

# The Common Property Resource Digest

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It isn't very often I feel like the announcements section is the most striking part of the CPR Digest, but it seems that way for this issue. When *Michelle Curtain*, our Executive Director, sent me the announcements for our upcoming meetings I was stunned, as much by the range of what IASCP has gotten involved in around the world as by the need to find twice the usual space for announcements. So don't fail to turn to page 12 and decide which of these events *you* are going to attend! Keep them coming, Michelle!

This issue's forum is well worth your perusal as well. *Prof. F.W.G. Hill's* keynote address to the biennial conference last June was got everyone talking, and he agreed right then to make his argument for the new "**Think Locally, Act Globally**" slogan the basis of a CPR Digest Forum. We have responses from Southeast Asia, North America, Africa, South America and Europe. From the Mekong River, *Wolf Hartmann* reflects on the role of regional initiatives in the global / local tension. Next *David Cash* discusses the role of science in interactions between the global and local levels. *Isaac Malasha* adds five practical points about the realities that resource users face which must be addressed if the 'global' is going to be any use to them. *Janice Rodrigues Placeres Borges* draws our attention to the fact that resource users already have a history of interacting with global institutions that has left them wisely suspicious. Finally *Sylvia Karlsson* addresses the commentary in light of the recently completed World Summit on Sustainable Development. **Enjoy!**

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## CPR FORUM COMMENTARY

### Global Visions and Local Imperatives

**Professor F.W.G. Hill**  
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A widely used environmental slogan, which has now reached iconic bumper-sticker status, is "Think Globally, Act Locally". Like many slogans, this one expresses a worthy principle but masks the obstacles to its achievement. The global thinking that emerges from international forums too often marginalises local realities; local action too often dismisses global concerns as irrelevant. Communication between the two is obscure or distorted, inhibiting any effective dialogue or negotiation between the scales involved.

In a recent lecture focussing on the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Kofi Annan emphasized the "Big Picture" in global economic terms, commenting that "Agenda 21 and all that flowed from it can be said to have given us that 'what' - what the problem is, what principles must guide our response. Johannesburg must give us the 'how' - how to bring about the necessary changes in State policy; how to use policy and tax incentives to send the right signals to business and industry; how to offer better choices to individual consumers and producers; how, in the end, to get this done."

The Secretary-General did, however go on to include the social and political, suggesting that "Far from being a burden, sustainable development is an exceptional opportunity - economically, to build markets and create jobs; socially, to bring people in from the margins; and politically, to reduce tensions over resources that could lead to violence and to give every man

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and woman a voice, and a choice, in deciding their own future.” Returning to the Johannesburg Conference, Annan commented “In an era of rapid change, it must mark a break with business as usual. In an era of great wealth, it must show how wealth can be shared by all those living, and preserved for those who come after. And in an era of insecurity, it must offer the prospect of peace through hope; hope that life tomorrow will be better - safer, fairer, more enjoyable - than it is today.”

These are laudable sentiments, and ones with which most of us would agree. However one has the sense that they reflect a global rhetoric, which skates over the harsh empirical realities and difficult allocative decisions which must be addressed if their vision is to be achieved. Among these are:

- Changing human demand/resource availability ratios, fed by growing human populations, life style aspirations and environmental change.
- Entrenched and emerging inequalities in power and resource access at national and international levels, in which political and economic elites tighten their grip on the decision making processes which determine benefit flows.
- Uneven macroeconomic performance between nation states, fed by the grip of a few politico-economic super-centres on the globalization of financial networks, the globalization of production and the globalization of markets and terms of trade.
- Technological innovation, which tends to privilege capital over labour, and labour over natural resources. As profits increasingly globalize, social and environmental costs increasingly localize.

These are, from a longer list, the trends which “thinking globally” must tackle seriously if Annan’s call to “break with business as usual” is to be heeded. Furthermore, thinking globally is not enough. If these trends are to be modified and their negative dimensions transformed, a great deal of “*acting globally*” is needed and this requires significant transfers in authority, responsibility and entitlement. The solution lies not in the current “win-win” rhetoric of sustainable development but rather in the recognition by power elites that the surrender of privilege to achieve collective legitimacy and consensus is ultimately in their own best interests. Sadly one sees few signs that this insight is yet present in global and national forums of power.

The analysis of the global trends has largely been the domain of the political and economic sciences. Common property scholarship has tended to focus on the local, on the social and environmental microcosms where livelihoods depend on common pool resources. In focussing on the local, Common Property scholarship has a strategic advantage in the global development debate, since the local forms the delivery point for policy and the litmus test for its efficacy. Matthias Finger has observed that “the local is where problems first become visible – even if they are only symptoms of global problems – and where they need to be solved as they arise, but it is also

where the resources and means to address such problems are scarcest.” Thus for Finger the local represents the level “at which all global, regional and national policies will ultimately be implemented. It is also the level which gives legitimacy to the entire public policy chain.”

However it would be analytically myopic for Common Property scholarship to confine itself solely to the local. Finger suggests that the weakness of Common Property theory “lies in the fact that it does not contextualize common property resources management, particularly within the larger framework of globalization, although this is where the most innovative governance efforts take place.” While this statement dismisses much good Common Property scholarship, it serves as a warning that much of this work has not yet reached the macro-political and macro-economic forums of developmental debate to which Finger relates.

