

# Forced Migration and Sustainable Development: Post-Conflict Opportunities in Ethiopia and Mozambique

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## INTRODUCTION: CONFLICT, POST-CONFLICT, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction are areas of emerging concern for international policy makers.<sup>1</sup> Of course, this is not to undermine the importance of conflict and displacement for development in the contemporary world. For example, the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) alone has contributed to an estimated 1.7 million excess deaths.<sup>2</sup> Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced

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internally and externally both here and in other African conflicts, requiring significant humanitarian interventions. Moreover, new conflicts continue to emerge. The impact of conflict on poverty and well-being is relatively well documented, with Africa showing minimal or no progress at the aggregate level towards international development targets such as the Millennium Development Goals, with reverses in areas such as educational enrolment ratios or infant and

child mortality statistics.<sup>3</sup> Violent conflicts have also often involved a significant level of struggle in rural areas over precisely the kind of natural resources that might underpin Africa's development, such as diamonds in Sierra Leone, oil and diamonds in Angola, or various precious metals in DRC.<sup>4</sup>

Nonetheless, the picture for Africa is not all gloomy, which helps to explain why interest in post-conflict reconstruction is not simply wishful thinking. Agreements between warring factions in the three countries mentioned above, and in countries such as Liberia and Algeria, seem to have brought some semblance of peace and security, even if not all observers would agree that they are genuinely 'post-conflict.' In addition, some progress has been made towards the return of refugees and displaced persons, albeit slowly and amidst some continuing and legitimate security concerns. Reginald Green has argued that at least 50 countries worldwide are currently in a post-conflict phase.<sup>5</sup> This arguably provides an opportunity to promote new development initiatives, whether as part of the winding down of operations by humanitarian aid agencies seeking the reintegration of displaced and war-affected populations, or as international and national development agencies move back into countries and regions where they had been forced to suspend operations.

In rural areas in particular, war and conflict can be seen as having a number of direct negative effects

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on agricultural land and other natural resources. Examples include the loss of land to landmines, increased levels of poaching of wild animals, illegal logging, and the destruction caused by advancing armies. The emergence of significant armed conflict often leads to loss of control of territory by states and an inability of state and non-governmental organizations to function effectively in certain areas, except perhaps for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

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At the same time, armed conflict may often be concentrated in protected areas that are of most concern in sustainable development terms. For example, in each of the African armed conflicts mentioned above, national parks and reserves were left outside the reach of government agencies and international conservation organizations, with many actually acting as core areas for the organizational and training activities of military factions.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, the end of war allows for the re-establishment of government institutions and the spread of their control to such areas. The post-conflict phase is sometimes seen as an opportunity to rebuild conservation initiatives and programs and to consolidate systems of rational management and use of natural resources.

Conflict creates problems for rural areas, specifically for the management of rural natural resources, and the post-conflict period does not necessarily bring these problems to an end. First, there is often a dash for growth and/or development in the immediate post-war period. Investment streams shut off or diverted during wartime may re-appear. Significant amounts of international development assistance may also become available for reconstruction activities, either as

part of a peace settlement or in response to improved conditions for development cooperation. Yet, such investments are often plagued by short-term thinking. Generally, incomes and productivity will have been depressed during wartime, and so the development task is seen as urgent. Governments may also prioritize extractive external interests over the longer-term internal interests of communities. External actors who arrive to consolidate development in the post-conflict period may be unaware of any history of sustainable management, and believe that the war has left a tabula rasa on which to base reconstruction activities.

