

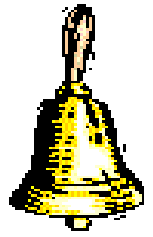


# THE BELL

WORKING FOR A JUST AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY IN THE SOUTH WEST PROVINCE OF CAMEROON

A Monthly Publication of FIDA, GNGG, HELP OUT and MUDEC

Sponsored by The Open Society Initiative For West Africa (OSIWA)



OSIWA

August 2006

## GNGG trains Council Authorities and Media Practitioners on Budget Tracking

Several Council Authorities and media practitioners have been trained on effective budget tracking by the Global Network For Good Governance (GNGG) during a workshop organized in Buea under the auspices of the Catholic Relief Services.

The Workshop started on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August in the Pan - African Institute of Development - West Africa (Paid - WA) hall with an opening speech from Mr. Mukete Tahle Itoe, the Secretary General of GNGG.

He thanked all the participants for coming and introduced the Organisation before thanking the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) for making it possible for the project to be realized. He went further to introduce the resource persons who were Mrs Awasum Susan from the Local government Training centre (CEFAM) and Mr. Christian Tanyi from the Martin Luther King Memorial Foundation Centre (LUKMEF).

GNGG's facilitator, Mr. Tangui Maurice introduced the Workshop's Objectives and Methodology.

-To Improve the Skills of Media Practitioners in Budget monitoring for regular reporting to the communities about the management of their Council Budget.

-To form a Network for media Practitioners and Council authorities

-To develop an action plan for budget tracking

The Lectures that followed focused on the overview of the council budget, types of council budgets, the budgetary process, budgetary rules, actors in the budgetary process, Council budget layout, budget tracking,



*Participants at the Training Workshop*

budget allocation, how to budget track, When to budget track and who to budget track.

An action plan was drawn by both council authorities and media practitioners on how to go on with budget tracking council budgets.

The participants expressed their sincere gratitude for this training and thanked the organizers for choosing Media men to carry out this task of monitoring council budgets. They went further to recommend that such programs should be organized regularly.

The District Officer for Buea who was present expressed his unreserved pleasure to accept and honor the invitation. He appreciated GNGG on

the efforts it makes to sensitize the population on Good Governance issue, He went further to say that budget tracking is a very sensitive issue and care should be taking when doing it. He pleaded that there should be more informative campaigns on what the government does as regards development to the local people. By training media practitioners on how to budget track, GNGG is indirectly training the entire population and he is convinced that this education will be fruitful and worthwhile.

In his closing remarks, the Secretary General, on behalf of GNGG thanked everyone for being participatory and interactive. He also thanked Mr. Justin Bédoume of CRS for participating as well as the Organising committee for doing a wonderful job.

Certificates of Participation were given to every participant at the end of the Workshop.



By Samba Ruth  
GNGG

## The Open Society Institute & The Soros Foundations Network

**T**he Open Society Institute (OSI) is a private operating and grant-making foundation based in New York City that serves as the hub of the Soros Foundations Network, a group of autonomous foundations and organizations in more than 50 countries. OSI and the network implement a range of initiatives that aim to promote open societies by shaping government policy and supporting education, media, public health, and human and women's rights, as well as social, legal, and economic reform.

To diminish and prevent the



### *George Soros extends support to Africa*

**George Soros extends Support to Africa** negative consequences of globalization, OSI seeks to foster global open society by increasing collaboration with other non-governmental organizations, governments and international institutions.

OSI was founded in 1993 by investor and philanthropist George Soros to support his foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union. Those foundations were established starting in 1984, to help former communist countries in their transition to democracy. The Soros Foundations network has expanded its geographic reach to include foundations and initiatives in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Mongolia, Southeast Asia, Turkey and the United States. OSI also supports selective projects in other parts of the world.

## The Open Society Initiative For West Africa (OSIWA)

**T**he Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) is dedicated to supporting the creation of open societies in West Africa, marked by functioning democracy, good governance, the rule of law, basic freedoms, and widespread civic participation. OSIWA believes that it best serves by sustaining catalytic and innovative initiatives that add value to the efforts of West Africa's civil society. OSIWA seeks to collaborate with advocacy groups, like-minded foundation, governments and donors.

OSIWA further recognizes the



*Abdul Tejan Cole  
Chair of OSIWA's Board of  
Directors*



*Mrs. Nana Tanko  
Executive Director, OSIWA*

importance of incorporating global developments in building open societies and seeks a greater commitment to the region by rich

nations.

OSIWA serves 15 members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as Cameroon, Chad and Mauritania. The ECOWAS members are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

OSIWA is based in Dakar, Senegal. The foundation also maintains an office in Abuja, Nigeria, which focuses on good governance and human rights programs in Nigeria.

## EDITORIAL

**F**emale legislators have been sensitized on the necessity to combat the harmful traditional practice of female genital mutilation through laws. Despite actions by civil society organizations to erase FGM from certain cultures, the practice still remains attached to the status of womanhood in certain cultures around the South West Province.

The creation of Human Rights Clubs in some colleges in the Buea municipality has initiated a new era for human rights awareness among youths. Their show of enthusiasm has been very encouraging to the Coalition in charge executing this Project to cre-

ate more open societies in the South West Province.

