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2008 Book Reviews

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Climate Change and Agriculture in Africa: Impact Assessment and Adaptation Strategies

Ariel Dinar, Rashid Hassan, Robert Mendelsohn, James Benhinet al.,
London: Earthscan, 2008, 206 pages

Reviewed by Tara Bedi

With climate change projected to impact on Africa quite strongly, this recent publication makes an informative contribution to what this impact will look like in the agriculture sector in Africa. It is an culmination of research studies carried out across 11 countries representing the different regions in Africa,(1) as well as the main agro-climatic zones and farming systems in that continent. The studies draw on a strong economics and research skill set, using different analytic methods to pull together a quantitative measurement on what the impact of climate change will be. Although quite technical in its tone, the book has a lot of key recommendations for policymakers to draw on as they develop policies and programmes to support farmers adapting to climate change.

The first three chapters of the book provide the background to the study. Starting off with the rationale behind the study, the book then moves into an overview of the methodologies used and the agro-climatic conditions in the countries of study. This overview provides an important context in which the results

of the studies can be interpreted and understood by policymakers. The book presents in detail the quantitative models used in the research, the limitations to the different models and how the data for the studies were collected. For practitioners or those interested in follow-up research, the farmers' sample survey, which also looks at farmers' attitudes, perception and response to climate change, is a useful resource.

Where the book becomes relevant to policymakers is in Chapters Four and Five, as it is here that the results from the country and regional analyses are presented. For those who work on agriculture policy and programmes, these results will help clarify and/or reviews provide evidence as to the types of assistance needed by farmers in order to adapt to changing climates. While some of the results may point to already known actions, such as the need for governments to make resources available to farmers or to provide irrigation, it is the analysis behind the results that is interesting.

One of the insightful areas both at a country and regional level are the results from the analysis of the impact of crop water requirements. At a country level, the results incorporate a high level of detail. For example in certain areas of Egypt raised temperatures will increase the use of water for wheat, maize and cotton, while decreasing yields, especially in the third growth stage for summer

crops. At a regional level, there is useful information on the types of crops which use water most efficiently, such as maize and sorghum. The other type of analysis that brings important insight into the impacts of climate change are from the cross-sectional analysis on economic impacts. For policymakers at a country level, the information will be useful as it includes estimates on how climate change will impact on farming revenues. For instance in Cameroon it is estimated that a 2.5° centigrade increase in temperature could cause a \$0.5 billion decrease in net revenue from farming in Cameroon. At a regional level some interesting points emerge such as the different effect of climate change for small livestock farms versus big ones, or for rain-fed versus irrigated farms.

One of the more exciting areas of analysis is on farmers' perceptions and adaptation strategies. The results show that a great number of farmers already perceive climate change as a current reality characterised by increasing temperature, decreasing rainfall and delays in the onset of the rains. As a reaction to these perceptions, farmers are already adapting, by changing sowing dates, using more drought-resistant seed varieties and diversifying into non-farming activities. For regional policy, there are a number of useful results, such as the link between rented land and willingness to adapt and the importance of farmers'

education levels and access to extension services as two ways to decrease the vulnerability of farmers to climate change.

1. These are Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Niger and Senegal in West Africa, Egypt in North Africa, Ethiopia and Kenya in East Africa and South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe in Southern Africa.

Fragile States: Dilemmas of Stability in Lebanon and the Arab World

Ali Fayyad, Oxford: INTRAC (International NGO Training and Research Centre), 2008, 200 pages

Reviewed by Eoin Murray

"The stone age" said former Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Sheikh Zaki Yamani "did not end for the lack of stone." Yamani's insightful comment was intended as a reminder to one of the most resource-rich regions of the world that development depends on investment in education, technology and the features and functions of modernity - before the oil runs out.

Fragile States: Dilemmas of Stability in Lebanon and the Arab World is a further reminder of the urgency of this call. While

the black gold of the Arab world is powering the economies of Western states and eastern powerhouses like China, large parts of the Arab world are lingering in pre-modern social conditions, characterised by what Fayyad describes as "societal fragility".

Western descriptions of the Arab world are usually of a homogenous ethnic and religious landscape. Thus, a casual reader of Fayyad's neat review would probably be surprised at the variety within the Arab world. These include dictatorships, principalities and democracies. There are also a multitude of ethnic minorities including North Africa's Berbers, Iraq's Kurds and the politically significant, if numerically diminishing, Christian population.

