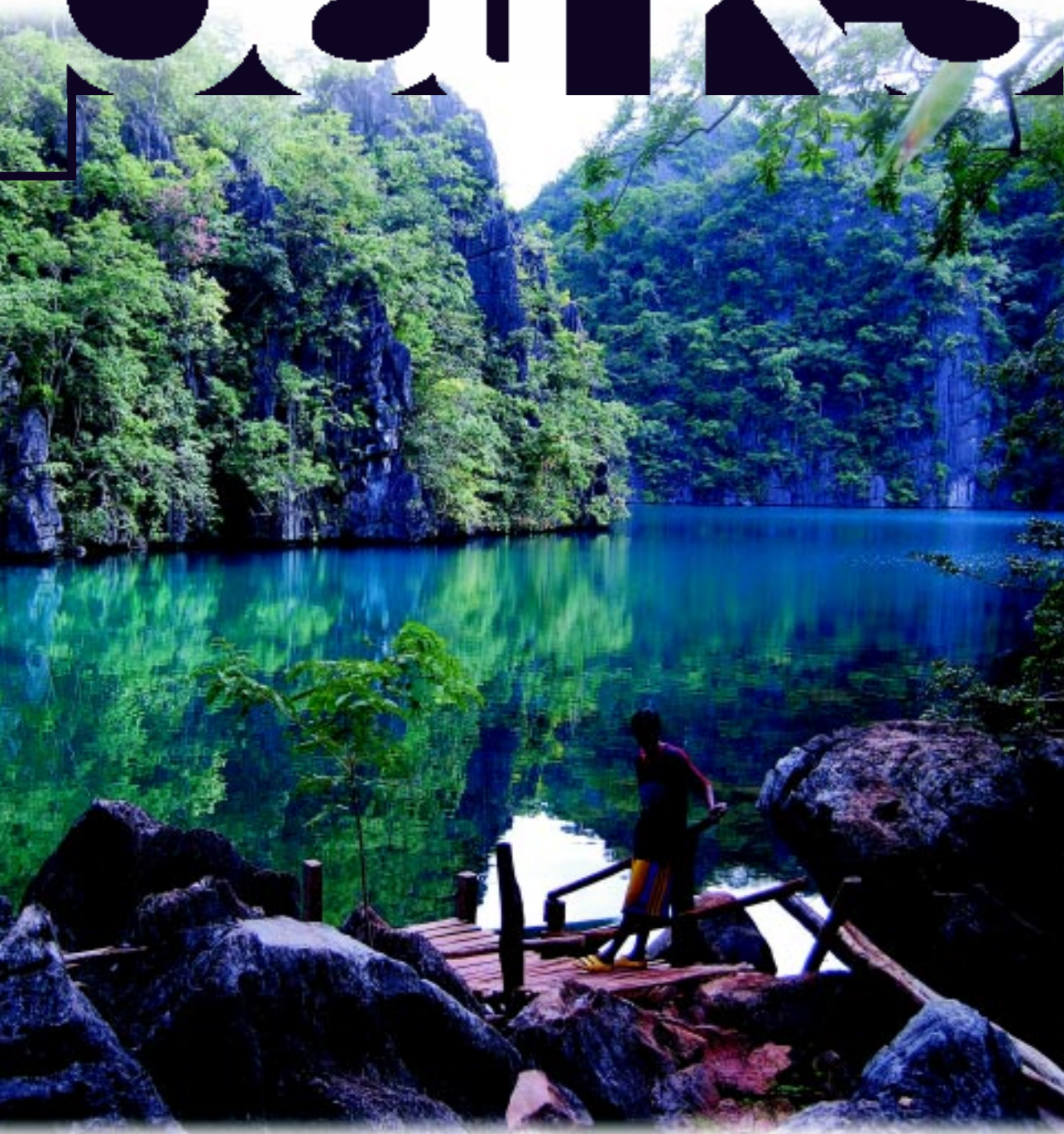


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Cover: Lake on Coron Island, an Indigenous and Community Conservation Area protected as part of the Ancestral Domain claim of the Tagbanwa people, the Philippines. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

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Protected areas and people: the future of the past¹

