

# From Users to Custodians

## Changing Relations between People and the State in Forest Management in Tanzania

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In the face of scarce public resources and burgeoning demand from the growing population for agricultural land and woodland products, Tanzania has increasingly recognized the need to bring individuals, local groups, and communities into the policy, planning, and management process if woodlands are to remain productive in the coming decades.



## Summary findings

Central control of forests takes management responsibility away from the communities most dependent on them, inevitably resulting in tensions. Like many African countries, Tanzania—which has forest or woodland cover over 30–40 percent of its land—established central forestry institutions at a time when there was little need for active management and protection because population pressures were low. But in the face of scarce public resources and burgeoning demand from the growing population for agricultural land and woodland products, there has been growing recognition of the need to bring individuals, local groups, and communities into the policy, planning, and management process if woodlands are to remain productive in the coming decades.

Tanzania established its first three community-owned and -managed forest reserves in September 1994. Today, supported by substantive policy reforms that largely grew out of the early experiences with community-based management, more than 500 villages own and manage forest reserves, and another 500 or so smaller social units and individuals have recognized reserves. Joint management by the state and the people is getting under way in at least four government-owned forest reserves.

Wily and Dewees describe the evolution of community-based forest and woodland management in Tanzania and the underlying policy, legal, and institutional framework. They draw together some of the lessons from this experience and review emerging issues.

They find that the most successful initiatives involving communities and individuals have been those that moved away from a user-centric approach (like that often used in South Asia) and toward an approach based on the idea that communities can be most effective when they are fully involved in all aspects of decisionmaking about management and protection. This suggests that the government should allow communities to become engaged as managers in their own right, rather than as passive participants who merely agree to the management parameters defined by the government.

The Tanzanian experience has shown that community-based forest and woodland management can be an integral part of initiatives that seek to improve governance over natural resources by improving accountability and by democratizing decisionmaking at the local level.

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**FROM USERS TO CUSTODIANS:  
CHANGING RELATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THE STATE  
IN FOREST MANAGEMENT IN TANZANIA**

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### **Acronyms**

<b>DFO</b>	<b>District Forest Officer</b>
<b>FBD</b>	<b>Forestry and Beekeeping Division</b>
<b>JFM</b>	<b>Joint Forest Management</b>
<b>JMA</b>	<b>Joint Management Agreement</b>
<b>MNRT</b>	<b>Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism</b>
<b>VFR</b>	<b>Village Forest Reserve</b>

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## AN OVERVIEW: *MIOMBO* WOODLANDS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

1.1 ‘*Miombo*’ is the name given to the distinctive and dominant dry woodland formation which extends across Southern Africa, from Tanzania in the east to Angola and Namibia in the west. Dominated by *Brachystegia* sp., *miombo* is thought to be of relatively low productivity, but this is only from the perspective of conventional timber production: commercially marketed timber from *miombo* woodlands is limited to just a few species, primarily *Pterocarpus angolensis* stocks of which have been greatly depleted throughout the region. Although of limited commercial value for timber production, *miombo* woodlands are extremely important for rural communities as a source of construction material, wild fruits, firewood, and for dry season grazing. In some areas, leaf litter transferred from woodlands to fields is one of the primary sources of nutrients for smallholder agriculture, cheaper, more available, and arguably more effective (for the cost) than chemical fertilizers. Finally, *miombo* woodlands provide an important habitat for wildlife, forming the basis for the tourist industry in parts of the region.

1.2 There is a growing body of research which shows as well that *miombo* woodlands can be extremely productive, and regenerate quickly once they have been harvested. Large areas of *miombo* have already been heavily modified through human intervention. In Malawi, for example, over 95 percent of remaining *miombo* has been modified by harvesting at some stage. The vast *miombo* woodlands of central Tanzania are mostly regenerated, and cultivated farmlands – not woodlands – were reported to have been widespread in these areas in the 1860s (Lawton, 1982). *Miombo* regeneration is actually favored when farming follows woodland clearance, and cultivated sites are quickly reforested through natural regeneration, mostly from root suckers, once farming is no longer productive (Campbell, 1996).

1.3 *Miombo* woodlands cover enormous areas across southern Africa – around 2.7 million square kilometers in total. Forestry institutions throughout the region were established at a time when there were few needs for proactive management and protection because population pressures were low. Theoretically in charge of these large areas, forest departments needed to do little to manage or protect them. Only in the last 20 years, have these pressures increased and taken their toll. It has become increasingly clear that the public sector simply hasn’t the resources effectively to manage extensive woodland areas vis-a-vis the large human populations already dependent on them. Perhaps more importantly, continued centralized control over these vast resources contradicts the idea that good governance over natural resources can be firmly rooted in decision-making processes at the community level.

1.4 In the face of burgeoning demands for agricultural land, and for woodland products, there is a growing recognition in southern Africa that individuals, local groups, and communities must be increasingly brought into the policy, planning, and management process if woodlands are to remain productive resources for the next decades. A growing body of evidence strongly suggests that the only way of preventing the complete loss of these woodlands is to empower local people

to manage them, or otherwise to legitimize local management, a process which, in itself, is dependent for success on local mechanisms of democracy and governance (Deweese, 1994; Wily, 1998c). There are important synergies: while the process itself is dependent on local mechanisms of democracy and governance on the one hand, on the other, this process of empowerment can strengthen these local mechanisms as well. Indeed, the democratizing impacts of community-based forest and woodland management can be very powerful.

1.5 There are risks in taking this approach, especially when even a basic understanding of processes of local institutional change is absent amongst institutions charged with moving the process forward. Indeed, although the ideas engendered by the rhetoric of 'local participation' sit well with this concept of legitimizing local woodland management, in some areas, woodlands are proving to be victims of the 'myth of the commons.' In the face of shrinking public budgets, there may be a tendency to 'return' control over woodland resources to communities, based on the presupposition that earlier community controls over woodland use existed, were effective, and could be revived, when this may not have been the case. Governments may give customary authorities control over natural resources which far exceeds their capacity for management, and in other cases, control over woodland resources may be transferred to a local elite which may use woodlands principally for immediate political or economic gain. In others still, control may come with extensive strings attached, limiting the rights of communities to take any effective decisions over woodland use and management. The process of legitimizing local management has seldom been straightforward (Deweese, 1996).

1.6 Indeed, whether and when a community has any incentive to take on responsibilities for forest or woodland management is poorly understood. Where there are strong cultural influences which place value on forests of religious significance, protection as an end in itself can emerge as the dominant local management paradigm. In other cases, there may be few incentives to manage at all unless woodlands are already scarce – 'managing abundance' may seem to be counterproductive. This is especially so in areas of high biodiversity, where global values (which are oriented toward conservation) may conflict with local values, which emphasize use. The Tanzania experience, however, shows that far greater value, for the community, is found simply in its ownership and control over forests and woodlands, rather than in the products which these areas might generate as a result of management.

1.7 The idea of more fully engaging communities in forest and woodland management in Tanzania is a relatively recent one, less than 10 years old. The objective of this paper is both to provide an overview of the evolution and experience with community-based forest and woodland management in Tanzania, as well as to focus upon some of the lessons and issues which have come out of the experience so far. Although most initiatives have focused primarily on the management of *miombo* woodlands, a few efforts have sought to involve communities in the management and protection of moist montane forests, as well as forest plantations, and these are reflected upon as well.

## FOREST AND WOODLAND RESOURCES IN TANZANIA

### Extent and coverage

1.8 Tanzania covers an area of more than ninety million hectares. Between 30 and 40 percent of the land area is 'forested.' Less than 2 percent of this area is accounted for by **moist montane**



forests, which are primarily found at higher altitudes in areas with good rainfall. An even smaller area is **mangrove and coastal** forest. Plantations (mainly exotic cypress and pine species) account for another estimated 80,000 ha.<sup>3</sup>

1.9 The vast majority of Tanzania's forests (around 96 percent) are comprised of **savanna woodlands**. Most of these woodlands, in turn, fall into the '**miombo**' category. *Miombo* woodlands tend toward a partially open canopy of trees of usually medium height (around 15 meters) and are interspersed with grassland. Most *miombo* are vulnerable to fire in the dry season and several common species actually depend upon fire for seed germination. Nonetheless, *miombo* woodlands are highly valued throughout the sub-continent for their multitude of products and services (Deweese, 1994; Campbell, 1996).

### Woodland management and administration

1.10 The most important administrative categorization of forests and woodland in Tanzania is simply whether it is 'reserved' or 'unreserved.'<sup>4</sup> Around 45 percent (14.5 million ha) of the national forest estate is reserved,<sup>5</sup> two thirds of which are Central Government Forest Reserves and the balance of which are Local Government Reserves. The Forestry and Beekeeping Division (FBD) of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) provides overall policy guidance for the forestry sector, and some technical oversight and supervision. For the most part, management and protection of all reserves has been decentralized, and is primarily the responsibility of District Forest Officers (DFOs) and their staff, who report to the local District Administration, which in turn reports to the elected District Council. The exceptions are a number of major catchment forests which are under the direct management of FBD.

1.11 Strictly speaking, 'reservation' is a land management regime rather than a tenure category. Reservation does not in law necessarily endow ownership upon the state – a fact made explicit in recent land legislation (the Land Act, 1999) and which is to be reflected in new forestry legislation in preparation. These legal instruments recognize a range of 'reserves,' for which tenure and jurisdiction may fall to various and separate parties. Nonetheless, it is common to refer to Forest Reserves in Tanzania as being 'owned' by central or local Governments, given the full jurisdiction they hold over these estates.<sup>6</sup>

1.12 It is important to note, however, that **unreserved** forests – that is, forests and woodlands which are not formally gazetted as reserves – represent the greater proportion of the national estate (19 million ha, or 56 percent). Most of this unreserved forest is also of the dry *miombo* woodland type.