Given this concern I suggest that the IASCP agenda must include three arenas of analysis and action.

The first is the analysis of scale and its policy implications for the assignment of appropriate jurisdictions over common property. Such an analysis must address the question of “whose common property?” in the recognition that the nature of different resources dictates spheres of common interest at various scales, ranging across a spectrum from the global to the local. It must address the issues of institutional and motivational effectiveness and the consensual legitimacy involved. It must deal with organizational efficiency, and finally it must address the articulation between regimes, with special attention to lines and directions of accountability. Such an analysis is a massive but important task, well deserving the attention of the intellect and energy represented by the scholarship contained in the IASCP.

The second arena is that of facilitating innovation at local levels. In regard to natural resources the local has been, and can be, the site adaptive transformations in use and management. Thus the local is not only the level where, in Finger’s terms, “policies have to be implemented” but also the level where policies can be originated.

Unfortunately the innovative potential of local levels is too often inhibited by legal and bureaucratic structures which deny them the essential component for innovation – the authority to experiment. They are also inhibited by the hegemony of cognitive systems which prioritise the methodologies, idioms, and findings of professional science and technology. “There is no meeting of minds between the academic and the common man” said Professor J.F.A. Ajayi, Vice Chancellor of the University of Lagos, in 1973. “The University agriculturist is not a better farmer, whom the village farmer can emulate. The university historian tape-records the traditional historians, but they speak different languages and seem to talk about different cultures. The study of philosophy, political science or public administration

in the universities might leave some impression on government officials, but it seems to produce no wiser administrators than the traditional rulers, nor ideas and values that are of direct relevance to the work of government among the traditional sectors of our society. For all their effort to achieve relevance through curriculum adaptation, the universities remain part of an alien culture, of immense prestige and often of great economic advantage, but with no roots in the people’s culture.” Today, 30 years later, this situation is little changed.

To unleash the innovative potential of the local a new form of interaction between professional and local civil science is required in which the local through experience and experiment takes the lead in problem-solving and planning for local ecosystems, assisted where appropriate by the technologies and comparative insights of professional science to place this planning into larger contexts. The methodology of professional science should be adapted to a different kind of involvement with the local: invited rather than imposed, directed rather than directive, facilitative rather than manipulative.

No professional association is better placed to undertake this task than the IASCP. You have already been doing this. This task of changing the methodologies and ethos of main-stream development science runs counter however to the interests of the epistemic scientific and bureaucratic community which dominates global debate, and this facilitative role should remain high on your agenda.

The third arena is the enhancement of communication – the transmission of information, in both directions, along the chain of linkages which bind together the local and the global.

Technologically we have achieved vast leaps forward in communication since IASCP was founded. If you had visited Victoria Falls in 1990 you would not have seen a single cell phone. Today as you walk around town they seem to be in the hands of nearly everyone – not only suited businessmen but also vendors at fruit and vegetable stalls. Technology provides a valuable tool for planning and communication, as elaborated in some of the papers on the agenda of the Conference. The Commons has indeed been “pixelised”, to quote the September 2001 issue of the CPR Digest.

Most of this communication has however been “downwards”, in a global-to-local direction. And even in this mode it has tended to stop short of the local, at the barrier point where language and illiteracy intervene. To push through this barrier the verbal and vernacular is still required – time taking and unrewarding in terms of the criteria for professional advancement. Thus scholarship assigns the task to “extension agents,” and in so doing misses the more substantive rewards of dialogue, which shifts the direction of communication “upwards.”

Facilitating communication in this direction, from the local to the global, is the most difficult of our communicational tasks. Our analyses and publications may help, but these also act as filters, often masking the authentic voice of the local. For this voice to be heard a large investment is required in time, money and professional commitment. The investment is structural, in facilitating the creation of hierarchical communication flows which retain a genuine representational voice as they move upward. It is political in that the centre should provide genuine spaces for the periphery in policy and planning. It is academic, in that meetings like this one provide forums for local voices to speak directly. It is to the credit of IASCP that the Association has long recognized this obligation, and I note that at a previous Conference the theme has been “Voices from the Commons.” The field trips and subsequent interactive sessions scheduled for this conference continue to address this focal concern.

Scale, innovation and voice. In the globalization debate, they have one common objective. This is to “bring people in from the margins,” to reiterate a phrase from Kofi Annan quoted earlier. If we can help to achieve this, perhaps we will be able to turn the slogan for the globalization debate into “Think Locally, Act Globally.”

For Further Reading:

Finger, M. (1999) “Globalization and Governance.” *Policy Matters*, Issue No. 6, December, pp. 1-9.

## CPR FORUM RESPONSE

### **The Local and the Global in a Transboundary River Basin: Another View from the Mekong**

**Wolf D. Hartmann**

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Having just come back from an international conference “From Conflict to Cooperation in International Water Resources Management”, held in Delft, Holland, at the end of November 2002, it is difficult to find any argument against Professor Hill’s views in his emphasis of the importance of the “local” for the “global”, and in particular the three arenas of analysis and action proposed by him: scale, innovation and voice. As could be expected, the “local” and local actors featured only marginally in the said conference, while global or international concerns and international organizations predominated deliberations. However, it seemed to me that there was not so much a lack of will to recognize the importance of other, including local realities. The importance of ‘stakeholder’ or ‘community’ involvement, rightly or

wrongly interpreted by me as the ‘local’ level, was repeated as a constant litany. There seemed to be more a complete lack of imagination and experience on how exactly to go about achieving this. I was in Delft to represent, together with colleagues, the Mekong River Commission (MRC), an inter-governmental organization of the four countries of the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB), i.e. Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and Viet Nam. On the occasion we had an opportunity to present some aspects of MRC’s work to the conference, in particular with regarding basin-wide development planning and public involvement in it.

