 24th of April

Realisation Phase

For the realisation phase the various groups were tasked to develop action plans that could help to facilitate the achievement of certain milestones towards the envisioned future.

1. Adequate policy and legal frameworks in the extractive industries sector

The extractive industries group suggested the creation of the Mugodhi Civil Society Network (mugodhi means mining in both Zimbabwean and Malawian local languages). Grounded in the ongoing work and experience of the group members their action plan follows two parallel strategies: firstly, advocacy and lobbying for the creation of an improved policy and legal framework and secondly, the establishment of participation platforms that link local to international initiatives such as the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) and Publish What You Pay (PWYP).

Regarding the first strategy, the group envisaged a bottom-up stakeholder engagement approach that first seeks to ascertain the grievances and aspirations of affected communities and subsequently engages all other stakeholders (i.e. parliament, ministries and business) relevant for the establishment of a strong and coherent policy and legal framework. These actions are to be accompanied by constant efforts towards improved civic education and a monitoring and evaluation system to determine progress.

The lack of political will and the exertion of political influence with the view of undermining these efforts were identified as the most critical risks to the action plan.

Questions/ remarks during the discussions included among others:

- How do you motivate key stakeholders such as government and business to become part of the project and not stonewall it?
- The regional level has not been taken sufficiently into account.
- The question of capacity (building) in civil society to sustain such networks is crucial.
- Is the process far reaching and inclusive enough?

2. Improved implementation of sustainable land management strategies

The main objective of the presented action plan is to ensure that land management and food production is informed by sound scientific and indigenous knowledge. As a first step the plan foresees to carry out a baseline study that collates and analyses indigenous knowledge in the region. Think tanks will then analyse both the scientific and indigenous information and package it for different audiences. Main risks associated with this activity are the power dynamics and potential conflicts of research agendas between the various stakeholders.

A comprehensive stakeholder analysis will be carried out throughout the life of the project to identify the various users and interest groups. These could include environmental and agricultural think tanks (national and regional), government departments and user associations such as farmer and fisher associations.

At the international level, there is an absence of southern African voices/agenda on a rights based global food system. This could be addressed using regional institutions such as SADC to facilitate a process where the voices of the poor farmer are heard at an international level.

At the end stands a vigorous system that incorporates the sharing of ideas amongst all actors.

3. Protection of biodiversity resources from GDP-led economic growth

The objective of this project and action plan is to better understand the current economic system as it relates to biodiversity utilisation. This project will involve research as a first activity and develop a baseline. The research will entail gathering knowledge and information on the current economic system and biodiversity accounting. This will be followed by a workshop of all stakeholders, including communities, to share the findings and fill in the gaps of the research. After a comprehensive and inclusive process of consultation and awareness campaigns, lobbying of key stakeholders will be done, particularly to decision makers. A draft final framework will be the outcome of the process, which will also be subjected to a final stakeholder input. The objective of this new alternative economic framework is to find a balance between biodiversity utilisation and economic development, and utilise other broad indicators of sustainable development including environmental integrity and human development.