



## Editorial

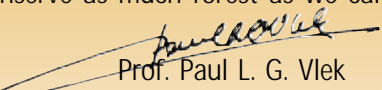
The year 2000 may go on record as the Olympic year for droughts. Kenya, Ethiopia, Romania, the Western United States and North-West China are all suffering from the same problem, but with widely different consequences. In the United States we are seeing a natural disaster in the form of bush fires and the ensuing destruction of huge tracts of forest and the threat to homes as a result of prevailing drought conditions.

We are witnessing a lose-lose situation in those regions of the world where natural disaster is coupled with human disaster and great suffering, as the capacity to cope with such climatic uncertainty is lacking.

Are we experiencing a drying trend?

A Chinese study claims that the incidence of drought in the North-West has doubled to two out of three years in the past 2500 years which is related to deforestation in South-East China. With the pace of land conversion in the tropics of today we may accomplish in a century what took over two millennia in China.

The debate on the reality of Global Climate Change continues at ever higher levels, and has become a theme in the presidential contest in the USA. There is an urgent need to obtain a better understanding of the effects of deforestation on global and regional circulation and climate. Until we have that, it might be wise to conserve as much forest as we can.

  
Prof. Paul L. G. Vlek  
Director at ZEF

## Emergency Relief Management in Mozambique and Angola

Torsten Feldbrügge

A commonly held notion is that the world has become more vulnerable to disasters and violent conflicts, and that this is particularly the case in developing countries. In fact, statistics show that the total number of disasters increased during the last decade, while at the same time the number of people killed by disasters decreased. Recent trends also indicate a slight decrease in violent conflicts, although the high number of latent conflicts is not very encouraging.

Human and economic costs of disasters and violent conflicts are high. Against this background, a recent study at ZEF has analyzed the "Economics of Emergency Relief Management in Developing Countries". This topic is of special relevance since most of the costs of crises, in particular on human resources, spread into the future and adversely affect development. An analysis of the correlation between the occurrence of conflict and national nutrition performance in 1992 and 1997, for example, shows that each of the ten lowest ranking countries experienced conflict or disaster.

Other costs relate to bi- and multilateral expenditure, by OECD/DAC members, on emergency aid. These reached a peak in 1994 with about US-\$ 6 billion, equivalent

to almost 10 percent of overseas development assistance. However, the costs have declined considerably since.

Nevertheless, in contrast to common perception, there are good short as well as long term reasons to invest in effective emergency aid, because, besides the humanitarian duty of saving lives, emergency relief can provide the basis for rehabilitation. The economics of relief management must be seen in this dynamic perspective.



*A deadly legacy of the violent conflicts in Mozambique*  
Photo: ZEF

The ZEF study offers an economic framework to guide improvements in effectiveness of external emergency relief.

Emphasis has been put on the role of information as an economic problem in crises, in particular between donor and relief agency, between relief agency and beneficiary, and on costs of relief interventions.

## Case Studies

To illustrate the range of informational problems and potential for improvement of relief aid provision, two case studies on food emergencies have been conducted in Sub Saharan Africa. One case study analyzed flood emergency relief undertaken by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation

(Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, GTZ) in Manica Province of Mozambique in February and March 1997. The second case study focused on drought relief, managed by the German Agro Action (Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, DWHH) in a volatile conflict environment in Kwanza Sul province, Angola, in 1997.

In the Mozambique flood relief, a diffi-

cult trade-off between officially requested assistance and potential inducement of sole reliance upon external aid by the intended beneficiaries as a result of this assistance, was part of the decision problem of the relief manager. The case study further showed the relevance of information collection, such as monitoring of relief distribution or registration of beneficiaries. In Angola, controversial information between aid agency and food donor on the severity of the drought led to an exhaustion of food aid stocks. Improved communication between agencies and a higher valuation of local information by the food donor would have been beneficial in this case.

## Doctoral Studies Program

While ZEF was welcoming the participants of the International Doctoral Studies Program for the 2000 academic year, the graduate students from the previous year were embarking on their respective field research trips. The following summary depicts just two research projects which could be undertaken owing to the support of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).