The natural resource sector provides a particularly interesting lens for the examination of post-conflict attempts to promote sustainable development, since there is increasing evidence of the important role played by trust and reciprocity in the operation of natural resource management institutions in the past. The major impacts of conflict and displacement might be seen as undermining such ties of trust.<sup>7</sup> Local communities, on whom natural resource management initiatives are increasingly based, are likely to have been significantly affected by war. Many of the major African conflicts have entailed large-scale displacement of populations that have often involved successive waves of people being displaced for varying periods of time. For example, in the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflicts, at least four waves of

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refugees that came to the Forest Region of neighboring Guinea can be identified, with these groups being settled in divergent ways and receiving different treatment.<sup>8</sup>

The picture is further complicated by differences in refugees' willingness and capacity to return home at

the end of war, based on financial, political, and security considerations. There may be very diverse categories of returnees, including former refugees, internally displaced persons, and demobilized soldiers, each with different experiences and interests. All of this might be expected to further complicate notions of community, weakening the strength of external community boundaries and creating new tensions. Such tensions might develop over land and resources that were taken over when their owners fled and are now occupied by those who stayed, or simply between groups who had different experiences during exile.

There is considerable variation in this picture of community disruption. Some relatively low-level conflicts have seen correspondingly low levels of displacement. Others, notably the Rwanda conflict of 1994, saw an almost organized departure (or at least re-grouping) of entire communities that were able to maintain existing leadership structures and social and political institutions during part or all of their period of exile. At the same time, the extent of commitment to post-conflict reconstruction varies considerably from country to country. Very large investments in countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, and potentially large investment in Sierra Leone, can be contrasted strongly with other post-conflict states such as Liberia where international donors have remained reluctant to fund post-war reconstruction even after comprehensive peace settlements and democratic elections.

Despite such variations, however, natural resource management is a particularly problematic area for planners and politicians in a post-conflict context, with major difficulties in making such management sustainable. Preserving wildlife and trees is not necessarily at the top of the list of priorities for policymakers in countries where food production has been devastated and basic service agencies such as health or education have been forced to respond to crises rather than plan for the future. The continuity of institutions capable of managing natural resources is likely to have been disrupted, while the boundaries of communities are likely to have been breached in various ways.

The following section explores some of the experiences of trying to deal with these issues in the context of two post-conflict countries: Ethiopia and Mozambique. It is based on two years of fieldwork carried out as part of a collaborative research project on natural resource management in post-conflict

countries, and focuses on case studies in Manica Province, Mozambique, and in North and South Wello in northern Ethiopia.<sup>9</sup>

### POST-CONFLICT NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN ETHIOPIA AND MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique and Ethiopia both suffered the consequences of long-running civil war throughout much of the 1980s, and in turn, were amongst the first African countries to benefit from the so-called 'peace dividend' after the end of the Cold War. In Mozambique, war initiated in the late 1970s, as a campaign of destabilization by white Rhodesia and later South Africa, escalated during the mid 1980s as large parts of the country fell to the rebel movement, Renamo. The war forced nearly two million rural people from many different parts of the country into

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neighboring states, with over a million moving to Malawi alone. A major Renamo base was established in the Gorongosa National Park, while other parks and reserves were also occupied by training and logistical bases, including the Moribane Forest Reserve and Chimanimani mountains in Manica Province, which formed case study sites for this research. Similarly, conflict worsened in the 1980s in Ethiopia, notably after the 1984 to 1985 famine, as fighters from the Eritrean and Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Fronts (EPLF and TPFL, respectively) sought to topple the Derg regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam. Here, the northern highlands including North and South Wello became major battlegrounds, with control of territory alternating between the two sides. This created not only physical insecurity but also insecure livelihood conditions for local people, forcing hundreds of thousands to flee to neighboring Sudan.

Although dissimilar in many ways, there are a number of parallels between the conflicts in Ethiopia and Mozambique, both in terms of their context and their impact on local populations and natural resources. First, in addition to stimulating large-scale refugee flows, both conflicts led to complex patterns of internal displacement as well, with major government-controlled towns and heavily protected transport corridors swelling with large displaced populations. This reflected the intensity of violence directed towards civilians, and generalized insecurity, which took root in many rural areas. Secondly, both pitted rebel movements with significant international backers against centralizing Marxist regimes, so that when peace finally came it heralded not only a post-conflict transition, but also a post-socialist one.<sup>10</sup> In addition, both countries saw significant interventions by international humanitarian agencies during the conflict period, with some commentators arguing that their presence was from time to time far from positive.<sup>11</sup>