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<sup>3</sup> The statistical basis for establishing the area under forest and woodland cover in Tanzania is weak, but is being improved through various mapping and inventory initiatives. Holmes (1995) provides relatively recent estimates, though these are based upon data from the 1980s.

<sup>4</sup> The importance of these distinctions is made clear in *The Land Act* (No 5 of 1999) and *The Village Land Act* (No 4 of 1999).

<sup>5</sup> This includes around 2 million ha of forests and woodlands within National Parks or Game Reserves.

<sup>6</sup> The 'Forest Reserve' is a familiar category in Anglophone Africa, and has its sister term of 'permanent forest' or 'national forest' or 'foret classe' in Francophone Africa. In virtually all sub-Saharan states, this categorization carries an assumption that this category of forest is owned and managed by the state and that the process of identifying a forest as such occurs through a legally-bound process, usually referred to in Anglophone Africa, as 'gazettement'. The extent to which, in law, a reserved area is *owned* by Government as well as managed and controlled by it, varies. This distinction has blurred over time, resulting in a conjoining of ownership and jurisdiction.

## VILLAGES AND LAND MANAGEMENT

### The Village

1.13 Most unreserved forests and woodlands fall within, or are adjacent to, the boundaries of rural communities. These communities – or ‘villages’ (in Swahili, *vijiji*; sing. *kijiji*) – are able to elect their own governments, or Village Councils, which in turn have the unusual characteristic of being independent legal bodies able to ‘sue and be sued,’ hold property and enter contractual arrangements. In addition, Village Councils have considerable executive and legislative powers, together with a wide range of responsibilities and rights. In this capacity, a Village Council acts on behalf of its constituent member households, known as the Village Assembly.<sup>7</sup> The Village Assembly is obliged by law to meet at least quarterly, in order to hear from the Council and to consider actions or policies that the village government wants to put into effect.

1.14 Of equal relevance is the social and spatial cohesion which underwrites the identity of ‘village.’ At the time of its establishment as a legal ‘Village,’ its core member households are registered, and the Registrar of Villages is provided with an idea of its physical identity. This is the ‘village area’ (Swahili, *Eneo la Kijiji*). The village area represents a discrete area, the boundaries of which have been agreed with neighboring registered villages. ‘Villagization’ began in the mid-1970s at which time some 7,500 existing and new villages were registered. Today, there are around 9,000 villages, an increase which derives mainly from population growth. Very few rural people live outside of registered villages, and most of Tanzania’s countryside is a mosaic of these village areas.

1.15 Inevitably, the size of village areas and the precision with which their boundaries have been determined vary widely in response to population pressure and intensity of agriculture. In much of the central and western part of the country, village areas tend to be very large and include sometimes vast tracts of grazing lands and woodland. Areas of settlement and cultivation tend to be concentrated in one or several parts of the wider village area. As population grows, large villages frequently apply to be split into two or several villages. In addition, ‘sub-villages’ (*vitongoji*) play an increasingly important role in local level management and governance. The elected chairmen of each sub-village have, since 1992, held *ex officio* seats in the Village Council.

### Villagers and Village Land

1.16 Over the last quarter century, Tanzanian land policy and law have built upon the emergence and consolidation of what is arguably the most decentralized and devolved regime of governance in sub-Saharan Africa, where local government is lodged first and foremost at the village level, supported by local government at the district level.

1.17 An initial effort to consolidate the control of local people over their own land areas was framed in the 1983 **National Agricultural Policy** which launched a program of village titling. As a result of this policy, Village Councils were able to obtain long leaseholds over their respective village areas and to sub-lease parts of these to member villagers, for settlement and

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<sup>7</sup> The core legislation which describes these relationships is the *Local Government (District Authorities) Act* No 7 of 1982, amended in 1992 and again in 1999.

farms. In practice though, laborious survey procedures prevented more than a quarter of villages in the country from securing Village Title Deeds. A new **Land Policy** (1995) and new land legislation (1999) have now reconstructed the tenure environment of Tanzania and with it, the nature and expression of rights at the local level.<sup>8</sup>

1.18 The construct of 'the village' remains central in the new policy and legal framework, and is in fact strengthened. The links between the village and its land were given a clear and strong legal foundation by the introduction into law of **Village Land** as one of three land management categories within which land ownership relations pertain (the other two being General Land and Reserved Land).<sup>9</sup>

1.19 Of these three land management categories, Village Land is perhaps the most important. Over half the country falls within the boundaries of its more than 9,000 registered villages. Village Land is subject to own legislation, the Village Land Act (1999). While this law removes the right of a Village Council to secure title over the Village Area, it endows that body with functions more appropriate to its identity as a government, by designating it the **Manager** of that land (rather than owner).

1.20 The new law is quite clear with regard to the responsibilities, duties and rights of the Village Council in this capacity as land manager. First and foremost, the Council is obliged to define, with the agreement of the community, tracts of the Village Area which are to remain, for an interim period or in perpetuity, as land held in common by the whole community. The Village Land Manager is required to establish a Village Land Registry and, should the community so wish, issue private deeds or titles over respective parts of the remaining land within the Village Area. The process through which this is to be undertaken amounts to a simple form of in-village adjudication, carried out by appointed villagers and dependent ultimately upon the agreement of the community as a whole. Rights established in this way are comparable to those of European freehold. These deeds may be made out to groups, clans, households, spouses (holding the land jointly), as well as to individuals.

## **THE FOREST POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **Village Lands and Forest Managers**

1.21 At once the relevance of the new land legislation to emerging systems of community-based management of woodland and forest resources in Tanzania, can be seen. As we have noted, most unreserved woodlands and forests are found in or adjacent to Village Lands, of which elected village councils are the designated and lawful Land Managers. Land law not only allows villagers to earmark parts of their local environment for common use and/or natural resource management. It encourages them to do so, and provides two mechanisms through which

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<sup>8</sup> cf. *National Land Policy* (August 1995); *the Land Act, No. 4 of 1999 and the Village Land Act, No. 5 of 1999*, approved by Parliament in February 1999, assented by the President in May 1999 but with the date of commencement not yet gazetted.

<sup>9</sup> General Land is in effect 'Government Land' and includes all urban areas, many estates which are held as leaseholds from the state, and a range of other lands where the state is the land management authority, in the person of the Commissioner of Lands. Reserved Land has special status in that its use and occupation is regulated by use- or resource-related laws, such as the Forest Ordinance, the National Parks Ordinance or the Highways Ordinance.

local-level jurisdiction may be reinforced. This is accomplished firstly, by declaring a woodland inside the Village Area to be common land, thereby protecting it from encroachment for private purposes such as settlement or farming. Secondly, land law provides for the ownership of all rights in this land to be titled to the appropriate group of the community, or even to the community as a whole.

1.22 Meanwhile the new land legislation establishes ‘Reserved Land’ (of which Forest Reserves are currently a major part, along with Game Reserves and National Parks) as a land management category, and in addition, makes it clear that not only the state, but virtually any other entity or legally established body may secure tenure over reserves, obliged nonetheless, to abide by the relevant laws governing ‘reserved’ estates (such as the Wildlife Conservation Act or the Forest Ordinance).

1.23 Taken together, these two facts suggest that the way is open for ordinary village communities, through their Councils, to be allocated such properties. Alternatively, the legal status of Village Councils provides the scope for these bodies to be designated as Managers of Forest Reserves (or more likely, adjacent parts thereof), if not their owners.

### **Forest policy and legislation**

1.24 While this interpretation suggests what *may* be possible, in terms of community-based woodland and forest management, what does policy say about Government’s intentions? Does the Tanzanian Government *want* to award local people management or tenure rights over Forest Reserves?’

1.25 The answer to this question is mixed. The recently adopted **National Forestry Policy** (1998) is quite clear about the need to bring *unreserved* forests, such as those found in Village Lands, under the jurisdiction of local communities, and indeed sets up a construct of Village Forest Reserves as a primary vehicle for doing this.<sup>10</sup> A Village Forest Reserve is defined in the Policy as a forest ‘*which is owned and managed by a village government.*’

1.26 In respect of other categories of Forest Reserve (Central and Local Government Forest Reserves), the Policy opens the way for adjacent communities to become co-managers, through ‘Joint Management Agreements’ (JMAs). Preliminary drafts of new forest legislation have developed this idea further, but still suggest little scope for ordinary citizens to become owners of parts or all of such ‘Government’ Reserves. Specifically, no provision is made for Village Forest Reserves to be declared out of already-existing Central or Local Government Forest Reserves. There are strong advocates that such a provision should be included in new legislation, the argument being that over time there will be a good number of Government Forest Reserves which would logically be devolved to Villages, once experience with Village management has accrued.

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<sup>10</sup> Provision is also made in policy, for the establishment of so-called Local Authority Forest Reserves by district authorities. These could be established only in those scarce areas over which no village has or wants jurisdiction. In reality, even if a District Council wanted to set up a Local Authority Forest Reserve, most would not have the resources to protect or manage them, and would almost certainly be forced to turn to adjacent communities involve them in management.