### Bamboo in Central China

The Shennongjia Reserve is situated in the mountainous landscape of the north-western Hubei province with peaks up to 3,100 m and deeply-cut valleys. The region is covered by dense forests and huge arrow bamboo stands. Biodiversity is high: more than 3,500 plant species as well as 308 bird species and 75 mammals have been recorded in the reserve. Many of the animal species are rare and protected, such as the golden monkey, tiger, leopard, black bear or the musk deer. And also the endangered giant panda lived here—but centuries ago. Today, plans are discussed to reintroduce the giant panda into the reserve with its arrow bamboo stands. Arrow bamboo is the preferred food of giant pandas: an adult animal consumes about 18 kg per day.

The doctoral research examines the botanical characterization of the arrow bamboo communities and their distribution in the reserve. The thesis will also assess the food supply and the respective carrying capacity with regard to the envisaged reintroduction of the giant panda. Furthermore, the dynamics of bamboo stands will be studied, which are strongly influenced by the unusual flowering behavior of arrow bamboo: All plants of a stand or even a region flower simultaneously and die back after producing seeds—a fact that might cause serious famines for the pandas. The bamboo stands regenerate from the seeds, starting with seed germination and seedling

establishment. The opportunity to study these processes, however, is rare, as arrow bamboo flowers only every 70-80 years. At present, we have one of these rare chances because the bamboo in the Shennongjia Reserve recently started to flower. The reintroduction of giant pandas into the Shennongjia reserve will result in higher public awareness of the rich biota of the reserve, which is one of China's most important places for biodiversity conservation.

This research is conducted by Zhao-hua Li, botanist from Wuhan, China, in cooperation with the Institute of Botany of the University of Bonn.

### ICT in Bangladesh and Peru

The importance of information is increasingly recognized in the development process. This thesis looks at the impact of information and communication technologies (ICT) on transaction costs, household resource allocation, and performance. Access to ICT and associated declines in costs have increased the potential of developing countries to overcome the information poverty. The provision of mobile phones to poor women by the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, and the spread of telephones in Peru due to deregulation and privatization are two recent examples. Though different in the nature of providers, they are similar in terms of their consequences: availability of information in rural areas. The availability of information has opened up a new opportunity to analyze the impact of less costly information on the objectives mentioned above.

The study is expected to provide a guideline for future development policies related to the provision of information and poverty alleviation.

Shyamal K. Chowdhury, an economist from Bangladesh, is conducting this research for his doctoral thesis in close cooperation with the Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh, and the Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo, Peru.

### Effective Emergency Management

Sound information and knowledge of the external conditions of crises, their perception by the population affected and the relief agency, and their causes are crucial for effective emergency relief. This helps to impede a simple return to the previous situation in which the crises could not be prevented. Moreover, such information is needed by the decision-makers in their efforts not to aggravate a crisis through relief activities. Emergency relief managers should more explicitly consider potential scope for reforms in crises. Clearly, the external conditions of crises call for adaptive intervention packages instead of pre-designed solutions. The investment in relief-related information is potentially very valuable, if valued not only on the basis of direct costs for information collection, but if the benefits of improved intervention as a result of better information are integrated. However, at the level of relief agencies, difficulties in interpreting information seriously determine effective allocation of relief resources.

### Flexible Funding Structures

More flexible funding structures between donor and agency than those presently observed are needed. Agreed minimum standards for monitoring of interventions should be introduced by relief agencies. As for the often neglected structuring of decisions in volatile crisis situations, a computerized decision-support system is proposed in the ZEF study for use in disaster management.



*Torsten Feldbrügge is research fellow at ZEF, Department for Economics and Technological Change, and conducted the research in Angola and Mozambique.*

# The International Nutrition Index

Doris Wiesmann and Torsten Feldbrügge

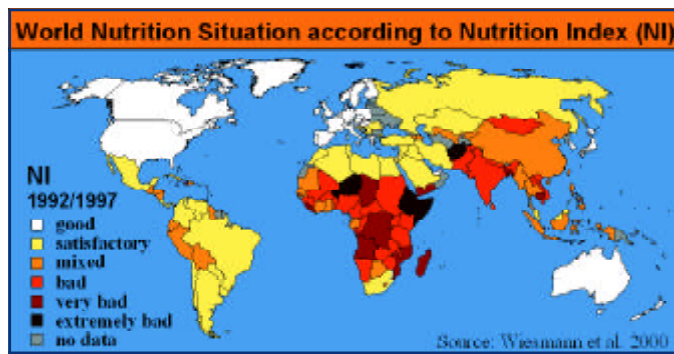
An International Nutrition Index (NI) developed by ZEF serves as a comprehensive measure enabling the analysis of performance and trends in combating hunger and malnutrition both in individual countries and entire regions.

of micro-nutrient deficiencies have been found. There is also a close connection between macroeconomic performance and people's ability to be free from hunger and malnutrition. In spite of this, for many countries the comparison of NI and per capita income reveals that a large potential for policies to relieve hunger and malnutrition has remained untapped so far.