While not acting on a global level, the MRC may have a problem with scale. Being a regional organization, it is understood to become involved in ‘basin-wide issues’ only, while issues that can be dealt with locally and nationally are left to national institutions to tackle. Obviously this dichotomy does not exist; there is nothing just local or national on one side and regional (or global) on the other. As Professor Hill rightly observes, “the nature of the resource dictates spheres of common interest at various scales”. A case in point are the ‘deep pools’ of the Mekong, which are deep areas within the river channel acting as dry season refuges or spawning grounds for a number of important, often migratory, fish species. While ‘deep pools’ are localized habitats, they are of regional significance. Their local management, frequently through some form of habitat protection, is of regional importance.

The importance of the “local” as the level where technical, institutional and organizational innovations can be originated has been recognized by riparian governments, who have requested MRC’s Fisheries Programme to create local examples of resource management which could inform the formulation of national fisheries policies. While, originally, this was aimed mainly at the definition of a number of technical parameters, this has lately been expanded to the development of process guidelines for the implementation of participatory fisheries management, or co-management, in the LMB region. This includes mechanisms for resource user organization and representation on different levels, and in particular for interaction between co-managers active on local, national and regional scales. While a variety of local forms of resource user organization have sprung up, user representation at supra-local levels has been difficult to facilitate, due to the fact that in at least two Mekong countries no such organizations exist outside government, and it is unclear to what extent conditions are in place which would allow them being set up. As a matter of fact, who and where are the ‘stakeholders’ which were so often referred to in Delft? “The population in general’, ‘decision-makers’, ‘voters’, ‘civil society’, ‘the profession’, ‘experts’ and others were all synonyms used to describe the “elusive stakeholder”. It became quite clear that, whenever the word ‘stakeholder’ was mentioned, members of government

agencies were in fact meant. This is not so uncommon. MRC itself is bound by a definition made by its Council to define key (or internal) stakeholders as the different units of MRC itself, including its national branches, the National Mekong Committees, and national ministries it cooperates with. Only as a second step, the involvement of external stakeholders, or the public in the real sense of the word, is contemplated.

Naturally, Delft also saw suggestions with regard to improving communications. There was a lot of talk about the need to reach 'stakeholders'. What was proposed was very much what Prof. Hill would call "downwards" communication. That there may be a need to facilitate "upwards" communication, taking off the lid and letting local people raise their voices, didn't enter the discussions. Yet, as we all know, in many instances information obtained from local communities is the only information available. The MRC Fisheries Programme is investigating local knowledge regarding fish migrations in the LMB. Some of this knowledge will be the basis for management interventions.

It seems to me that the main question is not if we think or act locally or globally, but to create conditions for interaction and conduits for communication between these scales.

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## CPR FORUM RESPONSE

### **The Maize Maze: Sustainability Science for Thinking and Acting Globally and Locally**

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Refusing to accept US donations of genetically modified (GM) maize, President Mwanawasa of Zambia argued that, "Simply because my people are hungry, that is no justification to give them poison..." He made this statement at the U.N. World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg on an international stage, with 2.3 million people facing starvation at home on the local stage. Whether motivated by concern or cynicism (or both), the showdown between the US/World Food Programme and Zambia, and other African countries which joined the ban on GM crops, is emblematic of the global-local dynamic so clearly articulated by Professor Hill in his commentary. In a volatile mixture of varying interests, risk perception, power politics, and developing-developed country tensions, tens of thousands of tons of food were produced by international entities that poorly understood the targeted recipients of their new technology. Hill's general insight is apropos in this context, "Communication between the two is obscure or distorted,

inhibiting any effective dialogue or negotiation between the scales [international and local] involved."

If, indeed, there is nothing to fear from GM maize, then the scientific community, multinational corporations, USAID, and international organizations failed to make their advances in science and technology appropriate to the needs, interests, and concerns of local people. Correcting this failure to link science and technology (S&T) to decision making is not just a matter of better salesmanship of western innovations and new technologies to the developing world. The "marketing", uni-directional model, in fact, exacerbates existing tensions, is bound to produce information and technology that is not used, and begs for greater nuance and complexity. Hill's analytic appeals for exploring issues of scale, strengthening local innovation, and giving voice continues to move the community of researchers and practitioners toward a better model. This is also expressed in the evolving missions of organizations such as the World Bank, UNEP, funding agencies like the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and sub-national governments, NGOs, and scientific organizations.

In this effort, one heuristic is being developed as part of the international Initiative of Science and Technology for Sustainability, a collaborative network based at the Third World Academy of Sciences with nodes at the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Chile; Chiang Mai University, Thailand; the Development Policy Centre, Nigeria; and at Harvard and Stanford Universities, U.S. Researchers and practitioners at these and other institutions are beginning to articulate a vision of sustainability science: science that is driven by people on the ground, addressing the interconnected problems of human development and maintenance of the earth's life support systems; science and technology that consciously link local through global institutions to produce place-based research and locally appropriate technologies in the context of global systems; and science and technology that is co-produced by participants in research, assessment, observation and decision systems.

