CCMCC
CONFLICT AND COOPERATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

NWO Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research

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Coordination, improved implementation and benefit-sharing with a focus on justice is essential to reducing conflicts around natural resources in the face of climate change

KATHMANDU AND THE HAGUE (7 November 2017). "Conflict is a natural aspect of forestry management because it is dynamic – as is society. We take notice of conflicts and engage and adapt our policies accordingly. We need to incorporate conflicts in all our guidelines and policies." This was the response of Mr Prakash Lamsal, Under Secretary of the Ministry of Forestry following the recommendations made by four Nepal-focused projects of the research programme on Conflict and Cooperation in the Management in Climate Change (CCMCC).

The four research consortia (Peri-Urban Water Security, Community Based Adaptive Learning, Hydropower and Conflict and Cooperation over REDD+) gathered with a range of representatives from governmental agencies, NGOs, community-based organisations and research institutes, to share the findings of four years of research. The projects focused on conflict dynamics around the management of natural resources in the context of climate change and related interventions. Discussions were had around the implementation of REDD+, which is confronted with issues about unclear tenure rights and ineffective procedures for equal benefit-sharing, as well as a presentation on water security of peri-urban communities, where conflicts are eminent between local users and water vendors. The teams also presented on the nature of conflicts around forest and water use and how adaptive learning processes enable transformation of conflict to cooperation. With regard to hydropower, the need for evidence-based provisions for, as well as monitoring of, downstream release was discussed. The representative of the Department of Electricity Development, under the Ministry of Energy, Mr Sanjay Dhungel acknowledged that monitoring was lacking and that should be given required attention in order to transform conflicts between hydropower developers and downstream communities.

Participants discussed the need for meaningful engagement of natural resource user groups, such as forest and water user communities in development of policies or finance schemes. The importance of acknowledgement of the diversity of Nepal's communities, with an eye for social differentiation and disadvantaged communities was underlined. "Inside communities, recognition of all sections of our diverse and socially differentiated communities is crucial", said Prof Ram Chhetri, an anthropologist from Tribhuvan University. This diversity in relation to varying needs, as well as different uses of natural resources, is crucial in developing mitigation as well as adaption policies as response to climate change.

The following recommendations were made by the consortia to enhance conflict-sensitiveness of natural resource policies, also those that are developed in response to climate change:

1. **Coordination**
   Compartmentalised roles and responsibilities lead to weak coordination between different agencies and levels of government and different resource users could be a source of conflict. Capacitating local government financially ,with technical knowledge as well in terms of human resources is critical to avoiding conflict.

2. Policy inconsistencies and poor implementation

There is a lack of clarity due to overlapping roles, leading to ineffective services resulting in conflicts for access and rights to resources. Natural resource governance should be more devolved, participatory and integrated. Decentralised planning processes and monitoring could result in more effective implementation. Furthermore, government reorganisation should be informed of the potential for conflict.

3. Benefit-sharing

Varying claims and competition between different actors on resources and associated benefits and costs results in conflict. Benefits should equitably go to the local community, ensuring disadvantaged social groups benefit too. Simplification, better implementation and better monitoring of the existing mechanisms is also needed and civil society organisations could play a major role in monitoring and advocacy of benefit-sharing mechanisms. Furthermore, researchers and associations should explore, analyse, document, translate and disseminate findings on benefit sharing through participatory activities at different forums.

4. Justice

The poor recognition of roles and rights, participation of different social groups and inequitable sharing of costs and benefits is essential to impeding conflict. Due considerations of the traditional uses and users in relation to the evolving interests around resource use and conservation is necessary. It is critical to provide clear, comprehensive and secure tenure rights to local communities over access and rights to natural resources. Government must ensure that existing guidelines are actually followed in consultation and participation of NR user communities

5. Technical solutions

Policy should support those technologies that enable efficient use of natural resources and are appropriate for small scale local institutions and user groups. A conducive environment for small scale, local businesses and the private sector to contribute in a responsible manner could be created.

The research from the DFID / NWO-WOTRO funded CCMCC programme found that while climate change was not necessarily the main driver behind conflict, it should be an essential part of policy, planning and natural resource management. All of the research investigated conflicts linked to adaptation, mitigation or climate change.

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ABOUT THE PROJECTS:

The **Hydropower Development in the Context of Climate Change** project looks into how the effects of hydropower development intersect with the impacts of climate change in the culturally and ecologically diverse region of the Eastern Himalayas in Nepal and India. While, hydropower is relatively clean and renewable, properly addressing the potential negative socio-environmental repercussions of large hydropower dams is a challenge.

The **Climate Policy, Conflicts and Cooperation in Peri-Urban South Asia towards Resilient and Secure Water Communities** project aims to strengthen and empower communities for the effective management of water insecurity, induced by the combined impacts of climate change and urbanisation in the use, management, and governance of peri-urban water resources of South Asia.

The **Community based Adaptive Learning in the management of Conflicts and Natural Resources** project, or CALCNR, has worked towards addressing knowledge gaps between community management of natural resources, local adaptation innovations and national policy debates over climate change and conflicts related to natural resource access. The project's research has found that water management has focused on technical and structural measures, but is often compromised by local conflicts.

The **Conflict and cooperation over REDD+ in Mexico, Nepal and Vietnam** project, commonly known as "CoCooR" is an interdisciplinary cross-country project with a focus on analysis of conflicts and co-operation. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+), and the enhancement and sustainable use of forest carbon stocks is an international policy framework promoted to align forest governance in developing countries with climate change mitigation objectives and to contribute towards poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation, through both national policies and concrete projects.

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