

Meeting the Donor: Challenges to the Decentralization Strategy in Environmental Management in Tanzania

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Introduction

For some years now, those who offer much needed aid for development have been urging developing countries to make fundamental changes in the management of their economic and political affairs. This call first came at a time of deteriorating living standards in the developing world, despite massive injections of aid by the developed countries. The desired changes moved two areas in development aid politics to centre stage. These were good governance and the management of the environment. Donors maintained that developing countries needed good governance or a more conducive and open policy-making environment so that resources could be utilised more efficiently and sustainable development achieved. The basic assumption was that without good governance aid was likely to be misused. Indeed, aid has been misused in many developing countries, but it is often not recognized that this was sometimes due to the politics of foreign nations.

With the call for good governance in developing countries, there has been a worldwide awakening about the need to pay more attention to the environment. Development and the environment have come to be inseparable sides of the same coin. As such, development aid has come to be so environmentally sensitive that a good part of aid today is directly channelled to causes aimed at sustaining the environment. Finland, for example, has made it clear that aid will be directed at achieving three main objectives: reducing widespread poverty; combating global threats to the environment; and promoting social equality, democracy and human rights (GoF, 1996).

Tanzania has tried to 'meet the donor' in pursuing the dual, and at times contradictory, challenges of increasing economic production and protecting the environment. This article, therefore, examines in detail the concept of

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good governance and its link to the environment and development. It places particular emphasis on the relationship between one key component of the good governance efforts in Tanzania—decentralization—and how it is related to environmental conservation and regeneration. Evidence of the government's efforts to address donor concerns can be found in policies and pieces of legislation regarding decentralization, the environment, and the restructuring of the bureaucracy, which are discussed later in the paper.

While decentralization and a greater sensitivity to environmental concerns can contribute to overcoming some hurdles that hindered conservation in the past, they will not solve all problems. The idea that good governance and environmental management are the key ingredients needed for building a prosperous Third World comes with its own set of problems. Insofar as development is concerned, the push for increased exports has been part of the policies that donors advocate for developing countries. Of concern here is the fact that in pursuit of increasing exports, policy implementers find themselves contradicting conservation efforts. In Tanzania, the conflict between the goals of economic growth and conservation can be seen in the expansion of export crop production that has led to the clearing of new farmland. This process has been intensified by structural adjustment policies that reduced non-farm employment, forcing people to turn to the land for their survival. Donor-inspired policies to remove state subsidies for agricultural inputs—aimed at promoting a more efficient use of these inputs—have encouraged peasants to bring virgin land, often inland forests, under cultivation as the most cost effective means to expand production. Despite the notion of sustainable development, in actual practice there is often a contradiction between encouraging economic activities and promoting environmental conservation.

Good Governance: The Concept

Looked at critically, good governance is intended to remove exclusivity. At the centre of the concept is the need for the state to make a rapprochement with the private sector and the civil society. The latter two are said to have been ignored by the state in the pursuit of development in the post-independence era, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. The experience of developed countries indicates that their importance in the development effort cannot be ignored. The term good governance, it seems, grew out of some failing associated with the idea of governance. Despite variations in the definitions of governance, there are some core common ingredients, such as the concern for the 'full' development of man, the environment, and the

planet. These, however, do not seem to be enough, because it was found necessary to add the word *good*. Hence, development does not just require governance: it needs *good* governance. The UNDP—which is one of the biggest multilateral development aid givers—sees good governance as developing capacities needed to realize development that gives priority to the poor, advances women, sustains the environment, and creates the needed opportunities for employment and other livelihoods (UNDP, 1994). On the other hand, Hyden (1992:7-8) defines good governance as the conscious management of regime structures aimed at enhancing the legitimacy of the public realm. Several other authorities—including Dunn (1986), the World Bank (1989), and Le Roy (1992:299-300)—list a number of conditions that would lead to the presence of good governance. The list includes:

- Constitutional arrangements and human rights
- Organizational effectiveness
- Primacy of legality and predictability of the law
- Responsive government which operates transparently
- Openness and tolerance in the political system
- Participation by stakeholders
- Freedom of association
- Favourable atmosphere for the growth of civil organizations
- Free press

The UNDP (1997:10) has built on the idea of good governance by developing a broader concept called systemic governance. Systemic governance encompasses the processes and structures of society that guide political and socio-economic relationships while protecting peoples' values, beliefs, freedoms, and security, as well as guaranteeing the exercise of personal capabilities that lead to a better life for the entire community. Systemic governance is made up of the political, economic, and administrative subsystems of governance, which are briefly discussed below.

