ISSN: 2581-6853

Editorial

We are proud and honored to launch the inaugural issue of our new Grassroots Journal of Natural Resources (GJNR). Natural resources refer to a broad spectrum of natural (largely biotic)/environmental (largely abiotic) assets, including air, water, land, plants, animals and microorganisms. These are the building blocks of our social ecological systems, such as rivers, lakes, estuaries, mountains, coastal zones and forests along with their human settlements, landscapes and nomadic groups.

While the natural resources of our only planet earth are finite (whether it is critically renewable or non-renewable), the current rate of population/economic/industrial growth out surpasses their supply potential. As a consequence, we are currently using 1.7 Earths equivalent of natural resources. The fact that we use more resources and services than nature can regenerate through fossil fuel based farming, overfishing, overharvesting forests, pollution, and emit more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than ecosystems can absorb is daunting on us. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, more than 40% of internal conflicts over the last 60 years are linked to the ruthless unregulated exploitation of natural resources. Based on these harsh realities, The Future We Want, an outcome document of Rio+20², calls for "protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development". Subsequently, the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (HLP) reiterates that the poor directly depend on natural resources for food, fuel, medicine, shelter and livelihoods, and are especially affected by resource depletion and environmental degradation. This calls for an urgent need to conserve and to promote sustainable use of natural resources for facilitating pro poor development.

Currently, the complexity of environmental problems is multidimensional originating in social complexity (from fragmentation of stakeholders), scientific complexity (from the multiplicity of factors at work and gaps in understanding), uncertainty (from the many unknowns), conflicting risks, and system dynamics (social, economic, political, and the state of knowledge and technologies)⁴. Additionally, challenges of scale and cross-scale interaction impose extra levels of complexity to environmental governance that have their influence on natural resources.

¹ UNEP and UNDPA (2015). Natural Resources and Conflict, A Guide for Mediation Practitioners, p101.

²https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/futurewewant.html

³ UN (2013). A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development. The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. New York: United Nations.

⁴Salwasser, H. (2004). Confronting the implications of wicked problems: Changes needed in Sierra Nevada National Forest planning and problem solving. USDA Forest Service General Technical Report PSW-GTR-193. Albany, NY: USDA Forest Service.

Natural resource governance refers to the norms, institutions and processes that determine how power and responsibilities over natural resources are exercised, how decisions are taken, and how citizens – women, men, indigenous peoples and local communities – participate in and benefit from the management of natural resources. The effectiveness and equity of governance processes critically determine both the extent to which ecosystems contribute to human well being and the long-term prospects for successful conservation of nature. Though it is well established that securing rights and sharing power and responsibilities through strengthened natural resource governance benefits both people and biodiversity, we have done precious little so far. Thus, governance is a necessary foundation for a just world that values and conserves nature and contributes to the achievement of global sustainable development goals ⁵.

Collective action in natural resource management is influenced by the social-ecological and governance context, so that natural resource management institutions affect the incentives for conflict or cooperation; the outcomes of these interactions influence future conflict risk, livelihoods, and resource sustainability. Action recommendations concern policies addressing resource tenure, conflict resolution mechanisms, and social inequalities, as well as strategies to strengthen collective action institutions in the natural resource sectors and to enable more equitable engagement by marginalized groups in dialogue and negotiation over resource access and use.⁶

At the local/regional scales, discussions on natural resources and livelihoods have to include issues, policies and strategies on Biodiversity, ecosystem goods and services as all of them are organically linked and interconnected. The latter components are the building blocks of ecosystem resilience and are the basis of our life support systems (soil, air and water). Subsistence and small-scale agriculture and fisheries provide livelihoods for many of the world's rural poor. Ecosystem services and other non-marketed goods are estimated to make up between 50% and 90% of the total source of livelihoods among poor rural and forest-dwelling households - the so-called 'GDP of the poor'. Hence, there is an urgent need at all levels of our production and consumption systems to embrace the principles of sustainability on a life cycle cost basis. Achieving sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns and decoupling socioeconomic development from rising resource use and environmental degradation require major changes to production systems, consumption patterns, employment strategies and technologies in every country. In this context, Sustainable Natural Resource Management (SNRM) deals with these linkages within and between natural systems and abiotic components. It integrates the management and environmental values social. economic community participation/involvement in planning, implementation and other activities through grass root level networks of producers and consumers. Notable examples are: community supported agriculture (CSA) based on agroecological principles⁸, community-based forestry, community

2

 $^{^5} https://\underline{www.iucn}.org/commissions/commission-environmental-economic-and-social-policy/our-work/knowledge-baskets/natural-resource-governance$

⁶ Ratner, B.D., Meinzen-Dick, R., Hellin, J., Mapedza, E., Unruh, J., Veening, W., Haglund, E., May, C. and Bruch, C. (2017). Addressing conflict through collective action in natural resource management. *International Journal of the Commons*, 11(2): 877–906.

⁷https://www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity-2030-agenda-policy-brief-en.pdf

⁸ FAO (2017). FAO's Work on Agroecology: A pathway to achieving the SDGs, p27. Accessed on 11 August 2018 at http://www.fao.org/3/i9021en/I9021EN.pdf; ⁹ Friends of the Earth International (2017). Community Forest Management and Agroecology -links and implications, p.24. Accessed on 11 Aug 2018 at https://www.foei.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/foei-cfm-agroecology-EN-WEB.pdf; Khadse, A., Rosset, P.M., Morales, H. and Ferguson,

based mangrove management⁹, community based fisheries management¹⁰, community based ecotourism¹¹.

