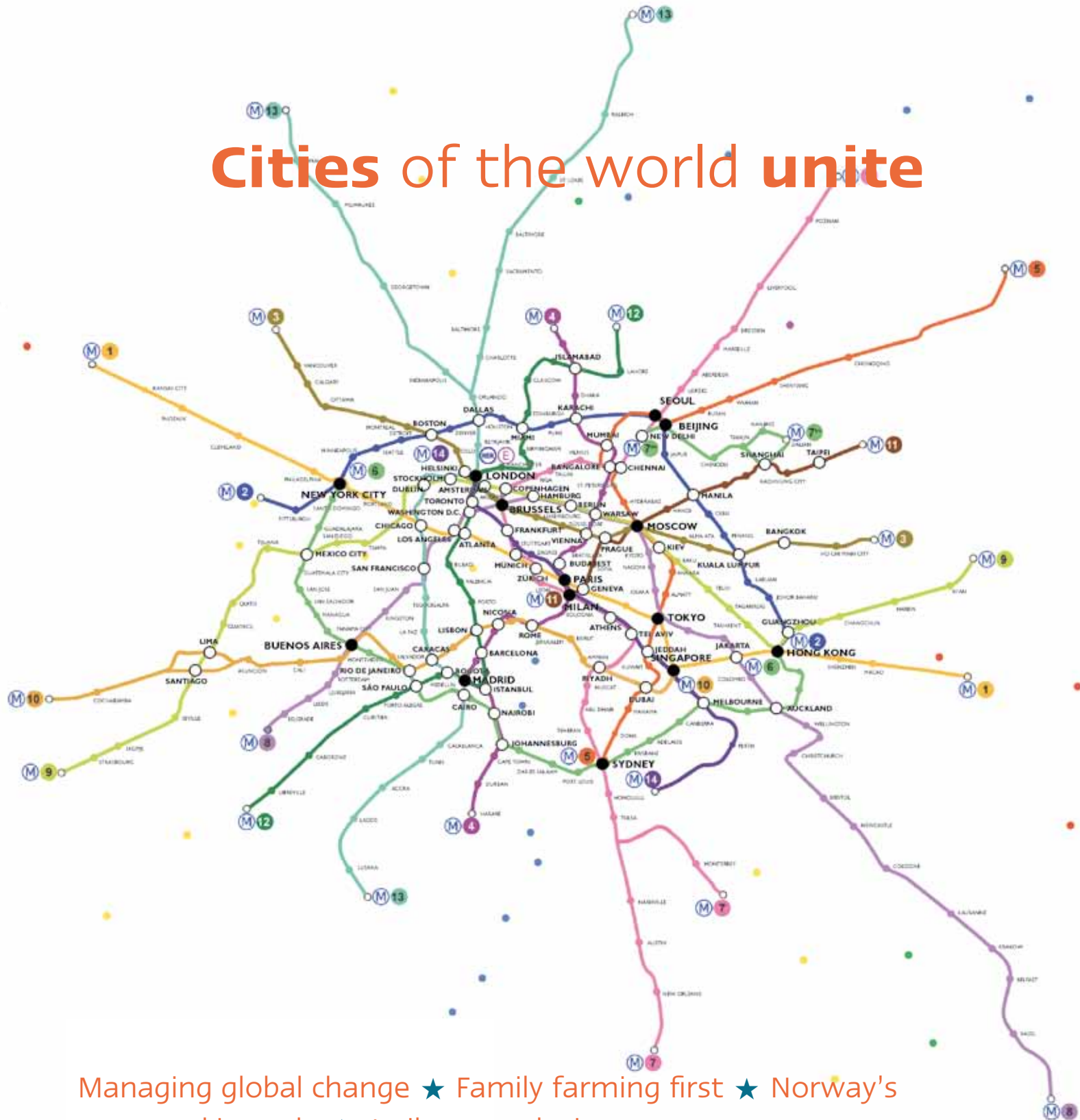


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**The Broker, issue 17, December 2009**

The Broker offers knowledge of global development issues. The Broker aims to contribute to evidence-based policy making and action by encouraging exchanges between knowledge producers and development professionals. The Broker will be a reliable source of information for all those concerned with development and globalization, especially in the fields of economics, human security, governance, and science and technology.

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# Family farming first

K.S. Gopal, Bara Gueye, Paulo Petersen, Roberto Ugas and Edith van Walsum

**W**ith the World Food Summit in Rome in November 2009 and the conference on climate change in Copenhagen in early December, climate change and hunger are once again hot topics. Agriculture is at the heart of both. Official delegations, civil society, businesses and farmers are asking: what types of agriculture do we need? Can any kind of farming feed everyone, or should we decide which is best?

Since the 1950s, industrialized nations, and more recently developing countries as well, have pushed their farmers to specialize and grow. Some 20 million farms in developing countries have expanded into large, mechanized, market-oriented businesses. Yet there are still over a billion rural people running small-scale multi-functional family farms of less than two hectares – and their numbers are growing.

Family farming, commonly considered old-fashioned and unable to respond effectively to market opportunities, is gaining recognition as a viable model for the future of agriculture. Yet, many maintain that only large-scale farming can sustain agricultural productivity in a global market and that a reliance on small-scale production will prevent farming communities from growing their way out of poverty. Politicians prefer land concentration and agriculture for export to achieve economies of scale.

Governments and donors need to recognize the potential of family farming and support its development. But what type of support do farmers need?

Family farmers produce for home consumption and for markets. Public policies support trade, investment and globalization and a growing number of small farmers are now included in global value chains. But there are growing concerns about this approach. Value chains exclude small producers, notably women, who cannot meet the rising scale and quality requirements; neither can they manage the risks involved.

Chain empowerment aims to help small farmers cope with the inherent challenges of global value chains, including questions of power and governance. But because the gap between farm-gate and supermarket prices is continually widening, farmers are frequently squeezed out of the system. There is a need to widen the perspective and explore other solutions.

## Forgotten farmers

Poverty reduction strategies often jump from one extreme to the other, from commercial agricultural production for global markets, to safety nets for the most needy. In between, small farmers, many of them women, have their own flexible strategies. They have been adapting their cropping patterns and diversifying food supply in response to growing demands from urban areas for decades. They have creative and innovative ideas, some more successful than others. Their potential as farmers, as well as their farming logic, deserve far more recognition.

Family farming has evolved into a wide range of location-specific forms, as farmers have responded to different agro-ecological, socio-economic and political conditions. Even with climate change and shaky economic and policy environments, crop production is stable and exports have increased in several West African states. Over 80% of total agricultural production in Africa is consumed locally. 📍 In Brazil, family farmers work on 25% of the agricultural land yet produce 65% of the country's food. In Peru, smallholders control around 90% of farms and produce 60% of total food. Family farming also helps safeguard biodiversity and retain cultural identities. It is hugely beneficial to a country struggling to rebuild itself once war has ended and can serve as a buffer during economic crises.

## Boosting policy support

Given the current global interest in agriculture, now is the time to boost

support for family farming. Political acknowledgement is essential, as are secure access to land, credit, inputs and appropriate mechanization, for example. Where such rights and services are in place, family farmers will develop their own mix of strategies. They can produce with internal and external inputs – for their own consumption, for regional markets and even for international markets – with limited carbon footprints, boosting rather than destroying ecosystem functions.

In Africa and elsewhere, governments need to be confident that small farmers can drive agricultural transformation. National governments need to acknowledge that, with the right conditions, family farmers can boost agricultural development. Neglecting family farming will erode societies and aggravate food and environmental crises.

The future of family farming is about re-humanizing agriculture and about creating more equitable relations between producers, processors, scientists, institutions and consumers. A world where one form of agriculture out-competes others is not sustainable. Any future needs family farming! ■

📖 To read the full text of this article, visit [www.thebrokeronline.eu](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu)

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# On the website

**As we head towards a new year**  
**The Broker website is looking at what**  
**the future holds in 2010 and in the**  
**longer term for development research.**

A recent blog focuses on Europe's international role with contributors including: Dieter Frisch, former director general for development at the European Commission; Martin Dinham, director general international at the UK Department for International Development; Mirjam van Reisen, director of Europe External Policy Advisors; Mikaela Gavvas, research associate at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), UK; and Judith Sargentini, member of European parliament for GroenLinks, the Dutch green party. See page 6 for an overview of the debate.

Bloggers are also discussing financial policies in light of the economic crisis. And a new opinion article on the website examines how technology shapes our daily lives.

## Passing comments

*'Illegal fishing practices by foreign trawlers have serious implications for the livelihoods of West African fishermen... Not only do fishermen at Sekondi-Takoradi harbour return with emptier nets, but increasingly the catch is too small, the fish are too young and should be left in the sea to mature and replenish dwindling stocks'. Jennifer Abuah, in response to 'Fishing for alternatives' (The Broker 16).*

*'I remember in the early 1980s when a French sociologist in Dakar convinced me that Africa is under-populated. But ... isn't it also true that overpopulation is a taboo topic ... I'd appreciate it if The Broker could explore this issue of global over-population'. Peter J. Bury, in a letter to the editor.*

[www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/regulars/blogs](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/regulars/blogs)

By **Louise Stoddard**, web editor

## Number crunching

What policies will help emerging and developing countries solve the problems caused by the current economic crisis? What international financial structure would work in future? In a new blog, we are exploring how the crisis has opened doors to alternative structures and ideas.

Evert-Jan Quak, regular *Broker* contributor and freelance journalist, wrote in his introduction to the blog: *'If we really want to break with the financial and economic practices of the last three decades, what are the alternatives? Isn't it time for an alternative approach to scarcity, sustainability and justice? And isn't it right that developing countries should be part of the solution? A fall in export volume growth, a negative shock in investments, high interest rates, reduced remittances and the fall in commodity prices have already taken their toll in many countries in the South – all caused by the financial crisis, in which they played no part whatsoever... This is the perfect time to discuss what the post-Washington Consensus era should look like'.*

Dirk Willem te Velde, programme leader of the Investment and Growth Programme, ODI argued that: *'A global compact for crisis-resilient growth could help developing countries cushion the impact of crises. Dealing with global problems requires a greater provision of global public goods. Apart from governance reform, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank need sufficient resources to help countries deal with crises. The IMF had sufficient resources to triple lending to low-income countries this year, but what about the next crisis when countries are still repaying the debts of this one? A World Bank International Development Association crisis facility could replace the myriad of approaches so far and reduce specific conditions and buttress growth when the next crisis hits'.*

Arjan de Haan, senior lecturer in social policy at the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague, the Netherlands, maintains that international financial imbalances continue to exist. These did not cause the crisis but are an integral part of the unbalanced system.

Peter van Bergeijk, professor of international economics and macroeconomics at ISS, argued: *'It is true that there are some early signs that world trade may stabilize but the situation is still extremely fragile. So what can we actually do? First-best government action should be aimed at reducing uncertainty per se through strict adherence to conflict settlement procedures or other instruments of economic diplomacy that aim at increasing trust in free trade'.*

[www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/regulars/blogs/Redeveloping-finance](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/regulars/blogs/Redeveloping-finance)

## Look out for

- A new blog, 'Germany at a turning point', examining the new German government, consisting of Christian Democrats and Liberals, which has proposed drastic changes to development policy
- Frans Bieckmann's blog explaining how and why we select articles for inclusion in *The Broker* and why they are important.



Lineair / Ton Schrieder

# Blogs

## Should we adapt to social media?

*The Broker* continues to explore social media for development research. In a recent opinion article, Richard Lalleman, coordinator of the international development web portal, Focuss.info, initiative, shows how technology is increasingly shaping our daily lives as a way to share and create new knowledge – the knowledge we are craving to help us make sense of new situations. He describes why institutes should adopt social media tools to create a social learning environment.

*'I believe – if organizations are letting staff members use social media tools – intranets should move to learning platforms like iGoogle. In such personal learning environments, every person can decide what kind of information should be published on their home page. The information originates from the different social media tools which the staff member likes best.*

*As a result, every staff member has their own personal web portal and, therefore, has access to different information to their colleagues. Eventually, because social media tools are also collaboration tools, every staff member can easily push valuable information from their own personal learning environment to other staff members.'*

We invite readers to submit their thoughts, opinions and reactions to this piece. Janelle Ward, resident blogger for *The Broker* and assistant professor, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands, wrote in response: *'Richard makes a number of interesting observations. He is right to point out the informal nature of communication via social media tools. He takes the optimistic view that social media offer a social learning environment. However, I'd like to point out a number of barriers that organizations may face. First, there is a perceived shift in job descriptions and second, many employees may be concerned with a request to combine personal and professional domains'*.

