

The Commons Digest

formerly known as The Common Property Resource Digest

NO. 7 QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF THE COMMONS Autumn 2008

Welcome to the Autumn 2008 edition of the *Commons Digest*. This issue reports on our 12th Biennial meeting held in Cheltenham, England in July 2008. The Cheltenham meeting was attended by more than 500 participants. In addition to some fantastic presentations and great keynote speeches, the fieldtrips were well attended and a number of awards were presented to outstanding papers and presentations.

We must also report, with great sorrow, the passing of two long-term IASC supporters: Professor John Thornes of England and Isaac Malasha of the WorldFish Centre in Zambia. Professor Thornes attended numerous biennial meetings over the years and was always recognizable for his enthusiasm and his friendliness. Isaac was very active in the IASC and at the time of his death, had been serving as chair of the 2009 IASC African Regional meeting. The loss of both men is a loss for the entire IASC community.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Jim Robson to the editing staff of the *Digest* as well as Emily Castle as a new Information Officer. Emily joins Charlotte Hess in working on the Recent Publications list and the Digital Library of the Commons. We would also like to give a heartfelt thanks and farewell to Michelle Curtain. Michelle served as Executive Director of the IASC for many years; she now works as a professor in the United States. **Enjoy!**

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Presidential Address

A Strategy for the Commons

Ruth Meinzen-Dick

**President of the International Association of the Study of the
Commons**

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the publication of Garrett Hardin's (1968) article "The Tragedy of the Commons." In some ways the real "tragedy of the commons" was the damage that has been done due to simplistic belief in the Tragedy of the Commons and its inevitability, particularly ill-informed policies of privatization or state take-over of resources. We now know that the "tragedy" is not inevitable. But one of the positive outcomes of that article has been that it has prompted a number of serious studies of the commons.

IASC has a lot to be proud of, in terms of both practical scholarship and scholarly practice that cuts across disciplines, countries, and resources.

There is a lot we have learned, and our members have been able to put that knowledge to use in protecting and improving the condition of the commons and those who depend on the commons for their livelihoods.

But this is not the time to rest on our laurels. There are too many remaining challenges to the commons, and new challenges emerging, as we have heard about these past few days. With these challenges come new opportunities, as well. What we need is a "Strategy for the Commons".

Let me first review some of these challenges and opportunities, and then turn to what I think are important elements of a strategic response.

The Commons Digest

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Challenges: Threats and Opportunities

We have abundant reminders, both during the 2008 biennial conference and in the news that many local commons are under threat. I realize that this is nothing new—we've had examples of almost 500 years of enclosures of one type or another, in this country alone. But the processes are accelerating as dramatically higher food and fuel prices create increased demand for land to produce both food and agrofuels. The price of rice, for example, has doubled in the last five months, and many other key food prices have been increasing rapidly. While enclosures of the commons may lead to intensification of production of these commodities, we also need to ask at what cost, and to whom? In many cases it is the very poorest people who lose out, and many subsistence, environmental, and even spiritual values that are hard to quantify and price are lost.

It isn't just at the local level: we also have growing evidence of global commons under threat. The IASC has been addressing global commons issues since at least 1996, but it is good that it is a focal point of this conference. The atmospheric commons is one of the most critical examples, going beyond loss of air quality to wholesale climate change. The collapse of ocean fisheries also calls for urgent attention, as does the loss of genetic resources. The loss of biodiversity in terms of wild species of flora and fauna does receive some attention, but loss of agrobiodiversity is also a matter for serious concern, as the local landraces and "orphan crops" like leafy vegetables, roots, tubers, or medicinal plants are lost. This is part of our common human heritage, and can have serious repercussions for the resilience of world food systems.

Let's look for a minute at some of the challenges posed by the "new commons". Our name change and the expansion of our mission to include these other types of commons has increased concern with these issues, but also to furthered opportunities to learn across resources. Again, in both the news and the papers of this conference we have examples of: enclosure (and expansion) of urban parks, gardens, and neighborhood improvements; ICT (information communications technology)-related commons such as bandwidth for internet and cell phones, or the internet itself; debates over intellectual property rights over music, crafts, books or text on the internet, and even genetic resources.

Information and knowledge open up whole new realms for exploration of the commons. In April this year I

attended an international conference on agricultural innovation systems. People at this meeting are dealing with issues like how to foster and spread innovation—whether by farmers, scientists, businesses, or partnerships of these. Increasingly, there are group-based approaches to not only extension information systems, but also participatory plant breeding or other types of knowledge generation and application. I was struck by how relevant the analyses of the commons are for addressing the problems with which they are grappling, and when I mentioned some of what we have found about managing commons, I got a lot of requests to point them to this literature, and grateful responses saying how useful this is.

The list goes on, but let me now turn to what I mean by a Strategy for the Commons.