When such systems function effectively they seem to share several characteristics. First, they are highly attuned to assure that information and technology that is produced is salient (does the science answer a question that is of interest to a decision maker?), legitimate (is the process of producing information or technology perceived as fair?), and credible (is the information believable and plausible?) to multiple audiences at multiple levels. A surprisingly large number of efforts ignore one of these three attributes, risking failure (e.g., tons of maize ending up in storage and not on the plates of starving people.)

Second, successful institutions consciously manage the multiple boundaries that need to be crossed in order to coordinate between: science and decision making; across

multiple disciplines; between global through local levels; and between western science and tacit/indigenous/traditional knowledges. It is these boundaries that often block “effective dialogue or negotiation between” different actors. In the best cases, organizations such as extension systems, applied research institutes, NGOs, private firms and universities can act as intermediaries across boundaries, translating and brokering information in two directions, mediating between multiple interests, perspectives and knowledges, coordinating research and application activities, and linking global through local science and decision making.



*Participatory research in Zimbabwe: International research links with national agricultural research systems and farmers to provide breeding technologies. Photo courtesy L.W. Harrington, CIMMYT*

Thus, as Hill points out, the simplistic bumper sticker appeal to “Think Globally, Act Locally” is insufficient. But for similar reasons, his revision, “Think Locally, Act Globally”, is also inadequate. Emerging notions of sustainability science suggest that navigating the challenging maze of producing salient, credible and legitimate science and technology requires a more complex aphorism: “Think and Act Locally while Thinking and Acting Globally (and in between as well.)” This of course, would not fit on a bumper sticker...But then again, there are relatively few cars in Zambia.

For Further Reading:

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## CPR FORUM RESPONSE

### Some Points about Prof. Hill’s Commentary

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I have five points I would like to make in response to Prof. Hill’s commentary.

A. One of the reasons why local interests are not well-articulated at the national and global level is that rights to own, organise and determine how resources are to be used at the local level have not been fully decentralised to users. Where some efforts have been made in this direction through different initiatives such as ‘co-management’ and variants of Community-Based Natural Resources Management Initiatives there has been a tendency to merely devolve responsibilities and not rights. This inhibits local users from articulating their interests at a national and global level. One way in which CPR scholarship can help in bridging the communication gap is by trying to understand why national and global interests are reluctant to fully devolve rights to local users. Such scholarship should show why governments do not decentralize appropriate authority to local government and local group organizations through the establishment of recognised formal policy and legal provisions.

B. As pointed out in the commentary, legal and bureaucratic structures may deny local - level actors the authority to experiment. But local actors may rely on resources to such an extent that it inhibits them from experimenting as this may compromise their livelihood. While legal and bureaucratic structures are important there is also need for participation and interest representation of resource users in the identification of problems opportunities and constraints as well as in the formulation, design and implementation of development programs and projects to avoid experimentations that may compromise their way of life.

C. The people’s rights to organize and make arrangements which relate to their needs must be legally institutionalised. We need to create legal and administrative avenues that will give a platform to local users to articulate their views at a global level.. As such it is important to make sure that enabling legislation detailing the responsibilities and authority of the local communities and resource users is promulgated and enacted by central governments;

D. Global discourse on the environment has tended to ignore local knowledge, culture, politics, and power structures. This has contributed to a lack of detailed knowledge of the aspirations and interests of local resource users as articulated by national and global interests.

E. There is also need to acknowledge that local users of a resource have a valid view of the state of their environment. This view is not heard because those who dominate the conservation debate at the moment do so from a particular ideological view-point which may be at variance with local views and economic imperatives. We need to understand from the communities and other stakeholders what their priorities are and how they conceive program development because any strategies for sustainable development must take into consideration the needs of the target population.

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## CPR FORUM RESPONSE

### Global Visions and Local Imperatives: A Reflection about the Pantanal Wetland of Brazil

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As Professor Hill points out there are still legendary hindrances to less conflictual relationships in the implementation of the local and global agendas - hindrances presently aggravated by the ambivalent and differential impacts of the globalization on the transition to a sustainable society.

In Brazil, a continental country with significant regional differences in several aspects, the globalization process has deepened the historic social separation between those included and those excluded from the system. That fact takes us to a reflection, among others, about the management of the natural resources, which are abundant in the country. That leads us to the question of the level of action of local communities in the management of natural resources, particularly the action of those communities that have a vital relationship with resources of global importance.

I will use the Mato Grosso Pantanal, the Wetland of Brazil, as a reference in my discussion. The Wetland is a vast plain of international importance, situated along the Paraguay River, which is seasonally flooded. The seasonality of its hydraulic regimen, along with its non-flooded areas is what allows the human presence in the region. That presence comprises several ways of life, each with its different culture: the *ribeirinhos*, who live alongside the river, the *pantaneiros* and several Indian groups. Such communities live in relative geographic isolation, relying on the local and regional natural resources and knowing them well.