[www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/articles/Opinion-Social-learning-in-the-21st-century](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/articles/Opinion-Social-learning-in-the-21st-century)

## Fun times



Cartoonist and illustrator Quique (alias Enrique Mendizabal) regularly updates his blog on the website with images and thoughts from his work as a research fellow at ODI. Recent cartoons look at development and aid issues in Nigeria, Vietnam and Antigua, and a researcher's ability to identify and stick with policy problems.

[www.thebrokeronline.eu/Enrique-Mendizabal](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/Enrique-Mendizabal)

## Innovations dialogue

In early December 2009, *The Broker* will blog from the conference 'Innovation Dialogue on Being Strategic in the Face of Complexity' at Wageningen University, the Netherlands. The pre-conference blog has been running for some weeks. Pepijn Jansen, working for the capacity development and institutional change programme, Wageningen International, will report from the conference, which will deal with issues of complexity, strategic change and alternatives to linear ways of planning.

[www.thebrokeronline.eu/Strategy-and-Complexity](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/Strategy-and-Complexity)

## Earth system governance

The Amsterdam conference on the human dimensions of global environmental change is being held on 2-4 December 2009. *The Broker* is running a blog with reports from the sessions, video interviews and guest contributions. See page 8 for the feature article on this topic.

[www.thebrokeronline.eu/Navigating-the-Anthropocene](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/Navigating-the-Anthropocene)

## Resident blogger Thea Hilhorst's recent postings focus on her experiences as a guest lecturer at Columbia University in New York and a recent trip to Palestine.



*'The military are watching and never intervene, except when a Palestinian talks back. While standing in the market we were actually shot at! A*

*small boy, hanging from a window above us, shot with his play gun loaded with little stones... Hatred here is not a latent feeling but a 24/7 active engagement! Our Palestinian guides are highly aware of the sad reality that we only really want to acknowledge what happens when we experience it ourselves. They patiently show little groups of visitors around ... hoping that one by one they will muster a more substantive support base'.*

[www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/regulars/blogs/Thea-Hilhorst](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/regulars/blogs/Thea-Hilhorst)

## Janelle Ward continues to discuss web 2.0 tools and asks why organizations become involved with social networking. Is it to broadcast ideas to a new audience or simply for marketing purposes?



*'Organizations don't always think through how to implement their goals before becoming active (or inactive) on sites like*

*Facebook. Social media were created to bring people together, not just serve as another sounding board for an organization's current activities. And even if organizations do encourage engagement, it often falls on deaf ears. It seems the greatest challenge is putting the 'social' into social media.*

[www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/regulars/blogs/Janelle-Ward](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/regulars/blogs/Janelle-Ward)

What next after the Lisbon Treaty?

# Europe's moment of truth

**Nationalist tendencies make one fear that the supposedly progressive influence of the European Union internationally will come to nothing. We asked Otto Homan to reflect on *The Broker's* recent blogs on Europe's future.**

**A**fter reading the opinion piece, 'Shaping Europe's international role', by Paul Engel *et al* (*The Broker* 16), and reactions to it on the website, it occurred to me that writing about the European Union's (EU) international role is no easy task. Every blogger concentrated on European development policy. Some were critical, a few managed to reason beyond the institutional implications of the Lisbon Treaty and even fewer (if any) referred to previous contributions. The debate fell on deaf ears.

The bloggers were bold and forthright in their comments, despite these omissions. The EU as a 'progressive force' was never substantiated, however, and calls for a strong commissioner were unconvincing. The optimism over the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty was unfounded. For instance, bloggers mentioned the European External Action Service (which will serve as a foreign ministry for the EU) as an institutional novelty that could have positive effects on integrating the different components of the EU's external relations, suggesting, in the process, 'good news' for the developing world.

'Who are we kidding', to borrow Judith Sargentini's words? Sargentini is European member of parliament for GroenLinks, the Dutch Green party. In my view, praise for the Lisbon Treaty is rather premature, particularly in terms of shaping Europe's international role. The suggestion that people outside the EU will have a clearer idea who to call if they want to talk to Europe is misleading, if not wrong.

The European Council is arguably the most powerful European institution and Herman Van Rompuy, its new

president, is from Belgium. An Indian diplomat has warned that if the new President came from a smaller member state, diplomats would glance at their diaries and say we cannot find time to meet.

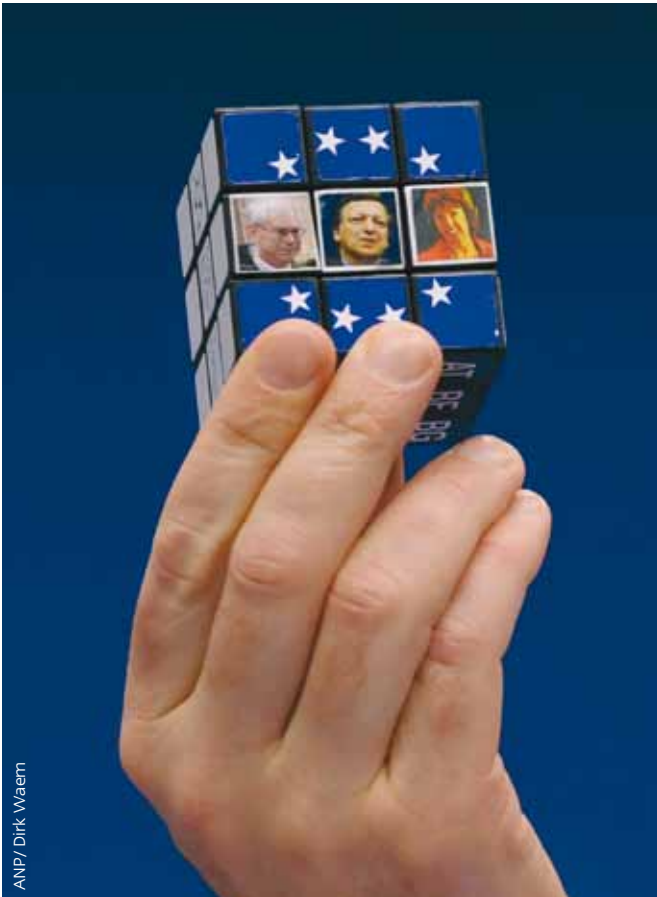
In addition, the 'organizational mess in the area of development policy' (I fully agree here with Dieter Frisch, former director general for development at the European Commission) will not go away after the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, unless development is subordinated to other areas of the EU's external relations, notably security and trade. Rob van Drimmelen, general secretary, the Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organizations in Europe, seems to imply this, if I have understood correctly, when he refers to a possible paradigm shift.

The new mantra of the Commission consists of three buzzwords: knowledge, security and leadership. An outward strategy that actively promotes the EU's role in global governance is currently at the top of the Commission's agenda. The focus is no longer on making the EU the world's most competitive economy (the knowledge economy) but on trying to enhance its leading role by attacking all kinds of new external security threats – real and imagined – from global warming and energy security to global food crises.

## **A new role for Europe?**

The Commission suggests, for example, a role for Europe in line with the civilian or 'soft' power capabilities attributed to it: 'The EU is in a unique position to respond to the impacts of climate change on international security, given its leading role in development, global climate policy and the wide array of tools and instruments at its disposal. Moreover, the security challenge plays to Europe's strengths, with its comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, crisis

By **Otto Holman**, reader in international relations and European politics, Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.



ANP/Dirk Waern

management and post-conflict reconstruction, and as a key proponent of effective multilateralism'.<sup>13</sup>

One way to interpret such sweeping statements is to assess the EU's possible role as a global actor. The EU possesses the necessary political and economic ingredients to lead the world in tackling these so-called security problems. Another way to look at it would be to start with the current governance crisis in the EU itself. This would suggest a new meaning for the EU's alleged 'expectations-capabilities' gap.

Simple statistics illustrate the reassertion of national governments *vis-à-vis* transnational and supranational governance. Governments bailed out their banks at the national level primarily to protect national interests. National governments then spent their way out of the financial crisis. The result – skyrocketing public finance deficits, which could reach 7.5% of gross domestic product in 2010 for the EU as a whole. Unemployment will probably increase from 9.1% in 2009 to 10.3% in 2010, despite government demand steering. The combination of these forecasts is explosive. The return of governance as usual – back to competitive austerity – will not be possible without heavy social costs. The alternative solution – postponing measures in accordance with the level playing field of the single market or in line with the stability and growth pact – will tear down some of the key building blocks of the European economic and monetary union.

The soft power expectations illustrated above are no longer in line with the EU's capability to uphold a degree of internal social cohesion. It is not clear whether the Commission has taken on board this new reality. In a recent address to the French senate, enlargement commissioner Olli Rehn argued that the EU should build on its internal strength to gain external power. But this internal strength is seen in terms of the new institutional architecture of the Lisbon Treaty rather than in terms of cohesion. The underlying assumption that this treaty will strengthen the EU's external performance is doubtful, as we have seen. How diverse can a 'union in diversity' become before it lacks credible power, soft or otherwise, to the outside world?

### Wake-up call

Even more embarrassing to read are the EU commissioner José Manuel Barroso's guidelines for the next commission.<sup>14</sup> He bluntly states that for Europe, 'this is a moment of truth. Europe has to answer a decisive question. Do we want to lead, shaping globalization on the basis of our values and our interests, or will we leave the initiative to others and accept an outcome shaped by them? The alternatives are clear. A stark choice has to be made. Either Europeans accept to face this challenge together – or else we slide towards irrelevance'.

We should not rule out, however, the possibility that the idea of transcending European governance in order to play a leadership role in global governance has, in fact, entered the belief system of European elites. Even some academics in European integration studies have considered this possibility, albeit in a less normative way. But it would be dangerously wrong to think – or hope, as some of the bloggers do – that this leadership role would be beneficial to the developing world, that a new 'policy coherence' would correct the 'most blatant incoherencies' between EU development policies and other policy areas (notably agriculture and trade).

If coherence is to be the future outcome of today's deliberations (and we should remember there has been much talk about integrated approaches, at least since the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999), it will be in the form of a self-interested subordination of development to security. In any case, the EU, coherent or not, will not be taking on a leading role due to its own internal crisis. The Lisbon Treaty will not change anything in this respect. ■

<sup>13</sup> To contribute to the blog on Europe visit [www.thebrokeronline.eu](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu)

- 
- Barroso, José Manuel (2009) *Political Guidelines for the Next Commission*
  - European Commission (2009) *European Economic Forecast: Autumn 2009*, European Economy: Brussels
  - European Commission (2008) *Climate Change and International Security*. Paper from the High Representative and the European Commission to the European Council, Brussels

# Managing global change

Humans have transformed the planet beyond recognition, and the institutions and governance mechanisms regulating our relationship with the natural environment cannot cope. New, integrated systems of governance, from local to global levels, are needed to ensure the sustainable development of the planet.

The Earth system is changing rapidly due to human activity. The atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide has increased by a third since pre-industrial times and average global temperatures are rising. Damage to the ozone layer has increased ultraviolet radiation. Marine resources are shrinking and human-made persistent chemicals have spread throughout the world's ecosystems. Human activity has had a negative impact on most other species.

This means that the institutions, organizations and governance mechanisms by which human societies regulate their relationship with the natural environment cannot ensure the sustainable development of the socio-ecological system the earth has become. A new concept or paradigm – earth system governance – describes the political challenges ahead and outlines the main problems that research on earth system governance is facing.

Earth system governance relates to political debates on contemporary governance. Although 'governance' is poorly defined in the social sciences, it usually refers to new forms of regulation rather than traditional hierarchical state activity. It also implies self-regulation, private-public cooperation and new forms of multilevel policy. Earth system governance is not confined to the state: public and private non-state actors, ranging from networks of experts, environmentalists and multinational corporations, to government agencies, are involved at all levels of decision-making.

### Five core issues

What issues do researchers and practitioners working in earth system governance need to tackle? The Earth System

By **Ruben Zondervan**, executive officer, Earth System Governance Project, International Human Dimensions Programme (IHDP), Bonn, Germany, and **Frank Biermann**, chair, Earth System Governance Project and professor of political science and environmental policy sciences, VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

### summary

- The organizations and mechanisms by which humans govern their relationship with the natural environment and global biogeochemical systems are not only inadequate, they are also poorly understood.
- New types of governance systems – earth system governance – are needed to cope with the negative impacts of human activities and achieve a sustainable co-evolution of humans and nature.
- Earth system governance implies a transformation towards integrated governance systems that include people, places, networks and organizations at all levels.
- Earth system governance research is pertinent to many public policy areas such as reforming the UN, making sense of the multiple agreements that are failing to tackle climate change and ensuring accountability and legitimacy at every level.