By way of illustrating the diversity of the Arab economic models Fayyad also references the immense economic success of the Gulf region, partially built on a non-oil economy. However, most Arab states are controlled by hegemonic elites, often established by colonial powers, who have failed to provide for the development of their societies. Instead they have invested heavily in the symptoms of political legitimacy and the "expectations of modernity". This gives rise to Burhun Ghayloun's concept that the Arab world contains states which modernise but are not modern. The failure to become modern has contributed to the rise of political Islam within the Arab world, whether of the (competing)

Salifist, Muslim Brotherhood or Shia ideologies.

Fayyad describes Arab states as fitting into one of three categories: homogenous, pluralistic and mosaic. Within these states the characteristics and causes of fragility include competing spheres of political legitimacy and foreign intervention.

Lebanon, Iraq and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) are naturally the focus of much of the text. Each is characterised by extreme institutional fragility, competing internal political or sectarian spheres of power and significant levels of foreign intervention. In the case of the OPT the sovereign state is replaced by a failed authority, dominated by Israeli occupation. Lebanon's fragility is characterised by competing sectarian interests, primarily Christian and Islamic, and Israeli and Syrian military intervention. Iraq also suffers from foreign military intervention and intense sectarian divisions.

For states throughout the Arab world the conflict with Israel is key. In Lebanon and the OPT it is a direct source of fragility. In other parts of the Arab world, often those not facing direct conflict with Israel, the conflict becomes a source of attaining political legitimacy. In the past this occurred at the official state level but the taming of the Arab state has led to a decline in this. Consequently, the conflict has been claimed by competing parties-

national or Islamic - as part of their political strategy to undermine the authority of the state.

Apart from comparatively high levels of instability the other remarkable factor about Iraq, Lebanon and the OPT is that they are parliamentary democracies. Fayyad does not use much space exploring the link between democracy and fragility and this presents a valuable opportunity for a follow-up study. In Western democracy competition for power is resolved through a legally enforced political contract to transfer power. In Arab states competing forces often seek to withdraw the legitimacy of the state rather than seek a transfer of that legitimacy. In the OPT, Iraq and Lebanon political parties (strengthened by democratic processes) are further bolstered by military wings which challenge the legitimate authority's monopoly on the use of lethal force and even the imposition of the rule of law.

In all three states competing political forces are undermined by the removal of legitimate authority as a result of foreign intervention. Functions of statehood (including market development, support for the rule of law, provision of infrastructure and relations with other states) become conditional on the interests of an external power.

Fayyad introduces the useful concept of societal fragility to characterise Iraq, Lebanon and the OPT. This occurs when

the fragility of the state passes into the society itself. This is caused by competing sectarian and/or strategic political interests, divisions over institutional structures and opinions on the legitimacy of foreign interventions. These factors spill from the political or institutional arena onto the streets - erupting in sectarian or political violence. This is a key distinguishing factor between these three explosive areas from other states in the region - a combination of both deep state and societal fragility.

In the case of Lebanon, which forms the major focus of the text, fragility is informed by the hangover from the bitter sectarian civil war, the unresolved relationship between the state and Palestinian refugees and foreign interventions by Israel, Syria and other regional and international powers. Lebanon's complex multi-confessionalist power sharing system has been preserved since the 1943 National Pact. To end the civil war alterations to the Pact were incorporated in the Taif Agreement. These set the balance of power more in favour of the demographically superior Muslim population. State positions (including the Presidency, the office of Prime Minister and Speaker of the parliament) are assigned on the basis of sectarian division. The current Lebanese political crisis can be traced back to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559/2004 which contributed to Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon. The aftermath of Syrian withdrawal involved

an escalation in sectarian tension, political assassinations and the extended failure of the parliament to elect a President.

Although three contradictory factors are at play in Lebanon -the Arab-Israeli conflict, inter-Arab relations and Arab-Western relations - Fayyad chooses to focus on the tensions inside Lebanon. He proposes options for reducing sectarianism and strengthening the rule of law, such as balancing the economic developmental programme, ensuring the independence of the judiciary and adopting a proportional representation electoral system.