The ghost of a project for the revitalization of the Parana-Paraguay Waterway has reappeared and is hovering over these people. This waterway is to act as the gateway of the

globalization process, particularly as it is represented by MERCOSUL, the common market of the Southern Cone, for the region and, indeed, the whole Plate Basin. Benefiting only the national and international elite, the implementation of this waterway will bring a series of negative local and regional social and environmental impacts, many of them irreversible.

I am worried about such facts and conscious of the distance between the academy and the extension of its knowledge to the local communities. I am also aware of the absence of a wider appreciation of such knowledge, practices and the will of the communities to make public policies more equitable and efficient. I am also involved in an effort (Borges and



*A Pantaneiro in the Mato Grosso Pantanal Wetland*  
Photo Courtesy Author

Chaudhry 2000), aimed at giving a voice to the Wetland communities and using them as an instrument in the management of the hydraulic resources of the Wetland. These local communities are the guardians of that “Ecological Sanctuary” and of its natural resources. We hope to bring the voice of these communities from the outer edges to the centre of the debate, so that their more equitable and fair common-goods management concepts can be heard.

This situation illuminates several concerns and research themes that Professor Hill includes in his comment. The *pantaneiros* make clear that their problems, their culture and their way of life are not properly looked upon by the academy and by federal and regional governments. They do not believe in the impartiality of these governments when it comes to decisive processes regarding the Wetlands. As to the jurisdiction over the common welfare, they see the necessity of a legal and institutional frame that would guarantee the access and satisfaction of all interests and of all the interested ones, yet they think that rules and laws were made “to be obeyed by the poor”, thus the injustices they suffer become explicit.

They see themselves as social actors and believe in the participation of the people in the decisive process while they also recognize themselves as co-responsible for the management of the natural resources. Nevertheless, they show aversion to being included in any associative form,

because they believe neither in the honesty of such processes nor the governments, seeing themselves as a mass to be maneuvered for “higher interests”. However, they do believe in the people’s participation, leaving an open channel for future engagement.

Finally, I would like to point out the big challenge for formal and informal education to teach and inform the community members of the processes and actions that any member of society can wield to reduce the pressure on the place and its natural resources of global interest. It stands very clear that the “I think locally, I act globally” concept has never before meant so much and proved so necessary.

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## CPR FORUM RESPONSE

### Governance of the Local, the Global and Linkages in Between

Sylvia Karlsson

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The commentary of Professor Hill was written prior to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) but the analysis is even more interesting in retrospect. The Summit may not have fully met his and Kofi Annan’s challenge of focussing on the how, how to go from words to action. There was a lot on the what and when. There are many targets and timetables in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; reducing poverty, increasing access to water and sanitation, reducing the rate of biodiversity loss etc. For many, the goals were not ambitious enough but even these targets will face challenges in being implemented. Nevertheless, implementation was a key theme. For example, the hundreds of Partnerships launched as part of the official outcome were all about how. How can one find innovative ways of engaging multiple stakeholder groups to work in partnership not only on small scale locally but across regions and countries? Leaving the direct WSSD context and turning to Prof. Hill’s generic theme of the link between the local and the global, his analysis struck three major chords in my own thinking, chords on knowledge, institutions and values. Let me share some reflections on each of these.

### On knowledge

Decision-makers at all levels need knowledge. They need knowledge on the condition of their natural and human resources, about the driving forces which are affecting their fate and about options to manage them. Presently, the dominance of top-down flows of information and knowledge, from the global and national levels to the local is evident. The knowledge ‘received’ on lower levels may not be appropriate, whether it concerns climatic, biological, social, economic or ethical aspects. To address this situation it is not viable to rely on current patterns of knowledge generation where a it remains with an exclusive group of scientists and professionals. There has been numerous efforts to increase the number of people who are engaged in the scientific enterprise, whether it is school children surveying disease incidence in their Amazonian villages, farmers making field trials in their Indonesian farms or NGOs taking part in global scientific assessments. In many of these examples, people are trained in the methods of modern science. Thus, richness of traditional and localized knowledge is paired with the language and approaches of science.

### On institutions

Prof. Hill’s argument that the slogan ‘think globally, act locally’ must be complemented by the reverse, ‘think locally, act globally’ raises the question: Are there criteria for initiating action, for example, through establishing institutions at a particular level? My framework for discussing such criteria evolves around three approaches to the concept of ‘matching’: 1) How institutions match the level at which scale the suffering of the environment occurs; 2) How institutions match the governance level where the driving forces behind the problem originate; and 3) How institutions match the level where there is capacity to take action. These three alternative, or rather complementary, criteria could be described as matching the level of suffering, culpability and capacity, respectively. The advantages of establishing institutions for governance at levels that correspond to their effects, and thus the geographic scope of suffering, is the common motivation for talking about the ‘fit’ between environmental problems and governing institutions. Applying the culpability criteria would be better suited to target the causes rather than symptoms of the problems. Moreover, from an ethical perspective it would be preferable if those who are explicitly responsible for the problems would be more targeted in governance. If there is no capacity to act at the level where effects or driving forces occur, then there is not much that can be done in governance.

### On values

Finally, coming to the issue of values. Cognitive understanding of the local at the global level, or the global at the local level is important. Yet, there are significant constraints in incorporating these diametrically different perspectives and it requires will-

power, value driven motivation, of decision-makers to search for appropriate knowledge, and then facing the choice of how to act on it. In a globalized world decision-makers, individual or collective, need either to realize that actions for the global and local common good will be beneficial for themselves in the long-run, acting on enlightened self-interest, or consider the common good the end in itself, acting for others. Both of these value foundations require stakeholders to add a wider context to their decision-making.