Governance Project, a major component of the global change research community, has identified five core problems that need addressing: architecture, agency, adaptation, accountability and allocation of, and access to resources.

### Architecture

What we do not yet fully understand is the macro-level, the architecture of earth system governance – the interlocking web of principles, institutions and practices that shape decision-making at all levels. Nor do we fully understand the interaction between treaties and rules. How is the performance of environmental institutions affected by being part of larger architectures? What are the environmental consequences of non-environmental governance systems, such as the world trade system? We also need to understand non-governance better. Why, for example, are there no institutions, or only weak ones, in some areas that, nonetheless, face major problems?

Most research has focused on single entities, such as particular treaties and how helpful they are. Our



No longer just ships of the desert? Residents of Sehwan, Pakistan, move their camels to safety during the floods of July 2007.

understanding of international environmental regimes has improved and we have better tools to study them. We know, for example, that international standards, verification procedures, compliance management systems, as well as external factors – such as the structure of the problem – all influence regime effectiveness.

Take climate refugees. By 2050, more than 200 million people may have become refugees due to the adverse impact of climate change on their livelihoods: the expected rise in sea levels threatens the existence of some low-lying island states, for example. Climate refugees are not included in the existing UN refugee regime. Some argue the UN Security Council has a role to play here, given the potential threat to security and stability; others favour an amendment to the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, or a separate, independent legal and political regime under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

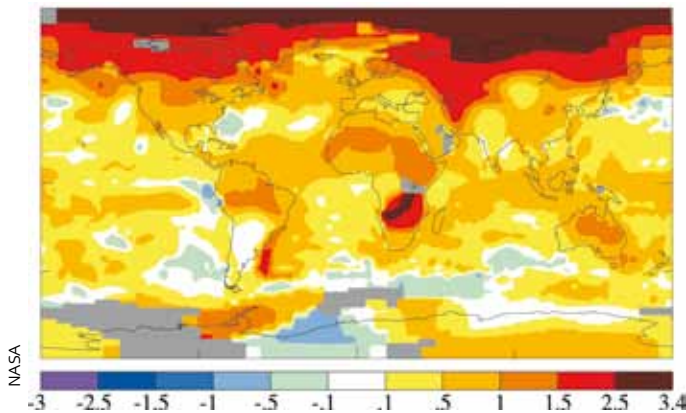
The quest for an overarching architecture of earth system governance is thus closely related to policy. Recent debates on strengthening the UN system and proposals to set up a ‘world environment organization’ or a ‘UN environment organization’ are two examples.

#### Agency

We need to understand the role of private and non-state actors better, including private and public-private

governance mechanisms, increasingly relevant in governance processes at local and global levels. Many important institutions include or are driven by actors beyond national governments – by environmentalist alliances, business associations, scientific networks or intergovernmental bureaucracies such as the secretariat of the climate convention at the centre of the negotiations in Copenhagen in December 2009. A good example of the new influence scientific networks are having is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that, through its scientific assessment reports, has become a strong agent in discussions and negotiations concerning climate change.

Non-state actors are not confined to lobbying or advising governments on creating and implementing international rules. Increasingly, they are participating in global institutions and negotiating their own standards. For example, large corporations and environmental advocacy groups established the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), which sets standards without government involvement. Public-private cooperation has received considerable impetus since the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development focused on partnerships (between governments, NGOs and the private sector). As with the FSC, Partnerships for Sustainable Development emerged at a time when states were unable to secure binding international agreements to resolve environmental problems. ➤



Earth system transformation: 2005 was the warmest year on record.

Some private institutions, however, seem less driven by weak public action and more by the incentive that voluntary private regulations could be a mechanism to avoid stricter government regulation. Again, we need to understand how effective such public-private or private initiatives really are.

### Adaptation

Current initiatives to mitigate global environmental change are too little, too late. Climate change, in particular, is unavoidable. We have to complement (not replace) the focus on mitigation with a focus on adaptation. Not surprisingly, adaptation is high on the agenda of the climate negotiations in Copenhagen. Adaptation measures, and in particular their funding, may well become as debated as emission reduction targets are for mitigating climate change.

Global environmental change places new burdens on the state. The millions of expected climate change refugees, for example, are likely to raise concerns on national security. Increased scarcity of water resources, falling agricultural yields and the many other negative impacts of climate change may hamper the creation or maintenance of minimal social conditions. A new type of governance – a state that can adapt internally and externally to significant transformations of its natural environment – is needed.

Hurricane Katrina, which destroyed large parts of New Orleans in 2005, is an example of the type of challenge that even the richest countries of the world may face in coping with extreme events. That the US National Guard had to restore public order in New Orleans shows that adaptation is not just about technical measures such as building adequate flood defences.

Governance systems need to be flexible in adapting and reacting to incremental changes in nature and to extreme events like Hurricane Katrina. The uneven geographic distribution of the consequences of climate change, and the massive resources needed to pay for adaptation measures, mean that poor countries are disadvantaged on both counts and require support.

### Accountability

The stronger earth system governance institutions become, the more questions will be raised concerning accountability and legitimacy. Stakeholders need to see that governance is legitimate: its actions and representatives must be accountable to their constituencies. The legitimacy of international negotiations and agreements, where international diplomats shape international conventions and agreements with little direct involvement of the parliaments and civil society in their home countries, is often described as weak.

Some see a special role here for large NGOs with global reach. Approximately 1300 civil society organizations have observer status at, for example, the climate change conference in Copenhagen in December 2009. The question then arises: how accountable and legitimate are these private actors?

At the national level, environmental advocacy groups can ensure legitimacy through their members or donors. Internationally, however, it is more complicated, given the wide disparities in the wealth and power of private actors. Most philanthropic organizations are based in industrialized countries and funded by them. With the high financial costs of participation in global policy processes, giving more rights and responsibilities to non-state actors in earth system governance could also privilege representatives of industry and business over other groups, in particular those in developing countries.

Financial support for non-state representatives from developing countries could be a mechanism to vouchsafe a balance of opinions and perspectives. The North-South quotas required in meetings of non-state activists within the UN Commission on Sustainable Development are one way to achieve this. Another way to include non-state actors from poorer nations could be by institutionalizing their participation. The Commission on Global Governance has proposed, for example, setting up an international forum

### Earth System Governance Project

The Earth System Governance Project is an international, interdisciplinary social science research project under the auspices of the IHDP, Bonn, Germany. Established in October 2008, it will run until 2018. The project carries out fundamental and applied research on the interrelated and increasingly integrated systems of formal and informal rules, rule-making systems and actor networks at all levels of human society set up to steer societies towards preventing, mitigating and adapting to global and local environmental change. The project is particularly concerned with earth system transformation within the context of sustainable development. It was also designed as the central nodal point within the global change research programmes to guide, organize and evaluate their various project activities. While essentially a scientific effort, the project also assists in formulating policy responses to today's pressing problems of earth system transformation.



Alamy / Ville Palonen

*High and dry: a fishing boat at Moynaq, formerly a port on the shrinking Aral Sea, Uzbekistan.*

for civil society within the UN to bringing together around 600 self-selected ‘organs of global civil society’.

#### **Allocation and access**

Earth system governance must address the question of how to allocate costs and benefits – in financial terms as well as in terms of changing the quality and quantity of resources and ecosystem services. Politics is about distribution, and earth system governance is no different. This is particularly pertinent for the relationship between developing and industrialized countries, which has caused disagreement in many areas of earth system governance, such as global climate and forestry policies. 🗳️ Developing countries naturally demand stronger action from the richer nations that caused the current climate change in the first place, while refusing, for now, to agree to their own quantified commitments. However, with China agreeing to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and following an EU summit in

October 2009, which recognized that developed countries need to support developing countries financially to adapt to climate change, disagreements could gradually be resolved.

The disagreements are not just between the North and South. While China seems ready to commit to some greenhouse gas reductions, India and many other developing countries appear more hesitant. While the EU agreed on the need for financial support, some eastern European countries rejected the suggested contribution principle, based on actual emissions, favouring a principle based on economic strength. The United States has to deal with the tension between President Barak Obama’s commitment to reducing emissions targets and the political feasibility of ratifying and implementing a binding international agreement.

Compensation for the adverse impacts of climate change and support through the global community for those in the worst affected and most vulnerable regions, such as small



### Global Environmental Change Research

At the first Global Change Open Science Conference in Amsterdam in 2001, participants from more than 100 countries signed the Amsterdam Declaration on Global Change. This called for stronger cooperation between the global environmental research programmes and for greater integration across disciplines, environmental and development issues and the natural and social sciences. The declaration also called for greater collaboration across national boundaries and increased efforts to involve scientists from developing countries. In response, the four international global environmental change research programmes – DIVERSITAS, an international programme of biodiversity science, the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, IHDP and the World Climate Research Programme – formed the Earth System Science Partnership. Under this umbrella, the research examines the structure and functioning of the earth system including changes taking place and their implications for global and regional sustainability.

island states, will not only be a moral responsibility. It will also be politically and economically prudent.

Mechanisms for allocation already exist in environmental governance. Finance for adaptation and mitigation can be assigned through inter-governmental agreements and implemented using public funds. The 1990 London amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, for example, saw the creation of a multilateral fund to reimburse the agreed incremental costs to developing countries of implementing the treaty. 📖 The Global Environment Facility has a similar function. Alternatively, mitigation and adaptation costs can be allocated through market-based mechanisms. The trade in mitigation obligations through emissions certificates under the Kyoto Protocol is an example here.

Despite the importance of allocation, research in this field is scarce. Empirical work would substantiate the more policy-oriented, philosophical treatises on equity. Social scientists and decision-makers need to explore new allocation mechanisms and criteria.

Earth system governance, as a particular research area within social sciences, needs to connect with other relevant social science areas and the natural sciences. While traditional science builds on developing and testing theories and hypotheses based on experience, earth system governance is inherently future-oriented and relies on new forms of research, evidence and knowledge. It also has to cope with intrinsic uncertainty: we do not know what systems and outcomes future generations will want. Research on earth system governance will often be interdisciplinary, international and multi-scale. This must be reflected in research management that can support and stimulate cooperation between disciplines, research traditions and scholars with different geographic backgrounds. The new global alliance of earth system governance research centres has been designed to cope with this major research challenge.

### A new global system

Earth system governance is beginning to appear as a political issue. More than 900 international environmental agreements are already in force; many harmful substances, such as chlorofluorocarbons, are now no longer in use thanks to international cooperation; and climate change mitigation and adaptation projects are mushrooming. Yet greenhouse gas emissions now exceed the most pessimistic scenarios developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The institutions, organizations and governance mechanisms through which we tackle not only climate change but other environmental problems are clearly inadequate.

Building a global, effective architecture for earth system governance that can adapt to changing circumstances, that involves civil society, that is accountable and legitimate beyond the nation state and that is fair for everyone, is a daunting research and governance agenda. ■

📖 To join the debate on the human dimensions of global environmental change, visit [www.thebrokeronline.eu/Navigating-the-Anthropocene](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/Navigating-the-Anthropocene)

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- Earth System Science Partnership: [www.essp.org](http://www.essp.org)
- International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change: [www.ihdp.org](http://www.ihdp.org)

### Global alliance of earth system governance research centres

Earth system governance needs to be studied through cooperation between scientists from different disciplines, research areas and world regions. Research groups affiliated to the Earth System Governance Project have therefore set up a global alliance of earth system governance research centres. It currently includes: the VU University Amsterdam; the Australian National University; Chiang Mai University, Thailand; Colorado State University, USA; Lund University, Sweden; Oldenburg University, Germany; the Stockholm Resilience Centre, Sweden; and the Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan. The alliance is exploring setting up partnerships with leading institutes in China, India and Brazil. It is organizing a series of global conferences and the first is in Amsterdam in 2009 on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change. The Alliance also relies on an international network of around 100 associated faculty members and research fellows.

# Cities of the world unite



A city with clout. 'Fist' of Boxer, Joe Louis, New York.

**B**y 2030, nearly 60% of the world's population will live in cities. Megacities with over 10 million inhabitants are appearing in developing countries and will include Cairo, Dhaka, Jakarta, Lagos and Mumbai within 20 years. The implications for slum dwellers are devastating.

The alternative climate summit for mayors in Copenhagen in December 2009 aims to put cities at the top of the climate change agenda. The summit's message to heads of state, the media and citizens is that cities and local governments have a crucial role to play given they are responsible for up to 80% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: they can and will act. Indeed, cities are already devising innovative approaches to mitigating and reversing the impacts of global climate change.