ASHISH KOTHARI

Significant changes have taken place in international conservation policies in the last few years. There is growing recognition of the role of indigenous peoples and local communities in the management of government designated protected areas, and equally, of the importance of sites and landscapes managed by such communities themselves. These two trends can be called Collaborative Management of Protected Areas (CMPAs) and Indigenous/Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs). The move towards these involves complex issues of rights and responsibilities, land tenure, customary and modern knowledge, relevant institutions, and sharing of costs and benefits. This paper predicts that over the next few decades, if conservation agencies are able to wisely use these new trends, we will see a dramatic increase in public support for conservation and expansion of various kinds of protected areas, and a reduction in the conflicts that plague many current protected areas. But for this to happen, much needs to be done to change national policies and practice, consolidate the gains of international policy changes, and tackle the single biggest challenge that humanity and nature face: the unsustainability of the current path of globalised 'development'.

THE DURBAN+5 PERIOD has been marked by dramatic shifts in international conservation paradigms. These point to an inescapable conclusion: the future of conservation lies, at least partly, in its past.

The recognition that nature conservation is fundamental to survival is reflected in ancient spiritual, cultural and material traditions of all continents. But in all such traditions, nature and culture were a continuum or even part of each other, and not separated. Sometime in the last century or so however, the formal conservation movement appeared to lose sight of this. It attempted to separate people from wildlife, and focus on islands of wildlife concentration where intensive conservation efforts could be directed. This was perhaps understandable given the enormous and very visible crisis of biodiversity loss. But we are now realising that exclusionary conservation is simply not sustainable even if it managed to stave off some extinctions and save a number of crucial habitats for a time. Nor is it ethically justifiable when imposed by those who have adequate means of livelihood and even luxuries, on those who are already living on the edge.

The last five years have therefore seen a remarkable turnaround, towards linking protected areas (or conservation more generally) with the traditions and practices, livelihoods and aspirations of indigenous peoples and other local communities... while not losing sight of the goals of conservation. The following broad features mark this shift:

- expanding the governance of protected areas to include communities, either as partners in government/NGO-run areas, or in their own right as custodians and managers;
- moving out of the 'island' mentality and looking at landscapes and seascapes as a whole, with the attendant need to focus as much on their political, economic, and cultural aspects as on their crucial biological values; and
- linking protected areas to the goals of addressing poverty and livelihood security, and significantly enhancing the generation of conservation-related benefits to local people.

This article explores the future of these new (yet age-old) paradigms in conservation. It predicts that over the next couple of decades, if current trends continue, the following will take place:

¹ This is partly based on a paper, 'Local voices in global discussions: How far have international conservation policy and practice integrated indigenous peoples and local communities?', delivered by the author at the 'Symposium on Sustaining Cultural and Biological Diversity in a Rapidly Changing World: Lessons for Global Policy', American Museum of Natural History, New York, 2-5 April 2008. The paper has inputs from Tasneem Balasinorwala, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, Hanna Jaireth, and Aghaghia Rahimzadeh.



Tagbanwa elders on Coron Island, the Philippines, showing their Ancestral Domain claim documents. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

- A significant reduction in the conflicts between people and protected areas that have plagued many parts of the world, and an increase in public (including local community) support for not only protected areas but for conservation across the landscape;
- A dramatic increase in coverage of protected areas, with increasing recognition of indigenous and community conserved areas;
- The slow but sure demise of the notion that nature and people or culture are separate, and that conservation can take place through only guns and guards; and
- Increasing security for beleaguered ecosystems and species, even while some will be inevitably lost, as societies in general and local communities in particular become more active in conservation.

These will however, not happen on their own. A few key steps to make them happen, are outlined at the end of the article.

Protected area governance: the new paradigms

For over a century, protected areas in the form of government notified sites for wildlife conservation, have been managed through centralised bureaucracies in ways that totally or largely excluded local communities. Given that most PAs have traditionally had people living inside or adjacent to them, dependent on their resources and often with associated age-old beliefs and practices, such management has alienated communities. There is also increasing evidence that PAs have often caused further impoverishment of already economically marginal communities, through loss of access to livelihood resources, physical displacement, and other impacts (see, for instance, West *et al.*, 2006; Colchester, 2004; Lockwood *et al.*, 2006; Chatty and Colchester, 2002; *Policy Matters* 15). A recent article (Redford, *et al.* 2008) argues that PAs in some of the most important biodiversity areas of the world contain a very small percentage of impoverished people, therefore it may not be justified to substantially recast conservation organisations into poverty alleviation ones. This may be valid in the context the authors are talking about, but it is also true that thousands of protected areas are in areas containing large numbers of poor people, many of whom have been dispossessed by related policies and practices (for a review of India, pertaining to three to four million people, see Wani and Kothari, 2007).

