

# **A Task Force on Protected Areas and Equity**

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE – DRAFT**

### **Background**

Although there is growing awareness of the contribution of protected areas (PAs) to sustainable development from a national and global perspective there are widely diverging views on the impact of PAs on indigenous and local communities living in and around these areas. Some believe that negative impacts are overstated, but others point to a widespread and systemic problem of the rural poor shouldering a disproportionate burden of the cost of conservation. There are also strong differences of opinion on what should be done to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts, and where the responsibility lies for implementing such actions. Sadly this is not just an academic debate. This polarisation of opinion undermines efforts to resolve social and environmental problems that clearly exist and so perpetuates what is ultimately a “lose-lose” situation.

Despite advances made at the World Parks Congress<sup>1</sup>, recognition of the importance of PAs in the MDGs<sup>2</sup>, changes in World Bank policy<sup>3</sup>, and the incorporation of “governance, participation, equity and benefits sharing” as one of the four major elements of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, there is still little evidence of the consensus and political will at the international level that is needed to address social equity in conservation to the depth and scale that is required. Indeed, results from the recent GEF Local Benefits Study suggest that many PA-focused conservation projects are actually making matters worse – 72 out of 88 GEF projects that supported PAs involved restricting resource use by local people, but only 40% of these made any attempt to address negative social impacts, and only 20% reported success in doing so.

At national level the picture is rather more encouraging in some countries where efforts to mainstream environment in poverty reduction strategies, and measures to promote more substantive participation of local communities in natural resource management, have significantly enhanced conservation efforts, and social equity in conservation. However, the “trickle up” of encouraging experience is still insufficient to counter the polarisation that prevails at the international level.

Although there are information and capacity gaps that need to be addressed, social and conservation science and capacity-building programmes are not a sufficient response. Some of the key barriers to progress are issues of environmental governance and the politics of conservation, and it is a political process (in the most constructive sense of the term) that is needed – a process that promotes understanding and reconciliation of different interests and delivers practical outputs that can be used to operationalize the emerging consensus.

The CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoW on PAs) is one obvious platform for such a process. Despite its many shortcomings, the CBD is a key driver of conservation policy at both global and national levels, and the PoW on PAs offers a unique opportunity to influence global and national policy and practice on equity in conservation. The high profile of equity in element 2 of the PoW presents a good entry point, but the equity dimension is almost totally missing in the other elements, notably in management effectiveness (element 1), enabling policy, capacity building and sustainable financing (element 3), and standards for PA governance and monitoring (element 4). Even where there is clear guidance on equity much remains to be done to translate rhetoric into reality during implementation. Most crucially there is a need to shift the emphasis of the dialogue and action from equity in process to equity in outcome as it becomes increasingly clear that participatory processes do not necessarily deliver equity in terms of impact on livelihoods.

In the progress that has been made in the last 5 years since preparations began for the World Parks Congress the Theme on Indigenous and Local Communities, Equity and Protected Areas (TILCEPA), a joint initiative of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and the Commission on Environment, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP), has played a major role<sup>4</sup>. The Protected Areas and Poverty recommendation from the World Parks Congress and the equity element of the CBD PoW on PA's in particular provide a strong mandate for further work on PAs, social equity and poverty. Although major differences of opinion remain on how to address equity, there appears to be growing political will within conservation agencies to support new initiatives on this issue, as indicated by the many discussions on this issue that took place within and around CBD COP8 in March 2006.

## **A Task Force on Protected Areas and Equity**

This TOR proposes the establishment of a task force to promote social equity in the conceptualisation and management of protected areas. This task force is to be established as a task force of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) under Strategic Direction #4 on Governance, Equity and Livelihoods in the new WCPA Strategic Plan (i.e. under TILCEPA). The Task Force will primarily address equity and PAs within a Developing World Context. Activities of the Task Force will target a range of relevant fora at regional and global levels but with particular emphasis on the CBD Programme of Work on PAs.

Although it deals with political as well as technical issues, this Task Force will be a technical forum comprising people acting in a technical capacity as experts in the field of PA conservation, poverty and social equity. Task Force members should therefore include opinion leaders from international NGOs, IUCN, and other multilateral agencies together with policy-makers, CBD delegates and practitioners from Developing Countries, including representatives of indigenous and local communities.

