



Economic reform and good governance: A challenge for Arab countries

According to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, good governance is one of the main factors in combating poverty and attaining sustainable human development.

However, the components of good governance, such as state accountability, institutions based on the rule of law, the scope for participation and an efficient public administration, are poorly developed in many countries. Arab countries in particular show enormous deficits. The political, economic, and social power structures in this region also pose a problem in the field of development cooperation. At ZEF, a comparative study has recently been conducted exploring the opportunities to participate in legislative procedures concerning the issue of economic reform in Morocco, Jordan, and Egypt. In cooperation with the 'Economic Research Forum' in Cairo, and with the support of three interdisciplinary research teams in the three countries, the role of the executive, the parliaments, and civil society was analyzed.

Three major trouble zones have been identified:

Political-economic impediments

- The three countries suffer from a lack of economic competitiveness, also owing to weakly developed human capital.
- Despite the introduction of neo-liberal reform policies, economic structures have been only partly liberalized. State and private monopolies blurring the economic politics of the countries represent a particular problem.
- The private sector consists mainly of a multitude of informal micro- and small enterprises. It suffers from a lack of productivity and political-organizational weakness. Public life is dominated by personal rather than collective relationships.
- The reform process has certainly been accelerated by the heads of state directly interfering with economic politics. However, the sustainability of such reforms remains doubtful. A coalition of bureaucrats and economic actors has grown that stubbornly opposes reforms while benefiting from too little regulation in some areas and too much in others.
- Austerity measures and misguided employment and investment expenditure have resulted in an unequal distribution of social benefits, causing social polarization.

Weaknesses in participation

- The reforms are pushing the executive beyond its capacities. Informal or short-term solutions such as special industrial zones and consultancy offices set up at ministry level to boost the reform are in fact obscuring institutions.
- The heads of state in the three countries have rendered the opposition powerless with their electoral systems (in Jordan and Egypt) and

Editorial

The land is mine!?

Can society allow landowners to do with their land as they please? Especially if they see their land as capital, to be spent (degraded) when needed? Some economists may argue that this substitution is fully legitimate and land with all its attributes is no different than the crop one plants on it or the cattle it supports. But this view ignores the important double purpose land serves for us: it provides ecosystem goods and services and therefore has private and public good features. In allocating land use, these private and societal needs should be constantly balanced, which requires a dialogue between the landowners and the stakeholders. In western societies, with highly intensive agricultural systems, this dialogue is in full swing as farmers are being made to understand that demands for quality surface and groundwater put limits on how many nutrients can be applied to the soil. A similar dialogue is needed with the farmers in the developing world. One example of policies on land degradation is Ethiopia, as featured in this ZEF news. Actually, there can be huge environmental costs that often also affect stakeholders far removed from the land. In the absence of ready means to balance the total costs and benefits of current and future ecosystem goods and services, it would be wise to err on the side of conservation, particularly when it comes to fragile ecosystems. Even when society would have to pay to ensure that ecosystem services are maintained, erring on the side of degradation could be far more costly. ■ Paul Vlek

The author is Executive Director of ZEF.



The private sector in the Arab region mainly consists of informal small enterprises.

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restrictive regulations (in Egypt) and by integrating the opposition in a manner that undermines its credibility, as is the case in Morocco.

- Basically, the parliaments lack the technical-administrative capacities to elaborate and adopt the multitude of economic laws. Indeed, working on them keeps the parliaments from fulfilling their true political role. Thus, they are neither in a position to represent the interests of the different groups in society nor to examine the impact the new economic laws are having on the market. Only in a few cases, such as in family or labor law, does parliament play a relatively active role.
- Parliaments have a bad reputation as legislative institutions in the three countries. Rectifying this state of affairs would require several improvements regarding electoral systems and the right to vote as well as strengthening the role of political parties.
- There are increasing numbers of civil society organizations in the Arab countries (especially employers' associations, lobby groups, and development organizations. While they appear to make the landscape of semi-state associations and unions more pluralistic, in reality, they are usually poorly organized and politically reticent. This is especially the case in Egypt and Jordan.
- A recurrent problem in implementing what are basically good government programs is the lack of incentive for most political actors to carry through their constitutional rights and functions in a proper manner. But the poor technical, administrative and

political competences of the different actors are usually not sufficient for them to participate in the complex political-economic reform processes in an adequate manner.