However, there are also some important differences between Mozambique and Ethiopia, and especially between the case study sites chosen for this research. First, Ethiopia is a relatively populous country, with North and South Wello representing two of the more densely populated regions. Pressure from population growth on natural resources is seen as being a serious issue in the northern Ethiopian highlands by a number of commentators.<sup>12</sup> This provided a justification for policies of resettlement from the northern highlands to lowlands in the southwest after the devastation of the 1984 to 1985 famine,<sup>13</sup> which were carried out by a highly centralized and hierarchical state. The fact that such resettlement was often involuntary contributed to the complexity of forced population movements and eventual return at the end of the war. In contrast, Mozambique is a relatively under-populated country, with greater areas of forest and weaker state control. Manica Province has a population of just under one million, but much of this has long been concentrated along the line of rail and road known as the Beira corridor, running from the port of Beira to neighboring Zimbabwe. Nonetheless, although land shortage is hardly an issue in Manica, the experience of colonialism had brought settlement of white farmers on better quality land, especially during the 1950s and 1960s, and the enclosure of many hillsides for state and commercial timber plantations.

### ***Policy and Institutional Trajectories in the Post-conflict Period***

With the end of armed conflict in Ethiopia after the military victory of the EPLF and EPRDF in 1991, and in Mozambique after the Rome Peace Accords in 1992, there is some evidence of both countries attempting to make up for lost time through a 'dash for growth.' This has more clearly been the case in Mozambique, where an improving relationship with international donors and the end of apartheid in neighboring South Africa have contributed to a favorable economic and political climate for development. Indeed, since 1994, when the first multi-party democratic elections were held, Mozambique's GDP grew by 12.6 percent in 1998. Even though there has been criticism that this growth has not been translated into a sustained reduction in rural poverty,<sup>14</sup> it

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is still one of the highest in sub-Saharan Africa at eight to nine percent, compared to two to three percent in the continent as a whole.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, change in Ethiopia has been more limited despite the government's intentions, and some exceptions such as prioritizing development in areas that had been disadvantaged by war, notably Tigray, and the relatively quick adoption of green revolution policies in extension practice. Moreover, the development process was set backwards by the renewed outbreak of fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998, and insecurity in other parts of the country.

In addition to some strides towards economic development, both countries also provide evidence of significant moves towards more substantive environment and natural resources policies in the post-war period. Thus, both countries have witnessed the establishment of new environmental ministries, environmental action plans, and natural resource management policies that stress the role of local communities, although many of these measures have been taken under donor pressure. For example, in Mozambique, there have been various legislative

initiatives in the post-conflict era. Discussions initiated immediately after peace in 1992 have now led to a new Land Law (enacted in 1997), Environmental Law (1997), Forest and Wildlife Law (1999), and most recently a new 'Decree Law' (15/2000) which passes new powers, including over natural resource management, to local chiefs.<sup>16</sup> There is also a new Ministry of the Environment, although its activities have not tended to dovetail well with those of other ministries responsible for natural resource management, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, or the Ministry of Tourism, which took charge of wildlife management in 2000.

In Ethiopia, the post-conflict period also saw much talk of improved environmental policies at the federal level of legislation and witnessed the brief existence of a Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, a National Conservation Policy, an Environmental Protection Strategy, and the 'Ethiopian Forestry Action Plan.' However, interviews with those involved suggest much of this was donor-driven, and perhaps for this reason, energy in Ethiopia appears to have fizzled out by the late-1990s. Moreover, the regions did not take up federal legislation, although the Amhara Region (in which North and South Wello are situated) has recently gone ahead with its own land and environmental policies.

Despite the prioritization of economic growth in both countries, it is certainly not the case that all government thinking is short term. For example, land redistributions were initiated in Ethiopia before the

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end of the war in areas controlled by the TPLF, and continued once it came to power as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Such redistributions—hardly the top priority of donors—represent an attempt, at least in principle, to give long-term security of tenure to the poor.<sup>17</sup> At the

same time, the revitalization of the forest reserves and national parks in Mozambique, albeit occurring at a very slow pace, also reflects long-term commitments on the part of the government and involved NGOs, as well as a particular view of sustainable development rather than simply development as growth.