In this special report, Janne Nijman shows how cities are stepping up to the mark. City governments and their communities are participating in global processes. No longer simply places where people live and where businesses and services are based, cities are networking and collaborating with governments and organizations at a transnational level to deal with climate change, pollution, social inequality and so on. Cities

are carving out a new role for themselves as independent global actors.

How are cities coping with the huge challenges thrown up by globalization, such as climate change and poverty, so glaringly evident within city borders? They are adopting a pioneering role, writes Sofie Bouteligier. Although the cause of many of today's environmental problems, cities are striving to be part of the solution.

Mayors and local city governments recognize their responsibilities and are leading the way in tackling environmental problems. They are forming powerful networks and sharing information and experience. The climate summit for mayors in Copenhagen shows that cities are beginning to make a difference at a global level. In a city-centred world, they can no longer make do working at the provincial or national levels. Good urban governance now means cities must develop transnational relations and act in the global arena.

To read the full versions of these articles, visit [www.thebrokeronline.eu](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu)

# The rising influence of urban actors

**It is time to recognize cities as global actors. City networks are reaching across the globe and local city governments are collaborating on crucial environmental issues. Coordinating policy at a local level, they are increasingly taking the lead in tackling global problems such as climate change.**

City governments are increasingly operating at an international level. They are responding to the negative impacts of globalization and taking up an independent global governance role to balance the economic forces influencing urban development. In December 2009, city delegations from around the world are gathering in Copenhagen for the UN climate change conference. Cities will lobby governments as they negotiate a new climate deal. They will also hold a parallel city summit. It seems that cities – their governments and their communities – are seeking ways to participate in global processes that have a knock-on effect *within* city borders.

Globalization has many implications for cities. Globalization affects cities everywhere. Globalization takes place *in* our cities: it has a *locus*, a place. Saskia Sassen, professor of sociology at Columbia University, USA, and the London School of Economics, UK, coined the term ‘global city’. Her work reconnects globalization with ‘place’ and grounds it in urban locality. Sassen writes about a network of ‘global cities’ – London, New York, São Paulo, Tokyo and Amsterdam – where globalization processes are local and concrete, controlled by city-based multinational corporations and legal and financial services. Globalization has to take place in *globally-connected* cities, Sassen believes. The global city is the funnel for financial-economic globalization and a crucial hub in the global economy, by definition functioning within the global network of strategic sites.

Sassen asks: ‘Why does it matter to recover place in analyses of global economy, particularly place as constituted in major cities? Because it allows us to see the multiplicity of economies and work cultures in which the global information economy is embedded. It also allows us to recover the concrete, localized processes through which globalization exists and to argue that much of the multiculturalism in large cities is as much a part of globalization as is international finance’.

Global city research initially focused on developed countries but with globalization it now includes developing countries. How is globalization impacting on developing nations? Does the global city idea apply to Cairo, Shanghai or cities in sub-Saharan Africa?

Global cities function as corporate sites from where powerful businesses control capital and labour flows. This provokes cities and their governments to advocate for (public) power, sustainability and justice within their borders. City governments are taking action: they feel empowered by their role within the global economy and react to the local impacts of globalization. Cities are gradually becoming *agents* of change within global governance structures.

The 21st century is the century of urbanization and the pressure on cities will increase. It seems certain that urbanization is integral to globalization. Today, over 50% of the world’s population lives in cities; by 2030 this figure will rise to 60% and by 2050 70% will live in cities. Urbanization is a global phenomenon but is taking place more rapidly in Africa and Asia than anywhere else.

The key challenge of the 21st century, according to the UN, will be ‘to make both globalization and urbanization work for all the world’s people, instead of benefiting only a few’. For this to happen, cities will have to change their urban spaces, services and infrastructure and governance arrangements to accommodate a massive influx of people. As the latest global

## Future figures

By 2025, the urban population in developing regions is expected to increase annually by 53 million (2.27%), compared with 3 million (0.49%) in developed countries. New megacities (over 10 million people) and hyper cities (over 20 million) will also emerge. Most new urban growth, however, will occur in smaller, often institutionally weak, settlements of between 100,000 and 250,000 people. Megacities are now appearing in developing countries and by 2025 the list will include Cairo, Dhaka, Jakarta, Karachi, Lagos and Mumbai. Mega and hypercities will be the city-states of the 21st century. In developing countries, urbanization usually goes hand in hand with extreme poverty: by 2030, over 2 billion people will be living in slums.

By **Janne Nijman**, senior lecturer and researcher at the International Law Department, University of Amsterdam and research fellow at the Amsterdam Centre for International Law, the Netherlands.



City planners hope to build this 600-metre-high ecosystem to feed the population of New York, USA.

report on human settlements from UN-Habitat argues, new forms of urban planning will be an indispensable tool for city governments. 📖 The 'market' philosophy that has pushed planning into the margins of urban governance cannot solve today's global problems: pollution, poverty, social instability and inequality, which are most acutely felt in the most densely populated cities. These challenges are acting as a wake-up call to cities and their governments to fight climate change and help achieve the Millennium Development Goals, to participate more actively and more independently in global governance structures. In short, to take control.

Decentralization is also contributing to cities' ability to carve out a niche for themselves within the global order. Local autonomy is a popular governance stance among European governments and international organizations such as the World Bank and UN. Cities and international organizations are advocating local autonomy, thereby strengthening local democracy and contributing to a gradual transformation of global governance structures. Cities all over the world, for example, have joined forces in the NGO, United Cities and Local Governments (see box right).

### Cities take centre stage

Cities are redefining their role *vis à vis* global governance. This is increasingly visible in three areas:

- transnational inter-city relations
- interactions between local governments and global institutions
- international law.

### Transnational inter-city relations

'International relations' are no longer exclusive to states. Major cities such as Amsterdam, Atlanta, Beijing, Kyoto,

Johannesburg, New York, Pretoria, Seattle, Shanghai and Taganrog have established international relations or foreign affairs offices. Their responsibilities include trade missions, foreign investments, development cooperation, cultural exchanges and the city's 'foreign policy', as well as their relations with global institutions such as the UN, NGOs and city networks. Some have even set up missions abroad: the Yokohama-Mumbai liaison office represents the government of the city of Yokohama in Mumbai in order to support Japanese business there and to attract Indian investment to Yokohama.

The growing bilateral cooperation between cities builds on twinning or sister cities, particularly popular in China and Australia, because it supposedly accommodates the

### United Cities and Local Governments

UCLG represents cities within global institutions, most notably within UN organizations. It has influenced UN-Habitat, in particular, to promote decentralization as a core element of good governance. UCLG, UN-Habitat and the Advisory Group of Experts on Decentralization (AGRED) were involved in drafting the guidelines on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities to promote good governance at all levels and to strengthen local authorities. Decentralization paves the way for democracy and political participation and acts as a counterbalance to globalization. 'Cities and towns hold the potential to maximize the benefits and to offset the negative consequences of globalization', according to UN-Habitat. Global cities are standing up and claiming a role for themselves in multi-level global governance, in this rapidly globalizing and urbanizing world.





Hollandse Hoogte / Solent News

Dubai ordered the design of Ziggurat, a futuristic 100% self-sufficient city.

Confucian principle of *guanxi* – relationships as the basis for doing business – and facilitates market entry. Chinese cities (and Asian cities in general) are particularly active in seeking ‘sister cities’ for economically strategic alliances.

Wilbur Zelinsky, emeritus professor at Pennsylvania State University, writes of ‘an emphatic positive correlation between number (and probably intensity) of twinnings and level of socio-economic development at both the intra- and international scale, as well as an apparent inverse relationship between size of place and level of local interest’. And for sustainable sister-city relations, it has been pointed out that ‘municipal-community entrepreneurship’ is needed, a mix of city government and (business) community action.<sup>15</sup>

Cities are increasingly organizing transnational cooperation through multilateral city networks, notably in relation to climate change and sustainable development. Exchange of information and sharing best practices is an important objective, as is obtaining clout with regional and global institutions. The Asian Network of Major Cities 21 aims ‘to strengthen Asian identity and enhance the importance of Asia in the international community by strengthening bonds and cooperation amongst major Asian cities... to enable major fellow Asian cities to mutually share their knowledge and experience of common problems ... to make it possible for the positive outcomes of these projects to be fed back to regions, citizens and companies... which will in turn contribute to social and economic development in Asia’. Likewise, Eurocities aims to influence and cooperate with EU institutions.

#### **Local governments and global institutions**

Global institutions and major cities collaborate closely on international law and global policy, bypassing the state. The World Health Organization – the ‘network-maker’ – in its Zagreb declaration of 2008, put out a plea for a city government representative to participate in member state delegations. And Cities Alliances is an organization in which

cities represented by UCLG and bilateral and multilateral development agencies work together to eliminate city slums. UNICEF has developed the child-friendly cities initiative to help local governments take the lead in implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and sets out how urban governance can conform to it.

UNESCO also works directly with city networks, including the Creative Cities Network, which focuses on cultural, social and economic development, and the International Coalition of Cities against Racism and Discrimination. The latter was launched in 2008 to bring together UNESCO’s city networks and help them to implement international law and the resolutions and declarations of international organizations promising to fight discrimination. Such initiatives add to the growing evidence that international organizations view direct relations with cities and local authorities as crucial in implementing the global values and standards they are obliged to promote on a global scale. Without the active involvement of local authorities, this hardly seems possible.

In 2004, the Cardoso panel on UN-Civil Society Relations, proposed by Kofi Annan, the former UN secretary general, made a number of pertinent proposals. The UN General Assembly should debate a resolution ‘affirming and respecting local autonomy as a universal principle’. It also proposed greater involvement by local authorities in UN processes. It suggested that the ‘Elected Representative Liaison Unit (proposal 16) should liaise with local authorities and their new world association [UCLG] and disseminate lessons of good practice’. The panel considered the UCLG ‘an important conduit for representing people at the local level in the system of global governance’. The panel also proposed that: ‘the United Nations should regard UCLG as an advisory body on governance matters’ (proposal 18). In this vision of global governance, local governments are understood as vehicles of democracy and ‘good governance’ in a rapidly globalizing and urbanizing world. Such explicit

support for local self-governance and the inclusion of local authorities in UN processes may empower city governments.

### **International law**

Through their partnerships with international organizations, city governments are increasingly involved in implementing international standards, as seen above. They also influence international law-making processes to ensure they mirror local circumstances and local interests more faithfully. Climate change and environmental governance is a good example. Agenda 21 is the global action plan on sustainable development for the 21st century, agreed at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It called on local governments to develop local agendas for sustainable development with and for local communities. Chapter 28 stipulates that without the participation of local governments, the Agenda's objectives cannot be fulfilled. City governments have observer status at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations in Copenhagen in December 2009, and will try to influence the outcome and push states to agree on 'higher' goals.

'International local government law' is another example.👉 International law is traditionally created by states and binding upon states alone. International standards for local governments are new. The UCLG guidelines, discussed above, aim to improve urban governance and drive the Habitat Agenda and Millennium Development Goals in cities through decentralization and local self-government. Drafted by UN-Habitat and AGRED, in close collaboration with UCLG, the guidelines were subsequently adopted by the governing council of UN-Habitat, a subsidiary of the UN General Assembly. Cities, as represented by UCLG, were therefore directly involved in creating a document of international law.

Cities are using international organizations to strengthen their autonomy in relation to the state, at the same time as asserting a position on a par with the UN and international processes of global governance. By collaborating at the global governance level they bypass the central state, with potentially far-reaching consequences for the global order as we know it today.

Global cities are nodes in a network of (economic) globalization – they are global actors competing within the international economy for investments, jobs and creative people. Their inputs, however, have shifted from an economic role to an increasingly political or administrative one. Bilaterally, cities are developing transnational relations with other cities. Multilaterally, in global city networks, they join forces, find solutions for global problems and work towards common goals. City networks, inter-city or based on partnerships with international or supra-national organizations, connect city governments. Cities are becoming actors, rather than the physical places from which the highly developed service companies of Sassen's 'global city network' command and control globalization.

Some may doubt this new role as a mere marketing ploy or view city governors' international trips as excuses for a

holiday. An alternative reading, however, may perceive the political resilience of cities and the powerful contributions they can make. City governments communicating across international boundaries, exchanging information and best practice, and sharing common objectives are emerging as agents in their own right – adding significantly and innovatively to global governance.

It is time to recognize cities as global actors. City networks are increasingly reaching across the globe. Local governments cooperate in global networks on climate change or energy targets; they can also coordinate local policy developments and take the lead in tackling global problems. A new level of transnational, inter-city cooperation has emerged.