As Fayyad acknowledges in his conclusion, the crisis of legitimacy in Lebanon, and in the broader Arab world, will remain until other significant factors are resolved. The relationship with Israel and the situation of the Palestinians as cause cœŕbre of the Arab world will continue to be used as a justification for undermining state authority. The suspension of societal and democratic progress in authoritarian states will also ensure that other societies in the Arab world remain significantly underdeveloped. These factors will continue to ensure the status of the region as one of unfulfilled potential and open the political possibilities for the further rise of political Islam.

The New Asian Hemisphere: the Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East

Kishore Mahbubani, New York: PublicAffairs/Perseus Books,2008, 295pp

Reviewed by Eamonn Meehan

In this recently-published book Kishore Mahbubani recounts an experience he had as a Singaporean diplomat at a meeting of EU and ASEAN senior officials in Luxembourg. Tan Sri Ahmad Kamil Jaafar, a distinguished Malaysian diplomat, led the ASEAN delegation. The hosts, Luxembourg, invited the ASEAN delegation to lunch, with Tan Sri Kamil as guest of honour. On his arrival a young European official asked him if he could show his official invitation. As he had not brought the invitation with him he was refused entry to the lunch at which he was supposed to be the guest of honour. While there is probably a strong element of farce about the incident, Mahbubani uses the story to illustrate the strong sense of disdain and cultural arrogance which he believes the European hosts displayed in dealings with their Asian visitors.

After a career as a diplomat which included representing his country on the UN Security Council, Mahbubani is now a professor in the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. His latest book is one of a

number recently published which analyse shifting global power structures and the implications for future peace and stability. The central thesis of the book is that the global dominance of the West - economic, political, cultural - is coming to an end and is rapidly being replaced by an increasingly confident and dynamic Asian region, in particular China and India. He argues persuasively that the 88% of the world's population living outside of the West are no longer happy to be the objects of world history but are increasingly becoming the movers and shapers of world events as well as of their own destinies. He points out that by 2050 three of the world's four biggest economies will be Asian and that Asian influence in other aspects of global affairs will be equally significant.

Mahbubani argues that the manner in which the West responds to the emergence of Asia is going to be critical to future peace and stability. He believes the West is unwilling to face up to the end of the era of Western domination of world history and is failing to adapt to new realities. Coupled with this he believes the West is incompetent in dealing with major global challenges such as climate change, nuclear non-proliferation, terrorism and regional conflicts such as the Middle East. He argues that this growing incompetence is leading to bad outcomes which aggravate the Western sense of insecurity.

He foresees a real crisis in the management of the emerging world order unless the Western mind stops looking only for dangers and begins to look at opportunities. What Mahbubani calls "the Asian March to Modernity" represents, he believes, a new opportunity for the world if the West can learn to work with rather than against this march.

Mahbubani spends considerable time on structures which manage global affairs and is highly critical of them. He criticises the way in which the UN Security Council is constituted (in particular he believes Europe should have one member, representing the EU), as unrepresentative of the modern world and lashes out at the processes for selecting the leaders of the World Bank and IMF. He reserves particular criticism for the G7 (he feels Russia is only tolerated by the others), which he accuses of being outdated and unable to implement the decisions it takes because it no longer has the authority it might have carried in the past. He accuses Western leaders of insisting that they wish to promote Western values whereas he believes for the most part they really want to promote Western interests. He is particularly critical of US foreign policy for behaving in a way which fails to recognise that other nations have interests too. This, he believes, will lead to a continued decline in US influence in global affairs.

He has interesting comments to make on the media, believing that the fact that most media with a global reach are controlled in the West contributes to a distorted view of world affairs. Mahbubani believes the West has made a huge contribution in ideas and values to the world and is particularly taken by the view that Asia's rise is based on adopting the modernising influences of the West in areas such as science, economic development, education and pragmatism. This is an exciting book. It will strike a chord with anyone involved in international development and who has felt the shifting balance of power across all global institutions. (Witness most recently, for example, the power exercised by China and India at the WTO Doha Round talks in Geneva.)

In my view Mahbubani underestimates the problems faced by Asia such as the potential difficulties for China as her people look for more freedom of speech and regional autonomy. He also fails to recognise the deep inequalities in Indian society which have become more evident as the cost of food rises. (This aspect of Asia's reality is well covered by Pankaj Mishra in *Temptations of the West: How to Be Modern in India, Pakistan and Beyond*.) Mahbubani is ultimately looking for ways to ensure stability and order as the power balances shift. He believes that pragmatism and the challenging of every ideological assumption embedded in our minds is the only real way forward. It is particularly foolish, he argues, to assume

that the Western ideological assumptions of the 19th and 20th centuries will necessarily work in the more complex world of the 21st century. Pragmatism is therefore our best guiding spirit as we venture into the new century. In conclusion he quotes one of the great pragmatists of the last century, Deng Xiaopeng: "It does not matter whether a cat is black or white; if it catches mice it is a good cat."