The Nutrition Index, in its function as an international monitoring tool, is hoped to make countries more accountable to their commitments and to help speed up necessary nutritional improvements.

The Nutrition Index is presented together with a broad range of nutrition-related indicators in a new year book on world food security

which has recently been published—jointly by the German Agro Action (Deutsche Welthungerhilfe), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and ZEF.



The NI, a research project on food security and nutrition developed at ZEF, reflects complementary dimensions of a country's nutrition situation by integrating three indicators:

- the percentage of undernourished in the population,
- the prevalence of underweight in children under the age of five, and
- the under-five-mortality rate.

Available data, refined and supplemented by own estimates, permit the calculation of the Nutrition Index for the majority of developing countries at three points in time (1981, 1992 and 1997). According to the NI, in North Africa and the Near East, as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean, a nearly satisfactory nutrition situation has been achieved. The situation is still bad in South Asia and at best mixed in most South East Asian countries. But promising upward trends have been observed in this region since the beginning of the 80s. In large parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, the nutrition situation is bad or even extremely bad, and recent trends do not provide much scope for optimism.

In further analyses, significant correlations between NI values and the prevalence



Minister for Agriculture, Karl-Heinz Funke, at the book presentation „Jahrbuch Welternährung“ on 29 March in Berlin  
Photo: Jungeblodt

Further topics in the year book range from the impact of trade liberalization to the effects of biotechnology on food security and nutrition.

Doris Wiesmann and Torsten Feldbrügge are research fellows at ZEF, Department for Economics and Technological Change.

## Desertification - How to Reverse the Trend

J.C. Katyal and P.L.G. Vlek

Desertification is defined as the degradation of land (vegetation and soils) in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid regions and is caused primarily by over-exploitation of natural resources beyond their carrying capacity. Desertification leads to a persistent decline in economic productivity in the agriculture of the affected ecosystems. Three types of land use dominate in drylands, and determine different potential solutions.

Rangelands constitute the dominant land use in drylands (4556 million ha out of 5158 million ha). Here, vegetation degradation due to overgrazing and by fuel wood extraction is the primary cause of desertification.

Rainfed croplands occupy an area of 457 million ha, of which 216 million suffer mainly from a degradation of soils. Soil constraints arise primarily from the rainfed croplands' vulnerability to erosion, which leads to a loss of soil fertility. Eroded soils are structurally unstable and prone to crusting and compaction. However, poverty and the unforeseeable rainfall distribution patterns limit the options for restorative management. Rainwater conservation, a viable solution to minimize risk, is not adopted due to insecure tenancy and centralized management of government-supported programs. A lack of adequate knowledge of water efficient techniques and high value land use alternatives, as well as an inadequate marketing infrastructure are the additional causes of poor rainwater management. Conditions for an improvement in this sector are: (1) a change of land tenure policies towards free hold ownership, (2) the introduction of community participation in rainwater management, (3) scientific interventions in efficient use of harvested water supported by high value land use options built on indigenous knowledge (e.g., the "zai" system used in the Sahel zone) and (4) government support to facilitate the development of rainfed agriculture.

Within drylands, irrigated cropland occupies an area of 145 million ha. Forty-one million ha suffer from reversible degradation, mainly due to salinity and water logging. With canal water irrigation, three key development options are suggested to remove excess salts and water and to minimize conveyance and application losses of water: (1) the introduction of effective drainage including research on bio-drainage techniques; (2) properly lined or closed water conveyance systems and efficient irrigation techniques to reduce water losses;

and (3) the introduction of a participatory management of the irrigation system. Although installing drainage and leak-proof conveyance systems is costly, the economic and ecological gains are high.

The entire strategy of reclaiming desertified land revolves around water to either, reestablish the vegetation of rangelands, rejuvenate the productivity of rainfed croplands, or halt cropland loss creeping into irrigated farmlands. Desertification begins with actions by people and will have to end

with new strategies. Otherwise the 900 million people affected today will grow to billions tomorrow.