First, political governance refers to the policy-making and implementation processes under a legitimate state authority. To achieve this, there is the need for a stable political system. By this we may refer to the components of good governance, such as the presence of constitutional arrangements, and the need for legitimacy by state structures. Such arrangements would enable stakeholders to predict events and outcomes of political processes more easily, as well as providing for human rights and freedoms, electoral processes, and accountability mechanisms in the exercise of political power. This is vital for actors in political systems who have to regularly make cost-

benefit calculations regarding the efficacy of various strategies for achieving their desired goals. What is referred to as political liberalization, where the political space is opened up, falls under this component. In Tanzania this space was opened up in 1992 with the reintroduction of multiparty politics.

The second dimension is economic governance, which deals with decisions that impact on how the economy is run. Ultimately, all efforts are expected to show their impact in the economy's performance and this will be reflected in the lives of the population. For so long the economies in Sub-Saharan Africa have not made a breakthrough, despite efforts to help by the developed countries. Economic governance cannot be ignored in the search for good governance, and that is why the private sector is being welcomed back to play a leading role in the management of the economy. Before these moves were made, the state in Sub-Saharan Africa played the central role of managing the economy. Unfortunately, African states were not good managers of the national economies. Aid has since been predicated on the recipient implementing a package of economic reforms that are expected to lead to a favourable environment for investors. Tanzania has not been an exception.

The third dimension is administrative governance. This is basically located in the domain of policy implementation. The civil service and other public services, such as local authorities, are focal points as they deliver policy outcomes. The aim is to have an efficient, independent, accountable and transparent public service at an affordable cost. Currently in Tanzania, there are the Public Sector Reform Programme (PSRP) and the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP), which aim at streamlining state activities, and giving more responsibility to the private sector. It is in this latter programme that the decentralization component, which will be examined later in the article, is located.

The Domains of Governance

As discussed above, there are three interlinked domains that make up the concept of systemic (or good) governance. These are the state, the civil society, and the private sector. These three domains are supposed to work harmoniously together for development to take place in underdeveloped countries. Before the initiation of the current reforms in countries like Tanzania, the state was the engine for development programmes: governments relied on it to produce economic initiatives. Under the good governance model, the state plays the key role of providing a legal and

political environment that allows the private sector to operate effectively, thus bringing about development. As the economy improves, it is expected that jobs will be created, thus substantially reducing the burden on the state. In this model there needs to be a smooth relationship between the private sector and the civil society. The civil society is expected to mobilize societal actors to participate in economic, social, and political activities.

The state has an important role to play in all development activities, regardless of the regime in power. In the 1980s it was fashionable to argue that the state had been sidelined (Evans *et. al.*, 1985). This line of argument was rebuffed by some, for example Almond (1988), and rightly so since the state in almost all nations provides for, among other things, law and order, infrastructure, and the legal and administrative framework within which development activities take place. In this era of trying to attract investors to the poorer countries of the world, more guarantees are needed from the state.

Developing countries are expected to exhibit a commitment by the political leadership to implement social and political reforms, empower the lower levels of the administrative structure, democratise government, strengthen capacity in the financial and service sector, and protect the environment. In the *good* governance framework, government institutions are also expected to ensure that there are equitable opportunities for the various groups in society, so that exclusion in economic, social, and political processes is the exception rather than the rule. The conventional three arms of government (judicial, executive, and legislative) are supposed to work in harmony through a system of checks and balances.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the concept of civil society became fashionable right from the time plural politics started to resurface. With the collapse of dictatorial and single-party states, the role of civil organizations in the state-civil society relationship became more apparent. According to Moyo (1996: 19-21), the concept of civil society has three parts. The first is free association, which implies the freedom to form political parties, trade unions, co-operatives, and NGOs without undue restrictions. The second is self-determination within societal organizations. This implies that the state should not interfere in the operation of NGOs. The third part is that civil society organizations are political actors, which have the right to participate in the political processes in the country, including influencing public policy. We would be right, perhaps, to subscribe to Diamond's (1994) definition of civil society as being a realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a set of shared rules.