Our experiences on SNRM around the globe point out that we cannot have romantic ideas either on the supremacy of the "traditional knowledge/technologies" or on the so-called "modern scientific knowledge/technologies" (as each of them can gain more by their closer interactions and ideas) to tide over the resource crisis. We need site-specific innovative solutions based on a blend of traditional and scientific knowledge/technologies, as the time is running out. This calls for a paradigm shift in NRM policies so that we can adopt more inclusive pro-poor communitybased or community-run or co-management strategies along with good governance frameworks based on the local/regional socio-ecological, economic, cultural and political realities. It is heartening to note that there are increasing numbers of several best practice case studies one eco- or social enterprises around the world that revolve around sustainable management of natural resources based on community cooperation and collective action at the grassroots level 12.

Notwithstanding the proven importance of local traditional knowledge, traditional ecological systems are currently at risk of being forgotten. Fewer people are involved in traditional agricultural and pastoral activities, leaving these practices to the older generations. One of the main influences upon this trend is the drastic change of the cultural, political, economic, environmental and legal framework. New educational systems that embrace Western techniques over local ones have shifted the interest of the youth. As a consequence, new generations tend to view local traditional practices as backwards compared to Western knowledge and management techniques and they have become progressively more distant from local knowledge and its implementation¹³.

B.G. (2018). Taking agroecology to scale: The Zero Budget Natural Farming Peasant Movement in Karnataka, India. The Journal of Peasant Studies, 45(1): 192-219; Lamine, C. and Dawson, J. (2018). The agroecology of food systems: Reconnecting agriculture, food and the environment. Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, 42(6): 8. Doi: 10.1080/21683565.2018.1432517.

⁹Jhaveri, N., Dzung, N.T. and Dung, N.K. (2018). Mangrove Collaborative Management in Vietnam and Asia. USAID. Available online at: https://www.land-links.org/wp-

content/uploads/2018/03/USAID_Land_Tenure_TGCC_Mangrove_Collaborative_Management_Vietnam_Asia.pdf; https://africa.wetlands.org/etude-de-cas/ community-based-ecological-mangrove-restoration-cbemr-re-establishing-amore-biodiverse-and-resilient-coastal-ecosystem-with-community-participation/

¹⁰ Alcala, A.C. and Russ, G.R. (2006). No-take Marine Reserves and Reef Fisheries Management in the Philippines: A New People Power Revolution. AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment, 35(5): 245-254. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1579/05-A-054R1.1; http://www.washington.edu/news/2011/01/05/co-management-holdspromise-of-sustainable-fisheries-worldwide/; https://blueventures.org/sharing-learning-across-the-sea-new-kenyanpartners-visit-madagascar

11https://www.theuiaa.org/conservation-of-biodiversity/wildlifealliance/;

http://www.ecotourism.org/news/community-based-ecotourism-asia-pacific-best-practice-stories-and-resources; http://www.expatgetaways.com/ethical-travel/).

¹²Steurer, N. (2013). Eco-entrepreneurship strategies and experiences from the Switch-Asia programme scaling-up study 2013. SWITCH-Asia Network Facility, Wuppertal, Germany, p.58; Tsai, S.D., Liu, T.Y., Hu, J. and Li, S.J. (2014). Entrepreneurship in Asia, Social Enterprise, Network and Grassroots Case Studies. Japanese Management and International Studies, vol.11, p. 280. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1142/9196; Sengupta, S. and Sahay, A. (2018). Social enterprises in the Indian context: conceptualizing through qualitative lens. Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research, 8(1): 19. Doi: 10.1186/s40497-018-0087-5; https://www.dbs.com/livemore/100-socialenterprises-to-watch-for-in-asia-2018.html, https://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/case-studies-media-centre ¹³http://wanainstitute.org/en/blog/power-local-knowledge-resource-management

3

Local knowledge is directly linked to local responsibility, thus losing such knowledge has direct impacts on the local sense of ownership and accountability to the lands and the surrounding natural resources. The youth's awareness of traditional practices will ensure a sense of responsibility and accountability to local knowledge and NRM ¹³. Thus, the academic/ scientific community and the civil society groups must play key roles in reviving, validating and reintegrating the traditional eco technologies for facilitating SNRM to tackle the issues associated with the intensive, inefficient and unsustainable use of the earth's finite resources.

We at the GJNR are looking forward to receiving your articles, short commentaries, etc. that explore the multiple dimensions of natural resources and their management at the grassroots level, from theory to practice, and from critical reviews to case studies. In doing so, we would strive to carve out a niche for this journal so that it stands apart from similar journals. In the best interests of the academic community and civil society groups, GJNR will be freely accessible globally via the Internet for immediate, open access to the full text of peer reviewed articles. GJNR applies the Creative Commons Attribution License under which anyone is free to copy, distribute, and display the work (please see full agreement on our dedicated pages of journal). All readers will be able to download and/or print any article at no cost. There will be no subscription fees, but minimum processing fees for the authors of manuscripts. Authors who publish in the journal will retain the copyright to their article.

The editorial policy of GJNR will be guided by the high standards of scientific rigour, quality and integrity, professional responsibility, and ethics that constitute the Grassroots Institute's vision. Furthermore, the scientific standards and impact of open-access journals are not much different from traditional subscription-based journals; GJNR will undergo the same peer-review process and quality control as would any other scholarly journal. GJNR will initially be published four times a year with contributions from academicians, practitioners and other grassroots level activists who work dedicatedly for the sustainable management of natural resources.

Professor (Dr.) G. Poyyamoli

Editor-in-Chief, Grassroots Journal of Natural Resources Department of Ecology & Environmental Sciences Pondicherry University, Pondicherry - 605014 E-mail: gpoyya@yahoo.com