How does this work in practice? City governments implement global policy targets locally and play a crucial role in grounding global policy decisions and international law in reality. They are also independent global actors, increasingly involved in the 'bottom-up' creation of global policies and international laws.

The city's role in global governance is complex. The city presents and identifies itself as an actor responding to the city's position as a 'site' within the grid of the global economy. Cities generate political and moral standards that may counterbalance the economic role globalization has forced upon them. It is too early to tell whether they will succeed. Undoubtedly, though, the new role of city governments within global governance structures brings much-needed vitality and new opportunities to international life. ■

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  - UN-Habitat (2007) *International Guidelines on Decentralization and the Strengthening of Local Authorities*
  - Globalization and World Cities Research Network [www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc)

### **Local-global partnerships**

*'Global and local matters are more intertwined than ever before. Where once many problems were the sole domain of national governments, today they can be tackled only by partnerships that involve central governments, the private sector, civil society and local authorities – and often international institutions, too. So we will need you to do your part both as local managers and as some of your country's most influential politicians. We will also need your national leaders and governments to give you the space to act. A state which treats local authorities as partners, and allows public tasks to be carried out by those closest to the citizens, will be stronger, not weaker.'*

— Former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, speaking to mayors and local governors at the United Cities and Local Governments summit in September 2005.

# Cities break new ground

**Cities are taking the lead in tackling global environmental problems locally. They form international networks to try to influence global politics and collaborate to share information and best practices.**

Cities are at the source of many of today's global environmental problems. They also have an important role to play in finding innovative solutions. Cities face severe environmental stresses given they accommodate over half the world's population but only take up 2% of the earth's surface. The concentration of people and their activities – of production and consumption processes – leads to pollution and environmental degradation that require urgent actions to ensure sustainable living.

Several mayors and local government organizations have stated that they recognize their responsibility and will lead the way in tackling environmental problems. But what does this mean in practice? What are cities doing to pioneer global environmental governance? Why do they want to do this? Is their contribution really making a difference at the global level?

On 16 February 2005, the day the Kyoto protocol came into force in 141 countries, the mayor of Seattle launched the idea that at least 141 US local governments should commit to the Kyoto targets, as a response to the non-ratification of the protocol by the federal government. The US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement received 600 signatures by July 2007. Today, 1004 local governments across 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have signed. US mayors promised to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 7% (or more) below 1990 levels by 2012, thus recognizing the target in the Kyoto protocol. They also urged the federal and state governments to endorse policies and programmes that strive for the same goal.

US cities opposing the Bush administration on climate change triggered a debate on the role of cities as 'norm entrepreneurs' in global environmental governance. Yet this is not the only way in which local governments in America have expressed their views and acted on climate change. Others include the Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) climate protection campaign (see box right) and the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (see box on page 19).

Cities taking up the mantle of global environmental governance and going beyond what their national

governments are doing is not confined to the United States. This is a global trend which includes strong positioning and concrete projects. Joint achievements are highly visible: local collective action can have far-reaching consequences and a wide influence globally.

## Local city initiatives

Barcelona broke new ground in 2000 with its 'solar thermal ordinance', which requires owners of residential and commercial buildings to generate 60% of their hot water needs from solar energy. These led to reduced CO2 emissions of more than 4300 tonnes per year and therefore lower energy bills. The Barcelona initiative prompted national legislation on solar energy and Seville, Madrid and others have followed suit, establishing even more stringent regulations.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems in Latin America have inspired other cities to develop similar public transport infrastructure. Curitiba in Brazil and Bogotá in Colombia have paved the way with their former political leaders acting

## Cities campaign for climate protection

Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), an international alliance of local governments and local government organizations, launched the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign in 1993 to facilitate mitigation at the city level. ICLEI pushed the idea that cities, as major sources of carbon emissions, should be central to devising international climate change policies and responsible for implementing them, whilst recognizing that the actions of single cities would be drops in the ocean. But bringing together 1185 cities in 33 countries would make a genuine difference. To help, cities must:

- conduct baseline emissions inventories and forecasts
- adopt emissions reduction targets within specified timespans
- develop local action plans
- implement policies and measures
- monitor and verify results.

ICLEI provides the cities with information, technical assistance and software tools. Actions have addressed problems relating to waste, energy, biodiversity, transport, water, housing and sustainable tourism. The campaign is one of many of ICLEI's initiatives but has received academic attention due to its success in the United States. [www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org)

By **Sofie Bouteligier**, research fellow at the Global Environmental Governance and Sustainable Development Research Group, University of Leuven, Belgium.



South Korea considers to build this green city for 77,000 people near its capital Seoul.

as ambassadors of sustainable urban transport. Guayaquil in Ecuador, Jakarta in Indonesia and Pereira in Colombia have also adopted BRT systems, as have Brisbane in Australia, Ottawa in Canada and Rouen in France. Around 40 cities worldwide have adopted BRT systems and even more are planned or under construction.

The city of Berlin and the Berlin Energy Agency developed a model for improving energy efficiency in buildings in 1997. Large public and private buildings were retrofitted (with new technology such as heating control systems, insulation and lights) through contracts between building owners and energy service companies, bringing energy savings of 26% a year. Cities in Bulgaria, Chile, Romania and Slovenia have also used this model.

The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group initiated a similar initiative together with the Clinton Climate Initiative (CCI): the Energy Efficiency Building Retrofit Programme. CCI set up a partnership with four energy companies (Honeywell, Johnson Controls, Siemens and Trane) and five banks (ABN Amro, Citibank, Deutsche Bank, JPMorgan Chase and UBS). The companies now provide products and services at favourable rates so that cities have the technology and know-how to make existing buildings more energy efficient. In exchange, the companies increase their markets. The banks grant the necessary loans, which are paid back through the energy savings.

More than 250 projects cover over 152 million m<sup>2</sup> of building space in 20 cities worldwide including municipal buildings, schools and universities and the largest public housing stock in North America. In the commercial sector, CCI has initiated retrofit projects in Chicago, New York, Bangkok, Mumbai and Johannesburg. Private owners initiating similar projects include shopping mall owners in India and Korea, the Daley Center in Chicago, and Wien

and Malkin – owners of the Empire State Building, New York.

Cities are not just *saying* they will take the lead in tackling global environmental problems; they are getting results. There are several reasons why cities are keen to stimulate debate and action:

- Cities now face severe environmental degradation and impacts from climate change including: 🌊 dwindling water

#### C40 climate leadership group

The C40, started by former London Mayor Ken Livingstone, is a group of 40 large cities with at least 3 million inhabitants from all continents aiming to cut greenhouse gas emissions. A few smaller cities, such as Stockholm and Copenhagen, are also involved. It has now joined forces with the Clinton Climate Initiative, its main objective being to help members kick-start action. Projects include: an integrated solid waste management system in New Delhi (door-to-door collection, transportation, treatment and disposal of waste); a light-emitting diode streetlight project in Los Angeles that will save 40% in energy use; and the introduction of electric vehicles in public and private sector fleets in 12 cities.

Johannesburg, Mexico City, New York, Paris and Seoul are all members. As major cities, their actions clearly matter for global environmental governance. They can take the lead at regional and international levels; they can influence at a national level and encourage worldwide action. They can achieve massive greenhouse gas reductions that will make a huge difference globally. The C40 is political: with Copenhagen and ICLEI it is holding a parallel climate summit for mayors at the UN summit in December 2009, where it will present what cities are doing and ask national governments to engage, empower and provide resources.



supplies, flooding (which destroys settlements), the health consequences of poor air quality and the urban heat island effect (temperatures in cities are expected to be 3.5–4.5°C higher than surrounding rural areas). Solutions need to be found.

- Local green politics often fits well with policies to create jobs, develop infrastructure and improve urban health. Effective communication channels with the local community and businesses will garner public support for environmental programmes.
- The image of being green and sustainable will help boost a city's 'brand', which will attract investment and improve its competitive edge over other cities.

The European Green Capital Award will be given to one city each year for having a good environmental track record and for showing strong commitment to change. Winning the award will boost environmental activities and recognition of the city's leadership. Stockholm will be the first European green capital in 2010.

### Does the local affect the global?

Despite these achievements, scholars remain sceptical that cities really will have an impact. Local government action is appreciated: it boosts the spread of best practices and information, it increases competence and brings projects to fruition. 🙌 All this should help local authorities by pass traditional limitations such as government regulations, low budgets and poor capacity and knowledge to deal with complex problems.

Local initiatives can encourage city-related climate change policies but do they contribute to global solutions? Some scholars remain unconvinced for several reasons:

- the benefits mainly accrue at the local level
- the impact is too small to matter at the global level
- the focus is on relatively easy measures, avoiding radical policy choices
- most initiatives are voluntary.

It is easier for local governments to take the lead if they have support from national governments as well as international recognition. This is why a group of local governments associations (ICLEI, United Cities and Local Governments, World Mayors Council on Climate Change, C40 and Metropolis) is lobbying at the Copenhagen climate change summit in December 2009. The group aims to try and convince the international community that national-local partnerships and strong support for and empowerment of local authorities are required to take global climate change policy beyond 2012.

For global environmental governance to succeed, support is essential for multiple actors at many levels: city, regional, national and transnational. Although city initiatives may seem limited, there is clearly a trend towards local engagement. To achieve significant results, urban areas need to act. The city networks are now in place and are ideal vehicles for coordinating efforts. Recognizing that local really does matter will be critical in tackling global environmental issues. As the C40 put it, 'engage, empower and resource our cities'. ■



Futuristic concept of a city public transport system.

Alamy / Carol and Mike Werne

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### City networks are thriving

The boom in city networks in the last 17 years is attributed to Agenda 21, born out of the Earth summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Chapter 28 recognizes the role of local authorities in promoting sustainable development and recommends encouraging the exchange of knowledge. The communications revolution means that this is far easier and cheaper to do than ever before and it can be done instantaneously on a global scale. City networks are diverse: some are old (Citynet) and some are new (C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group); some are specific (Energie-Cités) or broad (Eurocities) in scope; others may focus on smaller (Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign) or larger cities (Metropolis); they may have many members (ICLEI) or just a few (Mega-Cities Project) and so on. Yet they have common aims:

- to exchange information, knowledge and best practices
- to increase cities' capacity
- to strengthen cities' voices in the international arena.

Most networks also stage events where city officials and mayors can present best practices, learn from each other and build up personal relationships. Several have developed online tools – databases, mailing lists or intranet services, for example – providing members with information on successful projects and policies or upcoming events. City networks cooperate with international organizations such as UN-Habitat and the World Bank, the private sector (environmental consultants, energy service companies, banks) and NGOs. External actors help cities implement concrete projects by offering knowledge, services or financial support. Some networks represent cities in the international arena, advising the UN and participating in international summits.

# A silent revolution

Reporting from the World Science Forum, Hanns Neubert senses a sea change in attitudes towards the role of science in reducing poverty. Governments are spending more; young people are choosing science careers. Yet poor people will not benefit without genuine collaboration and knowledge sharing.

**B**ig changes are taking place in science in developing countries. Devastating health problems, malnutrition, war and conflict, climate issues and inadequate governance – in Africa especially – headline the news. And when the media reports on science and technology (S&T) in developing countries, the brain drain seems to be of most concern. But there are signs of a silent revolution.

This became clear during the World Science Forum in Budapest, Hungary, in November 2009. The ‘Davos of science’ is a bi-annual gathering of the world’s science leaders: politicians, funders and academics. Around 600 people involved in science and technology from nearly 80 countries spent three days debating the future of science. Concerns about funding in the shadow of the global financial crisis set the scene in the run-up to the forum. Yet, it soon became clear that delegates were not so anxious about the financial situation. Instead, making the best use of science, integrating it more effectively into society, and the role of the social sciences and S&T in developing countries took centre stage.

Even representatives from developing countries, although mainly present as spectators, recognized signs of improvement in their relationships with the global science community, despite their concerns about the brain drain. I talked to some of them during the conference.

Speakers in the session ‘science funding in a changing global economy’ reported that the rapidly developing countries in South America and Southeast Asia have increased their expenditures considerably on S&T in the last decade, outstripping their rise in economic performance. As is the case with developed countries, there is a strong correlation between a country’s investment in research and its level of development. Many sub-Saharan African countries, however, have failed to keep their spending on science in line with their impressive growth rates, which have, of course, slowed down recently due to the global financial crisis.