A Strategy for the Commons

Confronted with these challenges, we can either sit back and bemoan the “tragedy of the commons,” or we can bemoan the loss of the commons, whether local or global, “old”, or “new”, or we can try to do something about it. But what?

Now I am not going to suggest any kinds of panaceas, simple solutions, and I don’t mean to imply that any of these apply everywhere. But I do suggest that elements of this Strategy for the Commons include:

- Continue the learning
- Share our knowledge
- Put it to use

As IASC and as individual members we will each play different roles in this, but let us look at the components of each of these elements, and how they interconnect.

Continue the learning: across disciplines, resources and countries. It is quite appropriate that our new acronym spells out “IASK.” Study both successes and failures. Look for underlying principles as well as local specificities. Think about what lessons will apply to the next situation, especially to the “new commons.”

I don’t see this learning as being in conflict with action. As an applied researcher myself, I firmly believe that sound theory and research methods are critical for getting a better understanding of what is going on as a basis for policies and practice. But I’ve also found that many of the best theoretical insights (and many methodological innovations) come from engaging with people in the field, which forces us to confront the limitations of our pared down conceptual models.

That’s also often the most fun part. Last year, right at this time, I was back in Sananeri, the irrigation tank in India where I began my study of the commons, 25 years before (which, in turn, was right near my home town where I grew up). It reminded me of how exciting that feeling of discovery was. I had been hearing about the famous farmer managed irrigation systems in Bali and Nepal, but was told they didn’t exist in India, and this tank was government managed, but I was curious about how the tanks operated, so I did some interviews before starting on what was to be the “real” topic of my masters’ thesis. Imagine that feeling of discovering a very active local association managing the tank, and then, as I dug deeper, to find out that what I had been taught about the core of irrigation association activities was incomplete, because it had focused only on the internal activities, and not the efforts the group made to acquire water or liase with (lobby) the state.

But as exciting as that learning can be, it can’t end there. We need to: Share our knowledge, among our membership, but also more broadly. The Commons Digest and the International Journal of the Commons are good tools for this. I realize that it’s ironic that the IASC, with so many scholars of the commons who know all about free rider problems, make our materials available as open access, but the reason is that we believe it is essential to share our knowledge on these issues so that we can build on each other’s work and put it to use for addressing the problems and seizing the opportunities that the commons present. This knowledge is too precious to hoard.

We also need other ways to share this knowledge outside our Association. I ask each of you to look for opportunities to disseminate an understanding of the commons. Each of you is a member of other communities of practice, and can serve as a bridge, a transmission point, a boundary spanner.

Put our knowledge to use. I know many of us are engaged in direct work with local communities to enhance management of the commons, or providing information, such as about the extent or “value” of the commons (whether in economic, environmental, or other terms), and in many cases also working with communities to advocate for their rights,

We also have a lot to offer to help those working on global commons challenges. And if they don’t seek us out, we shouldn’t be shy about putting forward what

we have learned and how it can be used. That requires going out to where they are: beyond our own publications to the things they read or pay attention to, such as: briefs that trade in some of the scholarly language for understandability by a wider audience, and which relate to the global issues they are grappling with; and contact with the media (which may also involve some of those trade-offs). But we also need to address policy at various levels. Let me give some examples.

We have heard this week about efforts in England to advocate for stronger legal rights for the commons, both on behalf of individual local commoners and for the broader public interest. The 2006 Commons Act is a very important accomplishment in this regard. But as we have also heard, the law is (almost) nothing without implementation, and that requires a lot of work on the part of national government departments, local government bodies, commons councils, and members of the communities, who will exercise their duties as well as their rights.

For those who wonder whether our association's name change—dropping the “property” from our name—implies any less commitment to work on property rights, let me assure you that it doesn't. Owen Lynch's work in a number of countries provides an approach in working for legal reforms to strengthen community-based property rights. He notes that: “As an initial step, this can be accomplished by creating a legal presumption of local community ownership wherever such evidence exists” (CIEL 2002: 7). But he also notes that private rights are often stronger than public or “commons” rights, which are easier to expropriate or reallocate without due process and compensation. Rather than having individual privatization, collective and community-based rights can be legally recognized as private property rights, which would give the right-holders more leverage with outside interests, including government or rival claimants. Such legal recognition can also strengthen community bargaining power with businesses that might provide capital, knowledge, or market access so that the community gets a higher share of the value of the product, enhancing both their livelihoods and their prestige.

I won't say it is easy to engage with policy, or that we'll always get it right. It's usually easier to criticize than to

create, and for many of us, our training stresses critical thinking. It can be scary. But if we don't help shape policy, others will, and they are likely to have less understanding of the commons.