The violation of human rights in most societies is a major cause of conflicts. For this reason, we go beyond the South West Province to look at the causes of conflicts in Africa as well as propose solutions.

Dear Readers, bushmeat certainly appears on your lunch table once in a while despite the laws restricting its consumption. We have had opinions demonstrating the importance of bushmeat to the well being of our rural communities. What is your opinion?

*By George Mbella*



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## Female Legislators mobilised against Female Genital Mutilation

Cameroon's female legislators gathered under a tree in the garden of the country's parliament recently to listen to Hannah Kwenti, 17, a mother of a five-month-old baby girl, and a victim of female genital mutilation (FGM).

She was in Yaounde to take part in a campaign to raise awareness amongst female legislators about the dangers of female circumcision.

She said: "I come from Mamfe in south-western Cameroon, where I was circumcised in January after the birth of Ruth. My parents-in-law insisted on it, believing that if it was not done, I could one day be unfaithful to Peter (her husband)."

### Removal of female genitalia

The procedure took place just three days after Kwenti had given birth.

"During the excision I lost a lot of blood, and while the pain was convulsing me the woman there (the circumcisor) said, 'Stop crying, your case is still tolerable. There are some for whom we remove all the stuff there'."

FGM, also referred to as female circumcision, involved the partial or complete removal of female genitalia; the resultant wound was stitched up to allow a small hole for the passage of urine and menstrual blood.

Excisions were performed for a variety of reasons, including the belief that FGM reduced a woman's sexual appetite, and could lower the risk of infidelity on the part of women.

### 'I wished to die'

Kwenti said the woman who circumcised her said she would "not desire men other than Peter", while sexually transmitted diseases would "never be (her) concern".

She said: "I wished to die, but God didn't want this. I advise against FGM for your daughter."

The initiative to raise aware-



ness about the practice is being organised by the Cameroon Young Jurists Legal Resource Centre, a non-governmental organisation based in Buea.

According to rights watchdog, Amnesty International, FGM was common in certain communities of the West African country, and was also practiced in about 30 other nations on the continent.

*"The Cameroon Young Jurists Legal Resource Centre believed that during the past three years alone, about 600 women had been mutilated in south-western Cameroon, one of the regions most affected by FGM."*

### 600 women mutilated

The Cameroon Young Jurists Legal Resource Centre believed that during the past three years alone, about 600 women had been mutilated in south-western Cameroon, one of the regions most affected by FGM.

In addition, a report by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada noted that in certain parts of the country all Muslim girls were affected by the practice, and almost two thirds of Christian girls.

### Rite of passage

The practice of FGM had been linked to religious beliefs. It was also seen as a rite of passage into adulthood, while others viewed it as essential for hygiene and improving the appearance of the genital area.

Nationally, the United Nations estimated that about 20% of women in Cameroon were victims of circumcision, which could be carried out at any stage: at birth, during early childhood, in the course of adolescence, just before marriage or after the birth of the first child. -

Sapa-IPS

## Echos of Human Rights Clubs



*Members of Human Rights Clubs*

**Hi**

***I am Ndi Conielia a form five “Chap” in Inter Comprehensive high school Buea. I am a member of the Human Rights Club Inter. As a member I will like to tell you guys my experience in this club. I have learned that as a citizen you have to know your rights in the society.***

***But with this you do not have to violate another person’s rights because where your own rights end is where another person’s start. But please if you want to know more about this club contact I.C.H.S Buea P.O Box 09 and you will learn from us.***

***I am a student of Inter Comprehensive High School Great Soppo P.O. Box 9 Buea. Reading the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and books concerning Law, are my hobbies. I hate violation of human rights, torture, cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment and punishment. I wish to have friends all over the world and Cameroon in particular who share my outlook, so for the above reasons I won’t mind if provided the facilities to educate friends in and out of Buea and also to create awareness on human rights in schools, prisons and orphanages, because I believe that as youth of today and leaders of tomorrow, studying human rights, putting it in to practice and also educating others on human rights is fighting for a better tomorrow. To get in touch with me or wishing to know more about me write to Inter Comprehensive High School Great Soppo P.O. Box 9 Buea S.W Province***

Anne marie Ngoran I.C.H.S. Buea  
Email [Limyanne100@yahoo.com](mailto:Limyanne100@yahoo.com)

## Echos of Human Rights Clubs



*Members of Human Rights Clubs*

*The first day I heard that the human rights club will be introduced in our school Inter Comprehensive High school, I was very happy to join the club so that it will help me know much about human rights and especially my rights and their limits so that I will not exceed them*

*I knew that knowing my rights was going to change my life and also knew that it was going to change the lives of many Cameroonians if only they respect and promote it.*

*Since I entered club, I have had so much experience and I have learnt many things. Like in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article "9" which states that 'No one shall be subject to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile'. I learnt from this article that before anyone is arrested or exiled it should be for a reason which is JUST. This is very common in Cameroon where some policemen arrest people without justified reasons but because they have been bribed to do so. And so if you know your rights you will know that before anyone is arrested an arrest warrant should be shown as a proof that it is Just for your arrest.*