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## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

**Charlotte Hess**

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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## Upcoming IASCP Meetings

Meeting: IASCP2004, The 10th Biennial Conference of the IASCP

Dates: June, 2004

Location: Oaxaca, Mexico

Coordinator: Leticia Merino, lmerino@servidor.unam.mx

Meeting: The Northern Commons

Location: Anchorage, Alaska USA

Dates: August, 2003

Coordinator: Mead Treadwell, mal@gci.net

Meeting: Politics of the Commons

Location: Chiang Mai, Thailand

Dates: July 25- July 28, 2003

Coordinator: Chusak Wittayapak, chusak@soc.cmu.ac.th

Meeting: Pacific Regional Meeting

Location: Brisbane, Australia

Dates: September, 2003

Coordinator: John Sheehan, qld@propertyinstitute.com.au

Meeting: Latin America Biennial Conference Preparation and Workshop

Location: Oaxaca, Mexico

Date: May 16, 2003

Coordinator: Leticia Merino, lmerino@servidor.unam.mx

Meeting: The Commons in Transition

Location: Prague, Czech Republic

Date: 11-13 April, 2003

Coordinator: Tomas Ratomger, commons@vuze.cz

## *Latin America Biennial Conference Preparation and Workshop*

A workshop will be held in Oaxaca Mexico on May 16, 2003. The goal is to bring in individuals from the surrounding Latin American countries who would be actively involved in mobilizing participants for IASCP2004. The purpose of the workshop would be for individuals to share the work they are doing related to the conference themes.

## *THE COMMONS IN TRANSITION: property on natural resources in Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*

A workshop co-organized by: the Institute for Agricultural Economics (VUZE), Prague; the Czech Agricultural University, Faculty of Economics and Management, Prague; the International Association for the Study of Common Property (IASCP); and Humboldt University Berlin

### Background

Research on property reforms in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Former Soviet Union (FSU) has largely concentrated on the establishment of effective private property rights (cf. Swinnen 1997). The research has been informed by rather simplistic notions of property. Much research has equated property rights with ownership, ignoring the multiplicity of property rights and duties. Similarly, the research has been characterized by a stark dichotomy between state and private property, neglecting the role of intermediate property forms. These simplistic notions continue to dominate discussions on property issues in CEE and FSU until today.

Exploratory research conducted under the framework of the project Sustainable Agriculture in Central and Eastern Europe (CEESA) demonstrates the benefits of applying a more differentiated concept of property to research on natural resources. Its findings demonstrate a drastic difference in the effectiveness of private rights, on the one hand, and collective and public rights in common-pool resources. This difference is connected with two broad changes in resource governance in CEE and FSU. First, resource governance has shifted from previously dominant legal and administrative hierarchies towards markets. Second, states have tended to reduce administrative units at the central level and partly delegated power to local authorities. In addition, local actors have often negotiated authority over resources that goes much beyond the degree envisioned by decentralization programs. The waning and decentralization of state power have caused the emergence of significant gaps between property legislation and rights in practice. Mostly due to a lack enforcement of existing legislation, but partly due to the absence of legislation as well, public and collective interests in resource management have been marginalized in favor of private ones.

### Objectives of the workshop

The workshop has two primary objectives. The first is to explore state of research about property on natural resources in CEE and FSU. The second is to stimulate research about property on natural resources in the region through exchange of experience with other regions, the discussion of an agenda for research and exchange and, (possibly) the development of a concrete proposal for research and exchange.

### Themes

The workshop organizers would like to suggest four themes to guide the discussions at the workshop.

A. Local self-governance: Local self-governance has been a prominent theme in research on resource management across the world. It is therefore interesting to examine contemporary and historical forms of self-governance and explore its potential for resource management in CEE and FSU.

B. Multifunctionality of rural production: Rural resources provide multiple good and services to people in CEE and FSU. This theme therefore wants to explore the utility of property and common-pool resource theory to diversified rural resource systems providing private, common-pool, and public goods.

C. Changing role of the state in rural resource governance: Direct state management has been the primary mode of resource governance during

socialism. Postsocialist resource governance radically departs from this model, in theory and practice. This theme therefore explores the changing role of the state in postsocialist resource governance.

D. The (re-)definition of collective and public interests in natural resources: Postsocialist transformations do not only affect the distribution of property rights and forms of resource governance, but they also affect the definition of collective and public interests in natural resources. Influence by the European Union and international environmental organizations motivates attention to new resource problems and often quite radical re-thinking of old resource problems. This theme therefore focuses on the processes by which collective and public interests in natural resources are formed and resource use problems are defined.

### Workshop Venue

The workshop will take place on 11-13 April 2003 at Czech Agricultural University in Prague. Kamycka 129, 165 21 Praha -6, Czech Republic)

### Participants

The participants will include researchers from within and outside CEE and FSU who have conducted research on property issues in CEE or FSU. As a rule, each participant will be expected to contribute to the workshop actively, by submitting a paper, serving as a discussant, or providing a thematic overview. The number of participants will be kept at 20 persons to facilitate the exchange of experience and group discussion.