Civil society organizations provide checks and balances to the government in power and to the private sector as well. At the same time, they contribute to the strengthening of the two. Examples in this regard include campaigns for the protection of the environment, efforts to enhance consumers' rights, activities to check social and political abuse, and running economic activities. When it comes to participation, civil organizations become a political training ground for their members and other stakeholders. This training allows members to participate in local (hamlet, street, village, etc.), national, or sub-national (regional, constituency) level political processes with more confidence. In some cases, civil society organizations have managed to overcome market failures – as has been the case with cooperative societies.

With centralized economies giving way to market forces, the private sector is being resuscitated. It is assuming a greater role than ever before. With the welfare state 'withering away' due to a lack of resources and bad management, the private sector is now the closest partner of the state in the provision of goods and services. Further, the private sector is expected to create jobs. Overall job creation may, however, be realized only after some initial job losses because of employment policies followed by the state before the ushering in of the reforms. The private sector contributes to improved technology that guarantees higher productivity, improves tax revenues, and alleviates market distortions in some cases.

With economic liberalization, the state faces new challenges. The opening up of the economy means that competition becomes stiffer, and local companies may need some protection. This protection has been controversial and hard to defend in the current world, where globalisation is 'ignoring' national boundaries. Another challenge is the need to ensure that credit is provided to local entrepreneurs in both the formal and informal sector. Reforms have their costs, and will always result in some casualties – unemployment for example. The state needs to actively confront these challenges, for example, by providing a means to support displaced workers. The state will have to take a close look at the relationship between the private sector – whose prime motive is profit – and the environment. In many cases the private sector, and its foreign actors, have been found to be insensitive to the environment, leading to extreme degradation.

Decentralization

The twin processes of reforming the civil service (in the central government) and the local authorities in Tanzania have had the inevitable outcome of the

former transferring some of its activities to the latter. This is because of the insistence by donors that the central government be small, efficient, and affordable. 'Small' includes reduced numbers of civil servants, decreased activities of the central government, and reduced bureaucratic procedures. The institutions under local authorities have been designated as the providers of most social services in the new setting. Decentralization assumes the principles of subsidiarity, i.e., public service provision must be brought as close as possible to the end-user through the devolution of public service delivery and political powers to the lower levels of government. The roles of institutions have been redefined, and so have been the policies guiding these institutions. Important is the fact that central government institutions have retained the roles of policy-making, regulation, monitoring, performance assessment, and the right to intervene to ensure that the rules of the game are followed.

The Regional Administration Act (1997) effectively initiated the decentralisation process by scaling down the roles, functions, and staffing at the regional level, and re-deploying the staff in local governments. The main issues in this process included organizational reviews of district and urban authorities, the need to design new financial and planning systems, and the re-deployment of human resources. According to the Act, local governments have the responsibility for social development and public service provision. Urban and district authorities are allowed to liaise directly with central government ministries on issues of concern and interest in their areas of jurisdiction. They can collaborate with other local organizations that work in these areas of concern, say NGOs. This position notwithstanding, local authorities are required to work within the parameters of national policies, legislation, and development plans. However, they are free to make operational policies and decisions.

While the structure of each local government is expected to reflect the nature and functions that are to be performed in their jurisdiction, there are some common key structural elements. As far as the environment is concerned, Act No. 6 of 1999 – Amendment to the Local Government (District Authorities) Act of 1982 – establishes three standing committees, one of which is the Environment Committee. More importantly, the objectives of the district authorities have been reformulated in a more precise way with regard to the environment. The Act states that "it shall be the objective of the local authorities in performing their functions to provide for the protection and proper utilization of the environment for sustainable development."

Likewise, the objectives and functions of urban authorities have been reformulated so that they "take necessary measures to protect and enhance the environment in order to promote sustainable development."

Decentralisation has resulted in the central government delegating extensive responsibility to the local government authorities (city, municipal, town, and district). If we take the issue of the environment as an example, what it means in practical terms is that organizations working in this area should deal directly with the relevant local authorities. This contrasts with the previous setting, where they used to work under the direction of the central government. Issues relating to financial and human resource capacity will, of course, arise in such a major shake-up. The major changes in terms of administrative responsibility include:

1. The coordinating unit for the environment to be located in the local authority.
2. The by-laws relevant to the environment to be locally made and tailored.
3. The stakeholders to be consulted more often than before.
4. The benefits and responsibilities that go with this control, in the end, to be determined by, and shared between, the local stakeholders.