Such initiatives are promising in that they suggest that there may be a 'window of opportunity' for sustainable environmental and natural resource man-

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agement initiatives in the post-conflict period. However, they have been faced with a number of problems that appear common to both countries. First, there is a sense in which at least some of these initiatives have tended to ignore the specific histories of the villages, regions, and countries in which they have been implemented, or alternatively have engaged in a selective reading of history. For example, the revitalization of forest reserves in Mozambique, and of state forests and parks in Ethiopia, has been based largely on existing boundaries inherited from the colonial or pre-Derg era. Justification for their existence is taken as given and it is presumed that they represent suitable areas in which to carry out participatory planning exercises with local communities. Yet, this ignores the often tumultuous nature of the historical relationship between local communities and the state, in which the existence of forest reserves at all has been hotly contested.

Secondly, the post-conflict transition in both countries witnessed significant gaps in institutional capacity to manage natural resources and protect the environment, which in some cases reflected a broader institutional vacuum. For example, in Mozambique, the period between the peace accord of 1992 and elections in 1994 was one in which the authority of both the government and Renamo

(which controlled large swathes of rural territory in Manica) was severely challenged. On the one hand, wartime methods of control—often involving brutal methods of enforcement—had waned; on the other hand, new structures had not yet been put in place, and even if they had, their legitimacy would have been in question. Similarly, in Ethiopia a period of institutional vacuum allowed local people in a number of areas to destroy unwanted forests. In both Ethiopia and Mozambique, the structure of administrative authority was certainly disorganized during the transition period. In Mozambique, the development process resumed very unevenly as the government struggled with donors to develop a coherent national policy framework in the context of political uncertainty before the elections and political insecurity afterwards.

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ity afterwards. In Ethiopia, the situation was complicated by the need to grapple first with the independence of Eritrea, and then with the regionalization of the country and decentralization of control over many matters to new regional state structures.

Problems related to the existence of an institutional vacuum are also compounded by changes in power and control. In Ethiopia, the change of government saw a comprehensive change of personnel throughout the hierarchy. In some areas, especially at the lowest level, there was a purging of those seen as implicated with the previous regime, for example local community level officials known as ‘birokrasi.’ As a result, many people in positions of power in local government are now very young, usually less than 35. The relative insecurity of these new personnel may have led to the adoption of more conservative positions, especially at the local level.

Even in Mozambique, where there was no change of government, the range of legislative initiatives highlighted above can also be seen as a form

of competitive development of sometimes contradictory legislation, promoted by different ministries and supported by different international donors. This form of struggle for control is also replicated at a local level. For example, in Manica province alone, government initiatives to protect forest reserves, supported by certain donors and NGOs, are overlain by specific activities in support of the Land Law, often initiated by different donors and NGOs. In addition, there is also a separate post-war initiative to establish a ‘Transfrontier Conservation Area’ (TFCA) in the Chimanimani Mountains, part of a wider push towards transboundary conservation in southern Africa.<sup>18</sup>

During a period in which state power is relatively weak, there may be more incentive for the state to reach out to local community, religious, and other groups in order to forge alliances. One example was an initiative by Ministry of Agriculture officials to involve leading Muslim and Christian figures in forest conservation on Mount Yegof in south Wello,<sup>19</sup> which included the use of traditional ceremonies. Attempts to re-establish a management regime in the Moribane Forest Reserve in Manica have also been characterized by respect for local ‘traditions’ and ‘traditional leaders,’ with one state agency paying for traditional ceremonies to be performed at each stage in the development of the project.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, such initiatives are not necessarily lasting, and have waned over time in both countries as their governments have become more secure.