A poor information and knowledge basis

- Active participation in legislative procedures requires a broad information and knowledge base. The ability to collect data and develop indicators, scenarios, and options for action is a further important prerequisite. These competencies can only develop in a well-functioning network of policy-making and market and research institutions. But this is precisely what is missing in the three countries, despite recent and encouraging developments in the field of information and knowledge building structures.
- Although the increasing number of private economic actors has led to a growing demand for accurate economic data, this demand cannot be met since the economic structure is characterized by many small and informal family enterprises, a high level of illiteracy, and poor performance in the field of education. These factors have a negative impact on the availability of information and knowledge.
- The media play a very important role as providers of information and knowledge. However, in the absence of transparent management structures, they are an easy target for corruption by the economic and political elites.

Conclusions and recommendations

- Enacting economic laws and signing trade agreements is no reliable indication of the level of economic liberalization in the Arab countries. A lot remains to be done before there are free, fair, and competitive domestic markets in this region.
- It is essential to boost the productivity of small and medium enterprises. But to be able to assess the effect that different liberal laws have on the market, there should be more transparency regarding the transaction costs of these

enterprises, especially in the field of marketing, labor and social security agreements.

- The lack of adequate laws for the freedom of opinion and information still represents a major political impediment in the three countries. Liberal laws in this field should therefore be not only enacted, but also implemented.
- It is necessary to promote mechanisms that build consensus and mitigate conflicts. Various institutions already in existence, such as the policy council of the government party and the national councils for human and women's rights in Egypt, the consultative economic councils in Jordan, and the dialogue forum for social affairs in Morocco, should be strengthened.
- In the field of partnerships with law-making actors, a continuation of the exchange programs between European and Arab parliamentarians is recommendable. In addition, setting up an independent parliamentary forum advising the three countries' members of parliament could prove useful.
- Opportunities for cooperation with civil society (such as employers' associations and research institutes) offered by the EU-MEDA partnership program should be improved by means of the corresponding committees.
- It is also important for the Arab partners to have the possibility to set up networks with other local and less cosmopolitan civil societies. Only then will there be a chance of acquired competencies trickling down to a broader basis of civil society instead of remaining in the hands of a partnership between elites.
- A European-Arab committee of journalists could be founded to address the issue of information and knowledge based societies and work out solutions for the three countries. It would make sense for it to cooperate with the recently founded Euro-Arab Chamber of Commerce. ■ Noha El-Mikawy.



Most civil society organizations in Arab countries are poorly organized and politically reticent.

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The study was financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).



Despite broad media coverage of the conflict in Darfur, we still know little about its background.

Darfur: Who is fighting against whom and because of what?

Media worldwide have depicted the conflict in Darfur as a racial war in which the so-called Arabs have deliberately targeted the so-called Africans. Sudan has been accused of arming Arab militia known as janjaweed to indiscriminately kill black Darfur civilians. Moreover, Sudan has been accused of genocide. Despite this broad coverage of the conflict, we still know only little about the background. This article aims to highlight the historical background and the causes of the conflict.

While the contenders of conflicts in Darfur are ethnic, the stakes, i.e. access to land and water, are not. The recent conflict, however, has been framed in racial rhetoric.

In terms of development projects in Darfur, Sudanese President al-Bashir's government has not done much. The government's resources were very much absorbed by the civil war in the south, and it has directed much of its effort to oil exploration, hoping that the production of oil will ease the government's financial bottleneck. The only major development project in Darfur aims to link the region to central Sudan and Khartoum. The project, financed largely by local initiatives, has stalled due to allegations of corruption.

In 2001, tribal leader Abdel Wahed Mohamed al-Nur organized a group and planned an armed rebellion against the government convincing militias from other Darfur tribes to

join their fight. Initially, the government played down their significance. It was only in early 2003 that a rebel group called the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) began guerrilla operations. In turn, the government responded by bombing rebels and calling on local tribes to crush the rebellion. Obviously, the most eager recruits of Arab nomads saw this as an opportunity to grab land and livestock under the banner of state-sanctioned military operation. The war in Darfur seems to be a war between educated political elites who have recklessly amassed and destroyed large human and economic resources. The masses have been manipulated and fueled with ethnic prejudice to fight and commit atrocities. One of the key duties of any government is to disarm these militias and bring power to those state institutions that are entrusted with maintaining peace and order. While only little progress has been made on the humanitarian side, nothing at all has been achieved in terms of disarming the militias. Sudanese officials initially denied the existence of janjaweed militias, but later on they acknowledged their presence and the difficulty of disarming them.