*I will like to advise the public especially the youth that they should try and join any human rights club at their disposal for they are leaders of tomorrow and if they know their rights and respect them, they will change their lives and will reverse the poor moral situation in this country, so that we can enjoy a peaceful and prosperous country where the rights of citizens are respected and promoted.*

*Now that I know my rights nobody can violate them and so too I will not violate anybody's rights.*

By Njofie Minette

A member of the human Rights Club Inter Comprehensive High School  
modestynettie@yahoo.com

## The Causes of Conflict in Africa

*The Africa Union Summit of 1-2 July has just ended in the Gambia. In this exclusive interview with our Buea Correspondent Solomon Amabo, the Pan Africanist, Mwalimu George Ngwane revisits the summit. He says that there are many economic programmes, which adversely affect the development of Africa and that Africa Heads of States who do not often attend the summits often find their proposal on how to build Africa not taken seriously. Read on.*

**EDEN:** *The Seventh Ordinary Session of the Africa Union Summit has just ended in the Gambia. As a keen observer of Africa Affairs, could you refresh us on the highlights of this summit?*

**Mwalimu Ngwane:** The theme of the summit was rationalization and harmonization of Regional Economic communities and regional integration in Africa. Before the summit and in the margins, the judges of the Africa court of Human and Peoples Rights in the Gambia were expected to be sworn in. There were private sector meetings, and an Africa Union Awards ceremony. But the main topic of the Summit which was, like I mentioned earlier, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Integration. I must say I was highly disappointed that up till now the Africa Union is still talking about Regional Integration when a road map had been put in place towards the harmonization of Regional integration. The roadmap had envisaged within six stages and before the year 2025, the elimination, among member states of each regional economic Community, of customs duties, quota restrictions, administrative trade barriers and all other non-tariff barriers; indeed all precipitations that prevent the free movement of persons and capital. At the end of which, Africa was to establish an Economic community or common market that shall be charged with coordinating the activities of regional Economic Community. That economic roadmap died in 2001 when NEPAD was born.

**Are you accusing NEPAD for having killed the African Economic community roadmap?**

What I am saying is that NEPAD derailed and brought the African Economic Community (AEC) roadmap to a halt as was decided by the Africa Heads of States in the 1999 Summit in Libya. After the summit, instead of accelerating, the AEC roadmap of 1991 Obsanjo, Mbeki, Wade and Bouteflika came up with NEPAD. The whole idea of AEC was not to change names but accelerate the process. Too many programs were in place and they relied on NEPAD because Mbeki argued that technicians who were not Heads of States drew the Lagos Plan of action of 1980 and the 1991 AEC. They therefore wanted to draw their own programmes. That was where there were conflicts and NEPAD was given a free rise.

**Looking at NEPAD as an organization working for the development of Africa, especially the rural**



**arears, at what level was there conflict with the other development programmes?**

First there is the problem of ideology. Was the AEC programme not working or not popular? It is not true. It is a problem of personality ego. Also we find a procedural problem. As a background, Mbeki's programme was called the Millennium Africa Renaissance Programme and wade came up with the Omega Plan. The two were merge to create NEPAD. In fact every leader wanted to give the impression that he too can conceive an economic programme instead of accelerating the AEC. Then NEPAD had the institutional problem since it seemed to have been conceived as a parallel programme to the AU. But the AEC was under AU. The fourth problem is who owns NEPAD? With the above conflicts, NEPAD for me remains an intellectual exercise in the minds of its founding fathers while political parties have their focus on elections. The common man who was to benefit from AEC was the sacrifice lamb in all this.

**Some people are beginning to think that the A.U may go the same way as the O.A.U. what is your take on that?**

The current of thought is not only coming from the people. The chairman of the Africa Union commission, Alpha Omar Konare, expressed some frustrations during the Summit, pointing, especially to the slow implementation pace of projects by members states and the colossal misappropriation of funds by his staff during the conference of intellectuals and Africans living in the Diaspora that held in Senegal in October 2004. Even though I sympathize with the chairman, I must confess that the structures to blow such a whistle are either the Court of Auditors (absent in the AU) or the pan-African parliament (having only an advisory role). The first three years of the African Union brought a lot of hope but these routine summits seem to be more about attendance than achievements. This

was the same ill that made the OAU irrelevant as a people oriented organization.

**How then can the African Union transform itself into a People oriented organization?**

First, the African Union should return to the September 1999 Sirte dream, which was a revolutionary dialectic, propagated by Muammar Gadaffi. That Sirte dream was itself a Nkrumahist pan-Africanism, a Casa-blanca renaissance that militated for a United States of Africa. What is African unity, if it were not about African citizenship? And the push factors to a common continental citizenship are enshrined in the abolition of all barriers (visa, language currency, transport communication obstacles etc) that impede the free movement of persons, rights of residence and establishment.

Secondly, the African Union does not need biannual summits, now that it is equipped with organs and specialized technical committees. In my opinion, African Union Summits should be held once in three years leaving the organs to be more functional and the AU Assembly to serve as a coordinating unit of implementation. Then the Summits should remain in Addis Ababa, then the concept of Presidents acting as chair persons (in the case where they are hosting the summit) should be abolished and the AU chairman should play a more executive role reminiscent of the Diallo Telliera.