## **Re-making the construct of ‘reservation’**

1.27 Until very recently, Tanzania had pursued the strategy common in post-colonial Africa of seeking to inhibit the loss of forests to expanding settlement, cultivation and urbanization by withdrawing as much forest as possible from the vulnerable public domain and placing such estates under the protective hand of the state – as Forest Reserves. Reservation at once did two things: firstly, it removed *de facto* (or even *de jure*) community authority over the forest, and secondly, it earmarked these areas for conservation purposes.<sup>11</sup>

1.28 These two processes – until very recently seen as inseparable – have since been de-linked. As defined by policy (and, by extension, in the revised legal framework), the making of a Forest Reserve no longer necessarily means the removal of that property from local level jurisdiction, or even from local ownership. As we have noted above, this de-linking is endorsed in contemporary land law which makes it clear that the status of a property as ‘reserved’ (Game Park or Forest Reserve) says nothing about its owner. In short, where once ‘Forest Reserve’ was taken to mean ‘a property owned and managed by the Government for forestry,’ it now means that the central state, or as appropriate, a local district government (Council) only holds official jurisdiction or authority over the Reserve. Neither the ownership of the Reserve by the state, nor even its operational management, may be assumed.<sup>12</sup>

1.29 The development of such nuances, especially within an extremely short time-frame of less than five years, is worth pondering. The origins of these important socio-legal opportunities for community-based woodland and forest management derive less from new forestry policy or new law, than from changes on the ground. It is to these, the real experiences of community-based woodland and forest management over the last half-decade, that we now turn.

## **2. FROM COMMUNITY FORESTRY TO COMMUNITY-BASED WOODLAND AND FOREST MANAGEMENT**

### **THE EVOLUTION OF IDEAS ABOUT COMMUNITY-BASED WOODLAND MANAGEMENT**

2.1 An awareness of the value of trees and forests to ordinary people is not a new feature of woodland and forest management in sub-Saharan Africa. Policies, legislation, and institutions commonly made room for people to use forests and woodlands through an array of permit

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<sup>11</sup> There has been a shift in the focus on forest reservation since the 1980s in Tanzania. Reserves were formerly established primarily for the purposes of timber exploitation and revenue generation. Increasingly, new reserves are being established primarily for conservation purposes. Timber exploitation tends today to be confined to the exotic plantations and to certain ‘productive’ natural Forest Reserves, found mainly in only two or three Regions of the country (especially Tabora Region).

<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the immediate question arising from the Land Act is with regard to ownership of Forest Reserves. Arguably, subsidiary legislation may be needed to render all existing National and Local Forest Reserves the explicit property of the state, through long leasehold. Interestingly, rights of tenure to Village Forest Reserves, established on Village Lands, may be more secure than Government’s Forest Reserves. On Village Lands, property can be held in perpetuity (and by villagers). Elsewhere land may be owned only under lease (99 years).

systems, most recently with the advent of 'community forestry.' In its early forms in the 1970s, community forestry in Africa mainly meant encouraging rural people to plant trees on their farms, or in some instances, to establish community woodlots.<sup>13</sup>

2.2 These experiences have shown widely mixed results. In some instances, tree planting by rural people was readily adopted, and built on long traditions of on-farm woody plant management (Warner, 1997). In other cases, Governments found that even lucrative subsidies were ineffective at encouraging people to grow trees, possibly because households didn't share Governments' view of scarcity, and what it implied for the household economy (Deweese, 1995a). Community woodlots were especially problematic, because rights of access and use were seldom well-defined.

2.3 Particularly in drier areas, tree planting increasingly came to be seen as an expensive approach to reforestation. It was well understood that natural regeneration offered good promise, but its success was heavily dependent on the involvement of communities in the process of decision-making and management. In Zimbabwe and Malawi, in particular, there was a growing interest in so-called 'traditional forest management regimes' and a keen awareness of the role of communities in these processes (Campbell, 1996; Bradley and McNamara, 1993).

2.4 For much of the region, however, strategies for woodland and forest management remained essentially unchanged. Ownership, authority, and operational management of forests (and especially Forest Reserves) remained the prerogative and work of the state. People in the meantime needed 'to be educated' as to the value of natural forests, and were encouraged and sometimes formally obliged, to assist the state in reporting illegal forest users. In some countries, the 'buffer zone' construct became the focus of new approaches, sometimes separate from and in other cases, conjoined to, the definition of 'multiple use zones' along the periphery of otherwise 'protected' estates. The commitment to halt the loss of natural forest by bringing more and more areas under the auspices of the state as Forest Reserves remained the main underlying objective and *modus operandi* of woodland and forest management. Only relatively recently – in the 1990s – has 'community forestry' come increasingly to mean the direct involvement of ordinary people in the management of forests.

2.5 In the current sense of its meaning, community-based woodland and forest management in Tanzania had its beginnings in a small project in late 1994. Previously, some projects had taken modest steps to consider the needs of forest adjacent communities, and sometimes 'involved' them in protection activity.<sup>14</sup> Few of these initiatives came to anything or represented what is regarded today as woodland and forest management by local people. This was not to occur until late 1994, when eight villages established themselves as not only the definitive managers of a natural forest, but as its owners.

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<sup>13</sup> In Tanzania, hundreds of Villages established community woodlots during the 1970s and 1980s.

<sup>14</sup> A donor-supported effort begun in 1988, for example, sought to involve communities around North Nguu Forest Reserve in Handeni District in protection activities. It was typical that this development did not receive the support it needed and deserved at the time, and significant that the reason given by the then Director of Forestry was that it was 'wrong' to involve local people in the management of state property (Orgut and Forconsult, 1996).

## COMMUNITY-BASED WOODLAND MANAGEMENT OUTSIDE OF RESERVES

### The catalytic cases

#### *Duru-Haitemba*

2.6 Duru-Haitemba is a forest located in Babati District in the south of Arusha Region.<sup>15</sup> The forest itself is not impressive. Firstly, it is small – at least by Tanzanian standards – a mere 9,000 or so hectares. Secondly, it is not a lush, montane forest but a dry woodland, of the *miombo* type. Thirdly, by 1994 this ‘forest,’ such as it was, was in acute disrepair, its area and quality much decreased through encroachment by settlers and over-use during the previous decade.

2.7 Duru-Haitemba was one of a series of new forests scheduled for gazettement as a Forest Reserve in 1984. To this end, District Bye-Laws identified the area as protected, Forest Guards were posted to ‘protect’ the forest (mainly from local people), and eventually, the proposed Reserve was surveyed, its boundary cleared and beacons were installed (1991-92).

2.8 This last act provoked much local resistance. Objections to the reservation process focused upon the planned location of the boundary, and local people were determined to retain as much of the forest under their control as they could, outside the planned boundaries of the Reserve. Eventually an external adviser was asked to help arbitrate by identifying the uses which would have to be permitted by FBD in return for local acceptance of the Reserve. Considering the enormous conceptual progress made since then, it is worth observing that the trading of use rights in exchange for the community’s support for the taking of public land to establish a Forest Reserve was understood at the time as ‘the new way forward.’

2.9 In the event, the negotiations that followed led to quite different arrangements – the cessation of the reservation process, and the ‘return’ of the proposed Reserve to the eight communities within whose traditional and modern village jurisdictions, it fell. The fact that those same villages were some of the lucky few in the country which were being directly assisted through another donor-financed project, to survey and demarcate their Village Areas and to secure Village Title Deeds over these lands, was of course, an extremely helpful condition, which villagers were later able to draw upon.

2.10 Within a remarkably short and highly politicizing period of several weeks, three Duru-Haitemba villages had managed to demarcate ‘Village Forest Management Areas’ out of the proposed national Forest Reserve, to establish effective protection regimes involving more than fifty village forest patrolmen, and to put into effect simple but rigorous regimes of village-regulated forest use. Based upon their own assessment of damage, each community categorized uses into those which were henceforth prohibited, those permitted on a quota basis, and those uses which could continue freely – but only by members of the village.

2.11 Outsider’s access to the forest was stopped. Each village zoned its forest according to its condition, and ‘closed’ areas of special value and areas they decided needed time to recover. Village Forest Committees were appointed to manage the forest for the community. Grazing was restricted to specified zones and months. Stock-watering routes were closed, and one village re-

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<sup>15</sup> Much has been written about the Duru-Haitemba development in many unpublished project reports and papers. See, Sjöholm and Wily (1995), and Wily and Haule (1995) for short published accounts.

planted degraded stream banks. Encouraged, District Foresters agreed to remove the Forest Guards, at least on a trial basis.

2.12 The impact of increased community control was immediate and obvious. Encroachers were removed from the forest and, if they belonged to the community, provided with plots outside the forest. Illegal timber harvesters were evicted, charcoal burning in the forest ceased and felling of live trees came to a halt. The collection of dead wood for domestic fuelwood was given priority in all three communities, and the collection of wood for beer-brewing or for sale was made subject to the payment of fees. Bark-stripping for making traditional grain stores gave way to even older techniques, using withies and clay. The construction of brick houses was stimulated by the allocation of free permits to collect standing dead trees for burning bricks, and by the imposition of fees for harvesting wood for the construction of traditional polewood houses.

2.13 Villagers from neighboring communities, who were no longer allowed free entry into the parts of the forest now under the control of the 3 villages, found themselves launching their own initiatives to undertake forest protection and management in other areas of Duru-Haitemba. The cessation of free-for-all grazing followed, and had the most widespread effect upon the forest itself. Grass cover was quick to return, and the number of people in the forest dramatically declined. Within the following three months, all five of the remaining communities within whose Village Areas parts of Duru-Haitemba were seen to fall, had launched their own village-based management regimes. By March 1995 all 9,000 ha of Duru-Haitemba was under the direct management of one or another of the eight Villages.