It is now clear that *the crucial level* for environmental protection is *the local one*, and that is where the focus should be in addressing environmental degradation.

Other 'Environmentally Sensitive' Policies

In addition to the public sector and local government reforms, several other macro-policy documents that are relevant to environmental management were published between 1996 and 1997. These documents were designed to explore ways of increasing the local communities' participation in environmental affairs. Let us discuss the most relevant of them.

1. *The National Environment Policy (1997)*

This policy paper encompasses a broad spectrum of concerns, largely because environmental problems cut across many sectors, involving an interconnectedness that does not allow for environmental issues to be treated independently. There is also the challenge of balancing the need to increase economic growth with a more efficient management of the environment and an improved natural resource use. This implies pursuing both economic growth and environmental objectives by integrating environmental concerns into national development programmes. Briefly stated, there is a need to pursue sustainable development.

The National Environment Policy builds on the premise that the environment is threatened by land degradation, deforestation, wildlife habitats and bio-diversity, lack of access to quality water, deterioration of aquatic systems, and environmental pollution. The policy outlines areas that need to be addressed in order to counter the negative consequences likely to arise from the above-mentioned environmental threats. These are poverty reduction, population dynamics, technology, bio-diversity, public participation and education, the role of non-governmental entities, international cooperation, and enhanced role of women.

2. *Tanzania Forestry and Beekeeping Policy (1997)*

This policy was drafted in the context of the National Environmental Policy, and it is the successor of the Tanzania Forestry Action Plan, which was operational from 1988 to 1996. The drafting involved stakeholders, and its aim was to enhance the contribution of the forestry sector to the development effort. The policy identifies the role of local governments in forest management, and it proposes the strengthening of their capacity in that role. Like other sector policies of its generation, it intends to harmonise and strengthen the planning, research, training, and extension services of the sector at the district and community level.

3. *The National Land Policy (1995)*

This policy, prepared by the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements, was intended to give guidance on how to allocate land, regulate its usage, outline the modalities of ownership, and suggest ways of enhancing its preservation. It was also intended to resolve some of the land disputes that Tanzania experienced, notably between pastoralists and small-holder peasants, between large scale farmers and peasants, among contiguous villages, and between urban and rural needs. It goes further to address land tenure systems, the acquisition and disposal of land, and valuation. In terms of environmental management, this policy clearly gives powers to local authorities to make decisions on land use and related issues.

4. *The Agricultural Policy of Tanzania (1997)*

This document describes the goals, objectives, and methods to be adopted in creating sustainable agriculture for national development. Since agriculture is a key foreign exchange earner, the policy emphasizes the need to have clear strategies for the improvement of the sector, including the provision of extension services, the clarification of the role of cooperatives, the development of marketing strategies, and the provision of agricultural

inputs. What is also emphasized in this policy is the need to decentralise extension services to the local level in order to enhance consultative decision-making mechanisms. As expected, the issue of caring for the environment while pursuing agricultural objectives is clearly emphasized.

5. *The Wildlife Conservation Policy (1996)*

This document, which was prepared by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, gives guidance on how to use wildlife resources for development purposes while at the same time conserving wildlife resources and bio-diversity. A key feature of the policy is the attempt to make local communities an integral part of the management of these resources. Thus local authorities are supposed to manage those resources within their areas in collaboration with any other authority—local, national, or international. The document urges 'parastatals' currently involved in the management of wildlife resources to collaborate with local communities and their community-based organizations in the effort to rationally use and carefully conserve natural resources.

All the above-mentioned sectoral policies have certain characteristics that ought to be noted. First, with the exception of the forestry and beekeeping policies, they do not clearly address the issue of the necessary linkages between sectors. This is a significant omission in light of the interconnectedness of the sectors, especially in resource use. Secondly, nearly all policies support local level participation. The forestry and wildlife policies offer an inducement for participation by providing financial revenues to local communities. Participation in decision-making is also encouraged in these policies. Thirdly, the policies lack a clear implementation framework at the lower levels, starting from the district level downwards. This partly explains the delay in the implementation of some of the policies, though they were formulated between 1995 and 1997. Fourthly, it is likely that some pieces of legislation will need to be amended or repealed before the smooth operation of the policies is realized. This is a normal procedure when new policies, touching so many areas of human activity, are produced. It does not appear that such a necessary legal preparation has been embarked upon, making implementation *ad hoc* once again.