Redford *et al.* justifiably conclude with a call for a more “socially responsible, long-term approach to conservation”.

It has also been increasingly realised that conventional PA practices have not only violated human rights, but often backfired on conservation itself. Retaliatory action by disempowered communities, conflicts with PA managers, inability to use the knowledge and practices of local people, and many other factors have contributed to this. Reversing these trends requires a significant shift in PA management paradigms.

While the most significant international event to showcase and encourage the new paradigms was the World Parks Congress at Durban in 2003, this itself was a result of many developments at local and national levels over the last couple of decades.

In an increasing number of countries, two changes have been revolutionising PA policy and management. First, there is much greater participation of local communities and other citizens in what were once solely government managed PAs, transforming them into collaboratively managed PAs (CMPAs). Second, there is increasing recognition of indigenous and community conserved areas (ICCAs), which exist in diverse forms across the world, but have so far remained outside the scope of formal conservation policies and programmes.

There is no comprehensive assessment of how many countries have moved into these directions. However, a survey of protected area agencies just prior to the World Parks Congress, gave a good indication. In the period 1992–2002, of the 48 PA agencies that responded to the survey, over one-third reported that they had moved towards some form of decentralisation in their structure, and engaged a larger range of stakeholders than before. Over half reported that they now required, by law, participatory management of PAs. In 1992, 42% of the agencies had said they were the only decision-making authority; by 2002, only 12% said the same. Overall, the survey showed that “PA managers recognise that community support is a requirement of ‘good governance’, and more effort is being directed at involving various stakeholder groups. The general perception is that increased participation has resulted in more effective decision-making”. (Chape, *et al.* 2008).

Collaboratively managed protected areas (CMPAs)

There are many documented examples of collaborative management and its benefits (for a recent overview, see Kothari, 2006a). These can be found in a range of countries, including those classified as ‘developing’ and those already highly industrialised or urbanised; and in a range of ecosystems, covering terrestrial, freshwater and marine.

Amongst the earliest to experiment formally with co-management were the French. Over the last three decades they have created 44 such parks, ranging from 25,000 ha to 300,000 ha. Each is managed by an organisation of elected people of the local communities, which oversees a multi-disciplinary technical team that runs the park (Federation des Parcs Naturels Régionaux 2006). More recent CMPAs include many that were once managed in the conventional top-down manner. For instance in the Lanin National Park in Argentina, created by excluding the indigenous Mapuche, considerable agitation by the people forced the government to form a co-management committee. With assured sharing in decision-making and benefits, the park’s management has become more effective (Carpinetti and Oviedo, 2006). Two marine PAs in Indonesia (Bunaken), and the Philippines (Apo Islands), are managed through collaborative arrangements with local fishing communities, in ways that have improved fish catch and created more jobs, while enhancing conservation. Amongst the key ingredients resulting in their success are co-management institutions involving local community representatives, participation of entire communities in management, legal backing to participation, and understanding and respecting customary use and access rights (Leisher *et al.*, 2007). In Canada, 13 national parks covering over 180,000 km² are managed collaboratively between Parks Canada and the native groups on whose territories these are located (Johnston, 2006). And an example from South

Africa could be a precursor to many more around the world: under the Restitution of Land Rights Act 1994, 20,000 ha. of the world-famous Kruger National Park was transferred back to the Makuleke people in 1999, but continued as a reserve under the joint management of the tribe and South African National Parks (Fabricius, 2006).

Indigenous and community conserved areas (CCAs)

Even more revolutionary than co-management, is the recognition finally given to the world's oldest PAs: indigenous territories and community conserved areas (ICCAs). These have been defined as "natural and modified ecosystems, containing significant biodiversity values, ecological services, and cultural values, voluntarily conserved by indigenous and local communities, through customary laws or other effective means" (Pathak *et al.*, 2004).