*Dr. J.C. Katyal is director of the National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM) in Hyderabad, India, and was a research fellow at ZEF during 1999/2000.*

*Prof. Paul L.G Vlek is director at ZEF.*

the state maintaining the fixed overall area under cultivation for cotton. Legal uncertainty – deriving, for example, from undefined exploitation rights and maintenance obligations – is impeding private initiative and investment in new areas of production.

Effective and sustainable land and water use can only be achieved by integrating concepts for sustainable management of natural resources with proposals for economic and legal-administrative reorganization. New agricultural production methods have to be designed and tested, water and land distribution procedures need to be analyzed, the legal basis for agricultural production must be studied, and marketing possibilities must be evaluated. At present, ZEF is carrying out a feasibility study with the financial support of the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), investigating the possibilities of developing a research project in close cooperation with UNESCO and several research institutes in Uzbekistan. A proposal addressing the ecological, economic and legal-administrative constraints for the improvement of water and land use practices in the target region will be formulated by the end of the year 2000 and submitted to the BMBF.



*Dr. C. Martius, soil biologist and ecologist, and A. Schoeller-Schletter, public law specialist, are preparing the interdisciplinary project proposal, together with other ZEF staff.*

## Water and Land Use in Uzbekistan

Christopher Martius and Anja Schoeller-Schletter

The Aral Sea basin was declared an “ecological disaster area” in 1992 by the UN. It is a dramatic example of how the expansion of irrigated agriculture with inefficient methods, poor management and disregard for the ecological conditions can lead to the destruction of a whole ecosystem, inducing climate changes of supra-regional impact. The drastic reduction of the Aral Sea surface area since the sixties is mainly due to massive losses of river water in ill-designed and inefficient irrigation systems along the Amu-Darya and the Syr-Darya rivers, the major tributaries of the Aral Sea. Not only a waste of water is to be noted, but also high

degradation of soils, combined with high salinity – the latter being a result of the high ground water table. Water losses due to poor transport systems are estimated to amount to 40 km<sup>3</sup> of water per year – saving this amount alone would be enough to stabilize the Aral Sea at its present level. Worse, water use per hectare is twice as high as in other regions, yet at the same time, the yields of crops are reported to be only half, and in some cases less than one-third of what is produced elsewhere.

The production system and the administration of land and water have aggravated the problem. Measures such as the introduction of incentives to save water or the privatization of small farms are being stifled by a still widely unchallenged planned economy with fixed quotas for crop production and centrally assigned water. Transfer of land from former state owned farms to private users is not compatible with

## New Publications from ZEF

### ZEF Discussion Papers on Development Policy

No. 26 - Wiesmann, D., von Braun, J., Feldbrügge, T.: An International Nutrition Index - Successes and Failures in Addressing Hunger and Malnutrition, pp. 56, Bonn, 2000.

No. 27 - Torero, M.: The Access and Welfare Impacts of Telecommunications Technology in Peru, pp. 30, Bonn, 2000.

No. 28 - Hartmann-Wendels, T., Menkhoff, L.: Could Tighter Prudential Regulation Have Saved Thailand's Banks?, pp. 40, Bonn, 2000.

No. 29 - Dev, M.: Economic Liberalisation and Employment in South Asia, pp. 82, Bonn, 2000.

No. 30 - El-Mikawy, N., Hashem, A., Kassem, M., El-Sawi, A., El-Sawy, A. H., Showman, M.: Institutional Reform of Economic Legislation in Egypt, pp. 72, Bonn, 2000.

No. 31 - Roy, K., Ziemek, S.: On the Economics of Volunteering, pp. 47, Bonn, 2000.

*ZEF Discussion Papers are available from ZEF free of charge (tel. 0228/73-1861) or per E-Mail (zef@uni-bonn.de). The papers can also be downloaded from the ZEF homepage (www.zef.de)*

### ZEF - Books

Wehrheim, P., Froberg, K., Serova, E., von Braun, J. (eds.): Russia's Agro-food Sector: Towards Truly Functioning Markets, pp. 552, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Boston/Dordrecht, 2000, ISBN 0-7923-7841-5.

## Other Publications

van de Giesen, N.C., Stomph, T.J., de Ridder, N. (2000): Scale Effects on Hortonian Overland Flow and Rainfall-Runoff Dynamics in a West African Catena Landscape, Hydrological Processes Vol. 14 (No. 1), pp. 165-175.