Since the government is now part of the conflict, it can no longer be solved in the old manner of reconciliation conferences by mediators, so-called ajawid. Neither have the main rebel groups (SLA and JEM, Justice and

Equality Movement) earned any international credibility, since they offer no constructive solutions or long-term strategies. Instead, they continue to stress the history of discrimination against the region as a whole as a cause of war.

International awareness of the conflict was very slow to build up during 2003, since the world was being absorbed by the war in Iraq. Instead, the government of Chad took the lead and mediated the first, unfruitful ceasefire in September 2003. It lasted only 45 days. Thus, the international community has acted in words and promises so far, but more concrete actions need to be seen. This time, the international community, and in particular the United Nations, has to be the ajawid. The deployment of African Union (AU) peacekeeping troops in Darfur is a first step that needs to be supported. The AU is a newcomer to peacekeeping and lacks capacity. In an area the size of France, the AU peacekeeping forces have only few vehicles to transport their men overland and hardly any aircraft at their disposal. Moreover, what little valuable computer equipment it has been given for communications came with a software program and instructions written only in German, a language hardly any African there understands, unfortunately. ■ Khalid Khalafallah

The author did his PhD and research at ZEF.

Newcomers get it all wrong: Land degradation in Ethiopia

A new ZEF study of re-settled versus traditional farmers carried out in the Ethiopian highlands shows that the latter do a better job in conserving soils. Although erosion and nutrient mining is often considered a serious problem in Africa, little is known about differences between the farming systems. Agriculture, a key sector of Ethiopia's economy, supports over 85% of the estimated 70 million inhabitants. The Ethiopian highlands currently accommodate 88% of the populace and account for more than 90% of agricultural production. The population will double in 25 years. Agriculture faces an ever-greater challenge to ensure food security.

The rising population density associated with land clearing for agriculture has reduced the estimated original 40% forest cover to a mere leftover of 2.7% cover. It has also caused severe soil degradation that has destabilized the agro-ecosystems. Most affected are the northern and central highlands where, each year, an estimated 42 tons of fertile top soils are eroded from every single hectare of cultivated land. A substantial portion of the land in these regions has lost the potential to produce, and degradation in some areas is beyond reversibility.

In an effort to relax the pressure on the soil in the degraded highlands, relocation of people and resettling them in the low-populated southwestern highlands has been adopted as a policy by the government. Several thousand households have been resettled in the south-

western highlands in the last few decades. ZEF, in collaboration with EARO (Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organization) and with financial support from DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), has conducted a study in one of the resettlement areas in the southwest of Ethiopia to assess the impact of re-settlement on the natural resource base of the settlement areas. The study examined the biophysical processes of resource degradation and the farmers' awareness of, and their response to, degradation as well as the coping mechanisms they developed. The study was based on comparative surveys and analyses of two farming systems, extensive cereal crop-based farming introduced by the settlers, and intensive traditional perennial crop-based farming. The ultimate aim of the study was to provide guidance in sustainable land use for planning policy decisions in the region.

Data generated from a panchromatic aerial photograph of 1967 and satellite (Landsat TM and ETM) images of 1987 and 2001 illustrate that land use and land cover changes are severe and more dynamic in the newly settled regions with the "new" farming system introduced by the settlers than in the "old" coffee cultivation systems used by the traditional farmers. Almost everywhere, natural forest has been converted into cropland. Whereas



Deforestation has caused enormous soil degradation.

cultivated land in the traditional coffee system increases by 27 ha each year, of which 15 ha are at the expense of the natural forest, in the newly introduced system, the corresponding figures are 42 ha and 27 ha, respectively. This rate of deforestation is alarming and calls for closer scrutiny and policy adjustment.