As in the case of CMPAs, ICCAs cover all kinds of countries and ecological situations (see regional surveys at www.iccaforum.org; Kothari, 2006b; PARKS 16(1); Borrini-Feyerabend, 2008). Amongst the oldest are sacred groves, lakes, rivers and landscapes that abound in many countries. Equally old are likely to be highland forests managed for their value in securing downstream water security, or rich pastures in arid regions that were kept intact to use only as a last resort in cases of extreme drought.

In Italy, the Regole d'Ampezzo of the Ampezzo Valley, has a recorded history of community management for approximately 1,000 years; another example is the Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme, collectively owned and managed by people of 11 townships. (Merlo *et al.*, 1989, Jeanrenaud, 2001, and Lorenzi, pers. comm. 2004). In the USA, many community forests are traditionally or newly managed by town-dwellers, e.g. in New Hampshire, Conway (650 ha), Gorham (2,000 ha), Randolph (4,100), and Errol (2,100) (Lyman, 2006). In Nigeria, the Ekuri people are protecting 33,600 ha of dense tropical forest on their communal land, and have

Lake on Coron Island, an ICCA protected as part of the Ancestral Domain claim of the Tagbanwa people, the Philippines. Photo: Ashish Kothari.



resisted the overtures of logging companies despite being offered a road which they desperately need (Ogar, 2006). In India, there are over 10,000 community managed forests, ranging from a few hectares to several hundred thousand hectares. Some are managed by all-women forest protection committees, others by youth clubs (see photo over), yet others by the entire village (Pathak *et al.*, 2006). In the Peruvian Amazon, over 11 indigenous hunting-gathering tribes that have decided to live in voluntary isolation, are protected by the recognition of over two million hectares in territorial reserves (Norgrove, pers. comm., 2005). Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) number several dozen in the South Pacific (Govan, *et al.* 2006). The Navakavu marine PA in Fiji, and the Arnavon Island marine PA in Solomon Islands, both community managed, have been found to have generated substantial economic livelihoods and benefits for local people, while maintaining conservation status (Leisher *et al.*, 2007). The Comarca Ngöbe – Buglé indigenous territory in Panama contains one of the world's most important nesting sites for threatened Hawksbill and Leatherback sea turtles (Solis, 2006). In India, there are dozens of CCAs harbouring resident and wintering waterfowl, antelope and deer species, nesting Olive Ridley sea turtles, freshwater fish populations, threatened pheasant species, and more (Pathak *et al.*, 2006).

Territories of mobile peoples often contain significant biodiversity value, conserved due to traditional practices of nomadism and deliberate restraint. In the Borana ethnic territory in Ethiopia, customary law (*seera marraa bisanii*, or 'the law of grass and water') has for centuries helped protect ecosystems harbouring the unique wildlife of the region (including 43 species of mammals), (Bassi, 2006).

Indigenous protected areas and reserves that are incorporated into the official PA system are also increasing. Indigenous reserves account for a fifth of the Amazon forests, and have proven to be effective against illegal logging, mining, and other threats that are eating up forests outside these reserves. These include reserves that have been integrated into national PA systems, such as the 68,000-ha Alto Fragua – Indiwasi National Park of Colombia (Oviedo, 2006). Australia has a network of over 20 Indigenous Protected Areas, comprising about 20% of the country's terrestrial protected area estate. Indigenous PAs bring management resources to the indigenous people, without the loss of autonomy usually associated with collaboratively managed PAs; they also provide public recognition of the natural and cultural values of indigenous territories (Smyth, 2006).

Growing literature points to the existence of tens of thousands of other such ICCAs, most of them hidden from the public eye till recently because of our pre-occupation with government-designated PAs.

The Durban and Kuala Lumpur milestones

The Vth IUCN World Parks Congress (WPC), Durban, 2003, and its key outputs, gave a major international push to participatory and community-based governance of PAs (see <http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/wpc2003> and <http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/wpc2003/pdfs/english/Proceedings/recommendation.pdf>). Influenced by this event, the CBD VIIIth Conference of Parties adopted in 2004 a comprehensive Programme of Work on PAs, including a move towards new governance models. It committed countries to:

- recognise PAs under various governance types, including Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) and Private Protected Areas (PPAs) (2.1.2);
- use conservation benefits to alleviate poverty (2.1.4);
- implement plans to involve communities at all levels of PA planning, establishment, governance and management removing barriers preventing adequate participation (2.1.5, 2.2.2);
- ensure legislative and policy support for the above (2.2.4); and
- stop relocation or sedentarisation of communities without prior informed consent (2.2.5).