The process for consensus building that lies at the heart of this initiative will be based on two key premises. The first is that the closer we get to field level the easier it is to find consensus amongst different interest groups, i.e. the dialogue must engage the global level with national and local levels that are more grounded in reality. The second is that consensus is more likely if the *entry point* is equity in conservation, i.e. the way in which we do conservation rather than the question of whether or not conservation agencies should contribute to poverty reduction. Naturally the Task Force will address the relationship between protected areas, equity and poverty and in so doing will hopefully resolve some of the confusion, and reconcile some of the conflicting viewpoints, that continue to polarise discussion on this issue.

It is proposed that the Task Force be sub-divided into three regional groups – Africa, Latin America, Asia - but working to a common set of objectives and outputs (see next section). Some outputs could be region-specific whilst others could be produced by combining contributions from the regional groups. The rationale for taking the regional level as the entry point is that this is the level at which it is easiest to establish meaningful vertical linkages between opinion leaders at the global level and policy-makers and practitioners at national/local levels. A second consideration is the differences in context between regions, and language.

Although this is a global level initiative, this should not preclude activities focused at a national or regional level. For example a couple of countries within a region might be selected as pilots where the task force could seek to influence policy or pilot best practice guidelines to serve as an example of what could be achieved at larger scale through CBD processes. Likewise although the focus on the CBD process lies at the heart of this initiative, this should not preclude engaging in other relevant fora at regional level, for example the Latin America protected areas congress that will take place in September 2007. Regional priorities may therefore dictate additional activities and outputs.

### **Specific Objectives:**

1. To promote a better and more widely shared understanding of social equity in the conceptualisation and management of protected areas, including linkages with poverty and poverty reduction.
2. To strengthen provisions for social equity in regional and global conservation policy related to protected areas, with particular emphasis on the Convention on Biological Diversity (and particularly in elements 1, 3 and 4 of the CBD Programme of Work on PAs)
3. To achieve more equitable outcomes in the implementation of regional and global conservation policy related to protected areas, with particular emphasis on the Convention on Biological Diversity.

### **Core Activities and Outputs**

Listed below are proposed “core” activities and outputs that apply to the Task Force as a whole which will be implemented by each regional group, or by inter-regional sub-groups mandated by the regional groups to deliver a specific output. This list will be reviewed at the first regional level meetings of the Task Force and may be reduced in scope according to available resources.

1. Strategy and workplan development. Consider how best to deliver the specific objectives of the Task Force in terms of the overall strategy for engagement in CBD and other processes, and develop a workplan and funding strategy for the Task Force. Outputs:
  - i. Revised TOR for the Task Force
  - ii. Strategy paper and workplan
2. Foster dialogue and partnerships between opinion leaders with different expertise and perspectives within the Task Force and in the wider conservation community through meetings and electronic discussion. Outputs:
  - iii. Discussion paper presenting a Task Force consensus on the meaning and application of social equity in PA conservation and linkages to poverty and poverty reduction.
  - iv. Facilitated discussion of key issues on the TILCEPA list-server.
  - v. New partnerships between conservation and poverty-focused agencies
3. Action research and analysis: generate new information and develop practical methods and tools for use by researchers and conservation agencies. Outputs:
  - vi. A collective synthesis of available information on the social, cultural and economic outcomes of PA establishment and management at local, national and global levels
  - vii. A compendium of methods and tools to assess social, cultural and economic impacts of PAs at local level
4. Guideline preparation: capture key results of the dialogue, and action research/analysis activities (above) in the form of practical guidelines for conservation policy-makers and practitioners. Output:
  - viii. WCPA best practice guidelines on social equity, poverty and protected area conservation - including specific best practice standards<sup>5</sup>
5. Awareness raising and promotion: provide information and advice to guide the further elaboration of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, and other relevant policy frameworks at regional-global levels, and support monitoring of compliance by key actors with accepted standards. Outputs:
  - ix. A review of what's working and what's not working in the implementation of existing provisions on PAs and equity (to be presented at COP9)
  - x. Policy briefs for specific audiences

The taskforce will utilize several mechanisms to achieve the proposed objectives and outputs.

- Active engagement in relevant international fora (e.g. CBD, WPC, WCC, UN Meetings)
- Active engagement in relevant regional fora (e.g. Regional Parks Congress)
- Contribution to on-going initiatives (e.g. IIED-PCLG, IUCN Conservation and Poverty Taskforce, Rights and Resources Initiative, WCMC Vision 2020)
- Development of new initiatives

Building on the foundation established at COP8, IUCN, CARE International, and IIED will take a leading role in supporting TILCEPA to convene and fund the activities of this Task Force. At the regional level CARE will take a leading role in Africa, whilst IUCN will take a lead in Asia and/or Latin America (still to be confirmed). Through its Poverty & Conservation Learning Group IIED will provide support for information synthesis/dissemination.