Sommer, R., Denich, M., Vlek, P.L.G. (2000): Carbon storage and root penetration in deep soils under small-farmer land-use systems in the Eastern Amazon region, Brazil. Plant and Soil 219, pp. 231-241.

Jütting, J. (2000): Transmission of Price Shifts in the Context of Structural Adjustment: An empirical analysis for staple food after the devaluation of the Franc CFA in Ivory Coast. In: Agricultural Economics, Vol. 22, pp. 67-74.

Jütting, J. (1999): Social Security Systems in low Income Countries: An Overview from an Institutional Perspective. In: Indian Journal of Labour Economics, Vol. 42, No. 3, pp. 341-360.

# Displacement in Colombia

Stefanie Kirchhoff

In collaboration with the Universidad de Los Andes in Bogotá, ZEF is elaborating recommendations for political measures, the aim of such measures being to offer displaced persons in Colombia long term prospects in their new homeland.

The armed conflict over economic and political power in Colombia has forced approximately 1.200.000 people, mostly women and children, to leave their homes during the period from 1985 and 1997. Colombia ranks among the 10 countries with the highest incidence of displacement in the world. Official sources predict another 500.000 people will be displaced within the next three years. The continuing and increasing trend of displacement and the limited ability of the receptor cities to absorb these immense masses of people, are making it more and more urgent to design policies of prevention, assistance, and resettlement. A project funded by the Colombian National Planning Department and the research foundation 'Colciencias' aims at helping the design of such policies by analyzing the determinants and effects of displacement at the household level. Some preliminary results of a survey among about 400 households in expulsory and receptor locations are presented here.

## Causes of Displacement

The interviews confirm the role of the violent conflict as the principal cause of displacement. The actors most likely to provoke displacement are the paramilitary groups, followed by the guerilla. The probability of displacement increases substantially when household members become the direct target of death threats or other menaces. The analysis indicates that land owners, members of local organizations, and younger household heads face the highest risk of such threats. Violent events (e.g., tortures, assassinations, massacres) experienced by household members, friends and people from nearby areas also significantly increase the likelihood of displacement.

The results indicate that economic factors also play a significant role in the indi-

vidual's displacement decision as high risks like the loss of properties, unemployment, discrimination, etc., are involved. Households with a better standard of living at home (larger property, better access to schooling and public services) are less likely to displace themselves, a result which is consistent with the economic theories of migration. Expectations about the standard of living in the receptor city (e.g., the probability of finding employment) also play a significant role.

The majority of the displaced consists of low-income families from rural areas. Half of the interviewees had lived in their area of origin for more than twenty years. Many used to be farmers who had to leave their land and other assets in the control of the insurgent groups. Often, they lack the skills required to find employment in the receptor city. About a third of the displaced household heads became permanently unemployed. Others started to work as street vendors, household aids or construction workers. While almost two thirds of the displaced that were interviewed used to live in their own houses, after displacement most of them lived in rented rooms or apartments, shelters or with family and friends, often in marginalized poor areas and slums. Access to health care, schooling, and public services may improve or deteriorate with displacement depending on the area of origin and the city of destination.

## Policy Recommendations

Obviously, any real solution to the displacement problem requires the end of violent conflict in Colombia. However, as long as peace remains unlikely some policy changes seem recommendable. Government protection could be focused more on those

groups most likely to be threatened. Increased police presence might help improve the sense of security of the population in areas of violence. The results also show that the affected household's expectations regarding housing, employment, and assistance in the case of displacement differ considerably from the actual outcome. Therefore, improved *ex ante* information is necessary. About 60 percent of the displaced are less than 16 years old. Therefore, special programs to deal with the necessities and traumas of the children are warranted. Most current assistance programs focus on the provision of the most basic necessities right after displacement (e.g., shelters, food, blankets). While these programs are essential they do not assure the long term livelihood of the displaced. When asked directly about their most urgent current needs, most of the displaced named assistance in finding employment or credits to start their own



*Many displaced persons in Colombia are forced to work as street vendors in order to sustain a living*  
Photo: ZEF

small businesses. More than a third indicated a need for child education. Moreover, it is worrisome that 28 percent of the interviewees said they need money to buy food. Resettlement programs are one option to alleviate the pressure on receptor cities and help the displaced. When asked for the minimum conditions for their participation in such programs most interviewees named the absence of violent conflict in the area of resettlement, financial assistance in starting over, and property rights to housing and land.