Bouba Diallo Telli, Guinean, the first Secretary General of the OAU, came up with a principle that as SG, he is the president of Presidents. He wanted a free hand to control the OAU to a point where decisions should be taken even above Heads of States. He wanted the OAU to be a Supra-National Organ, Unfortunately, he ran into trouble with the Western Saharan Affair because he said the Western Sahara should be taken as a country in Africa. But it was his prerogative to take such decisions for the continent after consultations with all member states. When Diallo left the OAU, there was Nzo Ekwangaki, then Eteki Mbuoma and so on. They became minute's scribes and not executive secretaries. This is the problem of the AU. Even when the name changed from the SG of OAU to the Chairman of the AU, the powers have not been given to them.

*What accounts for the numerous conflicts in Africa even after the creation of the peace and security organ in the African Union?*

First, there does not seem to be a clear-cut role for the peace and security organ in the African Union, as it is the case of the Security Council in the United Nations. I also think there is less complementarity between adhoc peace committees and the peace organ. I am also convinced that the peace organ needs to be more militant at the level of preventive diplomacy as recommended by the resolutions of the OAU summit of 1993 in Cairo. Be it as it may, most conflicts in Africa are intra-state which means the perennial problems of bad governance, lack of endogenous economic programmes, unequal distribution of resources, economic graft and political greed have not melted away within some of our states. To compound this bad situation, Africa's reliance on the Bretton Woods prescriptions instead of intra-African trade, the connivance of multinational corporations and some western governments to advance their own agendas have denied Africa the opportunity of political stability and economic development. But let this bleak forest not hide the trees of progress witnessed in Botswana, Tanzania, Mauritania, Ghana, Benin, Libya, and Mali, just to name these few. At the end of the day the ownership of a conflict-proof Africa lies on the kind of partnership that exists between the leader and their citizens.

*Among the issues the AU is trying to handle is the Southern Cameroons National Council case. We did not hear anything about it. Observers even said this case is what makes President Biya avoid attending these Summits. At what level is this case?*

As far as I know, the case is in the specialized court in Banjul, the Gambia. Though not so conversant with the dynamics of the case, I know it has passed the merit stage. To the best of my knowledge it has not been brought to the AU General Assembly. This again is another problem with the AU which is interested in areas where war has already erupted. This contradicts Salim Ahmed Salem's spirit of 1993, which focused on conflict prevention than resolution. He wanted the OAU to look at where there were emerging conflicts and be able to stop them before they escalate. It is unfortunate. I think the AU through the Peace and Security Council should be able to have a database of countries that are already having some potentials of conflict and treat them. That includes the SCNC case of course.

*It has been observed that some African Heads of States do not often or never attend AU summits.*

*Does their action have any impact on their country within the AU in any way?*

It is very wrong for any of them not to personally attend these African summits. It is clear that when there is a meeting that concerns you, you ought to be present. The case of Cameroon is even more serious, where, for a long time, the President has not personally attended these summits. Nonetheless there is no clause that binds them to attend. The most important clause is for them to meet up to their membership. But of course when it comes to the deliberation of issues once a country does not have a high executive presence, it might militate against any of its projects being taken seriously. So when Heads of States don't attend, it has an impact on their country.

You recently came up with a memo on the need for independent candidates for all elections in Cameroon. Did that view have the whole continent at heart?

Well, it is a kind of democracy that is rooted on the African soil because African democracy talks of Candidates and not party profile and programmes. That is, the committee for which I am spokesperson believes that Cameroon's democracy that has remained at the level of party politics has remained at the level of party politics has showed limitations. The way to enhance competition and to expand the democratic spacer is to give a chance to stand with party candidates on the same level playing field. Our bone of contention is that at the level of every election the independent candidates be permitted to stand. We believe that municipal and legislatives are grassroots elections and the people need to know who is representing them.

Not people who are hiding their deficiencies under party canopy. The second thing is that at the presidential elections, we find that people have up to 300 members. You cannot put a person with a new ideology with people. We want that clause of 300 signatures nullified. Democracy is about option and choices and we cannot remain in the same monolithic mentality in the 1990s. These are structures which have succeeded in Mali and Benin. We don't know the arty to which Weah and Ellen Johnson belonged. We only know of their names. I think it is time we adopt a fast multi-track democratic system. The independent electoral commission and candidates that Cameroon is still dragging its feet on, has already been adopted in other countries, fifteen years ago. We therefore give the task to the Cameroonian leadership and the people of Cameroon who own national sovereignty to understand the need for these independent democratic institutions.

The just ended African Summit equally had on its agenda the crisis in the Dafur and Ivory Coast. Is there any hope that there would be peace in those areas after the summit?

One good thing about conflict is that they never disappear and are the dynamics of society. Even where Jesus was born there are conflicts. The most important thing about conflicts is how they are managed. When the AU came up in Article 5, pointing out the Peace and Security Council, I thought this organ would be responsible for preventing conflicts from becoming wars. The problem in Africa is that conflicts turn to be armed conflicts. The peace and security organ has not been given a definite role, given that there are conflicts between what it has to do and what the Security Council of the UN does. Secondly, the AU has the habit of crating ad hoc committees in charge of peace mediation in conflicts with the African peace and Security Council and even the UN. These committees must have coherent manner of handling conflicts. Dafur suffers from a historical/colonial overhand. Sudan was made up of people of different religious backgrounds. This can be managed. In Ivory Coast there is internal wrangling with the key players and the influence of Western powers, such as France. So I think if the AU ordered disarmament, there would be peace. The French and their puppet leader, Guillaume Soro, should also be called to order because there are already reports that election may not hold there come 30 October 2006.