Additionally, these and other events also highlighted the importance of 'good governance' in the management of PAs. This includes principles such as equity in decision-making and benefit-sharing, adaptability to diverse situations, long-term visioning, optimal use of resources, accountability of those who take decisions to those who are affected by them, transparency in all operations, and others (adapted from Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.*, 2006):

Yet another innovation in international conservation forums has been the introduction of governance types into the globally-used system of PA categories devised by IUCN (IUCN/WCMC 1994; a fully revised version of this with the addition of the governance dimension, is at http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn_pa_categories_guidelines_final_draft.doc). This recognises that not all the six main categories of PAs, classified according to their management objective, can be governed by not only government agencies but also by indigenous peoples and local communities, by private entities, and collaboratively between two or more of these. As countries begin to recognise ICCAs, some are also assessing whether these can be incorporated into the PA system in any of the Categories.

Diversifying the PA system and linking the landscape

As important as the expansion of individual CMPAs and ICCAs is the diversification of the PA system as a whole, and its opening up to governance and management models for larger landscapes and seascapes. Such a move has significant benefits, including:

- i) Greater coverage of areas important for conservation. *Indeed if ICCAs are given recognition and support, there could well be a doubling of the PA coverage of the world* (Kothari, 2006c). Additionally, CMPAs and CCAs are often politically more acceptable than conventional PAs, especially in countries where such PAs have been seen as obstacles to livelihoods.
- ii) Greater generation of resources: If CMPAs and ICCAs can increasingly be projected as not only conservation tools but also mechanisms to address poverty and lack of livelihood opportunities; this could help countries generate more resources for conservation. Most countries and donors have much more funding for 'development' and 'welfare' sectors than for conservation per se. However this should not become an excuse to reduce funding for areas that continue to need government management.
- iii) Greater ability to build actual *networks* of PAs: Combining different governance types would help to physically connect sites, allowing much greater gene flow and other benefits of connectedness. Many ICCAs, for instance, are already corridors between two or more government PAs (e.g. the community forests in New Hampshire, USA; or Van Panchayat forests in Uttarakhand, India). Seen from the point of view of communities, many PAs could be corridors between two or more ICCAs, providing crucial buffer functions and benefits to people.

Linking diverse governance models of conservation as also various forms of 'sustainable' use across the landscape and seascape, is the biggest hope for wildlife and biodiversity. Apart from other benefits, such as landscape-level management with connectivity may be crucial to deal with the impacts of climate change (Kothari, 2008).

A number of countries are exploring such diversification and expansion. Colombia has in added several governance types (adapted from Alcorn *et al.*, 2005, in Borrini-Feyerabend, 2006), including regional and local reserves, collaboratively managed PAs, indigenous territories, private protected areas, and ICCAs. More recently, after the World Parks Congress, the Madagascar government too has moved into diversifying PA governance types, as part of its commitment to triple the area under PAs (www.iucn.org/en/news/archive/2005/06/governancethur16.pdf). In 2002 India extended its PA types to include those that could be managed in a collaborative manner with various government departments and local communities, and those to be managed by local communities themselves, though the conceptualisation of these categories severely limits their use (Pathak and Bhushan, 2004).

Implementation of the CBD POW on PAs

Are changes in international conservation policy being adequately reflected on the ground? The examples given above suggest that the new paradigms are being seriously considered, or implemented in some countries – in a few cases even before Durban and Kuala Lumpur. Overall though, changing conventional conservation policies and mindsets has been slow and patchy.

One indicator of the extent of change is the degree to which countries have implemented Element 2 (Governance, Participation, Equity and Benefit-sharing) of the CBD Programme of Work on PAs. Most countries from where information is available (in their national reports, their responses to the CBD Secretariat's questions on implementation of the Programme of Work, and citizens' reports), are way behind in meeting their targets.