2.14 The process was not problem-free. Initially, the efforts of the eight Duru-Haitemba villages were driven by an awareness that they were the first forest-managing communities in the country and by the fear that if they failed, Government might take the forest away from them again. Their efforts were frequently undermined by doubtful officials and by some visiting foresters and academics who were skeptical of the communities' abilities to manage the forest. Some dismissed the initiative as workable only because the forest itself was a 'valueless' dry woodland, and not a precious montane forest. Critics argued that the commitment of the villagers to patrolling and protection was unsustainable because forest products, and the forest, was worth so little in the first place. As the experiment showed every sign of lasting beyond its first year, it was dismissed as 'workable for unreserved forests' but unworkable in respect of the Government Forest Reserves.

2.15 Villagers themselves were, first and foremost, seriously in awe of the responsibilities they had brought upon themselves, amply expressed in the words of one village leader that 'we must succeed for we can no longer blame the Government if this forest disappears.' The adoption of authority along with the responsibility was inevitably empowering at the local level. The capacity of each Village to take charge of its part of the forest and to manage it successfully, raised the morale of the community and reinforced its determination, making it easier for each village to face and solve problems as they arose. Such problems were many.

2.16 A pivotal development for the evolution of community-based woodland and forest management in general, arose with the refusal of a local magistrate to rule in favor of a Village Forest Committee which had sought court action against an offender who had refused to pay his fine for illegal felling in its Village Forest. The magistrate found that the Village had imprecise authority to levy fines in this area. This caused the concerned Village to explore how it could



indisputably legalize its authority. The result was to activate the capacity of registered Tanzanian Villages to make Bye-Laws in respect of any village matter or resource, and for such a Bye-Law to enter law and become legally binding.

2.17 Although this capacity is today widely used, in 1995, Village Bye-Laws were uncommon. In practice, many were drafted by the District Council and made applicable to all registered Villages throughout its District. A number were even drafted in the Prime Minister's Office (responsible for local government) and were executed nationally.

2.18 In the case of Duru-Haitemba, each of the eight concerned Villages drafted their own Forest Management Bye-Laws, and proceeded to secure the approval of the District Council, as required in law. By the time these reached the District Council (June 1995) the way was more easily paved by the belated recognition of the district authorities that the Village Land Titles each community had secured, fully included the Forest. By that time, the Villages felt a certain confidence in calling their forest areas 'Village Forest Reserves' – a framework which has since entered National Forest Policy (1998) and will likely be incorporated in new forest legislation.

2.19 Use regimes since 1995 have, of necessity, matured and become more detailed, usually as a consequence of conflict between users and a Village Forest Committee, or because one or another rule was unworkable, or unfair. Fee-paying for forest uses has extended, particularly as returns from fines have decreased with the decline in offences. Zone designations have in some cases changed and protection regimes reorganized as the eight Villages have found their patrolmen tiring of the voluntary work or becoming less efficient, or even guilty from time to time of illegal harvesting themselves. For all eight Villages, issues of financial accountability have presented crises, resolved with the imposition of new regimes of book-keeping and reporting. Each change has taken time, most communities only slowly determining upon the best course of action.

2.20 Cases of illegal harvesting do still occur, prompting a new burst of enthusiasm and action. When village leaders have been involved, significant changes have resulted. This has included the dismissal of Village Chairmen but more commonly, has resulted in a shift in the composition of the Village Forest Committees away from leaders to 'ordinary' villagers. Women have, in the same process, tended to fill more positions each year. In some cases, there has even been a shift in the status of the Committee itself, from one regarded as a sub-Committee of the Village Council towards one regarded more as an independent body, in effect a 'watchdog' upon the Council, and reporting directly to the community.

2.21 Despite considerable demands for land, none of the eight Villages have wavered from their determination to conserve the village forest, to allow its degradation or disappearance, or even to reduce its size. All eight Villages have limited new settlement in their communities, and directly encourage intensified land use on farm. Agroforestry, soil conserving measures, and even stock reduction, have all been effects of the Village Forest Reserve establishment process.

2.22 Most of the forest products which are extracted are used by individual households, and are not sold commercially. No village allows the harvesting of standing trees for sale. Even so, villagers place a high value on forest 'services.' All communities claim early impact from the improved condition of their respective forest areas in terms of reduced soil erosion, steadier stream flow, and better grazing resources, and have observed that wildlife has returned and that their forest beehives are more productive. Some villagers are beginning to look towards the

forest for higher productivity. In one village, the extraction and sale of mature trees, has become a subject of interest and planning.

### *Mgori*

2.23 The 45,000 ha Mgori Forest, like Duru-Haitemba, had also been earmarked for gazettelement in the mid-1980s. Expensive and time-consuming surveys, inventories and boundary demarcation had been undertaken (with donor funds<sup>16</sup>) and it was estimated that at least thirty Government Forest Guards would be needed to protect the proposed new Forest Reserve – a hugely unrealistic proposal in the face of staff retrenchment and shortages of funds which have characterized the sector. Although heavily over-harvested, it was envisaged that revenues generated from timber sales could be used to finance future protection.

2.24 People in the five Village Areas around the forest were skeptical, pointing out that the District Forester Officers had in fact contributed to illegal harvesting of timber and wildlife in the first instance. They also resented the loss of forest which, though beyond their still-loosely defined Village Areas, they considered to be their own. A tug of war over the location of the western boundary of the planned Reserve, adjacent to these five communities ensued. Government eventually conceded some 5,000 ha and cleared a second boundary – again at considerable expense. Relations between FBD, local people, and the District Council – which hoped to secure the forest for itself for future revenue-generation – remained tense during this period (1989-1994).

2.25 With the Duru-Haitemba experience to draw upon, a more workable and cost-effective approach towards the conservation of Mgori was developed (Wily 1996; Wily 1999b). In contrast to Duru-Haitemba (where communities rapidly seized both management authority *and* tenure), the five Mgori villages were constrained in how far they could act because only part of Mgori Forest could be definitely claimed as part of their Village Areas. Instead, it was agreed that the five Villages would act as Managers, but working with the District Council. Collaborative forest management became the watchword. A local Forester was appointed as Liaison and worked hand in hand with each community to establish effective management regimes and from time to time exerted his authority over Village decisions.

2.26 Nonetheless – and this represented a critical development – community stake-holding over the area consolidated between 1995 and 1998 as the Villages succeeded in establishing rigorous and effective protection regimes and in regulating use. This was in tough circumstances. Mgori was under a great deal of pressure from elephant poachers, from shifting cultivators looking for remote tracts of virgin forest to clear for short-term millet cultivation, and from the constant threat of fire (a management tool used by non-resident hunters and pastoralists passing through the forest in search of game and seasonal grazing).

2.27 During the same period, Village Area boundaries were surveyed. On the basis of rights established by customary use, respective Village Forest Management Areas were included within the Village Areas, confirming their status, in the eyes of the communities, as Village Forest

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<sup>16</sup> the SIDA-funded Regional Forestry Program which ended in mid-1995. Since then, the relatively small facilitation and other support costs to community-based forest developments in both Babati and Singida Districts (including respectively Duru-Haitemba and Mgori) have been funded by another SIDA-funded program, the Local Management of Natural Resources Program, or LAMP, now in its second phase (1997-2000).

Reserves. To some extent, this shift in the state-people relationship has been accepted by the District Council. The five Mgori Forest Villages have extended the boundaries of Mgori to include fringe woodland areas they were previously holding onto when they thought Government was taking the forest. Mgori now includes 43,000 ha of protected forest.

2.28 A further 2,000 ha have been earmarked by the Mgori villages as ‘spare’ forest (*Misitu ya Akiba*). These differ from the Village Forest Reserves in that they may, one day, be subject to planned settlement, in the event of severe land shortage. For now, these areas are subject to the same kind of use regulation and protection as ‘reserved’ areas – a process which has done a great deal to heighten and extend planning and active management by local communities to all their resources. Like the Duru-Haitemba villagers, the Mgori villagers are now more cautious in accepting new settlers into their Village Areas.

2.29 By the end of 1995, Government foresters involved in Duru-Haitemba and Mgori began speaking about their experiences more widely, and reported on them at a national forum of interested foresters. As a result, Duru-Haitemba and Mgori were in many respects catalytic, and have prompted new initiatives, often independent of the type of threat posed first by Government’s plans to ‘reserve’ these remaining woodland areas.<sup>17</sup>

### **Building on traditions of management through the “*ngitiri*”**

2.30 Potentially one of the most significant recent developments of relevance for woodland management has been an effort to strengthen, or to otherwise reintroduce, earlier traditions of land management. This has involved building on the customary practice of setting aside tracts of land for later or emergency use. Originally a concept which was applied to grazing areas, called *ngitiri*, it has more recently been extended to residual pockets of woodlands. Beginning in Mwanza Region, and to a lesser extent in Tabora, the approach built on the experiences gained in Duru-Haitemba and in neighboring Shinyanga Region, where grazing lands – not forests – were beginning to be protected through this revitalized customary mechanism for setting aside grassland.<sup>18</sup>

2.31 Today, more than 1,300 *ngitiri* have been identified in the seven districts of Mwanza Region with another 120 in Tabora Region. Several hundred are, in effect, Village Forest Reserves, similar to those developed in Duru-Haitemba and Mgori, but generally comprising no more than several hundred hectares each. The majority of *ngitiri* are much smaller areas and under the jurisdiction of sub-parts of the village community, either sub-villages, women’s groups, or traditional societies. At least 500 *ngitiri* are individually owned. Few of these are more than ten hectares in size and some are no more than one or two hectares.

2.32 The *ngitiri* initiative is important for community-based woodland and forest management in Tanzania for the very reason that it extends the approach and the opportunity to conserve resources into areas and regions where tree cover has been much diminished (or may even be non-existent), assisting communities in earmarking degraded lands for woodland regeneration.