Do you still remain an optimistic pan-Africanist?

I have no other choice because Africa is the only continent I call my own; but Pan-Africanism should not just be an emotional response, it should be an intellectual contribution to the contrasts and contradiction in Africa, where one sees an opulent lifestyle of the elite, contrasting with the pauperized reality of the masses, where one sees the yawning gap between the abundance of natural resources and the paucity of economic development, where one sees the increasing tendency for leaders who gave outlived their democratic usefulness still clinging to power. No! The people of Africa have been humiliated enough in slavery and colonialism, the African Youths are now looking for vistas of freedom through gruesome immigration ventures, and the leaders of Africa are refusing to transform our orange revolution into the green revolution. Yet I still see an emerging leadership that shall produce a vaccine to stop the virus of economic dependency and political folklore because there is nothing so wrong with Africa that cannot be made right by Africans.

# Bushmeat & Poverty Alleviation

## Implications for Development Policy

By David Brown

*The bushmeat trade is a subject of heightened interest in conservation circles, but has rarely been*

*taken up by development assistance agencies. This has hindered the search for effective*

*solutions which engender local ownership.*

*Three considerations commend the issue to development agencies at the present time: in relation to poverty alleviation, wild meat figures strongly in social safety nets and might figure as a component of economic growth and development; it could well figure in governance reform. This paper considers the arguments relating to these three areas and the policy implications arising.*

### Policy conclusions

There is a need to shift the bushmeat debate unto more positive terrain, recognising the many benefits which the trade in wild meat offers the range state economies.

There are strong practical and moral arguments to favour increased engagement by development assistance agencies in this debate.

The arguments in favour of bushmeat as a component of social safety nets are strong; those relating to its possible role in economic transformation are less well understood.

Bushmeat could well figure as a component of governance reform: this would have implications for the policies of international conservation agencies quite as much as range state governments.

Strategies of governance reform would include legal and regulatory reform, in a pro-poor direction. These must be linked to the establishment of channels of legitimate trade, if the reforms are not merely to drive this lucrative industry further underground.

### Bushmeat - the positives?

This article is concerned with the bushmeat trade - that is, with the trade in wild meat (usually smoked meat of larger mammals), for consumptive purposes as a protein source. It focuses on the situation in West-Central Africa. With some licence, the article treats the trade in this region in a fairly homogeneous way. The bushmeat trade is a multi-million dollar industry in the sub-region, and often a major component of local economies. Though estimates are necessarily speculative, volumes of 1-5 million tonnes of undressed meat annually (worth US\$2-10 billion or more)

*“The bushmeat trade is a multi-million dollar industry in the sub-region, and often a major component of local economies.”*

are widely quoted in the literature.

In many ways, this trade can be viewed in a very positive light. Its scale, vigour and international penetration bear witness to the resilience, resourcefulness and self sufficiency of peoples who are often living at the very margins of global economy.

Bushmeat has many characteristics that make it attractive to these peoples, particularly to the poor. These include:

- High returns to discontinuous labour inputs, with low risk and minimal capital outlay

- Excellent storage properties and a high value/weight ratio; it is easily transported and is thus an attractive commodity for producers in isolated areas who have few alternatives.

- A commodity chain characterized by high social inclusivity, in both wealth and gender terms.

- Labour inputs that are easily reconciled with the agricultural cycle, and with diversified income-earning strategies.

- Unlike many high-value marketed commodities, usage can readily be switched between consumption and trade.

The starting point in any analysis of the bushmeat trade should surely be these positive benefits, and any attempt to

*“Bushmeat has many characteristics that make it attractive to these peoples, particularly to the poor.”*

improve its management should take the preservation of them as its fundamental parameter.

That these benefits are rarely seriously acknowledged, and even less often preserved in policy, can be related partly to genuine concerns about sustainability of a resource whose supply appears markedly inelastic.

But the stigmatisation of the trade in western media goes beyond this issue, and arguably owes more to the projection of the values of industrial society onto the tropical world than any desire to guarantee the future interests of the bushmeat-dependent poor. Paradoxically, far from securing international conservation objectives, such stigmatisation may well be contributing unwittingly to their frustration.

### Varying perspectives on the bushmeat trades

To date, the academic literature - and even more so. Coverage in the popular media - have focused predominantly on the negative effects of the trade on wildlife populations. Other interests have been acknowledged, though the context has usually made clear that the central issue is biodiversity, and that the human interest is, at best, a contingent one. The arguments in favour of the conservationist perspective are strong. Witnessed by such indicators as declining population densities of vulnerable species and changes in the age distribution of the harvest, the evidence is overwhelmingly of an erosion of important components of

This series is an output of a project on 'livelihoods dimensions of wild meat trade in the tropics' funded by the John D & Catherine T MacArthur Foundation. The views expressed are not necessarily those of 001 and the MacArthur Foundation.