On average, sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa) spends 0.3% to 0.4% of its gross domestic product (GDP)

## summary

- Sub-Saharan African states (excluding South Africa) spend an average of 0.4% of their gross domestic product on science and technology but have promised to increase this to 1% by 2010.
- Developing countries are responsible for a mere 22% of global scientific publications. Yet China’s share rose from 0.9% in 1994 to 7.6%, second only to America, in 2007.
- The Rwandan government, despite years of conflict, has made leaps and bounds in science and technology development.
- Strategies are needed to integrate science and technology into development planning, including international collaboration, information exchange and sharing best practices.

on S&T despite the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action in which African presidents decided to increase spending to 1%. sub-Saharan states again committed themselves to this 1% goal in 2006, which they will achieve in 2010.

But what looks like failure, appears in a better light if we consider economic growth rates. Spending on S&T in sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa) rose from US\$1.8 billion in 2002 to US\$2.8 billion in 2007. This part of Africa once had some excellent universities, such as the University of Khartoum, Sudan. But political turmoil and cuts in funding robbed Africa of academic competence, in particular as older professors retired without a younger generation to take their places.

## Brain gain

The Gambia, one of the least-developed countries with only 1.6 million inhabitants, is convinced that investing in S&T is



By **Hanns-J. Neubert**, president of the European Union of Science Journalists’ Associations, based in Hamburg, Germany, and a journalist writing for [www.sciencecom.eu](http://www.sciencecom.eu)

the only way forward. Despite the brain drain, Lamin Faye, minister for basic and secondary education, was overjoyed with the single brain gain she recently achieved.

Muhammadou M.O. Kah, now vice-chancellor and president of the University of The Gambia, returned after 25 years. Abroad, he was professor of information technology and communication at a number of US and Arab universities. He has also worked for the World Bank and was the founding dean of the American University in Yola, Nigeria.

Faye admits: 'We cannot compete. Our youth are leaving for Europe and we have no internet connection. But we have to start somewhere and I am happy with Professor Kah's engagement.' Kah himself is optimistic: 'As with most universities in Africa there are well educated, ageing scientists here too. They have inadequate laboratories and simply cannot do science any more. But we can get these resources going again and train the next generation'.

As more funds are allocated, however, the shortcomings become clear. Jakaya Kikwete, president of Tanzania, announced in April 2008 that the country would raise its S&T budget from 0.3% to 1% of GDP in 2010. 'A critical issue, however, is to decide what kind of research to support', says Hassan Mshinda, director general of the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology. Science institutions receive money from government departments but without a proper funding system in place: 'Before new funding starts to flow the distribution system must be updated', Mshinda warned. Spending the increased resources effectively will involve giving more to some institutions than to others, which in turn could create tensions between regions and local authorities.

Rwanda is a success story of sorts. Now a beacon of progress in Africa, it has emerged from the terrors of genocide, thanks to its investments in S&T and despite the fact that 90% of the population lives on subsistence farming. Rwanda spent 1.6% of its GDP on science and technology in 2008 and hopes to achieve 3% in 2012, a figure that even some European countries have not reached. Rwanda's biggest success is its education system. Enrolment in primary education has doubled. In secondary education it has risen seven-fold and in higher education more than tenfold since 1999. In addition, centres of excellence have been built: the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology and high-quality secondary schools, such as the Ecole Technique Officielle in Gitarama, for example. In addition, every school and hospital will have a high-speed internet connection by the end of 2009. Fibre optic cables are being put in between South Africa and Sudan and will soon link with satellite communications systems in Rwanda's 30 districts.

The Rwandan government has focused on promoting demand-driven research that addresses critical challenges such as increasing agricultural production, improving public health and protecting the environment. King Faisal Hospital in Kigali will become a centre of excellence for medical research and healthcare, including using telemedicine – communication and information technologies – to deliver clinical care. President Paul Kagame is convinced that:

'Africa must either begin to build its scientific and training capabilities or remain an impoverished appendage to the global economy.'

The Chinese Academy of Sciences and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) reported on their success in S&T investments. The increase in the number of articles authored by Chinese academics appearing in international peer-reviewed journals is impressive. According to Mohamed H.A. Hassan, executive director of the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World, Trieste, Italy, China's accounted for just 0.9% of scientific articles worldwide between 1981 and 1994. But China then climbed to eighth place in 2000 with a share of 3.6%. By 2007, it had jumped to second place with a 7.6% share, trailing only behind the United States. Developed countries are responsible for 78% of global science publications, with 22% originating from developing nations. However, China, India and Brazil account for more than 10% while Africa contributes only 1.4%, of which South Africa and Egypt are responsible for more than half. 📌

Developing countries still need support. Some see it as payback time for the highly trained and skilled people developed countries have gained from the developing nations. To the 80-odd countries handicapped by poor scientific capacity, Hassan would like to see developed countries contribute to the following: at least one internationally recognized university; increased investment for universities; a national science foundation; national technology innovation centres; and a national academy of sciences to foster international collaborative research and provide expert advice.

### **Collaboration and partnership**

Greater collaboration between rich and poor countries would help. As Dong-Pil Min, chairman of the Korea Research Council of Fundamental Science and Technology, remarks: 'We are reasonably well-prepared to exchange ideas and share our knowledge across national borders. However, the benefits of knowledge are not readily and evenly allocated across the globe.'

The United States is, as usual, the leading investor in such programmes. The Global Technology and Innovation Fund, recently launched by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, for example, will provide US\$25 to US\$150 million for a range of research projects with developing countries. European science foundations, on the other hand, do not usually fund institutions in developing countries. However, the European Union (EU), not that visible at the Forum, is gradually doing more. The Africa-EU Joint Strategy and Action Plan, signed in December 2007, will support research into science, space technology and the information society.

The Consortium for Science, Technology and Innovation for the South was launched the day before the forum began. Eighteen ministers from the G77 countries celebrated the event. The consortium will provide a platform for science and technology ministries and research councils, in particular, to interact with scientists and work out how to



Doing science in Africa. A chemistry student at Cheikh Anta Diop University, Senegal, 2007.


devise national and regional strategies for science-based development: promoting South-South and South-North collaboration and encouraging information exchange on best practices are some examples.

### Career choices

Young people are increasingly interested and think S&T can solve society's problems. During a break in the Science and Youth session, delegates discussed a recent project – the Relevance of Science Education, managed by Professor Svein Sjøberg at the University of Oslo. Initial results show that interest among 15-year olds (girls and boys) in entering a career in S&T is highest in developing countries, with Uganda, Ghana, Swaziland, Malaysia, Philippines, India and Bangladesh at the top of the list. In developed countries such as Norway, the UK and Ireland young people are turning their backs on science careers, especially girls; in Japan very few 15-year olds are interested in following a science career.


S&T is gaining in popularity in developing countries and media coverage is growing. Popular science magazines such as Nigeria's *Science Times*, the online magazine *Science in Africa* from South Africa, or the information service, SciDev.Net, are gaining readers. More coverage is given to science in the papers, on the radio, the TV and through news agencies as the World Federation of Science Journalists reports (WFSJ).

Responding to increased demand for science stories in developing countries, WFSJ journalists launched a two-year

mentoring project, 'science journalism co-operation', to train budding science journalists.  The project brought together 60 aspiring journalists from Africa and the Middle East and 16 experienced colleagues from Africa, America, Europe and the Middle East between 2006 and 2007. As a result, at least two new popular science magazines have been launched in the last 12 months, more articles on science issues are being published, research is more thorough and writing styles have improved. Similar projects are now underway in South America and Asia.

The cold, rainy, cloudy skies over Budapest by no means dampened the heady atmosphere of hot debate over the future of science and technology. Putting aside their funding concerns, delegates debated how to support the silent revolution in the South – the growing awareness that science and technology can contribute to solving health problems, malnutrition, climate change and other social and economic challenges of the 21st century. ■

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- World Science Forum: [www.sciforum.hu](http://www.sciforum.hu)
  - Academy of Sciences for the Developing World: <https://twas.ictp.it>
  - Relevance of science education: [www.ils.uio.no/english/rose](http://www.ils.uio.no/english/rose)
  - World Federation of Science Journalists: [www.wfsj.org](http://www.wfsj.org)

 For a longer version of this article, visit [www.thebrokeronline.eu](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu)

# International peacemaker

Norway is a generous donor and enjoys high visibility as a peace broker. Public support is high, despite criticism from some quarters. It now wants to rejuvenate the UN and work more closely with the EU.



Alamy / Tomplodesign

Norway reached its goal of spending 1% of gross national income on official development assistance in 2009. Opposition parties and others criticize key elements

of the government's foreign policy but the outcome of the parliamentary elections in September 2009 points to a steady course for the next four years: further increases in Norway's aid budget and a continuation of the government's international agenda.

Norway has a very strong economy and has been less affected by the global economic crisis than most comparable countries. The government has been able to maintain a level of international assistance and retain Norway's position as one of the world's top donors in relative terms. In real terms, the situation is even more striking: with the national income growing rapidly, fuelled by high oil prices, Norway was able to double its international assistance between 1999 and 2008.

As Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg's centre-left coalition embarks on a second four-year term, its priorities have been set. New white papers on foreign policy, development assistance and humanitarian aid promise a continued focus on and further integration between these policy sectors.

According to the government, Norway's foreign policy interests in an increasingly interconnected world 'can no longer be limited to narrow self-interest'. An international legal order and multilateral regimes are seen as 'vital' to Norway; addressing climate change and violent conflict are identified as

## summary

- A strong economy enabled Norway to double international assistance between 1999 and 2008.
- Norway has been involved as a mediator in several international conflicts since the early 1990s.
- Critics claim Norway has achieved little in its roles as a generous donor and international peacemaker.

focal points in the fight against poverty and it is argued that globalization 'is increasingly turning peacebuilding, international organization and human rights into *realpolitik*'.

Norway has spent some 250 billion kroner (€30 billion) on international development assistance since the 1950s. The target of 1% of gross national income was set in 2005 by the new coalition (Labour, Socialist Left and Centre parties). The government reached this target in the 2009 budget, when the allocations for long-term cooperation, humanitarian aid, peacebuilding and cooperation in research and business were increased to €3.12 billion.

In 2008, 44% of Norway's total aid was bilateral, 24% multilateral and 27% multi-bilateral with 5% going to administration costs. In all, 110 countries received bilateral aid from Norway. Top of the list was Afghanistan (€88 million), followed by Tanzania, Sudan, the Palestinian Authority-administered territories, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, Nepal and Serbia.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) manages long-term state-to-state cooperation, as well as Norway's multilateral assistance and humanitarian aid. The MFA includes the Ministry of the Environment and International Development: in 2007, the International Development Minister, Erik Solheim, also took responsibility for the Ministry of the Environment, since when environmental issues have been pushed up the aid agenda.

By **Sven Gunnar Simonsen**, an independent analyst and international reporter, and a former researcher at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway.



Jan Egeland, former UN special envoy, at a conference in Oslo, Norway, May 2009.

as a partner in development. Although not a member, Norway is closely integrated with the EU. A 2009 white paper on international assistance states the government will cooperate more closely on development issues. <sup>13</sup>

For the MFA, Norway's main development policy objectives are to 'fight poverty and bring about social justice' and to focus on 'areas where Norway can make the greatest contribution'. In a 2009 white paper on foreign policy, the country's strengths are explicitly linked to the character of Norwegian society, described as 'a resource reservoir and tool for Norwegian foreign policy'. In some areas, such as human rights and women and gender equality, Norway is itself a top performer. Other areas reflect its broader international profile: the environment, peacebuilding, human rights, humanitarian assistance and good governance.

International assistance is also provided to sectors where Norway has particular technical competence. Its first development initiative, for example, was a fisheries project in Kerala, India. Today, assistance for technology transfer and resource-related governance focus on oil, gas and clean energy sources, primarily channelled through the Norad programme, Oil for Development (OfD), and the smaller, Clean Energy for Development. OfD operates in more than 25 countries. In recent years, Norway has, for example, helped draft Timor-Leste's petroleum law which emulates legislation governing Norway's own 'Oil Fund'. OfD's expenditures in 2009 were expected to reach €30 million, with Mozambique, Sudan and Timor-Leste the biggest recipients.

Norway enjoys a high international profile as a generous donor and as a peacemaker. The country also commands respect for its financial strength. By early 2009, Norway's Government Pension Fund – Global or simply the 'Oil Fund', owned 1% of the world's stock markets, making it the second-biggest sovereign wealth fund. Under finance minister Kristin Halvorsen, of the Socialist Left Party, the fund has taken an increasingly activist role. Ethical guidelines bar it from making investments that may contribute, for example, to human rights violations, corruption or environmental damage.