After doing the study of Sananeri tank, I was involved in some of the work that tried to synthesize across cases of farmer managed irrigation, and began to challenge the World Bank and other development agencies for irrigation projects that vested all author-

ity in the state, rather than building in farmer participation and even management of the systems. So it was with a lot of trepidation that I found out that “my tank,” Sananeri, had been included in a European Union project for tank rehabilitation, that had required the registration of a tank association in each site, and gave a matching grant to support the association's activities. My visit last year was over a decade after that project, and I was nervous about what that had done to the tank. Having become a bit jaded about the outcome



President Meinzen-Dick at the Podium

of development projects over the intervening years, imagine my pleasant surprise to find that this (and cell phones) had actually made it much easier for the association to operate. The involvement of a local university and NGO in “organizing farmers” under the project had certainly contributed to the good outcomes. There were, however, some indications that there might be some equity problems resulting, either from this policy or from other changes going on in the area. Some of my Indian collaborators have been investigating, and just this week I got the preliminary results. So the cycle continues... from research, to policy, to research on the outcomes of policy... to better policy?

Being strategic about having a policy impact also means forging appropriate partnerships, which may be with civil society organizations, governments, aid agencies, or even the private sector. For example, shall we accept Bakary Kante's offer to forge a partnership between UNEP and IASC to address some of the combined challenges of sustainability, linking environment to poverty reduction?

Conclusion

These are some of the elements of being strategic to defend and enhance the commons.

The IASC is itself a commons. Whether we achieve anything depends on what we all contribute, but I also think that there is a kind of multiplier effect when we pool our efforts. So let me end with an invitation, a call to all of you to contact members of the council or secretariat if you have ideas that you would like IASC to take forward.

I may be dreaming, but I would like to see that when we meet again in two years, the widespread connotation of the “commons” is not a tragic relic of the past, but a vibrant hope for our shared future. And furthermore, that as an Association and as individuals, we will have contributed to making this happen.

For Further Reading:

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Keynote Address

Governing Shared Resources: Key Challenges

Bakary Kante

Director, Division of Environmental Law & Conventions, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi, Kenya

I experienced great pleasure speaking with you and participating in the IASC’s global conference to discuss our common resources and the challenges we face to govern them. Devising better ways of governing resource systems is one of the major challenges of this century. Climate change, loss of biodiversity, ozone depletion, and most other environmental problems involve the commons.

In July, a few days before I gave this keynote address, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) published its World Economic and Social Survey 2008 focusing on economic insecurity. One of the key findings of this report is that the world is no longer the same as it was few decades ago and we are facing enormous challenges due to increasing inequity and associated social tensions.

I am not an academic like many of you. People like me survey evidence but have little time for in-depth analysis. This is why we need people like you to help us in focusing on the issues.

Let me challenge you with a few of my assumptions on global commons based on the evidence before me.

Is there something called global commons/ common goods today?

If we view the value of common resources as that which is due to nature and to the activities and demands of society as a whole, and not to the efforts or skill of individual people or organizations, I am not sure! We have moved away many miles from this assumption. Let me draw your attention to the issue of food and genetic resources. For millennia people around the world were exchanging natural resources that formed the basis for food security and livelihood security. The inter-dependence of countries for food security has been amply demonstrated. There is no one country in the world –

big or small – that is independent with regard to their sufficiency in natural resources or food crops. However, that seems not to be the basis for much of current global governance debates in biodiversity or natural resources management.

Take one example – African farmers in late 1980s faced a severe food crisis due to the attack of a bug on their staple food crop – the cassava. This bug was fortunately controlled by the introduction of another bug from Paraguay that can feed on the parasitic bug. The result was not just millions of dollars worth of food crop saved, but the local food crisis in many parts of Africa was contained. In 2006, this situation reversed. Africa now faces the attack of a fly that damages soft fruits, like mangos, which are a source of micronutrients for local people, in addition to being important economic crops. This fly is now devastating mango crops across Africa. A natural enemy for this fly is found in Sri Lanka but taking this insect out of Sri Lanka seems almost impossible due to strict regulations on sovereign rights over genetic resources, as per the Convention on Biological Diversity. In situations like this, what types of rights are important? How is ‘ownership’ established?

A new approach is clearly needed, one that is based on assessing the value of common resources for the benefit of all citizens. If genetic resources are for the good of humankind, then why are we grappling with the problem of countries not wanting to share whatever resources they have where livelihoods are threatened? A question for your consideration!

If natural resources and biodiversity are for public good, then why are we dealing with many of these issues under difficult and often one-sided trade regimes?

I do not have to elucidate of the problems faced by several developing countries around the world with regard to world trade rules. If we all recognize natural resources and biodiversity as global public goods, don’t we all have a responsibility to educate our trade negotiators on the importance of incorporating appropriate trade norms that do not impact this global commons?