Interested persons are requested to submit an expression of interest and a short abstract of the proposed contribution (up to 150 words) to Dr. Tomas Ratering ([commons@vuze.cz](mailto:commons@vuze.cz)) by January 20, 2003. They will be informed about the acceptance of their proposal by January 31, 2003. Complete papers will be due by April 1, 2003, to be distributed to the discussants and all participants before the workshop.

Participants will be expected to cover their own travel costs. The costs of accommodation and food in Prague will be kept to a minimum to facilitate broad participation. Participants will be offered accommodation in the guest house of Czech Agricultural University at a rate of 10 - 20 EUR per night. Also meal will be available in the university dining room or canteens.

### Preliminary program

The program will consist of two main parts. The participants will discuss the contributed papers in three panels in the first part. Each panel will begin with comments by a discussant from IASCP on the papers, followed by an open group discussion. *Participants will be required to read the papers beforehand, as those will not be presented at the workshop.* The second part consists of facilitated group discussions and work in small group. It aims at the exchange of ideas for research and exchange, plans for the coordination of activities, and the development of an agenda for research and exchange.

#### Friday PM:

Welcome and introduction

Thematic overviews

Common-pool resources in CEE and FSU: what are we talking about?

Privatization and understandings of property in CEE and FSU

Property relations in CEE and FSU. :

Panels A - C (group discussions of papers through Sat. AM)

#### Saturday PM:

Facilitated discussion of research and dissemination issues and plans

#### Sunday AM

Work in small groups on agendas for research and dissemination

Group discussion of research agendas prepared in small groups

Group discussion on next steps

## *Politics of the Commons: Articulating Development and Strengthening Local Practices*

July 11-14, 2003

Chiang Mai, Thailand

**Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development (RCSD) Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University**

Political change, whether upheavals or planned reforms, affect the commons. In some cases, changes take areas out of common management and privatising them, in others commons are put in control of the state, and in still others significant control is returned back to local communities. Interventions in the name of development or modernization, by the state, a wide variety of non-government organizations, international banks, and business continue to drive change to the economic and politic context in which local practices operate.

Institutional reforms towards good governance have been recently promoted as the solution to sustainable development and natural resource management challenges. In practice, however, the way political changes unfold, can both open and close the public policy process. The outcome can be new opportunities as well new barriers to effective local participation in management and decision making.

Some elements of this institutional reform package seems to be obvious goods in their own right, i.e. improved downward accountability, enhanced participation, tenure reform, and decentralization of power.

It certainly seems to tackle head-on the power of the old resource management regimes, which many see as a key obstacle to more participatory and people-centered sustainable development.

Despite its seemingly incontestable good, the institutional reform package has attracted considerable criticism among academics and critics of the major development agencies. The RCSD Conference in 2003 to be held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, will focus on the intersection between natural resource management of commons and political changes with a special emphasis on how development is articulated and the consequences of these interactions for local practices.

The conference will be organized around five key themes as follows:

### **1. Situating the commons in post-colonial and (post)-socialist thinking/articulation**

Coordinators : Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, Pinkaew Laungaramsri and Janet Sturgeon

How have common property regime and development trends changed in the era of post-colonialism and (post)-socialism in Asia? How have the history and political economy of resource and livelihood in this region been deployed within the influx liberal and neo-liberal economy? How are the commons situated in political, economic, and cultural transformations of the post-colonial and (post)-socialist thinking. What are the dynamic interactions between the colonial legacy, socialist practice, and the developments of the modern era.

### **2. Transnationalizing the commons and the politics of civil society**

Coordinators : Santita Ganjanapan and Philip Hirsch

Globalization and regionalization have helped to bring into focus, and in some cases to create, transnational commons. There are three main aspects to transnationalization of the commons. First, there are the transnational common properties such as shared river basins, or globalised industries such as shrimp farming that depend on appropriation of local commons, or intellectual property rights in bio-materials, whose management regimes and implications transcend national boundaries. What are the issues of grassroots participation in response to transnational impacts? Second, there are transnational discourses of the local as well as global commons, such as those coming under the

increasingly mainstreamed rubric of community-based natural resource management for example IASCP agendas. What are these transnational discourses and associated practices, and what quandaries do they present in relation to tensions between local context or specificity, on the one hand, and general principles or universality, on the other. Third, transnationalization of civil society, in part in response to transnationalized resource development, competition and conflict, and in part in response to wider globalization agendas and opportunities, presents new challenges. What scale issues are associated with the politics of civil society's engagement with the material and discursive dimensions of the transnationalized commons?

### **3. Local voices in the globalising market: cultural diversity and pluralism** Coordinators : Anan Ganajanapan, Yos Santasombat, Somchai Preechasilapakul

In the globalising market, state policies increasingly manage natural resources, particularly the common as commodities while ignoring local rights and the negative consequences in the lives of local people. On the other hand, the global market also encourages more population movement which reinforces the trans-border problems of people's health as well as local rights. A big part of local rights is tied up with local identity, ethnicity, gender and social movements. Will this be lost in the global market/ is there such thing as the global market and how do local voices react to such encroachment on their lives? What complexities are found in relation to such interactions? In what ways do cultural diversity and legal pluralism play a role in these problem areas in various parts of Southeast, South and East Asia?