The Key Actors

It is often remarked that for environmental conservation to succeed, there is a need for political will from the highest offices of the land. The workings of

the Government of Tanzania have in-built mechanisms that bring environmental matters to the attention of the highest organs of policy-making. Let us see how the organisation of the central government is set to deal with environmental matters.

First, there is the Standing Parliamentary Committee on the Environment that is becoming more active in and outside the Parliament. Secondly, in the Cabinet, there is the Community and Social Services Committee—chaired by the Vice-President—that discusses, among other matters, issues related to the environment. Thirdly, there is the inter-ministerial Technical Committee, which reviews documents, including those related to the environment, before they are presented to the Cabinet. Now let us turn to the specialized institutions.

Tanzania has tried to create specialized environmental institutions since 1983. It was in that year that Act No. 19 established the National Environmental Management Council (NEMC). This is one of the pioneer institutions created for the purpose of environmental management. However, the Council did not start to function until 1986. Following the increased importance of the environment on the development agenda, the Council was given vast powers and responsibilities. These responsibilities included:

- Formulating policy on environmental management.
- Coordinating the activities of all bodies concerned with environmental matters.
- Evaluating existing and proposed policies.
- Recommending measures to ensure that development plans take care of the environment.
- Fostering co-operation between government and non-governmental actors in the area of environmental management.
- Specifying standards, norms, and criteria for the protection of the quality of the environment and ensure beneficial uses.
- Proposing legislation.
- Establishing and operating a system of documentation and dissemination of information.
- Promoting environmental education, and
- Conducting research on environmental matters.

To say the least, these tasks are enormous. They are all-encompassing as far as environmental management is concerned, raising questions regarding staffing levels and the capacity for carrying out these functions. To facilitate implementation, four directorates were established in the Council: Natural Resources, Pollution Prevention and Control, Research and Environmental

Education, and Administration and Finance. From these, some ten departments were formed.

In 1990 the Ministry of Tourism, Natural Resources and Environment was formed. The Division of Environment (DoE) was formed in this ministry in 1992, and three years later it was moved to the Vice President's Office. The move from a sector ministry to the Vice-President's Office indicates the government's intention to make sure that environmental matters are dealt with within one of the most powerful offices. This move is one of those instances where the government proved it had the political will to take the environment seriously.

However, since the formation of the DoE, the division of functions between it and the NEMC have never been clear. As a way of clearing this fuzziness, the DoE was given the task of preparing the National Environment Policy in 1993. Nevertheless, with time, the Division went on doing functions that were basically under the NEMC, with the latter shifting to an advisory role. As the existence of these tensions were fully acknowledged, it was then thought that they would be smoothed out with the completion of the National Environmental Policy formulation. This would hopefully be prepared with the maximum consultation of all concerned, and with a view to reaching a fairer distribution of functions between NEMC and DoE.

In 1997 the National Environmental Policy was ready and the DoE functions were stated as environmental policy-making, environmental co-ordination and monitoring, environmental planning, and policy-oriented environmental research. These are further disaggregated into numerous sub-functions as:

- Policy formulation, review and analysis
- Coordination of environmental management
- Setting environmental management tools
- Environmental impact assessment
- Environmental management of coastal zones, watersheds, cleaner productive techniques, chemicals and toxic wastes, biodiversity conservation, etc.
- Environmental damage evaluation
- Monitoring (especially broad-based inter-sectoral environmental programmes)
- Negotiations and enforcement of international environmental conventions
- Research
- Environmental education, and
- Reporting

What appears to have come out at the publication of the policy is the overlapping, competing, and conflicting mandates allocated to the two bodies – NEMC and DoE.

Whatever the case, it was clear now that the government had made efforts to create national institutions that are specifically meant to deal with environmental matters. Apart from NEMC and DoE, there are other institutional actors. These include the sectoral ministries, which in their various capacities—for example licensing, taxation, and regulation—participate in safeguarding the environment. Others include the private sector, and national and international non-governmental entities.