We are nearing a decade in our collective failure to negotiate and come to an agreement on the Doha Development Agenda under the WTO. Why? Uncommon arguments that are many times not based on principles of equity are creating havoc with regard to dealing

with issues of food security. Needless to say, we are going through the spasm of food crisis today– linked to the issue of markets and trade dynamics in addition to other factors.

Does the world need a second or third generation of environmental law now?

We have completed a full cycle of making and implementing – however effectively – the first generation of environmental law. Most of the focus in this phase has been tactical - based on the assumption that a ‘carrot and stick’ approach is a good way of ensuring that States and citizens follow the provisions of such laws. We now have reached a stage in international legal negotiations where people are uncomfortable hearing the words “compliance and enforcement” preferring “implementation” instead.

Many of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) today require national implementation based on global rule making. Signals of such ‘implementation’ are often very weak. Environmental law in general has been poorly understood and practiced in many parts of the world. Environmental law is not treated with same seriousness as criminal or civil law.

We now therefore have reached a stage where we are not just looking at environmental law or rule making that is ‘softer’ but ‘effective’; but that is also ‘inclusive’ while serving ‘exclusive’ purposes. Environmental law is therefore changing— and rightly so. Law has more a social link than previously thought. Many existing commons management regimes have had to adapt in order to survive. This applies to the developing world where traditional rights are under threat from global and national economic changes.

If we are to move in the direction of common but differentiated responsibilities for shared resources, where do we draw the line between the common and differentiated issues? Do we need environmental law and lawyers to be more entrepreneurial and multi-faceted? If so, what kind of environmental legal system will ensure better focus on common goods and services? You may wish to discuss this.

Do we have to move from ‘think global, act local’ to a scenario of ‘think local and act global’?

We are all familiar with the issue of ‘think global, act local.’ Maybe we embraced this thinking a bit more than we should have. Global environmental governance systems are based on this. But time has come for us to revisit the relevance of this in today’s world. Should we be thinking of ‘think local and act global’? I would argue a big ‘Yes’”. The local level is where it is most important to tackle environmental challenges. It is at this level that people suffer most from environmental problems. Sustainable resource management can never be independent of sustainability of collective human institutions that frame resource governance, and that local users are often the ones with the greatest stakes in sustainability of resources and institutions. But the challenge is how to

bring about the right kinds of changes to the environmental governance agenda at all levels?

Governance is concerned with making informed decisions. We have terabytes of information but what we lack is knowledge! We need to focus on knowledge generation and its management. For example, until the 1970s, portrayals of the English Commons and their enclosures suggested that common property was a curious holdover from the past that was destined to disappear in the face of trends toward modernization. We now know that this is not the case, but more importantly, what lessons can we draw from ‘old’ commons for application to ‘new’ common pool resources, and is there scope to transfer knowledge about institutional change between commons? Environmental governance is also about sustainability. In regard to an institution, sustainability refers to the continued use of the institution over time with adaptation occurring in the day-to-day rules within the context of a stable constitution. If this is so, where are we going wrong? We need answers. The World Bank’s World Development Report in 1982 argued that global and national food crisis can be avoided by having good governance structures and mechanisms. In 2008 the same report lamented little progress in this direction – at least with regard to current food crisis and the way it is being handled. But how much of focus is on governance



Morris dancers in Cheltenham. Credit: J. Robson

structures and mechanisms? Almost little to none! How do we change this? We need answers from you.

I have placed before you the above four challenges or issues that, to me, are key to further discussing the future of global commons and conservation of our natural resources. I am sure you are all well placed to counter-challenge my observations and perhaps find some answers to the issues and problems I have mentioned.

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Keynote Address

From Global Commons to Global Community

Lord Carey of Clifton
Former Archbishop of Canterbury

I am delighted to be with you at this International gathering as you explore in many different ways the theme of global commons. It is a fascinating topic and one most relevant to the critical times in which we live.

As it happens, my wife and I have a small property in a tiny hamlet called Oldwalls, near Llanrhidian on Gower. Our cottage adjoins the common land that is one of the most beautiful features of the peninsula. The landscape of lowland commons on Gower has been formed through

the complex interaction of geology, climate and stewardship of the commons by successive generation of ‘commoners’. The Gower commons are locally, nationally and internationally important for nature conservation and, collectively, are one of the most significant areas of lowland heathland in Wales and the world. As with other common land in the UK, the Gower commons continue to be grazed by local commoner’s animals and this grazing is still an essential part of the farm economy. I am given to understand that there are over a million acres of common land in England and Wales alone (over 9000 separate units) and of course, originally most land was held in common. Sadly, the Commons, are in effect, what is left after seven centuries of steady depredation by landowners, and we have to acknowledge frankly that the Church, as one of the major landowners, was not without guilt in the major periods of enclosure. Thomas More (Utopia 1516) suggested that the practice of enclosure was responsible for some of the social problems affecting England at the time, specifically theft. He accused the rich and powerful of ‘stopping the course of agriculture, destroying houses and towns, reserving only the churches, and enclosing grounds that they may lodge their sheep in them’. An anonymous 17th Century protest poem summing up anti-enclosure feeling at the time says:

“They hang the man, and flog the woman,
That steals the goose from off the common;
But let the greater villain loose,
That steals the common from the goose.”