### **4. Politics of Tenure Reform** Coordinators : Jamaree Chienthong and Peter Vandergeest

Over the last decade international development agencies have supported or pushed institutional reforms in many developing countries, such as decentralization and accountability of governing institutions, participation of civil society, and the clarification of property rights, under an umbrella of 'good governance'. Many NGOs have also been convinced that these reforms are fundamental to sustainable and democratic development. Many questions have been raised about these reforms, for example, the way that they are often linked to loan conditions, the top-down ways they are implemented, and their appropriateness in Asian political contexts. Questions that papers in this theme might address include (1) What are some examples of institutional reforms based on good governance package, how are they working, and what effects do they have? (2) Do these reforms address the more important causes of unsustainable development, resource degradation, and conflicts over resource rights? (3) What are the impacts of tenure reforms? Under what conditions might they have a positive impact and under what conditions might they produce impoverishment or displacement ?

### **5. Crisis and access: critical times for the commons**

Coordinators : Chusak Wittayapak and Louise Lebel

The importance of access to commons (upland and coastal forests, waterways, coastal fisheries) for the wellbeing of poor and marginalized people is often greatest at times of ecological, social or economic crisis. Opportunities to re-design or introduce novel institutional arrangements affecting access, rule-making and decisions about the commons are infrequent, and often coincide with political crisis. Our understanding of social and ecological processes during periods of crises and re-organization is not well integrated, and the consequences for commons is not well understood. How do different kinds of crises, and the way they are constructed, affect dependencies on commons? What are the political determinants of access? How have citizenship, land tenure, and stewardship rights and responsibilities been bundled and unbundled over-time? How have power relation been played out in the axes of gender, ethnicity, caste, and class?

### **Format of the Symposium**

The Conference will be held for the first three days and the fourth day there will be a field trip. The venue will be Lotus Pang Suan Kaew Hotel, Chiang Mai, Thailand

The conference structure will facilitate interaction, often in small groups. Participants should come away with an improved appreciation of the diversity of perspectives on theories, actions, and policies about development, political processes and institutional changes in Asia

Proposal for panel sessions within the above theme areas as well as individual submissions are encouraged.

### **Synthesis Papers**

One of the specific products of the workshop will be as set of synthesis papers on each of the main conference themes. A first draft of the main ideas of these papers will be presented during the final session of the workshop. The preparation of these papers will be coordinated by the theme leaders, but other participants will be invited to join as co-authors. A small budget will be reserved to allow one small follow-up working group meeting for authors of each of the themes. This meeting will be held within three months of the conference, and the paper submitted soon after that.

### **Funding**

Full funding is available for only a limited number of participants from countries in Asia.

### **Important Dates**

- 1 December 2002: Deadline for submission of panel proposals
- 15 January 2003: Deadline for pre-registration and abstract submission.
- 1 February, 2003 Announcement of abstracted accepted for the conference and travel grant recipients
- 15 April, 2003 : Deadline for paper submission.
- 11-14 July, 2003 : Conference

### **Registration**

There is no registration fee. All participants are expected to present papers.

### **Correspondence**

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## **August 2003 Sustainable Development Workshop**

**Anchorage, Alaska**

***The Northern Commons:***

***Lessons for the world,***

***Lessons from the world***

Hosted by The Institute of the North, a division of  
Alaska Pacific University and The Northern Forum in  
conjunction with IASCP

To follow upon the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa, the Institute of the North and the Northern Forum will host a 2003 academic and governmental workshop on methods for managing the vast, commonly-or publicly - owned lands, waters, wildlife, mineral and other natural resources of Northern reaches of North America, Europe and Asia. The workshop will be held in conjunction with the Regional Meeting of the **International Association for the Study of Common Property (IASCP)** an academic association that studies common property issues worldwide. The workshop is scheduled May 19-26, 2003, and will offer field trips

to Alaska parks, wildlife refuges, forests, mines, oil and gas facilities, Native communities, and fisheries.

**The Northern Forum**, founded in 1992, is a UN-recognized NGO made up of 25 regional governments that face similar opportunities and challenges throughout the North. It is a permanent observer to the **Arctic Council**. The Institute of the North, founded by Northern Forum Secretary General, former Alaska Governor and U.S. Interior Secretary Walter J. Hickel, conducts research and teaching in Northern regional, national and international strategy, focusing on the obligations of common ownership of resources, lands and seas. It works with the Northern Forum to counter the historic pattern of exploitation in the North so that the natural wealth at the top of the globe can sustain and benefit local regions and peoples. The 2003 workshop will gather academics and practitioners to compare successes and best practices in achieving **three of the goals of the WSSD – economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, and social equity**. Academic goals of this conference will be to identify and map common areas in Northern Forum regions, to understand legal regimes in place for management of resources on common lands, and to identify measures to track the economic, environmental and social impacts of current management regimes.

The Northern Forum and the Institute of the North invite applications for the presentation of papers, and further co-sponsorship of the conference. For more information contact: Cindy Roberts, [mbroberts@gci.net](mailto:mbroberts@gci.net), (907) 343-2457 or see [www.institutenorth.org](http://www.institutenorth.org).

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26-30 May 2003, Bonn, Germany

An international conference on the role of forests in supporting rural livelihoods in developing countries and on the maintenance of biodiversity. Key objectives are to survey current knowledge and identify policy lessons and a future research strategy.

Organised by Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), in collaboration with Germany's Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the German Foundation for International Development (DSE) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).

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