Using the radiation signal from former atom bomb experiments, the Caesium isotope (^{137}Cs) fall-out from the sixties that is trapped in biomass, we studied a chronosequence of fields in the settler areas around Shomba and, as a reference, compared this with long-term fields from the Michiti coffee-growing area. The results from the settled area show a good correlation between the loss of ^{137}Cs and time of cultivation, suggesting that erosion continues over time. Data also show that ^{137}Cs , and thus soil, accumulates at the bottom of slopes and is lost in the top positions. An erosion-rate comparison between two older fields (around 60 years in cultivation) showed a three-times higher soil loss in the cereal-based systems of the settlers (20-30 t per ha and year) than in the coffee-based system of the original population (5-8 t per ha and year). Thus, farming systems introduced by settlers are more erosive than those traditionally used in the region, which hints at important policy implications.

In the second part of the study, we looked at nutrient losses. Extensive sampling and analysis of the topsoils (0-30cm) of the same fields studied for the erosion work showed that soil fertility (extractable phosphorous and potassium, among others) in the newly



Each year, 42 tons of fertile top soils are eroded from every hectare of cultivated land.

settled areas declined over the years of cultivation, particularly over the first decade. Organic carbon and nitrogen also declined. After around 60 years of cultivation, the fertility of the soils had degraded to a much greater extent under the settlers' cereal-based systems where most soil nutrients were reduced by 11-40%. In contrast, the traditional perennial cropping systems seem to have had only a negligible impact on the soil nutrient status, suggesting an excellent nutrient cycling through the vegetation.

Finally, the farmer's perceptions of the situation were investigated. Erosion problems were recognized by a majority of the settlers (68%) but by only a minority of the traditional farmers (33%). This is congruent with the actual extent of the erosion problem in these systems. Interestingly, the awareness of soil

fertility loss is equally high among the settlers and original dwellers (about 70-80%) even though the problem is largely one for the settlers. We used a logistic regression to elucidate the principal social and biophysical factors that determined the awareness that farmers have of soil degradation problems. For soil erosion this seems to be related to their experience and participation in anti-erosion programs. For nutrient depletion, production decline seems to be the prime indicator to the farmers. In both areas, farmers make similar observations about the causes of soil degradation and report the same principal measures to prevent it.

Farmers' awareness of soil erosion and soil fertility problems is not only dependent on the farming system in place, but also on the farm slope conditions, literacy, access to infor-

mation, tenure security and training or participation in soil and water conservation activities. Even if they are properly informed, the responses to their difficulties with soil degradation are seriously constrained by a lack of appropriate technologies, a lack of experience and a shortage of labor.

Given these results one should question the wisdom of the resettlement program. It may become a threat rather than a solution to land degradation in the areas of destination, particularly if no better know-how and technologies are offered to the settler communities to exploit their new environment in sustainable ways. ■ Merkuria Argaw and Paul Vlek

Merkuria Argaw has finished his PhD and Paul Vlek, Executive Director of ZEF, was his supervisor.

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Viewpoint



Woman power at ZEF: Interview with the new Director of ZEF's Department of Political and Cultural Change

Welcome at ZEF, Ms. Gerke. For those who may not know you, could you please briefly introduce yourself?

I studied sociology in Göttingen, Hamburg and Bielefeld. During my studies in Hamburg, I developed a regional interest in Southeast Asia, mainly Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. After my MA in Sociology and Austronesian Languages and Cultures in 1985, I continued my studies and my academic career at the Sociology of Development Research Centre at the University of Bielefeld until I was appointed Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Bonn in 1997. I carried out intensive field research in Indonesia and Malaysia, I worked at research institutes in Malaysia and Singapore and taught on long and short term contracts at universities in Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam.

What academic and practical experiences do you want to bring into your work at ZEF?

I am a sociologist with a strong background in development sociology, cultural sociology and social theory. I was always interested in the effects of globalization on the living conditions of people in developing countries, in other words, the interplay between macro and micro level development. In this regard, I have worked on the rapid expansion of consumer culture and the development of middle classes, on poverty and poverty alleviation and on local knowledge and the globalization of local knowledge. Regarding my practical experiences in the field of development studies, I worked as a consultant for national and international development organizations in the past ten years. I have close

friends at BMZ (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) and GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) with whom I exchange ideas on a regular basis.

What do you think of how ZEFa is positioned for the future and how do you perceive the department's work?