At the sub-national level, local authorities are the closest to the actual policy implementation arenas as far as both environmental degradation and conservation are concerned. They also are the links between national institutions and community-level actors. Given the current local government reforms discussed above, these institutions will assume a key position in coordinating, monitoring, and implementing policies that are formulated by institution(s) charged with that function via the decentralization process. Further, the National Environment Policy establishes policy organs at regional, district, ward, and village levels, suggesting that there should be a close relationship between these local institutions and the national ones. One additional factor needs be mentioned here—environmental projects. There are projects all over the country, which focus on environmental matters such as reforestation, water conservation, and soil conservation. In most cases these are donor-funded, although some local NGOs and CBOs are also increasingly involved.

The Challenges: Policy Objectives on a Head-on Collision Course

The push for economic revitalization in African countries has as a central tenet, the expansion of exports—mainly from agricultural activities. This has led to the challenge of achieving higher production without destroying an already fragile environment. Below we discuss several areas in which more production (preferred by donors), among other factors, counters the efforts of conservation, particularly in issues related to forests.

For most developing countries, the revival of the economy depends very much on how they can expand and intensify their agriculture. Tanzania is not an exception. Research has shown that a positive correlation can be

established between a higher national income and greater deforestation (Burgess, 1993; Mainardi, 1996). Also, research has shown that when the terms of trade are improved for farmers, with agricultural product prices going up, there is an aggravation of the problem of deforestation (Jones and O'Neill, 1994). The logic behind this predicament is that when farmers get higher prices they have a reason for clearing more forests to expand production. Also, higher prices provide the capital needed to put more land under cultivation (Ruben, Kruseman and Hengsdijk, 1994).

In Tanzania the same has been observed (Angelssen, Shitindi and Aarresad, 1998). The only thinking that contradicts the above findings is the old colonial belief that if one pays peasants (plantation workers then) too much money, the peasants can satisfy their needs and stop working. In this context of increased producer prices, it would imply that once the peasants are paid better prices they would stop cultivating—or reduce the area cultivated—because the amount of money they get from higher prices would satisfy their needs, allowing them to do less work. Much as we see this as an old brutal joke, there are some serious studies that have found that there is some truth in this logic (see for example, Monela, 1995). By reducing the area under cultivation or stopping altogether, it would mean that forests would somehow be spared.

The challenge facing Tanzania is to avoid the scenario whereby more forests are cleared in order to increase agricultural production. Whereas there are instances when growth in national income leads to more off-farm employment (Bingswanger, Mundlak, Yang, and Bowers, 1987), this does not seem to be the case for Tanzania. The demand for more agricultural products (and the modest growth in the economy) has come when the state is withdrawing from commercial activities and service delivery. This has two sides as far as employment opportunities are concerned. First, the withdrawal of the state from these activities has led to massive retrenchment and reduced employment opportunities. Second, the private sector, which is much more cost conscious, often does not employ many people; in some cases it has even introduced technologies that are capital intensive resulting in further unemployment. In addition, investors are not forthcoming as envisaged because of the poor infrastructure in the country. The possible advantages associated with the growth of national income, therefore, have not had any positive impact on the conservation front. As more people are thrown out of off-farm employment, they are likely to go for the only clear alternative, which is on-farm employment.

Theory has it that when the prices of inputs go up there is likely to be an 'extensification' of agricultural activity, which means accelerated forest clearance because virgin lands do not need fertilizers for maximum yields (Holden, 1997; Mwanawina and Sankhayan, 1996). The status of the prices for agricultural inputs in Tanzania is currently an issue of great concern. Shao (1992) notes that the implementation of structural adjustment policies has removed subsidies for farm inputs and access to credit for small farmers, leaving them without an alternative land development system. The state in Tanzania has, of late, started to support plantation agriculture at the expense of the small farmer—a clear indication of the abandonment of the small farmer and the embracing of capital-intensive agriculture (Mbilinyi, 1998).

While the strategy of clearing more land for agriculture is a reality in most parts of Tanzania—given the vast arable land that surrounds villages—some studies have shown that there are other choices open to small farmers. In areas where there are income-generating activities other than agriculture, people are ready to abandon agriculture because of its lack of profitability, or to reduce the amount of cultivated land (Barbier and Burgess, 1996). However, such alternatives are rather difficult to come by in the Tanzanian situation, given our discussion above on the withdrawal of the state from the economy. So it is more likely that removing subsidies will lead to the extensification of agriculture rather than to the abandonment of farming.