The mammalian stock throughout the core producer zones. However, there are some strong arguments in favour of a change of approach. They relate to two sets of considerations:

- The fact that conservation-based strategies are not working well in the range states where the need for management is greatest. Indeed, there is a view that such conservation-oriented strategies are unlikely.

- Stigmatising the trade and/or presenting it as a 'crisis narrative' has the effect of



<b>Box One: The potential for hunting and the bushmeat trade to contribute To poverty eradication</b>		
<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Constraints</i>
Barriers to entry	70% of value captured by hunters in Ghana Appears to be high unsatisfied demand	- Barriers low- depresses profit margins, and reduces investment opportunities
Value added in processing	A luxury commodity, where price is not necessarily competitively set A segmented trade could increase the demands for management of the resource	Rustic qualities disfavour product enhancement Opportunities for export-oriented production low De facto illegality a barrier
Investor behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High value retained by hunters indicates limits to centralization of control.</li> <li>- Often figures as a means of generating capital to invest in longer-term enterprise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dependent on infrastructure changes</li> <li>- Estimates of sustainable levels of production are almost always below present production levels.</li> </ul>
Scope for expansion in	- Farm-forest ecotone highly productive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Low human population density in source areas restrict opportunities and raises transaction costs</li> <li>■ Poor governance scenarios</li> </ul>
production Potential for improved management	improved governance is a major attraction for donor investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Management interventions by have often proven excessively high cost and fragile</li> </ul>
How to improve the situation of the resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Joint enterprise favours linking bushmeat to forest management.</li> <li>- May be better to focus on police parameters and initiative with focal groups to develop their own management models.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Management interventions by have often proven excessively high cost and fragile</li> </ul>
International policy context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CITES Central Africa Bushmeat Working Group a promising development</li> <li>- CBD may present a positive International policy environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not favourable due to restrictive implications of CITES trade approach</li> <li>- Moralisation by western environmental and animal welfare movements a constraint.</li> </ul>

legitimising a shift in ownership away from the resource users towards external interests. Given that this is a sovereign resource, ignoring local claims of ownership seems an unlikely way to improve its management.

There is a need, therefore, to give greater consideration to the human welfare dimension, both as a practical consideration and on moral grounds. This has institutional implications. Some conservation agencies have sought to take on board the developmental aspects of the trade, often within a 'community-based approach' to

conservation-cum-development, in the hope of finding 'win-win scenarios'. But all too often, this has produced solutions which satisfy neither constituency (Gates, 1998). Progress could be much faster and better embedded - if development assistance perspectives and instruments were also engaged. This is partly a question of the beneficial effects of a development-oriented funding stream, but largely a matter of approach. It is suggested that a social orientation is an essential prerequisite for real national ownership.

#### **Is there an agenda for development assistance?**

Development assistance priorities are largely set by the framework of the 'Poverty reduction strategies' (PRSPs) which are currently the favoured instrument of the international community, particularly the World Bank. There are broadly two areas of potential interest for bushmeat within this trajectory. These are *poverty alleviation* and *good governance*

#### **Bushmeat and poverty alleviation**

In identifying the roles which bushmeat might play in poverty eradication (see Box

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One), consideration needs to be given to two dimensions of pro-poor change the value of social safety nets to the poor growth and poverty reduction, and their implications for the poor

### Social safety nets

Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) including bushmeat have a well established role in sustaining and protecting the existing living standards of the poor, and ensuring that they do not fall into chronic poverty. Safety-nets are likely to assume particular importance where, through impoverishment or for other reasons, there are few external interventions to help the poor manage risk and uncertainty, for example, through public and private transfers (pensions, remittances), insurance systems and public support schemes (food aid, employment programmes). In most bushmeat range states, these support structures are little developed or entirely absent. Given the impoverishment and marginality of most forest dwellers, there is a strong case for bushmeat to be included in development assistance strategies, as a component of social safety nets (Davies, 2002).

### Growth and poverty reduction

The second area of potential interest is economic growth and transformation. Donor interest would undoubtedly be increased if it could be shown that the bushmeat trade might contribute to poverty eradication on a substantial scale. This is an under-researched theme in the literature, and also one with a dearth of useful evidence. However, there are good grounds for caution. These relate both to the low transformative potential of rustic commodities such as bushmeat and the fact, that transformation, were it to occur, would not necessarily be pro-poor.

A range of factors, including the nature of the resource, the character and volumes of its trade, and the availability of alternatives, are of relevance here. Paradoxically, it may be partly because of the virtues of bushmeat as a livelihoods asset that it is unlikely to figure strongly in rural transformation. Economists would argue that the characteristics which are typical of the trade - accessible technology and near to open access rights, leading to low thresholds of entry and broad participation - will result in tight margins and very limited potential for profits to be reinvested productively in the sector.