### ***Displacement and Return***

In addition to institutional change, population movements during conflict pose a specific challenge to policies aimed at promoting sustainable development in the post-conflict period. As discussed above, processes such as refugee return and the return of the internally displaced may complicate attempts to regulate access to resources. In Mozambique, over 1.7 million refugees were repatriated from 1992 to 1996 from neighboring countries, while in Ethiopia the figure reaches over a million.<sup>21</sup> Alongside these returning refugees were hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people and demobilized soldiers to take into account, including both those who returned to their village or region of origin, and those who chose to remain or move to another area.

The significance of displacement and return must be placed in the context of other forms of population movement, as can be seen in two villages studied in Manica Province in Mozambique. In Pindanganga, a village on the edge of the Beira corridor, a survey conducted between 1999 and 2000 shows that of around 800 households in the study area, only just over half (56 percent) had lived there prior to the war.<sup>22</sup> Of these, 75 percent had been displaced by the war, mainly to nearby 'safe' areas in the Beira corridor. Some 10 percent of those who had moved into the area were former Renamo soldiers who had fought in the area during the war and stayed on after its end. These and others were attracted by the proximity of roads and markets and the availability of land on which to farm. Even in the highly remote area of M'Punga, within the Moribane Forest Reserve, some 28 percent of the 321 households surveyed were newcomers,<sup>23</sup> with a high percentage of these being Renamo soldiers who had been stationed at the military base there.

The presence of returnees, demobilized soldiers, and newcomers complicates patterns of natural resource use and management. For example, in Pindanganga the production of charcoal is increasingly a cause of concern for state Forestry and Wildlife officials, motivating the development in 1999 of a community-based project to regulate this activity and set quotas for the amount of charcoal that can be produced. Yet, charcoal production is primarily an initiative started by demobilized soldiers seeking to eke out a living in Pindanganga, such that regulation through pre-existing natural resource management (or other 'traditional' institutions) is not necessarily effective in drawing in those most involved in the activity.<sup>24</sup>

In Yegof, in South Wello, Ethiopia, meanwhile, although returning settlers may represent as little as 10 percent of all households and demobilized soldiers under one percent,<sup>25</sup> severe land shortage has left many of them landless and amongst the poorest section of the population. As a result, there have been encroachments of these groups into state forests on hillside land and community forests. There has also been a need, as in Mozambique, to resort to the production and sale of wood, charcoal, or even the collection of dung for sale as fuel in order to survive.

However, it is important to note that it is not simply returnees or newcomers that are involved in

activities that are considered environmentally damaging, nor is the interpretation of their actions as damaging necessarily unchallenged. In Yegof, the main force behind destruction of state forests is most likely the fuelwood and construction interest of the nearby town of Kombolcha, and local commercial sawmills.<sup>26</sup> In Pindanganga, meanwhile, the local chief himself was involved in charcoal production at the time of this research, with his rationale being that in the absence of remuneration for his efforts as chief, he had little choice but to engage in commercial activities. At the same time, demobilized soldiers in Pindanganga tended to dispute the notion that charcoal production was destructive. Thus, one group of

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charcoal producers argued strongly in a community meeting that it was not charcoal production that caused the spread of uncontrolled fires—a major threat to the forest—but rather the activities of young boys involved in hunting. They pointed out, with some justification, that they had a strong incentive to control fires used for making charcoal, as they needed a continuing supply of wood in surrounding areas.<sup>27</sup>

Returnees and others who move into a community during the post-conflict transition period may bring with them knowledge and experience that is of value to natural resource management initiatives. For example, in Ethiopia there is some evidence that those who had spent time in formally-organized camps in neighboring countries or in the resettlement areas of the south had been exposed to new farming techniques or ideas, and especially to education and different forms of social and political organization.<sup>28</sup> One returnee interviewed brought back mangoes, a crop not previously known in his village, while an NGO worker commented that returnees were more receptive to accepting 'new' ideas such as the adoption of fertilizers. More importantly, better access to education and leadership experience in camps may have provided some with opportunities to become involved in decision-making positions on their return. Since those forced out by the Derg were often viewed

as victims, and given shortages of 'educated' people who were not 'tainted' as collaborators, returnees may have had privileged access to leadership.