Accessibility to forests and roads (for transportation of forest products) has been cited as a factor that can accelerate deforestation (Mertens and Lambin, 1997; Nelson and Hellerstein, 1997). In Tanzania, the thrust has been to build feeder roads that will facilitate the transportation of agricultural products—cash crops to ports and other export outlets, and food crops to urban areas. As many villages border forests, the effort to make them accessible to market outlets makes the forests around them vulnerable to would-be harvesters of forest products. There is, therefore, the dilemma that much as we would want farmers to have their crops transported to markets, the possibility of people and institutions (like local authorities) developing an interest in trading forest products will be likely to appear. The question is: can a balance be established and regulations created that ensure sustainable harvesting?

The Land Tenure System

Until recently, Tanzania did not have a clear national land policy that would include matters related to land tenure. It was in 1999 that the Land Act—in which some of the crucial issues were addressed—was passed. Issues

addressed in the act include the definitions of key concepts related to land matters; the categorization of land into general land, village land, and reserved land; and the setting of the procedures to be followed in the various scenarios that may come out of land matters, such as disputes, transfers, leases and so on. When there is no clear land policy that defines the tenure system(s), property rights, etc., there is the tendency for people to clear forests as a means to claim ownership of the land. This is what is called homesteading (Anderson and Hill, 1990; Angelsen, 1999). Angelsen argues that peasant farmers do this (homesteading) because of speculation, reserving for future use, and as an incentive to squeeze out competitors.

With regard to the Land Act, the problem remaining is that too few people know anything about it; and, as always, the legal jargon that goes with such documents is difficult for even a moderately educated person to understand. There are some NGOs that have taken up the matter of educating Tanzanians, especially women, about their land rights, but their efforts are limited by several factors, including finances and the vastness of the country itself. The implications are that people in remote villages will go on homesteading to the detriment of conservation efforts.

Concluding Remarks

Local authorities cannot ignore the challenges mentioned above, which remain the biggest threat to the success of the decentralization process. These challenges are internationally induced via a process where the poor acquiesce in externally-based policies, which are necessary but often contradictory. A major problem with decentralization is that while it pushes responsibility to the lower levels of government that are closer to the people, these administrative structures do not have the capacity to face the dual challenges of promoting economic growth and environmental protection. This is so because parts of the underlying causes are macro in nature. The implication here is that only at the national and international levels can the contradictions in externally derived policies be resolved. As it is now, some aspects of decentralization may pass problems on to lower levels of the government that are ill-equipped to tackle them. It seems, therefore, that there will be a need for the decentralized governmental structures to address the immediate problems and issues associated with adjustment policies, at the expense of effectively dealing with the wider agenda of conserving the environment. The chances that both can be achieved remain distant, although they both come from the same pressure source – the donors.

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Population and Population Policy in Tanzania

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1. Introduction

The world is witnessing an unprecedented expansion of the human population. Within the last fifty years that population has more than doubled: from 2.5 billion in 1953 to 5.5 billion in 1993. World Bank estimates show that the population will grow to 8.7 billion within the next thirty years. The situation in Tanzania is more alarming, since its population has quadrupled in less than fifty years.¹ However, it is important to note that the absolute number of people is not a problem for Tanzania. Rather, it is the rate at which the population is growing that causes concern (PHRD, 1990). This accelerated population growth has negative effects on economic growth, the environment and social services (Simon, 1977; South Commission, 1990; Missana and Nyaki, 1993; Omari, 1994; Kamuzora, 1981). These problems call for the adoption of a national population policy that locates population concerns within the overall national development strategy. This paper provides a general survey of Tanzania's population policy, the major problems associated with it, and some possible solutions.

2. The Context of Population Policy in Tanzania

2.1 Historical Background

The world's highest population growth rates are found in Africa. Like many other developing countries, Tanzania has been experiencing accelerated population growth in the last fifty years. A decline in death rates and high birth rates are the main explanations of the rapid population growth in Tanzania.

The crude death rate is estimated to have declined from about 22 per thousand in 1967 to 15 in 1988. The infant mortality rate per 1000 live births

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¹The Tanzanian population grew from 7.7 million people in 1948 to 12.3 million in 1967, and to 23.1 million in 1988 (PPU, 1995). Currently, the Tanzanian population is estimated to be 33 million people.