***“Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) including bushmeat have a well established role in sustaining and protecting the existing living standards of the poor, and ensuring that they do not fall into chronic poverty.”***

There would also seem to be few opportunities for value to be added in processing, through technical sophistication or increased investments of labour (in this respect, bushmeat may differ from, say, artisanal woodworking). This is especially likely to be the case where the trade is treated as *de facto* illegal, and is pursued in a clandestine way. Its stigmatization internationally also limits the potential for export-oriented processing and value added, in terms of volume, even if projections of sustainable offtake are over-cautious, they are often so far below existing levels as to make it most unlikely that sufficient capital could be generated from the sector to sustain long-term growth. In Central Africa, for example, Fa *et al* (2003) give a conservative estimate that, if present rates of offtake are maintained, relative to population trends, then bushmeat protein supplies will drop 81% in less than 50 years. However, if the supply was reduced immediately to sustainable levels, then all countries other than Gabon would be seriously effected by the protein loss. The dominant image, therefore, is of an industry with 'mining' characteristics, and without major forward and backward linkages into the wider economy. Without such linkages, there is little likelihood of the multiplier effects which would turn commodity extraction into a vehicle for economic growth.

However, there are some counter-arguments. Urban demand is high and possibly growing, and bushmeat can feature as a luxury item in a segmented trade, even

where substitutes exist at a competitive price. Unlike most agricultural goods, there is little evidence of major swings in prices. Bushmeat appears to perform quite differently, as a traded commodity, from other NTFPs, having both higher levels of returns to producers and less vulnerability to product substitution. Evidence suggests that hunters can capture a surprisingly high proportion of the value added in the trade. A recent study of the commodity chain in Ghana, for example, found that hunters captured 74% of the final sale price in chop bars (Mendelson, *pers. comm.*). Low barriers to entry will not, therefore, necessarily drive down prices to the point where there is no investment potential.

An additional consideration concerns the income raised. In West and Central Africa, hunting is traditionally undertaken by young men at an early stage of the family cycle, to accumulate capital which is later invested in setting up enterprises with a longer time horizon, such as export crop production and petty trade, it thus provides a stepping stone to greater prosperity for a social category that might otherwise be problematic for society, '[here is also historical evidence of the ways in which bushmeat can play a secondary role in supporting economic change. Asibey, for example, notes the part it played in underwriting the development of the Ghana cocoa industry and opening up the forest frontier (1974). Thus, even a decapitalising stock can have a role in economic growth and structural change of long-term benefit to the poor,

### Some recent evidence

Assessing the evidence for and against these propositions is inhibited by the paucity of the data on the social dimensions of the trade. This is largely a consequence of the difficulty of researching a predominantly illegal commodity chain. Particularly lacking is evidence on the investment behaviour of 'capitalist' bushmeat entrepreneurs: what levels of surpluses do they make? Where do they invest them - back into the sub-sector or locality or elsewhere? How do they negotiate prices with their suppliers? Where are the greatest profits to be made? Clearly, there are likely to be greater prospects for economic development where there is perceived to be value in re-investing income in the development of the sub-sector, with due regard to sustainability, rather than merely mining one primary commodity after another to its

economic limit. While this entrepreneurial information is often lacking, some case study evidence is beginning to emerge on the role of bushmeat in the livelihood strategies of the poor. The work of de Merode *et al* (2003) is particularly interesting in this regard. Its conclusions, reviewed in a parallel publication in this series, challenge some important assumptions underlying current conservation strategies.

#### **Bushmeat and governance**

The second strand of the argument for the recognition of the wild meat economy in development assistance thinking and strategies concerns the issue of governance. This is a particularly challenging area. In the first instance, the character of many of the range states is unpromising (weak central government with low outreach; major opportunities for rent seeking by officials; low, dispersed and fragmented forest populations; narrow spans of authority over natural resources). Bushmeat tends to figure within that group of commodities which are conceded informally to the rural majority (albeit on terms set by those rent-seeking officials), with the quid pro quo that more coveted and higher value resources, particularly timber, are to be monopolised by the state. At the same time, the thrust of international conservation efforts has, in recent decades, done little to improve the quality of governance. By and large, local resource users in biodiversity-rich areas have found themselves marginalized in conservation discourse, both institutionally and morally.

Existing approaches tend to be premised on the need to take resources out of local control, denying their value to those within closest proximity, who suffer their negative effects. In return, these users are offered the promise of conjunctural benefits in the distant future. In areas where future welfare is highly discounted, such promises are unlikely to convince.

#### **A review of potential instruments and strategies**

To date, management approaches have focused primarily on the attempt to manage the off take through community-based schemes. However progress has often been slow, and successes difficult to sustain. A recent review by DHD concludes that "the scope for sustainable management of bushmeat is limited, except where integrated into community forest management"(2002). An alternative strategy would be to shift the attention away from the project instrument towards the creation of a policy environment in which wild fauna is likely to be conserved. This would address

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the fact that, under present tenurial arrangements, the incentives for forest dwellers to conserve wildlife are almost always negative.

#### **A three-fold strategy is required:**

##### **1. Legal and Regulatory reform**

As with other natural resources, wildlife laws are often anti-poor and effectively unworkable. The case of Cameroon illustrates this point (Box Two).

What is notable about the existing legal frameworks is how far divorced they are from the realities of the trade and consequently, how unsuited they are to ensuring that the benefits are justly distributed and/or invested productively (cf. Ly & Bello, 2002). A drastic reduction of the regulatory burden would be unlikely to worsen the condition of the resource, but could do much to instil local support. The greatest impact would come from actions to give local people long-term rights over their wildlife. The arguments for this proposition are partly moral and economic (it is they who bear the cost); and partly conserva-

tion-based and practical (they have the ability to apply communal sanctions, and their support is essential to control such a decentralized resource). These rights would need to encompass any benefits from consumptive and non-consumptive uses within the wider environs. This would include ensuring that the main -and immediate - beneficiaries of protected area demarcation were the affected populations. It would then be up to them to decide whether it was worth retaining the wildlife in their localities; if so, their new-found right would give them what has hitherto been most lacking - the authority to exclude.