## Programme

The first meeting of the Task Force will be in early to mid 2007, and in this case the Task Force will meet at a regional level (Africa, Latin America, Asia). The Task Force will then meet in full immediately before the next meeting on the CBD Ad Hoc Working Group on Protected Areas (February 2008), and then again immediately before the 9<sup>th</sup> CBD Conference of Parties (COP9) in mid 2008 (although maybe limited to a sub-group mandated by the larger group?). In addition to this core programme of meetings there may be additional meetings, either of the regional groups, or of specific regional or inter-regional sub-groups of Task Force members that are working on specific outputs.

At present it is envisaged that the Task Force will have a life of two years covering the period leading up to and immediately after CBD COP9. A revised TOR will be produced in early 2007 after the first regional-level meetings of the Task Force. This revised TOR will include the "core" objectives, activities and outputs that are common to all regions plus any additional activities and outputs adopted by specific regions.

## Task Force Structure and Membership

The Task Force will be chaired by Ali Kaka, the WCPA Vice-Chair for the eastern Africa region, working in close collaboration with the co-chairs of TILCEPA. It is to be constituted as one Task Force, but with regional groups that may meet independently.

It is proposed that each regional group of the Task Force have a maximum of 18 members so that the total membership of the Task Force will be around 50. To ensure a range of different perspectives and technical expertise it is proposed that the balance in Task Force membership be roughly as follows:

- 6 members from national government agencies (e.g. Wildlife Authorities, Forest Authorities, Ministries of Environment etc) including at least 2 people who have been, and will continue to be, members of national CBD delegations.
- 6 members from international agencies (e.g. Development Banks, IUCN, UNEP, CBD Secretariat, International NGOs, IIED, international tour operators etc) representing a range of different perspectives, including at least one resource person with in depth knowledge of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas and the CBD processes leading to its development.
- 6 members from national or local civil society organisations representing a range of different perspectives, including at least 3 from organisations representing perspectives of communities living in/around protected areas, at least one being from an indigenous peoples' organisation.

Note: balance in geographic coverage within a region is desirable but secondary to the above.

Criteria applying to all members of the Task Force:

- Substantial interest and experience at policy and/or field level in the issue of protected areas and equity, and linkages with poverty and poverty reduction
- Sufficiently fluent in English or Spanish (Latin America) to actively participate in discussions in these languages.
- Able to engage in discussion beyond the specific context of their own experience (i.e. motivated to participate in this process by an interest in the bigger picture)
- Able, and well placed, to influence policy development processes at national or regional levels

## Funding

The first meeting of the Africa regional group in January 2007 will be funded by CARE. The first meeting of the Asia regional group will be held in early/mid 2007 in conjunction with a regional WCPA meeting (to be confirmed). In Latin America the first meeting of the regional group will be held in September/October 2007 in conjunction with the Latin America Parks Congress (to be confirmed). On this assumption only a small amount of additional funding will be needed for the Asia and Latin America meetings.

CARE, IUCN and IIED are actively seeking funding for the proposed follow up meetings at the CBD Ad Hoc Working Group on Protected areas and CBD COP9, and for other activities to deliver specific outputs.

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Notes:

<sup>1</sup> the recommendation on PAs and Poverty supported by a diverse group of stake-holders which endorsed the principle that PAs should "do no harm" in terms of the livelihoods of indigenous and local communities and where possible have a positive impact.

<sup>2</sup> As an indicator for MDG #7

<sup>3</sup> the policy on displacement which now recognises restrictions on access to PA resources as a form of involuntary displacement, whether or not the affected people are physically relocated. This policy now requires the design of any WB-funded initiative that may restrict resource access to include a participatory process to identify any potential adverse impacts, leading to the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures that "assist affected persons restore their livelihoods to pre-displacement levels".

<sup>4</sup> Organisation of specific sessions related to protected areas and equity at the World Parks Congress, CBD COP7 and COP\* and the World Conservation Congress in 2004. and COP8

<sup>5</sup> drawing on on-going work by Winer, Turton and Brockington)