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<sup>17</sup> These included the emergence of what has since become the first gazetted Village Forest Reserve in the country, under the Finnish-funded East Usambara Catchment Forestry Project, and initiatives, still relatively unformed, in Iringa and Morogoro Regions. In Lushoto District in Tanga Region, a German-funded soil conservation program assisted six villages to rehabilitate and manage the small Chambogo Forest.

<sup>18</sup> See Wily and Monela (1999) for a detailed review of the *ngitiri* program mentioned here.

Secondly, it seeks to involve the private sector, encouraging individual farmers to reassess their farm resources with a view to protecting, rather than clearing, their residual woodland patches. Experience has increasingly shown that farmers are well equipped profitably to apply silvicultural management techniques in these small areas. A growing number of farmers with very small *ngitiri*, acknowledged and protected as such with the cooperation of the wider community, now routinely thin and prune to produce only those trees they have most use for.

### **Extending the concept of locally managing woodlands outside of reserves**

2.33 Meanwhile, developments in both Arusha and Singida Regions, where respectively the catalytic Duru-Haitemba and Mgori initiatives occurred, have continued apace. In **Singida Region**, ten new villages have launched village-based woodland management efforts, accompanied and stimulated by the formal demarcation of the boundaries of Village Areas. It is anticipated that an additional 40 to 50,000 ha of quality *miombo* woodland will in this way be secured where in other circumstances it would almost certainly have been lost to the continuing process of shifting cultivation and settlement, because of vagueness about the ownership of the resource.

2.34 In **Arusha Region**, the expansion of community-based woodland and forest management has been equally impressive. Today, the Region boasts 150,000 ha of forest/woodland under the direct management of 41 villages. By far the greater portion is found in the pastoral Masai district of Kiteto, where nine villages manage respective parts of the 80,000 ha Suledo-Sunya *miombo* woodland. As in the case of Mgori Forest, the current focus of discussion (and potential contention) is the question about the extent to which communities should be able to harvest valuable timber species for their own benefit (instead of for district-wide, or even national, benefit). The development of a regime of taxation which satisfies all parties is the main issue on the current agenda.

2.35 These developments (and several other developments in Morogoro Region not discussed here) have taken place on unreserved 'public lands.' Most have fallen within 'Village Lands,' and use the framework of the Village Forest Reserve, first adopted by the eight Duru-Haitemba villagers, or the comparable construct of *ngitiri*. This kind of reservation differs strikingly from Reserves created by the state in that the 'reserving,' or the dedication of property for the purposes of forest conservation and development, is being undertaken by local people themselves, and in respect of lands over which their jurisdiction is recognized. Indeed, the act of 'reserving' forest and woodland in this way, also serves to extend and confirm village jurisdiction where it is vague or under dispute. In due course, there will doubtless be a number of communities which establish forest conservation regimes over the remoter, woodland tracts in their localities, precisely for this purpose – that is, less to protect woodland than to secure land.

2.36 To date, Village Forest Reserves (VFRs) have not, with one exception, been nationally listed (or 'gazetted'). The majority of the 1,500 or so 'forest reserves' on public lands, large or small, exist informally.<sup>19</sup> In Mwanza and Tabora Regions, a loose form of *ngitiri* 'registration' has been introduced, where the concerned group formally informs the local District Council of

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<sup>19</sup> The exception is Mpanga Village Forest Reserve, a very small VFR of 59 ha, in Tanga Region. The average size of VFRs in Singida Region is currently around 3,000 ha. Masai VFRs are the largest, averaging 20,000 ha. Other VFRs in Arusha Region average 1,200 ha. VFR/*ngitiri* in Tabora Region average 75 ha and the smallest VFR/*ngitiri* are found in resource-poor Mwanza Region, where they average 27 ha.

its intentions and actions. The making of ‘community rules’ has also been used to formalize the decision at least at the local, community level. Whilst effective in terms of binding the community to agreed actions, such rules do not have the advantage of Village Bye-Laws, which are binding upon all persons, irrespective of whether they belong to the community where the VFR is located or not. Many villagers are simply not aware that it is necessary firstly, to ensure that the content of the ‘rules’ is consistent with provisions of both administrative and forestry legislation, and secondly, that the proposed rules are presented formally as Bye-Laws to the local District Council for its endorsement. Without this form of approval, the ‘rules’ cannot enter statutory law and be upheld in the courts.

2.37 In practice, Arusha is the only region where Villages have taken this step. Although the lack of national gazettement has shown no signs of inhibiting reserve-making at the local level, and certainly does not suggest illegality, many situations do exist, where it will be in the interest of the concerned communities to use their legislative powers to secure their own authority over the woodland through a Village Bye-Law. This same act will bind community members more firmly to their decision.

#### COMMUNITY-BASED WOODLAND MANAGEMENT IN GOVERNMENT FOREST RESERVES

2.38 The explicit involvement of communities in the management of already-gazetted Central or Local Government Forest Reserves, has been introduced much more slowly, more cautiously, and, arguably, with much less success. Initiatives involving communities in the management of Government Forest Reserves have been proposed in upwards of 10 reserves. The Norwegian-funded Catchment Forestry Program has made a commitment to work towards this end in respect of another ten or so Reserves over the coming five years.<sup>20</sup> Tangible action on the ground has been modest. While implementation has begun in nine National Forest Reserves,<sup>21</sup> community partnerships are well advanced in only three Forest Reserves. Even in these three cases, final formal agreement as to the respective roles and responsibilities of the state and community is yet to be made, and the communities operate more or less in ‘trial’ circumstances. These cases are nonetheless interesting in their own right and have proved highly instructive as to modes of state-people cooperation.

#### Urumwa Forest Reserve

2.39 Urumwa Forest Reserve is one of the high canopy and timber-rich *miombo* woodlands of Tabora Region – a region in which upwards of two million hectares have been gazetted as Government or Local Government Forest Reserves.<sup>22</sup> Today, three-quarters of Urumwa Forest Reserve is jointly managed, by seven different groups together with Government Foresters. Only five groups are directly adjacent to the Reserve, while just three of the seven groups constitute ‘Villages.’ One of these groups is not even a ‘community’ *per se*, but a Government agency (Prisons)

2.40 This arrangement to share management responsibilities for the Reserve arose because of an initial understanding of concerned Foresters that the involvement of local people, through user

<sup>20</sup> These are: Nou, Haraa and Hanang Forest Reserves in Arusha Region; Geita and Sayaka FR in Mwanza Region; Shume-Magamba, Baga, Shagayu, Ndelemai and North Nguu in Tanga Region; Urumwa in Tabora Region.

<sup>21</sup> In Shume-Magamba, Baga, Ndelemai and Shagayu Reserves in Lushoto District, Ufiome and Nou in Babati District, Numbevalle in Makete District, Kitulangalo in Morogoro District, and Urumwa in Tabora District.

<sup>22</sup> Wily and Monela (1999) review experience with Joint Forest Management of Urumwa Forest Reserve.

groups, was only to be on the basis of ‘use agreements,’ and that it did not matter who these user groups were, so long as they fulfilled their part of the use agreements. These agreements were actually termed ‘contracts’ and more closely resembled use ‘licenses’ than Joint Management Agreements. Indeed, user groups have secured access to the forest primarily on the basis of their willingness to pay user fees.

2.41 It was inevitable that the Urumwa initiative would run into difficulties. Some adjacent communities were included in the arrangement, some were excluded, and ‘contracts’ were signed not with whole communities but with almost random sub-parts thereof. Terms were dictated by Government, which firmly and explicitly reminded the ‘partners’ of its controlling authority. The partners, in turn provided forest patrols more or less in direct exchange for access rights described in the contracts. The main right offered was a right to harvest certain marked trees for timber, but only in a manner dictated in the contract (i.e. removal of the wood by vehicle, not by hand, a condition few villagers were able to fulfil). Foresters found they were having to spend more, not less time, in the area, ‘supervising’ their contractees. Villagers felt their local interests in Urumwa highly attenuated by rights defined by contract, and tempered their willingness to protect the forest accordingly. One of the contracted communities turned its back upon the forest altogether, saying that the right to harvest timber was not what it had been looking for from Government and that this was just another way for Government to exclude local people from woodland and forest management. In short, the arrangement was not co-management in the sense generally understood but more or less a sophisticated harvesting agreement, in which the user group paid for access by providing in-kind protection services.

2.42 Today, several years after the initiative began, local Foresters are working to reconstruct the arrangement along more workable lines, basing these changes in the empowerment of the community to act in respect of threatened forests. Some of the most basic principles which are being adopted in Urumwa, include recognition that, *firstly*, the logical partners in management are those (and only those) who share direct boundaries with the Reserve; *secondly*, that as far as is reasonably possible, the existing socio-legal and institutional framework within which communities operate should be used (i.e. in the Tanzanian context, the modern Village); *thirdly*, that the sub-division of the Reserve among the different local partners will be workable and lasting only where this has been determined and agreed among the parties themselves. In this way, the definition of respective ‘Village Forest Management Areas’ will have a community-driven logic and legitimacy, and have a much greater chance of success; *fourthly*, local people will become most positively involved in forest protection and management not in their capacity as users but in their capacity as managers, building upon their sense of custodianship, and not just upon their economic need. This approach requires that authority be genuinely shared, and that ‘joint management’ consists of far more than simply providing access to reserved areas.

### **Gologolo Forest Management Area**

2.43 The second case of co-management concerns Gologolo Village and the **Shume-Magamba Forest Reserve**, in Lushoto District, Tanga Region. Unlike earlier examples of *miombo* management reviewed in this paper, Shume-Magamba is a rich, moist montane forest, and is classified as a Catchment Forest Reserve. As such, FBD is more directly responsible for its protection and management. Most of this 12,800 ha Reserve acts as a watershed catchment, providing assured supplies of water for several million households in lower areas. The special

significance of Shume-Magamba lies however in the fact that some 3,000 ha of the Reserve were cleared many decades ago and today support a rich mosaic of commercial plantations.