*Dr. Stefanie Kirchhoff, research fellow at ZEF, is coordinating the project together with project partners in Colombia.*

Professor Dong Fu-Reng is an economist at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, China and member of ZEF's Advisory Board



**ZEF:** China is about to join the WTO. How will this step change economic development in China in the long run? Where do you see chances and risks for China in the trade of products and services?

**Dong Fu-Reng:** In the long run, China's accession to WTO will improve the development of its economy, however, it will also bring some negative impacts in the short run. China's accession to WTO will increase its integration into the world market, thus further deepening its economic reform process towards an open market-oriented system. Facing international competition, many enterprises will have to carry out and speed up reforms. This is especially true for the state-owned enterprises. The private-owned enterprises being relatively less impacted by the structural changes will have greater opportunities for expansion. The sectors facing tremendous pressure include the automobile industry (automobile producers and input industry), the agricultural sector (mainly wheat, corn, soybean and cotton), telecommunication, as well as the banking and insurance sectors. Labor intensive sectors such as the textile industry will mainly benefit from accession to WTO, but only those enterprises with modern technologies will be able to compete internationally.

**ZEF:** Human resources, innovation, science and technology are the driving forces of long term growth. How is China performing in this respect, and what future policy directions are expected?

**Dong Fu-Reng:** A basic goal of China's national policy is to promote the reform process based on science, technology and education. Besides increasing investment in fundamental research, the Chinese government encourages the private sector to invest in the development of especially applied sciences and technologies. However, the environment and legal framework for the development of science and technology needs further improvement. This refers for example to the protection of intellectual property rights or the creation of incentives for technical innovation. China has also established high-tech zones and implemented some more favorable policies to attract foreign and domestic investments in the fields of high technology. Core high-tech sectors include information technologies, biotechnologies, new energy, new materials and environment protection technologies.

**ZEF:** The employment of many workers of former public enterprises in the private sector is always a problem of economic reform. How is China dealing with this problem and what is the role of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)?

**Dong Fu-Reng:** Unemployment is an especially big problem in the development of China's economy. For the tremendous surplus of laborers in state-owned enterprises new jobs need to be created. The Chinese government promotes the development of private enterprises, especially of SMEs. In fact, the development of private enterprises has been very fast. In 1998, non-state-owned enterprises in total industry reached about 70 percent. However, the development of SMEs is still impeded by many obstacles, like the prohibited access to some sectors such as banking, insurance, telecommunication, security trading, aviation or railway, the difficulty of recruiting qualified staff and in the area of management, administra-

tion and technology. In addition, private enterprises have little possibility of raising capital on the stock market, and it is not easy for them to obtain bank loans; SMEs, especially, are hardly able to provide collateral for banks, etc. These problems are increasingly being faced now, for instance, state-owned banks have established departments for SMEs and specialized credit agencies are also being developed. To tackle the unemployment problems, policies that speed up the urbanization process and the development of small and middle-size cities have also been carried out, since the level of urbanization is very low in China. In 1999, only 30 percent of the total population lived in the urban areas.

**ZEF:** What is to be done to address the poverty problem in rural areas in particular?

**Dong Fu-Reng:** Although China has had considerable success in alleviating poverty, the task of wiping out poverty by the end of the last century was not achieved. There are still 32 million people having problems to sustain their basic needs in terms of food and clothing. Of these, 20 million people suffer from a lack of arable land, extreme poor soil quality and lack of water so that resettlement into other regions is needed. A percentage of poor people who had been successfully pushed above the poverty line returned to poverty again. The major causes of poverty are adaptation problems to market changes, surplus of agricultural products, barriers to marketing channels, lack of knowledge and technology, scarcity of capital, natural disasters, or tragic accidents of family members. Therefore, it is necessary to provide farmers with market information, technical training and loans. But there is also the need to revive and create social insurance systems (health care, pensions and social welfare).



## International Advisory Board stimulates ZEF's further strategy

On 19 August 2000 the International Advisory Board of ZEF met in Bonn for the second time, the focal point of this year's meeting being the current and future role of the Center at both a national and an international level. Under the leadership of the deputy chairperson, Margarita de Botero, the Board discussed, in particular, the long term strategy of the Center including its research agenda. Furthermore, financial and administrative aspects were addressed as well as the forth-

coming evaluation. The Board meeting took place in a constructive and open atmosphere, during which various ZEF staff members presented their research projects. The Board members welcomed the opportunity to discuss the work of ZEF with researchers – a most advantageous opportunity enabling a better understanding of the activities of ZEF thereby assisting the Board in their recommendations for the future direction of the Center.