A recent survey of 36 PAs in Latin America, Africa and Asia, by the Forest Peoples Programme, found that new conservation principles were not yet in widespread application (Colchester, 2004). Indeed in many countries, forcible displacement and exclusion have continued. Nevertheless, the new principles of equity, power sharing, participation, and sharing of benefits are now increasingly being discussed and adopted at national levels, are being incorporated into donor policies, and are being used as tools by indigenous peoples and local communities to demand changes in policy and practice.

There is no comprehensive assessment of how many countries provide the recognition of CMPAs or ICCAs in their conservation legislations. But some indications are available. A survey of 16 countries by TILCEPA (see <http://www.iucn.org/themes/ceesp/CCAlegislations.htm>), found six (Australia, Brazil, Guyana, India, South Africa and Vanuatu) that had brought in

Angami indigenous youth keep watch on the Khonoma village-declared Tragopan Sanctuary, Nagaland, India.
Photo: Ashish Kothari.



legislation recognising ICCAs as part of the PA network (with great variation in what kind of sites could be considered eligible). Another six (Canada, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Mauritania, Tanzania and Taiwan) did give legal backing to ICCAs, but as part of more general laws providing recognition of indigenous or community territories and rights, rather than as PAs or specific conservation mechanisms. Four countries (China, Morocco, Nepal and Nigeria) had no legal backing for ICCAs whatsoever, though a few of them reported some level of administrative or financial support to ICCAs, and one (Nepal) had moved towards almost full community management of at least one PA.

One must recognise that insensitive or mechanical implementation of the new paradigms may be counter-productive. In Malaysia and India, for instance, top-down recognition of ICCAs through statutory legislation which forces uniformity and allows government interference, could undermine existing customary practice and thereby the conservation initiative itself. Conversely, in the Philippines, bold legislation provides considerable possibilities for indigenous peoples to govern themselves and protect their territorial and knowledge rights, which some communities have been able to use to claim 'ancestral domain' (see for instance Ferrari and de Vera, 2004), but some loopholes in the law and strong resistance from the bureaucracy have severely restricted or delayed its application. A detailed assessment of South Asia reveals that progress is very uneven, across countries, ecosystems, and peoples (Balasinorwala, *et al.* 2008; for a more global overview, see Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.*, 2004).

Progress in converting conventional government-run marine PAs into co-management regimes is perhaps even slower than their terrestrial counterparts (ICSF 2008). Somewhat more encouraging is the increasing recognition of marine ICCAs, e.g. the LMMA network in the Pacific, as above.

Many countries continue to resist attempts to change national policies in line with the international requirements. New Zealand, for instance, has still not incorporated any of the three broad trends mentioned in Section 3 above: indigenous rights, diversity of governance types of PAs, and landscape approach (Aroha Mead, pers. comm.).

In its latest *Review of Implementation of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas for the Period 2004–2007* (UNEP/CBD/WG-PA/2/2, 26 November 2007), the CBD Secretariat concluded that: "Though legislative and policy frameworks exist for equitable sharing of costs and benefits and participation of indigenous and local communities, more efforts are needed to implement them to ensure meaningful participation of local communities in the establishment and management of protected areas, and in the integration of various governance types into national systems of protected areas."

Based on this assessment and considerable advocacy by civil society organisations and some governments, the IXth Conference of Parties to the CBD (Bonn, May 2008) adopted Decision IX/18 on protected areas (<http://www.cbd.int/decisions/?m=COP-09&id=11661&lg=0>) with a recommendation to:

- a) improve and, where necessary, diversify and strengthen protected-area governance types, leading to or in accordance with appropriate national legislation including recognising and taking into account, where appropriate, indigenous, local and other community-based organisations; and
- b) recognise the contribution of, where appropriate, co-managed protected areas, private protected areas and indigenous and local community conserved areas within the national protected area system through acknowledgement in national legislation or other effective means."

It should be noted that the above recommendation will not necessarily lead to more progressive steps, for it neither incorporates a rights-based approach, nor deals with the need for *appropriate* forms of recognition. Nevertheless, it marks an acknowledgement that governments need to do much more than they are so far.