But, to return to our cottage on Gower, from our sitting room we can see wild horses, sheep and cattle that roam the many acres. What I find most remarkable is that this common land exists at all in our tiny island where property developers have gobbled up most of our available land. For hundreds of years the common land of Gower has seen innumerable peoples come and go and it has remained possessed by all and owned by none. It remains a place that is still the livelihood of those who live by the land and yet it is for all of us, like the landscape, the sea view or the beach, held in perpetuity for the whole of creation; the wild horses, the soaring hawks, the rabbits, the farmers and the wandering tourist.

In the address I am about to give I want to use the image and the story and experience of Commons to reflect on

some of the concerns at the heart of my beliefs and concerns. I have entitled this address: ‘From Global Commons to Global Community.’

Predictability can be a curse as much as a blessing. Making assumptions in learning is the way we join things up and is a key factor in growing up; but when it becomes a habit, so it may become a prison that stops us breaking out of moulds and finding new trails of knowledge. I hope that this Conference will have that kind of effect; that instead of reinforcing what we know, we may be jolted into new thinking and our old assumptions challenged.

In 1987 I became bishop of Bath and Wells. This diocese, conterminous with the county of Somerset, is a place of remarkable beauty with seaside, moor, levels and hills providing a habitat for animals and human beings. I spent a great deal of time listening to ordinary people who lived by the land. Sometimes their stories were told to me by some of the old parsons who themselves lived so closely with their people that they identified with their problems and their aspirations. From them a darker story began to emerge that seemed to challenge the pretty story that the average person saw of the rural idyll. This darker account spoke of the way richer people were buying up farms and using intensive farming methods; of fewer people being employed to care for the land; of farm land being used for tourism and development; of younger people being driven from country areas because they could not afford to live there any longer. Part of the story that worried me was the growing gulf between townspeople and country-folk. I put some of these thoughts in a speech to the Green Party in 1988 and some parts of the press immediately hailed me as ‘the Green Bishop’. If by ‘green’ they meant newness and rawness, they were partly right because I was a new bishop at that point. But I was not new to issues to do with ecology and environment. In the 70’s I wrote a book on anthropology from a Christian perspective in which I raised questions about what I perceived as mankind’s unthinking and uncaring relationship with his habitat- the reckless and wasteful use of irreplaceable and precious resources. I found myself wondering whether, either directly or indirectly, Christianity’s doctrine of creation was central to the western world’s brutal disregard of nature. It is of course true, as many thinkers have concluded, that the rise of western science and technology owed a great deal to the pre-eminence that Protestant Christianity in particular gave to the individual conscience and to progress, but could it be

that it encouraged humankind to interpret the Genesis command to be a 'steward' of creation as a call to dominate and, adversely, to regard the world around one of our playthings?

Christianity must take some of the blame for the polluting of the earth, certainly not all and most definitely not the most. The humanocentric view of the Christian faith is

susceptible to distortion with some Christian groups focusing attention on individual redemption to the detriment of the world around, and others assuming that creation is but an adjunct of the human story. One Christian theologian, Loren Wilkinson, admits candidly that 'with a few important exceptions, Christians have not shown much concern for the world's health'. However, attributing blame is a useless exercise- we are all guilty and as human beings we are all challenged to be part of the answer as well as the problem.

Our theme of Global Commons makes the point that, just as in medieval times in Europe and places in Africa, South America

and elsewhere today, the commons were and are the place where the local, regional, national and global meet - so ecological problems are problems for us all, and, very sadly, it is usually the very poor who are most affected.

And it is with the very poor that I want to pick up my biographical journey. In 1991 I became Archbishop of Canterbury. I was 54 years of age, Up to that point I had visited several parts of the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand - but I had never visited America and, for the purposes of this address, I had never visited Africa. It was Africa that awoke me to the tragic suffering of the poor. I saw it first hand in Sudan, in the slums of South Africa, in Rwanda and many other places. Unlike a political leader I did not speed through the shanty towns merely seeing the problems. My wife and I stayed with the people; we slept in desert places under the velvety sky with an open latrine just a few feet away and rats scurrying in the darkness; we ate with the poor

with our fingers and through interpreters we listened to their tales of hunger and cruel death. It was one of those re-awakenings that occurs rarely in a person's life. We returned from our first visit to the Sudan haunted by what we had experienced and determined to do something about it. I raised money, I set up projects in development

and I used my office to alert people to the issues involved in development.