## facts and news

In July, the Brazilian Research Council (CNPq) approved the project "Management of plant detritus and its effects on litter decomposition and soil macrofauna in central Amazonian agro-ecosystems", prepared by the State Museum for Natural Science in Karlsruhe (Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde Karlsruhe - SMNK) and ZEF (Department Ecology and Natural Resource Management) in cooperation with Embrapa - Amazônia Ocidental, the Brazilian agricul-

tural research institute in Manaus. The 3-year project, which on the part of Germany had already been approved by BMBF in April, will start this year. In this follow-up project, the possible application of results from a previous project "Soil fauna and litter decomposition in primary and secondary forest in a polyculture forestry plantation in Amazonia" (1996-1999) in practical soil management in low-input farming will be examined.

The granting of stipends and research funding by the Robert Bosch Foundation has made it possible for future German graduate doctoral students within the field of agriculture and forestry to participate in the International Doctoral Studies Program at ZEF. With this initiative, the foundation aims to strengthen the long term presence of German scientists in international research institutes and organizations within the agricultural sector. Additional to the German Academic Exchange Service and the German Federal Min-

istry of Economic Cooperation and Development, ZEF was able to gain a further important supporter of the program.

At the end of August, Joachim von Braun, director at ZEF, was elected the new president of the International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE). The IAAE has about 1800 members active in over 90 countries world wide. Their central focus is on issues surrounding agriculture, nutrition, environment, rural development and international trade.

# Should Human Rights Take Priority?

Chris Jones-Pauly

Are human rights to be made the primary goal of development and trade and investment related assistance policies? This question will be explored at a workshop at ZEF to be held from 9th to 10th November 2000.

Endeavoring to make human rights the major aim of development has wide implications. For one, it means asking whether human rights are to supersede growth as the major goal of development or whether human rights set the agenda as a goal of growth. It means looking at the arguments in favor of, and in opposition to, such a redefinition, as well as the political and institutional difficulties in doing so. It has implications for the relationship between donor and recipient countries, and between investors and recipient countries participating in trade related assistance.

One could consider going beyond the era of conditionality and related sanctions in order to focus on redefining the contractual relationship. The question then to be posed is whether all parties would be obligated to adjust their allocations of resources for direct development aid as well as trade and investment related assistance to fit the criteria of human rights. Mechanisms for enforcing contractual agreements, or even having them reviewed, then become important. What form these shall take must be discussed and also how they are to be built

in as an integral part of a strategy for development aid and trade or investment related assistance. Finally, clarity is needed about the larger context of the interplay between human rights and development.

The workshop will start with identifying the political and institutional constraints on making human rights the explicit primary aim of development or growth. The participants will then examine whether these constraints can or should be overcome and how. Against the background of these broader issues, representatives from bilateral aid agencies, business, and NGOs will have an opportunity to assess the degree of integration of human rights in their organizations' strategies on the basis of concrete examples of good and bad practices. Also to be debated is the issue of the obligations that a human rights policy places not only on the recipient countries, but also on donors and investors, in terms of resource allocation and implementation. The pros and cons of various approaches now being used by multilateral agencies and especially by international NGOs will be discussed as well as issues of future strategies. Finally the question is raised whether and how a fundamental consensus can be reached about human rights as the macro-environment that guides political, economic, and legal choices relating to aid and trade. The closing discussion aims to identify points of focus for future research and policy.

*Dr. Dr. Chris Jones-Pauly is senior research fellow at ZEF, Department for Political and Cultural Change.*

## ZEF Calendar

### SEPTEMBER

11 September: 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.  
6th Bonn Dialogue on Development Policy with Kemal Dervis, Vice President, World Bank: „Globalization and Equity“; Conference Venue: ZEF

### DECEMBER

- 4 December: Conferment of the German UNIFEM Prize for sustainable women's self help projects with Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (in collaboration with the German Committee of UNIFEM and the City of Bonn); Conference Venue: ZEF
- 6 – 8 December: International Conference „Tropical Agriculture in Transition – Opportunities for Mitigating Greenhouse Gas Emissions? (in collaboration with the Fraunhofer Institute for Environmental Atmospheric Research, Garmisch-Partenkirchen); Conference Venue: Gustav-Stresemann-Institut, Bonn
- 14 – 16 December: International Conference „Facing Ethnic Conflicts – Perspectives from Research and Policy-making; Conference Venue: Haus der Geschichte and ZEF, Bonn

From 16 October 2000, the regular ZEF Public Lectures with diverse guest speakers will again be held each Monday evening from 5:00 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. The program is available on the internet ([www.zef.de](http://www.zef.de)).