Norway's active role as a peace mediator and facilitator is often explained by reference to particular traits of Norway itself. In 1988, a young scholar and activist, Jan Egeland, published a thesis that would become a manifesto of sorts for Norway's future role as a peacemaker. Egeland argued that Norway was particularly well suited to play such a role – a small country with no colonial past and no great power ambitions. A couple of years later, Egeland was hired as a deputy minister of foreign affairs and got, in his own words, the opportunity 'to create the empirical material that was missing in the thesis'. Behind the scenes, Egeland was a key player in the 1993 Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinians. He also played an important role in the peace

Norad, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, is the main public implementing organization besides the MFA. As a directorate within the MFA, Norad's role is to ensure that foreign aid is effective and that quality control and evaluation processes are in place. It provides finance to NGOs and carries out its own research and development projects. A substantial part of bilateral aid is channelled through NGOs. The five largest – Norwegian Church Aid, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Norwegian Red Cross, Norwegian People's Aid and Save the Children Norway – received a total of €237.5 million in 2008.

### Policy priorities

The cornerstones of Norway's development and foreign policy are the scale of its international assistance and its role as a mediator in international peace processes.

Norwegian priorities reflect changes in the global landscape (such as armed conflict, migration and climate change) as well as the ideological profile of current and recent governments. The underlying justification for aid has shifted to some extent, from a conservative concept of moral obligation to a social democratic one of international solidarity.

Norway is the world's seventh largest donor to the UN system (2007). The government is eager to revitalize the UN now that the George W. Bush administration has left office. The European Union features less prominently than the UN



Norway's role as peacemaker is not always appreciated. Protesters in Colombo, Sri Lanka, April 2006.

process that led to the 1996 peace accords and ended Guatemala's 36-year civil conflict.

Norway has since been involved in peace processes in Sri Lanka, Sudan, the Middle East, Colombia, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, Haiti, Burundi, Eritrea, Mali and Cyprus. In several cases, the government has worked with Norwegian NGOs already present 'on the ground'. The government's readiness to cooperate with NGOs in foreign policy is the key aspect of what is often called 'the Norwegian model'.

International assistance also follows Norway's engagement in peace processes. Sudan, the Palestinian Authority-administered territories and Sri Lanka were major recipients from 2005 to 2008. The promise of aid has made concessions more palatable in negotiations and funding has sought to ensure that an agreed peace will last.

The role as peacemaker is not without its disappointments. Back home the most controversial topic is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Successive governments have prided themselves on their balanced relationship of trust with leaders on both sides of the conflict. But with the Israelis and Palestinians both becoming more radicalized since the 1993 Oslo Accords, this 'balance' has become more complicated.

Israeli authorities, in particular, have criticized Norway and at home the government has come under repeated fire from the pro-Israel Progress Party and the Christian People's Party.

Norway's involvement with the conflict in Sri Lanka gradually became unpopular with both parties. Erik Solheim's readiness to talk with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) angered nationalists and the Sri Lankan government; later in 2009, as the LTTE was approaching its final defeat, Solheim alienated the Tamils by encouraging the LTTE to lay down their arms.

In recent years, a major factor affecting assistance has been the deployment of the Norwegian army. Humanitarian and development aid have followed Norwegian forces into Bosnia, Kosovo and, above all, Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, the Norwegian government has encouraged its main Norwegian NGO partners to concentrate their work in Maymana in the northern province of Faryab, where Norway runs an International Security Assistance Force provincial reconstruction team. Afghanistan is today the largest single recipient of bilateral aid from Norway. As such, it may also be said to constitute a major challenge in terms of the politicization of aid. Whereas it is difficult to question the needs of the country, it is clear that aid here is part of a package aimed at 'winning hearts and minds'.

### Questioning Norwegian aid

A common claim by sceptics in Norway, as in other countries, is that large sums are lost to corruption and bureaucracy and that the aid does little, if anything, to reduce poverty in developing countries. Controversies specific to Norway concern the close ties between the MFA, development and humanitarian NGOs and academia. Critics also challenge the country's role as peacemaker, its rationale and success rate.

Foreign policy priorities and practice have traditionally been consensual in Norway. However, discussion concerning Norway's international role and engagement has changed significantly over the last decade or so. To a large extent, this is due to the rise of the Progress Party, Europe's most enduring right-wing populist party. Declaring 'traditional assistance' to be ineffectual, and comparing its costs to the unmet needs of Norway's own sick and elderly, the party has called for drastic cuts in development assistance. Norway's second-largest party, the Progress Party is also sceptical of Norway's role as a peacemaker.

The Conservative Party – the largest on the right before the rise of the Progress Party – on the other hand, has overseen a steady increase in international assistance while in government. In the 2009 election campaign, the party criticized the Labour-led government for turning the 1% target into a 'mantra' and caring less about how the money was actually spent; cuts, however, were not the main point.

In the 1990s, there was also significant scepticism in the Conservative Party over Norway's emerging role as an international peacemaker. However, the 2001-2005 centre-right coalition government, led by Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik of the Christian People's Party, continued on its predecessor's diplomatic course. It was during



The Norwegian model: Erik Solheim, development minister, during Sri Lankan peace talks, October 2006.

Bondevik's government, for instance, that Norway's peacemaking efforts in Sri Lanka began – led, incidentally, by Erik Solheim of the Socialist Left Party.

In the September 2009 election campaign, disagreement over foreign and development policy weakened the prospects for a coalition between the Conservative, the Progress and Christian People's Parties. The disagreement between the last two on international aid issues appeared insurmountable, even though the Progress Party softened its 'cut-aid-to-the-bone' image, pledging to be 'critical of the system of forced contributions to state development aid through taxation' and to focus instead on investment in developing economy enterprises. Norway does not have a strong tradition of private philanthropy.

The most significant *intellectual* critiques of Norway's international role in development and peacemaking have been provided by professors Terje Tvedt and Øyvind Østerud. In 2003, Tvedt, a historian at the University of Bergen, published

#### International affairs and development research in Norway

- Center for International Climate and Environmental Research, Oslo: [www.cicero.uio.no](http://www.cicero.uio.no)
- Chr. Michelsen Institute: [www.cmi.no](http://www.cmi.no)
- Fafo: [www.fafo.no](http://www.fafo.no)
- Fridtjof Nansen Institute: [www.fni.no](http://www.fni.no)
- International Peace Research Institute, Oslo: [www.prio.no](http://www.prio.no)
- Norwegian Defence Research Institute: [www.ffi.no](http://www.ffi.no)
- Norwegian Institute of International Affairs: [www.nupi.no](http://www.nupi.no)
- Department of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen: [www.uib.no/sampol](http://www.uib.no/sampol)
- Centre for Development and the Environment, University of Oslo: [www.sum.uio.no](http://www.sum.uio.no)
- Department of Political Science, University of Oslo: [www.statsvitenskap.uio.no](http://www.statsvitenskap.uio.no)

a study that presented a fresh reading of what he termed 'the south-political project'. Using controversial terminology, Tvedt described a 'do-good regime' where 'elite circulation' between the political, research and NGO sectors has created a 'national-corporatist' system. Those inside this system, argued Tvedt, have substantial self-interest in international aid and simultaneously shape the policy and prevent the system from being criticized.

Professor Østerud, a prominent political scientist at the University of Oslo, triggered fierce public debate, later dubbed 'the aid war', with an editorial in *Aftenposten* in 2006. Østerud questioned what had been achieved by decades of Norwegian international assistance or by the country's more recent role as a peacemaker.

The most important critic of Norway's success is probably Hilde Henriksen Waage on the Middle East. Waage argued that the Oslo Accords were not so much the result of brilliant diplomacy, as of the weakness of the Palestinian side at the time. <sup>15</sup> Although controversial when first published, this interpretation has since gained much ground.

As for systematic evaluations of international aid effectiveness, several studies suggest that Norwegian *and* international assistance has had limited success in stimulating economic growth and reducing poverty. But research also indicates that 'aid effectiveness has increased in recent years' and that international assistance can play an important role in poverty reduction. <sup>16</sup> This has lent support to the Norwegian government's focus on the Millennium Development Goals and its renewed emphasis on good governance, national ownership and poverty reduction.

In 2006, a report from a government-appointed committee argued that aid had done little to generate investment and growth. It recommended that Norwegian long-term assistance should concentrate on 'poor countries with good governance that are able and willing to achieve poverty reduction and economic development'. These countries should be allowed to manage the funds and bring about their own development.

These broad recommendations resonate with government policy. However, optimizing international assistance is a continuous struggle. In November 2008, an evaluation report from the Office of the Auditor General found 'significant weaknesses' in 'realizing the goals of timely and effective assistance of high quality' in the management of Norway's humanitarian assistance. Case processing times were often too long, there were weaknesses in the financing system and follow-up was inadequate, according to the report.

Yet, despite a critical media and fluctuations in support for political parties, public support for Norway's international assistance remains high and fairly stable. The most recent survey by the Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2007, found that 15% of respondents would increase international assistance, while 47% would keep it at the current level and 32% would reduce it. Three-quarters of respondents also thought that Norwegian assistance is producing good results. ■

<sup>15</sup> For a longer version of this article, visit [www.thebrokeronline.eu](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu)

# Good for the economy, good for the people?

A lucrative oil industry means Angola's economy is booming. Yet poor rural areas receive little funding. Sergio Calundungo, director of ADRA, a large NGO, wants research to investigate how high-level decisions are made concerning rural livelihoods.



**Sérgio Calundungo** is director of ADRA – Acção para o Desenvolvimento Rural e Ambiente (Action for Rural Development and the Environment) – a large NGO in Angola. He has a degree in pedagogy from Agostinho Neto University in Luanda, and a postgraduate degree in development and international cooperation from the University of the Basque Country in Spain. Calundungo has 16 years' experience in the development sector and before joining ADRA in 2007 was country director for Intermón Oxfam. ADRA receives funding from ICCO, NIZA/Actionaid, Oxfam and British Petroleum. [www.adra-angola.org](http://www.adra-angola.org)  
Interview by Jojanneke Spoor.

## Tell us about ADRA

The Angolan government lifted the ban on NGOs in 1992, when the first elections were held as part of the peace process between MPLA, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, and UNITA, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola. ADRA was set up the same year to fight poverty and improve rural livelihoods. Seventeen years of bitter civil war taught us that poverty is not just about a lack of funding and basic services, but that social poverty – the fact that poor people find it difficult to develop useful skills or form valuable networks – is a crucial issue.

ADRA focuses on four areas. We aim to increase the socio-economic status of rural families. And we want to improve the quality of education. Children should learn how to read and write but they should also learn about democracy. Angola needs creative, active citizens who can think of alternative solutions to poverty in rural areas. We also work with local politicians to increase their accountability to the public and teach them to adopt a more participatory way of governing.

ADRA's most important mandate is to build the capacity of civil society. We believe that the route we followed from colonialization, through independence and war, to democracy was possible because our political representatives and civil society worked well together. Angola is traditionally hierarchical, but our leaders are beginning to realize the importance of collaboration.

## The Angolan government is known to be critical of NGOs. What kind of relationship does ADRA have with the government?

Multiparty democracy is relatively young. In September 2008, we had our first successful elections in 16 years. The results of the 1992 elections were not accepted by UNITA, which led to another decade of civil war. We do not have a strong history of collaboration between the government and NGOs, because NGOs only came into existence in 1992 and are struggling to increase their technical capacity. New ones are set up every day, making it difficult for the government to decide which ones to talk to.

ADRA, one of the oldest NGOs, works hard to maintain its reputation as a trustworthy and professional organization.

We generally have a good relationship with the government. Some government officials support our goals and methods, others are sceptical. One of the reasons we are a trusted partner, I believe, is because of our employment strategy. We think people's commitment to fighting poverty is as important as hiring good technical staff, if not more so.

Communication is the most important aspect of our work. We try to attend important national meetings and forums through our satellite offices across the country. We make sure the root causes of Angola's problems are visible and not overshadowed by the government's push for economic growth or by donor-driven agendas. We applaud efforts by our government and international institutions, but change has to come from within. Decades of civil war have destroyed agriculture and education: these sectors need investment.

### **What kind of research is useful for your own work?**

A good researcher is not necessarily a good activist and vice versa. Keeping the roles separate avoids confusion. ADRA is, as we say, a living organization. We know the context changes all the time. That is why we use *strategic thinking* instead of *strategic plans* that will dictate activities for years to come. To keep up with change, we keep on learning. Collaborating with universities and research institutions helps enormously. We often organize meetings with students and team up with researchers and journalists to make sure the Angolan people know what is happening and are involved in the development of our country.