2.44 The challenges that Government faced in both protecting natural forests in the catchment, as well as in managing the plantation estate, led directly to a pilot effort to involve communities in co-management.<sup>23</sup> The most important adjacent Village is Gologolo – important in that it is located inside the Reserve. This suggested Gologolo as the logical ‘manager’ of around 5,000 ha of the Reserve, an area which included around a third of the commercial plantation area. This proved to be a complicating factor, for while the state showed a willingness to allow local people to ‘manage’ the natural forests, it was far less willing to surrender its plantation management functions to the community, especially those relating to the issue of harvesting contracts to saw millers, or decisions with regard to re-planting.

2.45 In spite of this reticence, the **Gologolo Forest Management Area**, comprised of the 5,000 ha area of Shume-Magamba, is managed today through a genuine state-people partnership, which operates through a Joint Management Committee. Most of the protection functions fall to Gologolo Village, while most of the industrial plantation functions fall to FBD. Decisions within both areas, as well as a host of subsidiary matters (such as replanting regimes), are fully discussed and confirmed within the monthly meetings of the Joint Management Committee.

2.46 Nonetheless, like all co-management arrangements in Government-‘owned’ estates, community roles are fairly tightly linked to its rights of access. This renders the arrangement vulnerable to constant pressure for more and more access. The early Gologolo experience already confirms the main finding of the Urumwa initiative: the desirability of involving local people as authorities in their own right wherever possible, not simply as users. This approach is genuinely much more difficult in the case of Gologolo, because of the commercial plantation estate, and the need for Government to ensure that it recoups some of its establishment and management costs. Still, as the Government Plantation Officer himself opines, in future years, there is no reason why a competent village could not take on the full onus and rights of management, either on a revenue-sharing, contract or even ‘hire-purchase’ type arrangement.

### **Ufiome Forest Reserve**

2.47 The third case examined here, **Ufiome Forest Reserve** (5,635 ha) manifests the learning that has occurred. Started originally as a case for co-management along the lines of Gologolo, the arrangement now being piloted is one in which the eight adjacent communities have been recognized as designated ‘Managers’ of respective parts of the mountainous catchment forest, each village with its own ‘Village Forest Management Area’ (VFMA). The draft agreements between FBD and each village are quite clear that Government Foresters will play no operational role in management, other than at the request of the community or in instances where it has blatantly broken the Management Plan and Bye-Law to which it has bound itself to observe in respect of that VFMA. This mode of community involvement in national forests represents a breakthrough, establishing communities not as partners but as forest management authorities recognized and able to be recognized in their own right.

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<sup>23</sup> Work in Gologolo was undertaken with support from the German aid-funded Natural Resources Management and Buffer Zone Development program (NRBZ) of FBD. Wily (1999) provides a summary.

## SUMMARY

2.48 The meaningful involvement of local people in the conservation and management of forests and woodlands in Tanzania has a short history, dating from around 1994, when the approach was first introduced. Despite this, progress has been made not only in action on-the-ground but in supportive policy and legal changes which have been brought about in part by on-the-ground experience. Where this experience has been limited, the development of policy and legislation has been poorly informed.

2.49 Table 1 provides an overview of accomplishments to date. Nearly 350,000 ha of forests and woodlands are under some form of community or local management in Tanzania. Most efforts have taken place in ungazetted, unreserved forests, that is, outside of Central Government or Local Government Forest Reserves.

2.50 Central to these accomplishments is the fact that whole villages have themselves adopted the same type of strategies that underlie 'reservation.' In short, they have set aside for protection and regulated use, those areas of forests and woodlands they want to conserve, leading to the development of Village Forest Reserves, subsidiary categories of group or community forest reserves, and even 'individual' or private reserves. These forms of reservation have entered policy (at least in a broad sense), and are in the process of being provided for more precisely in forestry legislation which is being drafted. Given the large numbers of reserves likely to be established on Village Land over the coming decade, and the need to limit bureaucratic procedure, provisions for simple Registration at the District level is being provided for – and is likely to be used a good deal more frequently than national level gazettement.

2.51 Meanwhile, the more conventional co-management approach towards community involvement in woodland and forest management (through Joint Management Agreements) has also been pursued in Government Forest Reserves. This too, has a place in policy and will be given status in new legislation.

2.52 Thus – at least at this early stage – a dual strategy has evolved: communities can directly manage (and may even own) forests or woodlands within Village Lands, or may co-manage with the state (or with another agency appointed by the state) woodlands in existing in Government Reserves. Thus, as Tanzania enters the twenty-first century, community-based woodland and forest management is self-evidently well underway.



**Table 1: Community-based Woodland and Forest Management in Tanzania, 1999**

<b>Regions Districts</b>	<b>Management of public lands or village areas Village Forest Reserves (VFRs), Community Forest Reserves (CFRs) Individual 'Reserves' (ngitiri)</b>	<b>Management of reserved forest areas Government Forest reserves National Forest Reserves (NFRs) Local Government Forest Reserves</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>ARUSHA</b> <i>Babati Kiteto Simanjiro Ngorogoro</i>	53 villages directly manage 176,500 ha ha all as VFR	8 villages manage 5,635 ha Ufiome NFR	61 communities 182, 135 ha
<b>SINGIDA</b> <i>Singida Rural</i>	5 villages directly manage five VFR, totaling 43,000 ha; 15 villages in process of establishing 15 VFR, total area estimated at 50,000 ha	-	20 communities est. 93,000 ha
<b>MWANZA</b> <i>Sengerema Magu Mwanza Rural Geita Kwimba Ukerewe Missungwi</i>	381 villages manage 381 VFR; 280 sub-villages, clans and other groups manage 280 CFR; 647 individuals manage private 'reserves'; Total: 35,000+ ha	-	661 communities 647 individuals 35,000+ ha
<b>TABORA</b> <i>Urambo Nzega Igunga Tabora</i>	76 villages manage 7,660 ha VFR; 31 individuals manage 394 ha private 'reserves'	7 local groups co-manage 13,700 ha of Urumwa NFR	83 communities 31 individuals 21,754 ha
<b>TANGA</b> <i>Lushoto Tanga</i>	7 villages directly manage 605 ha; 1 village manages first gazetted VFR (Mpanga) 60 ha	1 village co-manages 5,000 ha of Shume-Magamba NFR 1 village manages part of Baga NFR, 500 ha 1 village manages part of Kabosa NFR, 500 ha	11 communities 6,665 ha
<b>MOROGORO</b> <i>Kilosa</i>	7 villages manage 10,000 ha in VFR		7 communities 10,000 ha
<b>Total</b>	<b>544 Villages 280 Groups 678 Individuals</b>	<b>11 Villages 7 Groups</b>	<b>555 Villages 287 Groups 678 Individuals</b>
<b>Total 'Reserves'</b>	<b>1,502 village, community or individual 'reserves'</b>	<b>5 reserved forest areas</b>	<b>1,507 reserves</b>
<b>Estimated area (ha)</b>	<b>323,219</b>	<b>25,335</b>	<b>348,554</b>

### 3. BUILDING ON EXPERIENCE

#### LESSONS FROM EXPERIENCE WITH COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST AND WOODLAND MANAGEMENT IN TANZANIA

3.1 The evolving experience with community-based forest and woodland management in Tanzania, is increasingly showing that these approaches can be effective, cheap and sustainable. Indeed, Government's ability to take any alternative approach is highly constrained because of its limited access to resources,<sup>24</sup> and while this in itself is a compelling reason to focus on alternative woodland and forest management strategies, it is not sufficient. The relevance of the approach is rooted in the challenge of securing forested and woodland areas, rather than in the need to undertake extensive and costly silvicultural operations.

3.2 We attempt to summarize here some of the main lessons which have been learned from experience in Tanzania with community-based forest and woodland management, and to focus further on some of the outstanding issues which need to be resolved.

3.3 There are three particular and closely related lessons which are of special relevance,

- Firstly, the establishment of community-based woodland management regimes is a development *process*, and is workable only when treated as such;
- Secondly, experience has shown that the success of community-based woodland management approaches depends very much on how the process is being driven by the community;
- Thirdly, the idea of community 'participation' in woodland management must be seen to be far more than simply a pretense for action, but should be integral to how communities mobilize themselves to manage these areas.

#### Community woodland and forest management as development process

3.4 As a development *process*, the evolution of community-based woodland management regimes has been favored when circumstances and institutions have allowed for flexibility. Flexibility has meant that the approach could be broadened to include Government Forest Reserves instead of just public lands. Within public lands, there are a widening range of approaches appropriate for individual, community, and Village actions. The definition of what is a 'forest,' appropriate for community-based management, has also evolved, now to include dry woodlands, commercial plantations, degraded rangelands where natural regeneration can be encouraged, as well as moist montane forest.

3.5 As a development process, most experiences so far seem to have taken place in two phases: a first in which simply securing the forest under local control dominates the process and the management regimes, and a second phase which gives way in time to greater interest in developing the potential of the forest. This is particularly the case as woodlands recover from

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<sup>24</sup> Government's entire budget (excluding donor funds), for instance, for protecting and managing some 30 million ha of forests and woodlands is around \$800,000 annually. The ratio between public expenditure and donor expenditure on forestry in Tanzania is around 1 to 19.

past exploitation, and as greater benefits become possible. Above all, the process – both external and internal to the community – of arriving at an acceptable spread of management responsibilities amongst villagers, adopting transparency measures, adapting use rights for sustainability, and so on, is dynamic and evolutionary.