# A Better Standard of Living for Rural Areas

Monika Reule

Whether in Africa, Asia, Europe or elsewhere in the world: acceptable living standards must prevail, otherwise people migrate to the cities. Usually a set of measures are required in order to come closer to this aim. The "Global Dialogue on the Role of the Village in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" illustrated what needs to be done.

At an invitation from ZEF, around 300 village as well as city representatives, scientists, politicians and leading business representatives from all over the world came together at the EXPO Fair Grounds in Hanover. From 15-17 August, within the framework of the "Global Dialogue on the Role of the Village in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", they discussed both the difficulties and prospects of life in rural areas.

More and more people worldwide are leaving the rural areas to live in the city. Already today more than 75 percent of the population in industrialized countries live and work in urban areas. This is also a trend seen in developing countries in which the majority of people still live in rural areas. Many people are forced to leave their rural homes due to the economic or political situation or for ecological reasons, while hope drives others to the big cities in search of a seemingly better life. Here they are often met with a situation, the very one which caused them to retreat from the rural areas: unemployment, poverty and inhumane living conditions.

"We have to cease regarding cities and rural areas as isolated living areas having nothing to do with one another", urged Klaus Töpfer, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). „The greatest challenge is to recognize the mutual dependency on one another of city and rural areas and to contrib-

ute to stabilizing the connection between both these areas".

As always has been the case – in particular in developing countries - agriculture represents the livelihood for most of the people living in rural areas. Current studies indicate that the production of food will need to double by the year 2025 in order to nourish the world's population of around eight billion by that time. Participants of the Global Dialogue were therefore promptly in agreement that measures need to be taken in rural areas to facilitate increased food production,

*Klaus Töpfer*



*Musicians from Palestine*

*Talkshow with Minister Betty Okwir, Deputy Minister's Office, Uganda, Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, Wuppertal Institut, Sabine Christiansen (moderation) and Gerhard Prante, Aventis Crop Science*  
*Photos: ZEF*

however, without simultaneous, long term exploitation of natural resources. That such an aim can be achieved through implementation of simple measures, coupled with the initiative of the village inhabitants themselves, was evidenced by many illustrations presented during the Global Dialogue. For example, a farmer from an arid Indian region described how the implementation of simple measures enabled the saving and efficient use of water. Today, in this very same region, which once offered no prospects of fundamental life, sustainable agricultural methods are once again being used.

The role of biotechnology is a controversial debate in the field of new technology. "Biotechnology is neither the "sole sacred technology" nor is it always to be instantly equated with genetic engineering",

stressed Gerhard Prante from Aventis Crop Science. In particular, representatives from private industry urged to finally end discussions and rather establish appropriate mechanisms which allow biotechnology transfer and adaptation to local needs for the well being of the population. Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, president of the Wuppertal Institute, however, considered the application of genetic engineering as dangerous and in this context, made a comparison to nuclear energy.

Immense hope for the further development of rural areas is also placed worldwide on the introduction of modern information and communication technologies. Miko Rwayitare, managing director of *Tele-cell*, South Africa, reported on his experience of marketing wireless communication technology in the African continent. "The political decision makers, particularly in Africa, have no interest in an improvement of living conditions in rural areas and therefore can often be held responsible for failed efforts of trying to connect rural areas to today's society of information technology", he criticized harshly. During the Dialogue it was repeatedly stressed to decentralize political decision making in order to enable rural communities to improve the quality of life.

By providing rural areas with the administrative and financial flexibility to act, it would be possible for villages to take the measures necessary for a functional local infrastructure. Parallel, the initiative of the people themselves, their willingness, together with a responsible approach, was also called upon. By initiating such practices, the villages will be provided with every opportunity to progress and develop into an environment offering attractive living conditions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



## Impressum

Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung  
Center for Development Research  
University of Bonn  
Walter-Flex-Str. 3  
D-53113 Bonn, Germany  
ISSN: 1438-0943

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ZEFnews is published three times a year in English and German and can be ordered free of charge.