Both institutional change and the processes of population displacement and return are important issues in post-conflict contexts. However, it is relevant to return to the issue of how the 'post-conflict transition' is defined since this not only underpins the nature of any conclusions about appropriate post-conflict policy initiatives, but also serves to act as a warning against any simplistic implementation of such policy.

### **Revisiting the Definition of Post-conflict**

Describing a country, region, or time period as post-conflict is obviously fraught with difficulties, as demonstrated by attempts to recount the renewal of conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998, or the breakdown of peace agreements in countless other contexts. Even in the relatively secure peace of

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Mozambique since 1992, the continued existence of armed gangs in parts of Manica province led to some areas remaining 'no-go areas' for international donors as late as 1996. Indeed, frustration with the capacity of either local actors or international intervention to bring peace to conflict-ridden parts of Africa has led to the addition of new terms to the development lexicon, such as 'chronic political emergencies,' or 'complex humanitarian emergencies.'<sup>29</sup>

Yet, it is not so much the risk of a country or region sliding back into war that is of concern here, but more the fact that initiatives to build a long-term post-war future are themselves still the subject of much conflict. As noted above, forest reserves in Mozambique are highly contested; the same is true of land redistributions in Ethiopia. The fact that

returnees in Ethiopia often found that they had lost their access to land while in exile has given rise to numerous conflicts, as they argue for further land redistributions and engage in temporary activities such as charcoal production to gain a livelihood. Importantly, disputes over resources such as forests and land do not simply disappear with the formal end of conflict. The post-conflict context may also give rise to score-settling, conflict within communities, and even victimization of those associated with the previous regime.

One example of continuing conflict involved a post-conflict sustainable development initiative in Meket District in North Wello, where the British NGO, SOS-Sahel, has sought to devolve 'user rights' over communal hillsides to local communities.<sup>30</sup> Seen as a way of addressing worrying levels of soil degradation and deforestation in these areas, this initiative fitted with the decentralization discourses of the post-Derg period and the encouragement of participation by local communities in natural resource management. It identified local burial associations, or kires, as an appropriate institutional vehicle for community management of the resource.

However, although enjoying some success and interest from other agencies, this particular form of community-based natural resource management has not been without its problems. One is that it tended to ignore the specific history of kires. Rather than being 'traditional' institutions, resurrected after a period of dormancy during the war, it seems equally possible that kires were brought to prominence during the war, and especially during the 1984 to 1985 famine, by being used to distribute emergency food aid to local populations. In addition, problems arise where the kire does not fully correspond with a geographically, religiously, and socially well-defined community. Such was the case in the enclosure of a woodlot between the villages of Jirelie and Megenagna in Meket, where a dispute arose between the two villages, and between the Christian and Muslim communities within the two villages. At the core of this dispute was the mistaken assumption of project workers that the kire represented all concerned.

A rather different conflict was observed in the Moribane Forest Reserve, where the return of displaced people after the war was accompanied by a return of elephants that traditionally migrated



through the forest. Those living in affected areas of the forest called on the Forest and Wildlife Service to help them protect their crops and homes by shooting at least one elephant, as was said to have occurred prior to the war. The Forest and Wildlife Service was reluctant to do this, because it had begun to view elephants as a potential wildlife resource and also disapproved of people living in the forest. However, crucially, the community itself was also split on what action to take. This was evident as the local chief apparently weighed the relative advantages of drawing this group of farmers—most of them demobilized soldiers—under his protection against seeking political capital from supporting the state's desire to remove people from the forest. Such political capital could be traded for further support to communities already living outside the reserve, or at least close to the road running through it. The same chief also was involved in boundary disputes with neighbors seeking to maximize the area and population under his control in the expectation that formal power would be decentralized to chiefs in post-conflict administrative reforms.<sup>31</sup>

These two examples both highlight how actors are engaged in processes of re-establishing legitimacy in conflict periods to fill the institutional vacuum that would otherwise exist. It is perhaps inevitable that this implies a period of political contestation, and while this does not necessarily lead to renewed violence, it does question the approach of working with the 'community' during the post-conflict period. Indeed, the fluid situation that emerges in the aftermath of violent conflict demands considerable skill in identifying ongoing tensions in order to ensure that policy is not based on simplistic assumptions of post-conflict communal harmony.