Winds of change in international NGOs

Conservation policy and practice, at both international and national levels, has been heavily influenced not only by governments but also by civil society organisations and donors. Slowly but surely, these too are embracing the new conservation paradigms. As mentioned above, some like IUCN² have actually been at the forefront of leading the changes. But many others, including some of the largest and richest NGOs, are widely criticised as having lagged behind (see the widely quoted articles by Chapin, 2004 and Dowie, 2005, and responses to them at <http://www.nature.org/pressroom/press/press1671.html>; http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/what_we_do/policy/people_environment/wwf_response/index.cfm; <http://www.worldwatch.org/system/files/EP181C.pdf>; <http://gristmill.grist.org/story/2004/12/28/21406/952>;). Some, like WWF, have undertaken an extensive internal review, with the help of critical outsiders, and have pledged to move urgently and widely towards more equitable and participatory conservation practice. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has focused increasingly on partnerships with communities, including for instance fishing communities in marine conservation and livelihood enhancement programmes (as one example, see Leisher *et al.*, 2007). Reportedly the CEOs of several international conservation organisations are engaged in a process to work out common principles on indigenous/community issues in conservation, and TILCEPA is currently facilitating a dialogue process between indigenous peoples, local communities, and conservation groups.

Key lessons and challenges

Some observers have argued that the oft-seen failure of participatory approaches to conservation, not only to achieve conservation but also to generate sustained benefits for people, indicates the need to return to the conventional strict protectionist forms (see for instance, Terborgh, 2004). But others have rightly pointed out that lack of adequate implementation of the fundamental principles of equitable conservation cannot be seen as a failure of the principles themselves (Wilshusen *et al.*, 2002; Brechin *et al.*, 2002; Spiteri and Nepal, 2006). Moreover, evidence from around the world suggests that new paradigm approaches to conservation (especially co-managed protected areas and community conserved areas) do indeed often work, where implemented with sufficient policy back-up, on-ground capacity, and other key ingredients (see examples in Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.*, 2004; Pathak *et al.*, 2004; Kothari, 2006a; Kothari, 2006b).

There are a number of key lessons that have emerged from both the successful and unsuccessful attempts at applying new paradigms of conservation, which we all need to learn (Blaustein, 2007; Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.*, 2004; Spiteri and Nepal, 2006; Redford *et al.*, 2006; Brockington *et al.*, 2006; Leisher *et al.*, 2007):

- The distribution of costs and benefits of conservation remain highly skewed between local communities and wider society (as shown, for instance, in studies by CARE International, WWF, and IUCN, in Uganda, Philippines, Thailand and Kenya; report under finalisation, Phil Franks, pers. com.), and significant change is needed to balance these out.
- The distribution of power and benefits within communities too remains inequitable, often even in otherwise successful participatory conservation or community-based initiatives; policies and practice need to understand local divisions and hierarchies (including those of gender), and devise methods to ensure that the poorest, most disadvantaged sections are provided special focus.
- Many participatory conservation initiatives, especially those imposed from above by governments, NGOs and/or donors, tend to remain at a superficial level of consultation and the doling out of benefits, without getting into actual power-sharing and joint decision-making; considerable advocacy is needed to bring about genuine change towards equity,

² Given its structure, with both governmental and civil society membership, IUCN is not easily classified as a NGO; however in its functioning it usually provides civil society perspectives and spaces in varying degrees.

even while allowing for some caution where local socio-political situations are very conflict-ridden and a rush towards decentralisation may be counter-productive in the short term.