3.6 Despite the fact that the National Forest Policy is relatively new, and derives from experience gained in the field, recent experience with community-based woodland and forest management suggests some areas for policy reform. Co-management has, for example, already moved beyond the confines of ‘user rights’ defined in policy. The clarification that Village Forest Reserves are owned by Villagers, rather than by the Village Councils, could also be helpful. What is most important is that policy has already provided an enabling framework which favors community-based management approaches. Within this framework, change and progress, evolution and maturity is to be expected and welcomed.

### **The process as social transformation**

3.7 Experience has shown as well, that genuine community involvement in woodland and forest management does not merely constitute a redistribution of access rights but represents a more fundamental socio-political shift in state-people relations. Internal relations within the membership of the local community may also be transformed. Accordingly, institutional relationships and frameworks at all levels will themselves be seen to adjust.

3.8 The singular feature which has characterized these shifting relations, has been the process of devolution in resource management – a movement of authority and power from the center to the periphery. The key factors will be obvious – the willingness of the state (and local governments) to ‘let go’ is critical, as is the capacity of the periphery to receive, use, and take advantage of its new-found powers.

3.9 In this respect, Tanzania provides two positive lessons. Firstly, it has supported the emergence of an extensively devolved system of administration to the grassroots (in the distinctive character of its ‘Villages’). What has been most significant in the Tanzanian experience, however, is less that it has had this advantage, but that local level institutions have been greatly enlivened and further developed where village level woodland and forest management has been instituted. The act of empowerment embodied in genuine community-based woodland and forest management has in turn directly prompted and supported devolutionary and associated democratizing processes. A tangible example has been the mobilization of village legislative capacities, long-existing but very rarely used before community-based woodland and forest management was introduced.

3.10 Secondly, the capacity for forestry institutions to accept and absorb ‘learning by doing’ and to ‘learn from the field’ has been considerable, if inevitably imperfect in circumstances where the bottom-line is power-sharing, and where ‘process’ in any event, tends to move erratically rather than smoothly forward. Community woodland and forest management in Tanzania, for example, has not been born out of new Policy. Rather, policy formulation has been, in many respects, directly prompted by new approaches on the ground. In a very real sense, core strategies, substance and instruments in proposed new forest legislation in turn derive from experience with community-based woodland and forest management in the field.

3.11 This capacity is similarly illustrated in the way in which the understanding of ‘Reserve’ has seen subtle reconstruction in both a legal and administrative sense, and is today an altogether more diverse framework than it was a mere four or five years ago. Although often ambivalent, the readiness of Government to respond to change positively and to refashion conventions and instruments, has allowed the function of reservation to come an extraordinary full circle over the last four or five years. In 1994, villagers were more or less ‘fighting against’ the making of Reserves. Today, villagers are more or less ‘fighting for’ Reserves of their own making and under their own control. What has shifted has not been the need to remove dwindling resources from open access situations, but the actors, instruments, and policy environment through which this may be most workably and powerfully effected.

### **Going beyond ‘participation’**

3.12 A third central lesson has been that the success and sustainability of community involvement has been directly correlated with the extent to which the concerned communities secure authority over management. Co-management (for example, in Government Forest Reserves) is proving more difficult to establish, more fragile, and, because of the much greater amount of time and effort in operational management required on the part of Government, a great deal more expensive to maintain – and potentially less sustainable. As suggested in the case of Urumwa Forest Reserve, this is even more so the case where the ‘Government Partner’ involves local people not as managers in their own right but as forest users, where the state involves local people not as central actors but only as beneficiaries with protection duties.

3.13 For the moment, perhaps the most important contribution made by Tanzania in this area so far, has been to develop working community-based management in the true sense of the word, rather than a range of participatory regimes, each at the end of the day proscribing local ownership of management. One of the outstanding challenges facing Tanzanian forestry today is to bring this generally-successful experience with villager-controlled management more fully into the Government Reserve sector.

## **DISCUSSION**

3.14 A range of closely related issues emerge from this discussion about Tanzania’s experience with community-based woodland and forest management. Each has a degree of relevance beyond Tanzania, where other countries are similarly grappling with the challenges of establishing new institutional mechanisms for woodland and forest management. To the extent that these experiences can inform policy, institutional, and legal reform elsewhere, the success of community-based woodland management has been rooted in efforts to:

- move from a user-centered to manager-centered paradigm in community involvement in Government Forest Reserves;
- look first to local reality and potentials and to confidently establish Tanzanian models before borrowing too wholeheartedly from external experience;
- adopt a flexible approach to Policy development in this new area to keep it dynamic and supportive rather than constraining; and finally,

- to guard against an inevitable tendency where power-sharing is at stake for the center to co-opt the initiatives of ordinary citizens rather than support them.

3.15 It is very much the case that community woodland and forest management in Tanzania is moving rapidly beyond the ‘piloting’ stage, to where valid lessons can be drawn and strategic directions refined. Moves towards national application, and the development of policy and legal instruments, make the formulation of a clear and consistent vision about the to approach and process timely.<sup>25</sup> More acutely, there is evidence that different initiatives have much to learn from each other and that certain fundamental principles and processes apply – *or should apply* – irrespective of whether the forest is large or small, precious or degraded, under state or local jurisdiction (Wily and Monela, 1999). Pivotal among these is the need for the process of establishing community involvement to be genuinely participatory and preferably community-driven and for consensus to be arrived at with regard to the purpose of involving communities in the first place.

3.16 Importantly, the more widespread adoption of community-based woodland and forest management suggests the need for a fundamental shift in the orientation and outlook of Tanzania’s national institutional framework for forest management. FBD, with the support of District Forest Officers, have operated in the past primarily as a regulatory and controlling body. As responsibilities shift to the community, the need for this national regulatory framework becomes far less critical. At the national level, then, the challenge will be to transform these institutions from regulatory and controlling ones, to service delivery institutions, with responsibilities for working with communities to increase their effectiveness as forest managers. This is, indeed, one of the central challenges of the institutional reform efforts which are currently being formulated.

### **Institutional learning**

3.17 There are good opportunities, in this process of institutional reform, for developing bridges between the approaches taken in the ‘unreserved’ and ‘reserved’ sectors (respectively in Village Lands and Government Forest Reserves). Problems in the latter derive largely from the directives of new Policy, which, while welcoming ‘participation,’ structure this in limiting ways. Policy leaves foresters and villagers in no doubt that Government is to remain the authority over and Manager of these estates. No direct provision is made for local people to share management or to be designated as Managers – let alone provision for Government Forest Reserves to become Village Forest Reserves – a not unrealistic scenario in the case of many of the remoter woodland Reserves, where state guardianship and management is virtually non-existent or ineffective.

3.18 Policy also proscribes the nature of local involvement as being effected only through Joint Management Agreements with central or local Government, which set out their ‘user rights and benefits.’ This accurately reflects the Policy’s perception of local people as (only) users, or stakeholders whose ‘stake’ in the forest is simply access to its products.

3.19 Whilst these strictures are being loosened in practice, and whilst the drafting of new forest legislation is seeking directly to provide for community-based management of Forest Reserves, a conviction that local people may be ‘involved’ in FR management, but not actually

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<sup>25</sup> A suggested profile is provided in Wily and Monela (1999).

manage with authority, continues to pervade the thinking of many foresters. Understanding why this hinders rather than helps improved forest management may need better articulation and discussion at the national level.

### **Moving from a user-driven to a management-driven regime**

3.20 User-centered cooperation tends to be a weak foundation for community involvement in responsible management because it down-grades local interests as *solely those of user interests*. In the process the more important *custodial interests* which derive more from history, locality and socio-environmental interests than product use, are undermined.

3.21 This deprives the state of what it really needs: an increase in responsible guardianship. Arrangements defined in terms of user access tend to decrease this stakeholding. They may even stimulate a 'tug of war' over resources. Perceived only as 'users,' it is logical for local people to attempt to secure maximum access, and over time, to demand more and more, irrespective of whether or not this is good for the Forest. After all, the state has made clear that any sense of guardianship they may have felt towards the forest was unfounded and is not recognized.

3.22 Product-centered local management, in which the community is regarded as the user rather than the main actor makes co-management especially difficult in those forests where use should be minimal or reduced. Government simply has nothing to trade in order to secure the cooperation and protective services of the local population. In South Asia, where the user-centered paradigm dominates so-called 'joint management,' it is precisely this factor, along with an underlying reluctance to devolve authority on the part of forest services that has so evidently prevented community involvement from extending into management of India and Nepal's protected areas (Wily 1994, Shrestha, 1999).

3.23 Even in Tanzania's several hundred 'Production' (as compared to Protection) Forest Reserves, product-centered agreements have less than optimal utility. These Reserves are often in such poor condition and under such a degree of threat from illegal harvesting, that the prime task of management *is* protection and close regulation (and often reduction) in their use. In these circumstances as elsewhere, a careful assessment of what constitutes sustainable management for the longer term (i.e. what is good for the forest) must precede and guide use regimes, not be driven by them. However, where the currency of management is access rights, this is difficult to achieve.<sup>26</sup>

3.24 In any event, product or beneficiary-centered 'community involvement' is largely unnecessary, at least in the Tanzanian context. Forest-adjacent communities have enough *custodial interest* in seeing a forest or woodland remain in existence for this to be usefully built upon, rather than diminished. This kind of 'stake-holding' bespeaks a value with which no amount of direct product use can compete.