## CONCLUSION

The post-conflict period is increasingly seen as providing an opportunity to right the wrongs of war, including such tasks as the return of refugees and displaced people, reconciliation, and reconstruction of damaged infrastructure and shattered economies. In both Ethiopia and Mozambique, this optimism about prospects for post-conflict intervention extended further to significant initiatives to promote sustainable development in community management of natural resources. However, one drawback is that these have

often ironically resulted in the same kind of state interventionism and imposition as had occurred previously, with little real participation by local communities. This is especially the case in Ethiopia.

One reason that post-conflict situations may result in a somewhat interventionist stance is that government and donors see this period as a 'window of opportunity' and a chance to make up for lost time, in the same way as do other groups. There is sometimes naïve enthusiasm that the legacy of the past can be overcome and that expectations on all sides

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that rapid solutions can be found. Initially there may be a more conciliatory attitude towards involving local institutions. In Ethiopia, this was in part because of notions of decentralization, self-determination, and local ethnic representation. Yet, the post-conflict period ultimately represents a time in which different groups are encouraged to jostle for position—whether as in Ethiopia, to associate with the conflict's victors, or as in Mozambique, to assert local advantage after a conflict widely regarded as leading to stalemate.

In all of the above situations it is also important to bear in mind that public policy does not start afresh in a post-conflict period, but brings with it the historical memory of state and non-state agencies as well as affected local populations. It is rarely the case that conflict creates 'greenfield sites' on which rehabilitation activities can be planned. For example, in both Mozambique and Ethiopia, rural communities have historically experienced considerable coercion. People in the government have correspondingly been accustomed to being coercive. These observations are important because new interventions do not enter a vacuum. Development workers, especially in post-conflict periods, stay in one place for a few years at most, sometimes only a few months. However, many of those with whom they work have longer memories of intervention and political change. It is therefore vitally important for external interventions to

become sensitive to how such memories may influence people's current positions, and to manage and sequence expectations and interventions.

There are also historical differences between different places and variations in the nature of intra-community divisions, which can have an important impact on the potential for participatory natural resource management initiatives in the post-conflict transition. In the specific case of Moribane Forest Reserve in Mozambique, the interests of those living near to roads or outside the reserve did not necessarily coincide with those living deep inside the forest. In north Wello, those who returned, whether from resettlement schemes or abroad, often had different interests than those who had stayed during the war. In both Ethiopia and Mozambique, meanwhile, the physical impact of conflict varied. Thus, in areas closer to towns where soldiers concentrated, not only were natural resources themselves more affected by environmental degradation, but also social and political dynamics in the post-conflict period were often more complex. All of this warns against a post-conflict

policy approach which simply focuses on particular affected populations—displaced people, returnees, or demobilized soldiers, for example—and channels resources to them without examining local socio-political and environmental circumstances. Targeted interventions in favor of the displaced or demobilized may exacerbate conflict between these groups and others, and thus undermine the potential for consensus over natural resource management.

Finally, it is not so much that the post-conflict period creates special conditions that are unfavorable for sustainable management of resources (not least since 'sustainable management' initiatives such as land reform and CBNRM can exploit these conditions too). Rather, the assumption that conflict comes to an end with the end of war is premature. There is a need for those promoting sustainable development to recognize the historical rootedness of conflict and the way in which such conflicts are overcome or even resolved. In this sense, sustainability may mean living with and working around conflict, rather than pretending or assuming that it has ended. ■

## NOTES

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- 16 In practice, Decree Law 15/2000 confers powers on 'community leaders,' which includes traditional leaders in many areas, but could also include leaders appointed by Frelimo since independence.

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