The three research groups of ZEFa are working successfully. The Governance and Conflict Group has just received a huge grant from the Volkswagen Foundation, and Dr. Schetter is one of the leading specialists on Afghanistan in Germany. The Natural Resources Group with Dr. Mollinga is contributing social science expertise in ZEF's interdisciplinary projects in Uzbekistan, Ghana and the coffee project in Ethiopia. The Knowledge, Culture and Development Group has just finished a major project on knowledge governance under Prof. Evers' leadership. Thus the three research groups' impact in the international research arena is quite visible. ZEFa is an indispensable part of the interdisciplinary triangle of ZEF and has contributed to the success of ongoing research projects. As the importance of socio-cultural aspects for all kinds of development research, especially of those with a natural science focus, becomes more and more recognized, the contribution of ZEFa will become even more important in research on the effects of global change.

What focuses do you want to set for the department's future work?

At the moment I am working on a research project on the governance of cultural and

biodiversity. The issue of diversity has been at the centre of the discussion in the natural and social sciences, albeit within different methodological and theoretical frameworks. The project will focus on development opportunities as well as development hazards, utilizing the potential of diversity to achieve the goals of poverty reduction, social and gender equality and ecological sustainability.

As Professor of Southeast Asian Studies and Director of the Institute of Oriental Languages and Cultures I was heavily involved in teaching students and supervising Masters and PhD candidates. "Capacity building" in development studies through the ZEF International Doctoral Studies Program is essential, and I hope to concentrate the training and supervision of doctoral students in our own University of Bonn, which defines itself as a research university with high standards and ambitions.

With my academic and practical background I will put more emphasis on strengthening the ties between ZEF and national and international development organizations. I shall make sure that research projects focus on the development policies and development studies as an academic discipline. ZEF should play a leading role in the conceptualization of development, in designing development strategies and in the practice of interdisciplinary research. In short: I will aim at sound academic social science research with practical relevance within the interdisciplinary setting of ZEF and an impact on contemporary development theories and development strategies. ■

The interview was conducted by Bernd Kuzmits.

Agricultural policies in Asian developing countries

Since 1995, many developing countries have actively participated in bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations with the aim of entering the World Trade Organization (WTO). However, the knowledge on protection in the agricultural sector is generally still rather low. To fill this gap in research and to create a basis for further trade-related analysis to be conducted in the future, a project was initiated by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in cooperation with ZEF to understand and assess agricultural policies and to measure protection for agricultural products in selected Asian countries. This project has been financially supported partly with funds of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ – German Technical Agency).

Among various protection measures, the producer support estimates (PSEs), a methodology applied by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), has been increasingly used. For OECD countries, and recently for many transition countries, the PSEs are regularly calculated and annually updated. Applying this methodology to developing countries faces several challenges. Among these are the risks of measuring inac-

curate PSEs due to high transaction costs or quality differences between domestic and internationally traded commodities. Thus, adaptations of reference prices to compute protection levels have to be carefully assessed given the specific circumstances in each developing country.

Studies on India, Indonesia and Vietnam have produced in-depth analyses of the development of the agricultural situation and policies since the mid-1980s.

Evidence from Vietnam

Since 1986, Vietnam has moved from a centrally planned towards a market-oriented system through several major economic and trade reforms. First positive results of the reform process became visible in the early 1990s, when poverty declined, and the agricultural sector started to grow, achieving impressive export growth rates. The question arises to what extent support policies contributed to this growth. The finding is that most agricultural products were taxed in the 1980s and up to the mid-1990s. This was mainly due to large inefficiencies in the production and processing of agricultural commodities, the dominance and monopoly posi-

tion of the state-owned sector, restrictive trade policies like import and export quotas and licenses, and distorted markets and prices in the country.

The domestic reform process and the opening of the economy since the early 1990s have impacted on the gaps between the domestic and international prices. During the last decade, agricultural support seems to have emerged and slightly increased in Vietnam. However, in general, it is at a low level compared with many other countries. The detailed results for key commodities and for the agricultural sector overall are especially important for Vietnam as it moves forward plans to negotiate entry into the WTO. ■

Ulrike Grote and David Orden

Both authors are coordinators of the project.

David Orden is a Senior Research Fellow at IFPRI, and Ulrike Grote a Senior Researcher at ZEF.

All five discussion papers produced in the context of this project are available at www.ifpri.org. The discussion paper on Vietnam is available at www.zef.de.