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<sup>26</sup> In one extraordinary case (Geita Forest Reserve), Foresters found themselves 'having' to offer even charcoal harvesting rights to local villagers in order to secure their cooperation. These same villagers were perfectly protecting their own in-village forested areas. However, having been introduced into Geita's management only as users, to 'pay' for their use rights through providing some protection services, they quickly raised the stakes, insisting on greater and greater access. For the record, this 'plan' has since been abandoned.

3.25 Contrary to the fears of some Foresters, recognition of this kind of stake need not be effected by a transfer of ownership of the estate to the community. Whilst tenurial rights undoubtedly give community-based woodland management an excellent basis, a similar, if lesser impact may be achieved by at least sharing *the 'ownership' of management* – in short, by sharing the authority and decision-making powers that underwrite management. Integral to this is a longer-term frame of reference. Charged with the survival and management of the Forest over the longer-term, many communities have accordingly adopted longer-term strategies, closing off damaged areas and forbidding damaging uses. The bottom-line appears to be that it is not until a community is placed in the position of recognizing that 'we will only have ourselves to blame if this forest disappears,' that community-based forest management can fulfil its promise. Weak versions, in which people merely 'participate' as users, or provide protection services, hardly prompts that attitude.

### **Reconstructing the meaning of collaborative management**

3.26 Because of this, there is a related need to re-think the meaning and nature of Joint Forest Management' as it is emerging in Tanzania. There has been a widespread assumption amongst Foresters that JFM must be taken at its most literal. Either Government manages and involves villagers in peripheral ways, or Government Foresters fully co-manage with Villages. While the latter might appear to be optimal, in reality there are very few occasions which warrant such genuine co-management in Tanzania. Shume-Magamba is one of the exceptional cases in point, where the existence of commercial (industrial) plantation rendered the full-time presence of a Government Plantation Manager necessary, for the tasks of issuing harvesting licences, and determining replanting regimes.

3.27 These types of commercial opportunities are relatively limited. Most Forest Reserves comprise natural forests where the prime requirement of management is to secure the forest from illegal use by bringing it out of open access – the condition most Forest Reserves 'owned' and managed by the state appear to be in, whether they are guarded by Government Guards or not. In such circumstances, the primary substance of a 'joint management agreement' for Government Forest Reserve management, will desirably be an agreement that the concerned community be designated 'the Manager.' Proposed changes in forest legislation will make this possible, despite the absence of tangible Policy directive. As envisaged in legislation, the JMA would specify the management regime to be pursued, the plan having been worked out by the future Manager (i.e. the community) in collaboration with the advising Forester. The Forester's role would accordingly that of technical adviser, available on request – and 'watchdog,' intervening when the management regime agreed is not adhered to.

3.28 These types of arrangements have made the creation of Village Forest Reserves out of Village Land, so successful. The lack of such arrangements in most of the early 'co-management' initiatives in Tanzania has clearly limited their success. This is especially so where 'co-management' has in reality been a new form of licensing, access being paid for through provision of patrolling and reporting services.

3.29 This type of approach does suggest, again, the need for a fairly fundamental reorientation in the institutional structure and role of forestry institutions in Tanzania. FBD, and the District foresters who work with it, must focus increasingly on the delivery of advisory services to facilitate community-based management, rather than on licensing, regulation, and policing. This

shift in emphasis from control and regulation, to a more constructive enabling framework for community-based management must be seen to be part of a fundamental reorientation of forestry institutions in Tanzania towards service delivery.

### **Keeping policy dynamic**

3.30 A shift in strategy – and in the institutional approach toward woodland and forest management – should not be difficult to achieve. To some extent, this is already occurring informally. The approach toward the co-management of Government Forest Reserves, for example, has in some cases tangibly moved beyond the user-stakeholder construct towards a ‘community-as-manager’ or ‘community-as-custodian’ paradigm. Further changes may be expected in more and more precise ways in response to different situations, while putting into practice the fundamental principle embodied in policy that villagers may and should act as the key players in forest and woodland management. In this eventuality, the emphasis placed in the new Policy upon the roles of local governments in public land management, will in all likelihood, dwindle.

3.31 Still, the impediment which Policy in respect of Government Forest Reserves has placed upon community involvement strongly suggests that formal revision of the new Policy is desirable, and sooner rather than later. The main change which is needed is simply to introduce explicitly the opportunity for the state to delegate Reserve-local communities as Managers – and to open the door towards the possible devolution of all jurisdiction of such estates to successful forest-managing Villages. A second change which is needed is to make it possible for Village Forest Reserves to be owned not only by ‘Village Governments’ (Village Councils) as the new Policy currently states, but by the constituent communities of those Villages. To limit ownership of VFR to the governments of the Village is, in any event, illegal and inappropriate in light of new land law, which directly designates Village Councils as land managers, not land owners.

3.32 Indeed, over the last twenty years Tanzania has seen the devolution of state control from the center to local governments. Local Government Forest Reserves in fact account for some thirty percent of all gazetted Forest Reserves. Many of these bodies are looking directly to Villages to manage these estates, and there is a strong likelihood that in time such Reserves could – or should – become Village Forest Reserves. Similarly, a good number of cases exist in respect of Government Forest Reserves, where Villages could reasonably expect to become the jurisdictional authority, as well as the ‘Manager.’

### **Learning to learn from the field**

3.33 The shortcomings in Policy in respect of Government Forest Reserves derive mainly from the fact that there was no local experience upon which to build. This was not the case in respect of ‘unreserved’ land where the early developments of Duru-Haitemba and Mgori provided an important guide as to how local level ‘Village Forest Reserves’ could play a key role in securing ‘unreserved’ forest. Without such experience to build upon, the drafters of the new Policy (beginning in 1996) appear to have been strongly influenced by the strategies of ‘community forestry’ elsewhere, at least in respect of Government Forest Reserves.

3.34 Unfortunately, some of the core concepts borrowed – most specifically the user based construct – derive from the very earliest (and South Asian) experiences with joint forest



management (JFM). These were experiences which have in at least ‘best case’ scenarios moved forward since their widespread dissemination in the late eighties and early nineties. At least some Indian states, for example, are beginning to look to local people as managers first, and users who help with protection, second.

3.35 In any event, paradigms evolve out of different circumstances. At the risk of over-generalization, a prime difference in the South Asian and African situation is the absence in the former of an integrated socio-spatial entity – ‘village’ in the sense of being both a social group and a physical land area. Instead, the much more important societal distinction through much of South Asia would appear to be vertical distinctions within a village and area, founded upon caste. Given that those most dependent upon forest products were the very poor and poor, JFM in South Asia has arguably built upon rather than overcome these distinctions, and in so doing, has deprived itself of being able to designate whole forest-adjacent communities as ‘Managers.’ Instead, the cooperation is with the user group, who may derive from many different areas, some quite far from the forest. Meanwhile, many of those (especially wealthier households) living next to the forest have little interest in its products (Wily, 1995, Poffenberger *et al*, 1996, Ford Foundation, 1998).

3.36 In contrast, in sub-Saharan Africa, adjacency is a primary factor in social, ritual and product use of the forest concerned, with a clear and generally consistent decline in vested interest by distance from the forest edge. Moreover, there is a much more active history in sub-Saharan Africa of local custodial interests by the adjacent community over the forest. In sum, whereas in South Asia, a user-centered framework for community involvement in management has been, correctly or otherwise, the starting point for community involvement, in Africa, the logical starting point is not ‘users’ or user groups, but the *forest adjacent community* – whether its members directly or actively use the forest or not.

3.37 For these reasons, the unthinking adoption of the user-centric South Asian paradigm is both needless and inhibiting in Tanzania. It is especially frustrating given that a great deal more opportunity exists for establishing community-based management system over a much greater range of estates – that is, those forests which are useful or not, available for use or not. National Policy-making and strategic thinking must of necessity look to its own field. Where it has done so (such as in the idea of Village Forest Reserves) ease of concept and construct is striking.

3.38 Building independently from its own realities is perhaps most obviously important in Tanzania in view of the advantages Tanzania possesses over most other states in this area. A case in point has been made earlier; that whilst many forest administrations must search around, sometimes in vain, for an appropriate socio-institutional foundation upon which to construct community-based management regimes, Tanzania has the ideal instrument to hand, in the ‘Village.’ To waste time pursuing models other countries were forced to adopt partly in absence of such a socio-institutional formation, is a great loss indeed.

### **Moving forward**

3.39 A final point relates to the longstanding concern about the age-old tendency of the state to co-opt the initiatives of ordinary people, a tendency that is manifest in the holding onto or retrenching of authority, in the face of change. This will always be a risk, and the implications of such a development need hardly be spelt out. The current flurry of effort on the part of ordinary

citizens to secure woodlands for the longer term, through designating areas as *ngitiri* or Village Forest Reserves, would come to a total halt – simply for fear that by doing so, the community would lose that estate. Indeed, at the local level, a main fear expressed by the earliest groups of Villages to establish full management authority over its forests was simply that, should they succeed in protecting the forest and restoring its condition, ‘Government may try to take it away from us again.’

3.40 Finding the right way forward will obviously be crucial to the future of community-based woodland management in Tanzania and to the future of its forests, given the clear evidence even at this early stage of just how central ordinary people can be to their survival.

### **AUTHORS' NOTE**

Liz Wily is a Rural Development and Land Tenure Specialist based in Nairobi. She has worked and written extensively on the introduction of community-based forest and woodland management in Tanzania, in particular, in the case study sites reviewed in this paper. Peter Dewees has been the Task Team Leader for the World Bank-financed Tanzania Forest Resources Management Project, which has financed some of the work reviewed here. Both authors are indebted to Robin Mearns, Agi Kiss, and Marilyn Hoskins for comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

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