- Another key ingredient – the provision of tenurial security through territorial, land, water, and resource rights (and corresponding responsibilities) – appears to be in very short supply in most countries. With little or no long-term security, communities are unable or unwilling to be enthusiastic partners or players in conservation. This clearly needs to change, again allowing for some caution in specific situations where conservation may be threatened by hasty moves.
- A lot of initiatives pay only lip-service to traditional knowledge; given the overwhelming evidence of how productive its use can be, there is an urgent need for conservation policy and practice to move towards positive integration of traditional and modern conservation knowledge.
- Many stereotypes continue to plague conservation, one of the most persistent of these being the romantic view of indigenous peoples as living in age-old lifestyles in total harmony with nature, and the opposite, that all people living within natural ecosystems are necessarily degrading the environment. Conservationists need to understand the nuances of each situation, the fact that all cultures are in flux, that traditions are changing, and that various mixes of the traditional and the modern may be needed to make conservation and equity work together.
- Most international attention on the inequities of conventional conservation policy has focused on indigenous peoples, who also happen to be the best organised and most vocal at international forums. Other traditional communities, including mobile peoples (both indigenous and others), peasants and fishers now need equal attention.
- Discussions amongst conservation and human rights advocates at international levels often remain polarised, full of rhetoric, with 'both' sides unwilling to find common ground (what Redford *et al.*, 2006, call the "dialogue of the deaf"); this needs to change, emphasising inter-disciplinarity, and the humility that no single discipline or ideology has all the answers.
- Though indigenous peoples and local communities are increasing their presence in international forums, very often one still sees other civil society actors or government officials speaking on their behalf; all efforts need to be made to facilitate and create the spaces for communities to speak for themselves.
- Unlike the 'management effectiveness' tool that IUCN helped develop and which is now used in many countries, there is no 'social assessment' toolkit that can be similarly used to understand the social impact of PAs. This urgently needs to be developed, not necessarily as one methodology but as a menu of tools (the IUCN WCPA Task Force on Protected Areas, Equity and Livelihoods is taking a lead on this).
- Governmental recognition of community initiatives in conservation, such as ICCAs, has sometimes, ironically, undermined or threatened them; the challenge is to devise mechanisms of recognition and support that respect the diversity of local arrangements, and provide inputs only where required and requested by the communities concerned, for the purpose of more effective conservation or equity.
- Co-ordination amongst various agencies responsible for actions across the landscape, remains poor in many countries; more innovative institutional mechanisms and policies are needed to break through the conventional divisions amongst departments and agencies, and to empower citizens to participate in larger-scale planning and implementation.

A major challenge to conservation in general, and to the new paradigms of conservation in particular, is the unsustainability of 'development' models rapidly spreading around the world. Economic globalisation has considerably expanded the scope of predatory industrial forces, pushed the homogenisation of cultures and worldviews and production systems, and opened up

hitherto inaccessible or nationally protected sites and communities to exploitation... all in the name of 'development' and 'growth'. Climate change is perhaps the most devastating result, the various manifestations of which will have to be confronted by conservationists (within and outside local communities) around the world. More localised impacts are felt when governments decide to locate projects and processes like mining, large hydro-projects, tourism resorts, industries, ports, and the like, into ecologically and culturally sensitive areas.

In a number of places conservationists, social activists and local communities have joined hands to resist destructive development processes, but these instances of co-operation appear to still be few and far between. More equitable and participatory forms of conservation would provide a solid platform to bring together sections of society that could jointly fight the 'development' juggernaut... and evolve alternative visions and processes of human welfare and development.

Conclusion

Much of what has changed in international conservation approaches has not yet translated into national level policy and practice; simultaneously the lessons from successful community-based conservation are not spreading fast enough. There are signs that the predictions made in the Introduction, can come true... but they will require considerable effort along the lines suggested in the section above.

Moving further along the road of equitable conservation will require governments, civil society organisations including international conservation NGOs, scientific institutions, and others, to engage much more with indigenous peoples and local communities on platforms that assure equality and mutual respect. It will need much greater attention to complex issues of land/water and resource tenure, the integration of traditional and modern knowledge, inter-disciplinary work, adaptability to diverse ecological and cultural conditions, the distribution of costs and benefits, inequities within communities, and finding alternatives for fundamentally unsustainable patterns of economic growth... amongst others.

Major hurdles remain at the international level also. In particular, even where conservation policy has become more progressive, it risks being undermined by international economic and political forces that foster unsustainable 'development' processes, and cultural and economic homogenisation. Forums like the World Trade Organisation, and entities like the world's biggest multinational corporations, remain largely out of the influence of environmental, conservation, and human rights discourse. Even in some environmental processes, such as the international response to climate change (especially the economic instruments that have become the playground for the world's corporations), threaten to marginalise indigenous peoples and local communities. In such a situation, there is even more of a need for a convergence amongst conservation and human rights advocates from all sections of society.

With greater documentation of best and worst practices (emphasising lessons of *process*), facilitation of learning across countries and regions, utilising and building on existing guidance, including what has been produced by IUCN and other organisations, carrying out advocacy for policy changes, and joining hands to resist the forces of destruction, we can make these predictions come true.

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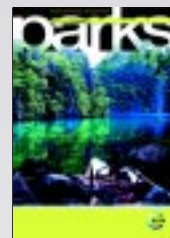
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