But why should we at this Conference be concerned with matters of development? Well, let us not idealize or romanticize the notion of Common land. Common land has never been places simply to be gazed at as if they were paradises of beauty, tranquility and charm. They were essentially the common land for feeding the hungry, through common use of land owned by all. Is there not a direct link between our focus on global commons to our care for all people on our overcrowded planet? Let me remind you of the present situation: which is not only the challenge of inclusion, it is also the challenge of justice. We speak

so readily of one world, which rich and poor share. But in reality there are two worlds. One world, one billion in total own 80% of global GDP; while another one billion at the other end of the spectrum live on under one dollar a day. The disparities are vast, unfair and indeed unjust.

And yet, the very odd thing about it all is that issues of environment and development belong together! There is an inter-connectedness that makes it extremely dangerous to separate them. I well remember in the early 90's making a visit to Armenia. We had first visited Russia and as we flew from Moscow airport the words of the British Ambassador rang in my ears: 'As you land at Yerevan look for the trees'. What could he have meant? As we landed, I realized what he had meant. There were no trees. It had been a harsh winter. There had been an earthquake and many had been living in tents, people were hungry and desperately poor. Desperation drove them to cut down the trees for firewood and, therefore,



Lord Carey speaking in the conference marquee

to create environmental damage. Ecology and development belong together.

In the land of the blind the one-eyed man may be king, but it is far more satisfactory to have double vision when it comes to problems of the magnitude we face today.

So, from the viewpoint of someone reflecting on the world's ills from the beauty of Gower Common land, what do we need to do?

First, there is the need for understanding. The more we can do to bring home to people that our mother home, the earth, is in deepest distress the better. But even better still is to bring home to each one of us that we need to inculcate new disciplines of restraint to consume less at every level if we wish our grand children to enjoy a reasonable life style. And such restraint will lead us to better health.

Second, there is the need for justice for the poor. We speak glibly of globalization but it has not yet gone far enough. Trade barriers mean that the poor cannot compete with American and European subsidies that protect us and hurt them.

Thirdly, there is the need for action. Governments, of course, have to play their part in creating 'green policies' that encourage citizens to be more aware of energy consumption. Nevertheless, a top-down approach on its own is sure to fail. If the theme of the 'commons' makes the point that common land is for all, and all are involved in responsible maintenance, it follows that the challenges compel each citizen to be more earth-conscious and to do what she and he can to live in rhythm with nature.

Fourthly, there is the need to confront the problem of exponential population increase. In 1650 total human population was 500 million and was spread thinly around the world. By 1996 the world's population stood at 5.6 billion. Shortly before 2000 AD we crossed the 6 billion mark. It is pretty certain that by 2011-12 the population will hover around 9 billion. The growth-rate, which is largely happening now in developing countries, is a disturbing time-bomb. Quite obviously, any reduction must involve a number of facts- principally, the empowerment of women in developing countries who, literally, bear the burden of the family; education, employment, and health care

Fifthly, there is a need to combat together the weariness and sense of hopelessness that the current debate on global warming is engendering. The scepticism of Lawson and others, and indeed the Washington deci-

sion-makers until quite recently, has its roots in the complexities and calamities we currently face. It is tempting to throw up our hands in the air because the problems are too great, the solutions too hard to find. The current debate on mitigation versus adaptation highlights the problem. Put in these stark terms however, it is clear that the answer must be that we both mitigate carbon as well as adapt to the effects of climate change.

And our solutions should also aim to lead the public forward rather than berating them. Policy makers should encourage real and genuine change by shifting the burden of taxation rather than penalising and punishing ordinary people. The way to motivate support for responding to climate change is not to scare people, not to punish them, and it's not berate to them, but to invite them to take greater responsibility for their environment. The Commons and the use of shared land for all, is a solution inviting people to care for land, which is no longer intensively farmed, but is enjoyed as a place of leisure, livelihood and sustenance for all. People tend to care for the spaces they share - they protect and value their land.

Well, our theme of Commons has allowed me to roam into areas of development as well as conservation. The commons reminds us all of our common indebtedness to mother earth and our moral responsibility to care for our environment for the sake of future generations. As a Christian my studies have shown me that although the Christian faith has a rich quarry of theology and thought concerning the environment it has been neglected in the past. You may not share this resource of faith and, very possibly, you will have other reasons for being passionately committed to an environmental agenda. For us all there is but one challenge which is set out in the theme of your Conference, to 'connect local experience to global challenges'. Few things matter more than that.

For Further reading:

Andrew Hurrell. On Global Order. OUP, 2007, p.218 ff. 'The greening of sovereignty is an enormously difficult process'

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Conference Report

Report on the 12th Conference of the IASC

John Powell and Chris Short

The 12th IASC international conference “Governing shared resources: connecting local experience to global challenges” was hosted by the University of Gloucestershire in Cheltenham, England, with organizational support provided by the CCRI. For England, the weather was remarkably good, and the week resembled an extended tea party, though without the Mad Hatter present.