We recently commissioned an independent study on how citizens participate in local governance. It examined the dynamics of participation and effective methods for learning about human rights, using our projects as examples. Last year the government decided to pilot more indirect forms of governing. We fed the conclusions of the ADRA study into the national debate on decentralization that evolved since then.

Research is useful: it supports our advocacy efforts. One of our recent studies on the socio-economic conditions in a rural community helped us convince the local government to invest in a new school and health facility. More importantly, the participatory research itself increased the commitment of those involved and encouraged them to become active citizens.

### **What research is needed in Angola?**

What I would like to understand better is the effect that high-level decision making is having on rural livelihoods. Angolan politics is anchored in Luanda and the other big cities. Rural areas receive little funding. Angola is one of the world's fastest growing economies. However, most of this comes from oil and very little trickles down to ordinary people. The oil industry employs few Angolans; even unskilled labour is brought in from Europe and the United States. Yet, unemployment is rampant, especially among the young in the cities. Investment in agriculture, where most Angolans traditionally work, is rare. When the government does invest, it is on big technological improvements, ignoring the precarious livelihoods of rural farmers.

We need to be able to show that what is good for the economy is not necessarily good for the Angolan people. If we could prove that most oil revenue is not invested in sustainable development, we'd have a powerful tool. Research shows that it disappears but we don't know where. The decentralization process is supposed to redistribute wealth and opportunities, but for this to happen we need to know exactly what is going on.

We also need to face up to climate change. It is already having negative impacts on rural livelihoods. We need to understand what the government and NGOs can do to reduce these negative impacts and increase the resilience of rural households. The government has signed the Kyoto agreement. We have a national biodiversity strategic action plan in place. But over-exploitation of the land and the growing demand for woodfuel have led to eroded, exhausted soils, reduced biodiversity and desertification.

The government has started a five-year project on sustainable land management with UN funding, but it deals almost exclusively with environmental issues rather than livelihood challenges. Participation is a magic word for anyone interested in UN funding, but how genuine is this?

We would like to see an assessment of the effects of climate change on rural livelihoods with ideas for action at the local level. How can farmers protect their crops and secure a better future for their families? ■

# Solidarity in the face of disaster

***A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster*, by Rebecca Solnit, Viking, 2009.**

**A review by Mateo Taussig-Rubbo**

**W**e all know what happens in times of disaster. The mask of civility and morality constraining our selfish, animal instincts falls away. People panic, mobs form and there's looting, arson and mayhem. Think of Thomas Hobbes and his state of nature or the tales about New Orleans after Katrina. Those who do not become predators are victimized. If we are lucky, civil and military authorities will save us.

These stories, says Rebecca Solnit in *A Paradise Made in Hell*, are wrong. Investigating earthquakes in San Francisco and Mexico City, 9/11 and other events, Solnit presents a different story. Instead of Hobbes' 'war of all against all', she documents how disasters generate a feeling akin to joy among the survivors, as people pull together in the aftermath. This emotion does not have its Hobbes, its theorist, promoter or fabulist. Hollywood isn't interested either, preferring the ordinary but singular hero able to keep his – yes, typically his, rather than her – head amidst the panicking masses. We do not have a word, Solnit writes, for the emotion people feel as they find community and deep connection in the wake of disaster.

Solnit maintains that the real danger at times of disaster is elite panic. Perhaps sensing that their inability to prevent the disaster undermines their claim to authority, elites see the spontaneous gathering, mutual aid and socializing, so typical after a disaster, as dangerous. Indeed, if Hobbes explains why we have states – because Leviathan protects us

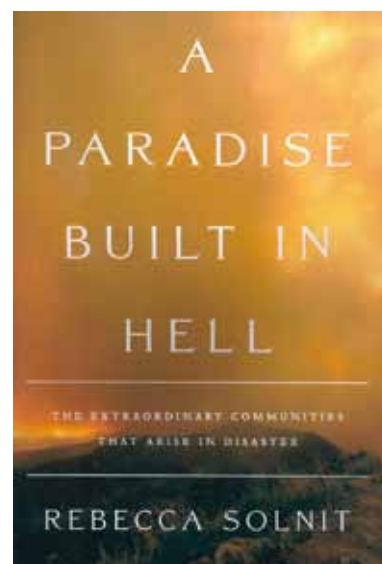
from each other – officials are correct to see a challenge in disaster communities. People are cooperating without the state.

In severe cases of elite panic, the public itself is seen as the enemy: the military is sent in, terrible mistakes are made. After the San Francisco earthquake in 1906, a man spotted near a ruin was shot dead by a soldier. The soldier then discovered the man had been trying to rescue someone from under the rubble.

In New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, reports of child rape and even cannibalism were fabricated, says Solnit. Overall, the dominant response was in fact one of mutual aid. Yet officials stopped most of their own rescue efforts to interfere instead with civilians trying to help. Thankfully, in New York after 9/11, people gathering in Union Square, participating in rescue efforts, not going to work and talking to strangers were not seen as threatening. Instead, elite panic was deflected to Muslim and Middle Eastern communities.

Solnit's insight into the dynamics of disaster is important. Officials should be trained not to see the spontaneous actions of civilians as a threat. Remember that officials were unable to stop the 9/11 plot as it unfolded, while passengers on United Airlines flight 93 saved many lives on the ground by acting quickly and collectively.

In examining the emotions that emerge in disaster, Solnit explores a dizzying range of perspectives. We learn about Peter Kropotkin's anarchism, the role of carnivals in suspending daily routines, the founding of new orders through political revolution and the academic discipline of disaster studies which has long contended, from studies of cities that suffered aerial bombing in the second world war, that



disasters don't cause panic or break civilian morale.

But can the fleeting response to disaster ground a new order? In some instances, after the Mexico City earthquake for example, Solnit sees long-term potential. She shows us something else. The disaster temporarily delivers us from the less obvious disaster – the 'hell' that is contemporary society with its banality, consumerism and lack of community. Well, perhaps. If the utopia of disaster is itself a response to contemporary society, the lack of insight from Asia or Africa is a pity, since they might show something different. Everyday hell, after all, has some good points – infrastructure, bureaucracy, impersonal institutions and a strong private sphere are valuable too. ■

For a longer version of this article, visit [www.thebrokeronline.eu](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu)

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# Good water governance

**In this second report on *The Broker thesis project* we highlight the work of two researchers who examined water management systems in Africa. Their theses have been reviewed by Meine Pieter van Dijk of the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education, Delft, and Rudy Rabbinge of Wageningen University, the Netherlands.**

In most developing countries, the effective management of water resources depends not only on appropriate technologies. Because there are also social and organizational dimensions, the design of appropriate institutions is crucial. The authors of the theses examine community-based water management systems in Ethiopia and Malawi, focusing on the relationship between formal and informal institutions. All too often, they find, formal institutional arrangements fail to reflect the informal realities on the ground.

**Rahel Deribe** (Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia)

In 'Institutional analysis of water management on communal irrigation systems', Rahel Deribe examines the effectiveness of communally managed irrigation schemes in two districts in Ethiopia. Most communities tend to identify with local water user associations and committees, and so turn to them rather than formal institutions to resolve conflicts over water.

Deribe finds that collective irrigation water management may be most effective in communities that are close to markets, familiar with irrigation systems, and involved in their construction. Arguing that community-based management can contribute to more sustainable water use and higher farm productivity, she calls for improved support – including training, extension and access to credit – to strengthen their capacities, and to create links with formal institutions. However, 'the presence of external organizations can reduce local

efforts to enforce the rules', suggesting that they must be demand-driven and complement local inputs.

Most common property resources are exploited on a 'first come, first served' basis, resulting in inefficient use, unequal distribution of the benefits and depletion. Developing the capacity of community-based water management systems will therefore contribute to efficiency, equity and sustainability.

Reading committee member Rudy Rabbinge described Deribe's study as 'interesting and extremely relevant' for many areas of Ethiopia where irrigation is essential. Meine Pieter van Dijk commented that 'collective action is an interesting theoretical approach, while the tragedy of the commons is an old but still relevant dilemma in environmental economics'.

**Stephanie Zwier** (Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands)

In 'Community-based water management: Wishful thinking or a way out?', Stephanie Zwier assesses the viability of five water resource management arrangements in rural Malawi. The reading committee praised this as a study of 'an important topic, dealt with in a creative manner.'

Zwier found that in two cases the communities were effectively managing their water, while the three others were not. She identifies three sets of conditions that determine viability – the resource system and its users, local caretakers and organizations, and institutional arrangements such as rules, sanctions and monitoring systems. She offers several recommendations for governments, NGOs and project designers. First, if the resource system is large, it may need to be divided up and the parts managed separately. Second, the system boundaries should be clear to all users, both to prevent free riders and to ensure that those who invest in the system are rewarded.

Deribe and Zwiers highlight the importance of relationships between

formal and informal institutions. They call for greater efforts to strengthen informal institutions and linkages with formal institutions, ensuring that they are appropriate and reflect the situation on the ground. ■



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**The Broker thesis project** is a platform for masters-level research on development-related issues. Masters graduates from around the world are invited to submit their theses for review by a reading committee consisting of policy makers, journalists, politicians and academics. The reviewers will assess the theses on the basis of their originality, scientific quality and relevance to development practitioners and policy makers.

This section of *The Broker* presents reviews of a selection of the theses submitted, offering an insight into the wide range of research carried out by masters' students from all continents. The full texts of the reviews and the theses are online at [www.thebrokeronline.eu/the\\_broker\\_thesis](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/the_broker_thesis)

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# Pocket-sized foreign policy

**D**escribed as a ‘pocket-sized medium power’, the Netherlands has always struggled with its size. It has never felt satisfied, like a teenager in front of a mirror. Within NATO, the Netherlands has for years wanted to be the biggest of the small. When the large member states had finished talking, often there would be time for just one last presentation by the largest of the little ones. With the expansion of NATO, the eastern European members refused to see why the Netherlands should have that honour. Within the European Union the same picture emerged. Under the weighted voting system of the Treaty of Nice, the Netherlands fought hard to get the 13 votes needed to participate in European decision making – just one more than Belgium. There had to be a difference!

It is a bit like betting on two horses, because a country that can call itself the biggest of the small ones can also regard itself as the smallest of the great ones. Sometimes it is preferable to be small, because it allows you to be a free rider without too many repercussions, and the game will go on. At other times it is better to be large, because you can join in discussions on the rules of the game. But to be a pocket-sized medium power is to be accepted in the world of the small *and* large countries.

But priorities can shift. As the world order is changing, accelerated by the economic recession, the Netherlands does not want to miss the boat. The G8 is no longer relevant; now it is important to be in the G20. The days when small countries could piggyback on (or, according to some, even profit excessively from) globalization are over. ‘The kind of regulatory and tax arbitrage that small countries once profited from is now subject to international crackdown. Regulation is fashionable again and taxes are going up’.

Suddenly, becoming a member of the G20 appears to be the Netherlands’ highest foreign policy goal. We are announcing to anyone willing to listen that we are the world’s sixteenth largest economy, and among the top ten in terms of financial institutions, development aid and agricultural exports. The government even laments the departure from Afghanistan, since our efforts there yielded much ‘influence and prestige’ at the table of the great ones. And, as a medium-sized, thus ‘benign’, member state, why not enter the race for president of the European Council?

By **Ko Colijn**, special professor of global security issues at Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands.



There is another list in which the Netherlands has long been among the top ten, but oddly enough this has never been used as an argument to be part of the G-something. This is the list of the world’s arms exporters. In the latest review by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the Netherlands ranks sixth. Although that position should not be overestimated – the market share of the top five amounts to 78% – the Netherlands is yet again the largest of the small, among them Italy, Spain, India, China, Brazil and Canada.

In a recent report on the Netherlands’ arms export policy, several things stand out. In 2008 Indonesia was the largest customer (€316 million). The Netherlands exported military vehicles to Rwanda and Lebanon, and spare parts to Turkey. But the largest arms exporter is the government itself, which still has stocks of excess equipment (frigates, tanks, planes) for sale. Dutch arms exports are now worth around €1.3 billion, compared with €650 million just 10 years ago. The idea that the 1990s would result in a temporary ‘boom’ in exports of Cold War vintage military equipment has not materialized. By SIPRI’s criteria, the Dutch share of the global arms market in the period 2004–2008 averaged 3%, a relatively high proportion of total world trade.

If the Netherlands is ‘doing well’ as an arms exporter, the government itself as an exporter of cold war vintage military systems is even doing *particularly* well. It seems that even in this field we are living up to our reputation as a pocket-sized medium country. ■