At a glance

■■■ About 250 people attended the opening of the new Center for Research and Scientific Education (CRFS) in Dano, Ioba province, Burkina Faso, on December 13 2004. Among the visitors was the German Ambassador to Burkina Faso, Mr. Schweinitz. Opening speeches and welcome addresses at the inauguration ceremony were held among others by the Minister of Education and Scientific Research of Burkina Faso, Mr. Laya Sawadogo, Mr. Gisbert Dreyer, Director and Founder of the Dreyer Foundation in Germany, as well as by Professor Paul Vlek, Executive Director of the Center for Development Research (ZEF). The Dreyer Foundation is the main funder of the new Center.

Cooperation between ZEF and the Burkinabé Institute for Environment and Agricultural Research (INERA) has thus entered a new phase of intensive collaboration and exchange in the field of scientific work and personnel. The Center offers excellent accommodation, technical equipment and modern working facilities for



A new phase of intensive cooperation between INERA and ZEF has begun.



About 250 people attended the ceremony.

up to 20 researchers. It has already been an essential home to researchers from the GLOWA Volta project and the BIOTA West Africa network conducting their field work in this area over the last years. Both projects are being funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

The German TV channel 3sat broadcast a feature on the GLOWA Volta project and the Center in Dano on the occasion of World Water Day, March 22 2005.

Facts and News

■■■ On March 18-19 2005, an international conference on 'The Role of Labeling in the Governance of Global Trade' brought together 30 participants from academia, international organizations, the private sector and the government. Special focus was given to the developing economy perspective. The conference was organized by Ulrike Grote (ZEF) in cooperation with Nancy Chau (Cornell University) and Arnab Basu (College of William and Mary).



The role of virtual water was a key issue at the Conference.



At the Conference: 130 participants from 29 countries.

Water Science and Policy meet in the Rhine City of Bonn

Integrated Assessment of Water Resources and Global Change: A North-South Analysis' was the title of an international conference held in Bonn, from 23-25 February 2005. The Global Water System Project (GWSP) and the GLOWA-Volta project of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), both ZEF-based, played key organizational roles. The 130 participants from 29 countries presented 45 papers during six sessions, and exhibited 34 posters. UNESCO, BMBF (the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research), the government of NRW (North Rhine-Westphalia), and INWENT (Capacity Building International, Germany), supported the Conference financially.

Professor Malin Falkenmark of the Stockholm International Water Institute delivered the keynote speech in which she emphasized the shift in thinking required to address the 21st century hunger gap. She also highlighted the need to move the emphasis of water management from blue to green water. Green water is the evapo-transpiration of plants, which provide the staple foods for humanity.

Falkenmark pointed out that the growing consumption needs of the North are causing a lack of water in the South. The food security dilemma forms a challenge because of competing water needs, especially in dry and arid areas. New data show that food imports are important for some dry countries, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. Water that would otherwise be used for food production can now be made available for other purposes, such as drinking water. Other coun-

tries will have to cope with water scarcity by concentrating on better management of the available water resources and needs. In this context, Falkenmark referred to the need for a new generation of water professionals that is able to incorporate water implications of land use.

The growing gap between North and South was also an important issue dealt with in another context. The gap not only concerns water availability and quality, but also the capacity to apply science and its solutions. Thus, integrating components of local capacity-building for people in the South has become a major goal in research projects like the ZEF-led GLOWA-Volta project. In addition, close cooperation with the local partners is indispensable, according to project leader and ZEF Executive Director Professor Paul Vlek. He also emphasized that scientists should have a role as facilitators presenting scientific output to inform local stakeholders instead of dictat-

ing policy decisions. Hereby, the gap between scientists and politicians can be bridged too.

Scientists at the Conference also showed new modeling tools allowing human and natural processes to be coupled and understood better. Dr. Eric Craswell, Executive Director of the GWSP's International Project Office, pointed out the importance of combining new scientific methods and practical tools, which allow a participatory assessment and better approaches to adaptive management. But it is also clear that satisfactory answers and applicable solutions for the local level cannot be found if the global scale is not taken into account. Craswell explained that thanks to increasing international cooperation between water research programs, global observation systems can be employed effectively to help to predict global environmental change. At the same time, water users and managers at river basin level can be helped as well. ■

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