A total of 502 people from 71 countries attended the conference that was spread over 5 days. 420 papers were given in 87 Panel sessions, and delivered in 11 sub-themes. There were also two book launches, six policy fora, eight field trips, four pre-conference workshops and a series of ‘master classes’ run for students. In addition there was a drop-in presentation skills clinic, two round tables and four keynote speakers.

The opening ceremony, complete with tea and cakes, was held on the afternoon of Monday 14th June in the large outdoor pavilion set up the week before in the grounds of the Park Campus. The Brookfield Youth Jazz Band set the tone with a selection of classic jazz tunes followed by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Patricia Broadfoot, who opened the conference and welcomed the delegates to the University.

246 delegates attended four workshops that were held on the first day of the conference. Workshops were run on Introduction to commons, New Commons, Research Design, and UK Historic and Contemporary Commons. The Research Design workshop, which focused on qualitative methods, and the Introduction to the Commons workshops were particularly popular. About a third of those attending joined on the day without prior notification, which made room planning very difficult. However, the level of interest was particularly pleasing and more could be offered in future, perhaps more advanced courses over two days, which may be attractive to delegates and especially postgraduates.

Three keynote addresses were given:

- Bakary Kante (UNEP) “The difficulties of managing global commons”

- Lord Carey of Clifton (former Archbishop of Canterbury) “From Global Commons to Global Community”
- Judy Ling Wong (Black Environment Network)

All three keynote speakers were excellent and addressed the key themes of the conference. Speeches were stimulating and thought provoking. In addition Elinor Ostrom (Indiana University) and Ruth Meinzen-Dick (President of the IASC) gave presentations at the conference dinner. The Conference dinner was held in Cheltenham Town Hall and was attended by 350 delegates, complete with musical entertainment from a local band called SwingFromParis.

On Thursday 17th July over 300 delegates attended one of eight Field trips to destinations ranging from Gower Peninsular, Severn Estuary, New Forest, Forest of Dean, Shropshire Hills, Somerset Levels, Cotswold Hills and The Bodleian Library, Oxford. The trips looked at a range of resources being managed in common including upland pasture, fisheries, woodland and the management of multi-functional shared resources as well as the management of new commons through copyright and intellectual property rights.

There were two very successful round table discussions organized on the subjects of Social Learning and Sustainability and Authority, Property and Democracy.

A total of six policy fora were organized on the following topics:

- Marine policy
- Community forestry
- Creating a political voice for the commons
- Clash of the Commons
- Contested commons: from conflict to peace
- History and archaeology of town commons

Those attending enjoyed the opportunity for some focused and in-depth discussion on the selected topics and the timing of these in the late afternoon gave delegates some choice in terms of relaxing or engaging in further discussion.

The conference received good evaluations, especially in terms of its intellectual & academic stimulation and overall rating of the venue itself. Nevertheless there were some things that could have been improved upon and together with the IASC we will look to ensure that these are passed on to the organizers of the next conference.

Last and by no means least we would like to thank all the delegates for their patience and understanding, which helped us enjoy the event much more than we had dared hope.

2008 Conference Co-Chairs

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Emily Castle

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BOOKS

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A warm welcome to Jim Robson, the IASC's new Executive Director and co-editor of the Commons Digest!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Send Letters, Announcements, and Practitioner and Project Profile Submissions to Alyne Delaney, Editor, *Commons Digest*, Innovative Fisheries Management, Aalborg University, North Sea Center, PO Box 104, DK-9850, Hirtshals, Denmark. ad@ifm.aau.dk
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For membership dues, back issues, and missing copies Jim Robson, Executive Director, IASC, Email: jrobson@iasc-commons.org. TEL: +52 55 5622 7423

Editors' Notes

We would like to give a *warm welcome* to the following recent additions to the IASC family:

Emily Castle, Information Officer
Tine de Moor and Jesse Ribot, Council Members
Jim Robson, Executive Director and Digest Editor

Along with *heartfelt thanks* to

Calvin Nhira and Dianne Rocheleau, Council Members

Owen Lynch, President

and

Michelle Curtain, Executive Director

Thank you Michelle!

Alyne E. Delaney
and
Jim Robson, Editors



In Memoriam



Isaac Malasha

Isaac on the Somerset levels Fieldtrip during the Cheltenham conference

We are deeply saddened to inform you of the passing of Dr. Isaac Malasha of the WorldFish Centre in Lusaka, Zambia. Isaac died suddenly after a short illness. Even at a relatively young age he had already become one of the finest scholars in the natural resource social science community in southern Africa. His future career carried the promise of true leadership in this field and he will be sorely missed by many people both professionally and personally. He was very active in IASC. He presented and helped organize panels at several biennial meetings and served most recently as chair of the programme committee for the African regional meeting early next year. His loss is a loss for our entire community.