Putting all this into practice is not necessarily straightforward. There would probably be strong political resistance to the move - in that it would, at least by association, challenge the control of the politico-Industrial complex over the highest value forest resource (timber). The identification of the category of 'resident users' might also be problematic, particularly in zones of continuing immigration, or where 'traditional ownership' is contested. 'Residence' is also a fairly moveable feast in bushmeat producer areas. Tradable quotas are one possibility to cover the non-localisation of claims (Inamdar *et al*, 1999), though the governance challenges would be formidable. A simple mechanism would generally be preferred to regulate the overall offtake in line with scientific monitoring.

#### **Box Two:**

##### **Wildlife legislation in Cameroon**

The formulation of forests and wildlife legislation in Cameroon, has been the product of diverse and conflicting pressures, and implementation suffers accordingly. The most recent legislation is the 1994 Forest Law. This freely permits traditional hunting in all zones not subject to restrictions (curiously, the latter include buffer zones as well as protected areas). However, traditional hunting is limited to traditional technologies (i.e. tools derived only from vegetable materials') and class 'C' species (vermin and common reptiles), and is oriented exclusively to subsistence use. Trade is totally prohibited. Legal commercial hunting is effectively beyond the means of the rural majority. Commercial hunting can only be undertaken by a licensed operator, using a firearm, according to the provisions of a *cahier des charges*.

Additional permits are required for transport of game and wildlife sale. Egbe comments that the notion of traditional hunting within the law is archaic and unrealistic. He comments "A law which

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makes the most common forms of conduct illegal is itself an instrument of indiscipline". A 1995 decree (though not the original law) makes reference to community hunting zones (CHZ).

These can be up to 5,000 ha in size, though the area designated must be free of any other title (for example, timber or farming), which effectively excludes almost all available areas. Criteria for the allocation of CHZ are still under discussion, as are the terms for their exploitation. At present, commerce is precluded. This makes it difficult to put in place management systems in line with established patterns of use. The decree also makes provision for communities to receive 10% of the proceeds of hunting by outsiders employing a licensed guide, albeit only for socio-economic infrastructure projects. However, at present rates, this would be likely to give communities a maximum of £350 per year, probably in return for exclusive hunting rights. Egbe makes recommendations to bring the law into line with existing patterns of usage and strengthen community institutions and incentives for conservation. **source: Egbe, 2000**

Flexible closed seasons are probably the most workable solution, though only feasible where they enjoy local support.

### 2. Legitimate trade

The second requirement for any policy advance is surely the establishment of channels of legitimate trade. As noted by Davies, 'development agencies need to be persuaded that not only is the bushmeat trade an economic driver but that it is worth investing in a regulated trade to bring benefits to the rural poor' (2002:588). Likewise range state governments. In the present situation of almost universal criminalisation, the only effect of attempts to tighten up on management is to drive the trade further underground - increasing the profits from illegality (Dickson in Oldfield, 2003). Neither will there be any willingness for responsible entrepreneurs to seek to invest in the higher end of the value chain (overseas and urban niche markets) which might act as a motor of local economic development. A trade development strategy is not inherently 'pro-poor' or 'pro-conservation', and other steps would be needed to promote these objectives. But without it, it is difficult to see how increased investments in management can ever improve the condition of the



resource.

### 3. Greater Transparency

Allied with all these measures (and an essential prerequisite for them) is the need to acknowledge the crucial role which wild meat plays in producer economies. This requires a range of measures to increase transparency: acknowledging the trade in national production statistics (Asibey and Child, 1990); revising poverty assessments (Davies, 2002); and including wild meat within national poverty reduction strategies (only in Nigeria and Bolivia - neither of them map range states - has this occurred to date).

### Conclusions

Making the case for investing in bushmeat to development assistance organisations raises complex issues with important strategic and political dimensions. Aid agencies are under increasing pressure to justify their budgets in terms of short-term impacts - a consideration which disadvantages all activities in the forest sector, wildlife included. There is widespread scepticism about the

likelihood of quick 'win-win' scenarios in the low governance contexts typical of this sector. If the principle of 'triage' is applied, then it is unlikely that the wildlife resource would figure in development assistance, despite the high emotions which it generates in conservation circles. But one of the primary justifications for bringing this issue into realms of development assistance is the impasse which has been reached in conservation-oriented policy: Despite the best intentions of many conservationists, a biodiversity focus is most unlikely to prioritise the consumptive use of the wildlife resource. If bushmeat is to be brought out of the closet, and made the subject of legitimate debate commensurate with its importance in livelihoods and national economies, then another perspective is needed to prioritise those concerns. As this article has underlined, the challenges are many. They must be faced as much by conservation and development agencies as by policy-makers in producer states.

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**"A law which makes the most common forms of conduct illegal is itself an instrument of indiscipline"**