Doug Wilson and the *Commons Digest* Editors



Professor John Thornes

During the 2008 IASC conference in July, Professor John Thornes was taken ill on a field trip to the Shropshire Hills. He later died in hospital on the same day. John, a professor at Kings College London, presented a very well received paper on the Tuesday of the conference entitled 'Sheep and Ships: modelling grazing and erosion in a Warming World'. As his obituary in the Times says 'John Thornes was one of the most eminent and influential physical geographers of his generation, a highly original researcher and a passionate exponent and exemplar of geographical field work' (The Times August 4th 2008). Those who met him were not only aware of his acute mind but also a wonderful sense of humour and his keenness to encourage young researchers. All those at the conference were shocked by the news and would like to send our condolences to his wife Rosemary and his children Claire and Chris.

Chris Short, Conference Co-Chair, IASC 208,
University of Gloucestershire

SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

PhD scholarship in The Netherlands for research in the Andes

Eligibility: Interdisciplinary researchers in natural resource management from Bolivia, Peru, or Ecuador.

Period: 2009-2011

New Application deadline: December 5th, 2008

Further Information: http://www.concertacion.info/extra/becas_phd_concertacion.pdf

Contact: Fabio de Castro
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Background: Concertación Programme

Concertación is a project that aims to improve the water- and livelihood security of local economies in the Andean region. This will be done through the development and support of democratic, equitable and sustainable water management policies and practices.

The strategy of the project is:

- 1) Educate a pool of water practitioners in order to establish a shared network of professionals in the Andean countries.
- 2) Develop innovative academic research and stimulate social learning processes in the development and management of water resources.
- 3) Create a knowledge and knowledge exchange platform on sustainable and equitable water resource development and management.

By comparing concrete experiences in water management and stimulating exchange and learning at an Inter-Andean level, Concertación aims to have an added value, both for policy and practice. This will be done together with actors and platforms at local, regional and international level.

Central Themes of the Project

- 1) Legal pluralism, water management and recognition policies
- 2) Local water management and the strengthening of authorities and organizations
- 3) Integrated management of water in river basins
- 4) Regional and international policies for integrated water management

Justification and Focus

The urgency of the water problem is well recognized in the Andes. The present distribution of water and decision making power over water management is characterized by problems of justice, democracy and sustainability. New water policies try to respond to the water management challenges. These have been and continue to be highly debated because of diverging visions, objectives and strategies of the diverse water use sectors and water use groups.

One of the central issues in the debate is the effect these new policies have on the water access security of the Andean communities and organizations, especially those of the farmers, indigenous peoples and other groups of low economic resources that depend on water for their livelihoods.

With special emphasis on the Andean communities, this project pretends to feed the debate over water policies. This will be done through research, exchange and capacity building aimed at the creation of new responses and proposals of actors at local, regional and national level. In this way, these actors will participate in the public debate over the present water policies by proposing and developing water management strategies and policies that are effective, equitable, democratic and adapted to the local context.

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JULY 1, 2008 - JUNE 30, 2009 IASC MEMBERSHIP CARD

Renew your membership now and you will not miss any of your membership benefits; including: subscriptions to The Commons Digest; discount registration at our nearly annual meetings; conference abstracts, and the opportunity to contribute to the growth and financial stability of the IASC. Contact the IASC office for additional information or visit our web site.

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INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP*	CHECK MEMBERSHIP YEAR(s):
\$50,000 or more.....US \$100.00	____ July 1, 2008- June 30, 2009
\$20,000 - 49,999.....US \$50.00	____ July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010
\$19,000 and less.....US\$10.00	____ July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011
Total dues payment @US \$100.00.....\$ _____	
Total dues payment @ US \$ 50.00.....\$ _____	
Total dues payment @ US \$ 10.00.....\$ _____	

* Supporting Member Category - US\$1,000.00 annual fee (e-mail us at iasc@iasc-commons.org for further details on this new membership category)
*Traditional Institutional membership fees are a suggested flat rate of US \$120.00.

PAYMENT INFORMATION:

You can return this card to IASC with:

___ A check payable to IASC
___ MasterCard ___ Visa ___ Discover | Card Number _____

For either individuals or institutions, if your financial situation prevents you from making a full payment at this time please indicate that and we will contact you.

Signature _____ | Exp. Date: _____ OR Email, phone or fax the information to:

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF THE COMMONS
P.O. Box 2355 Gary IN 46409 USA Phone: +52 55 5622 7423 Fax: +52 55 5622 7508 e-mail: iascp@iasc-commons.org <http://www.iasc-commons.org>