Civil Society and the War on Terror

Kasturi Sen with Tim Morris, Oxford: INTRAC (International INGO Training and Research Centre), 2008, 170 pages

Reviewed by Ann Rigney

From the perspective of the development practitioners who have contributed chapters to *Civil Society and the War on Terror*, the international politics of the so-called war on terror are having a detrimental impact on civil society groups (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). While global security is regularly cited as the motivation for new counter-terrorism measures, conditions for the world's most vulnerable are worsening and CSOs and NGOs are facing increasing challenges to their work.

The premise of the arguments laid out in this book is that when human development becomes a security paradigm, peace and stability become threatened everywhere. Experience by civil society actors is that the restrictions placed on them by, for example, demands for financial accountability, inhibits their efficiency on the ground. There is a culture of mistrust between governments, donors and organisations both in and out of country and progress made in the years previous to the war on terror to strengthen partnerships across national boundaries is being undermined.

Published by the International NGO Training and Research Centre, the discussion opens with an introduction by Kasturi Sen with Tim Morris which raises questions about current laws, regulations and general challenges, all of which need to be asked when CSOs and NGOs pursue their organisational goals. Rather than a theoretical engagement with the issues, each chapter is based on discussions, observations and shared practical experiences. Although the contributors describe events in a range of different countries, the book's focus is on the experience of CSO and NGO actors in South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East, alongside an assessment of the damage inflicted by the security measures implemented by the US, UK and EU.

The US leads the way in implementing these measures but, as several contributors note, many other governments are following suit. In fighting its so-called war on terror, the US has taken upon itself the authority to prevent NGOs from working with suspect groups and to dissolve trust between donors and client NGOs and CSOs. In many cases US NGOs have come to be viewed as an extension of the administration, with resulting difficulties in maintaining their neutrality. US NGOs are left with the stark choice of adhering to counter-terrorism measures and working alongside the military in stabilisation efforts, or facing the possibility of having their funding cut. As one contributor notes, the US Treasury has a key function in forcing this adherence.

There is a dangerous vagueness to state definitions of terrorism, a vagueness about which NGOs must be careful. In an environment where they are accused of terrorist associations and having their financial assets frozen, many players are nervous about even questioning the language of counter-terrorism. This vagueness is by no means limited to the US government - indeed, the Lisbon Treaty proposed that EU military activities "may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories" while neglecting to give any sort of explanation of what such "terrorism" might comprise.

Several states have taken similar counter-productive approaches to counter-terrorism. As a major player in the war on terror, the UK has introduced a number of damaging policies to the NGO and CSO sector. Like the US, the UK tends to focus on Islamic CSOs and rather than winning support from its Muslim communities, its policies seem to be designed to deny any hope for trust, openness or co-operation. In Pakistan, CSOs are often seen as a threat to the government and the war on terror is thus used as a tool to control them. CSOs and NGOs in other south Asian countries face similar challenges, with more favoured actors being drawn into working alongside the government while reducing their commitments to providing welfare services.

Central Asian countries also have seen CSOs and NGOs as a threat to their authority - possibly a knock on effect of the many "colour revolutions" that have taken place in the region. For many governments secular and radical extremism is a major concern. However, they feel that CSOs and NGOs have failed to demonstrate accountability and transparency in their work, therefore, creating more of a threat to their stability.

Arab countries are seen to place many restrictions on CSOs and NGOs, namely that they often must follow a neo-liberal agenda. The situation is exacerbated as well since many CSO and NGO actors argue that there is a double standard in support. CSOs and NGOs in Israel are

not required to complete the same standard of counter-terrorism measures (CTMs). With so many refugees and displaced people, they argue that host governments are quite inhospitable when it comes to support for refugees.

In Iraq, many NGOs and CSOs must work alongside coalition forces, which, as mentioned before, creates little trust and shows questionable impartiality. In general, their finances are very tightly regulated yet many fear the consequences of registering a complaint.

Geo-political interests and the war on terror have merged dangerously with development assistance, pushing aside issues of growing poverty and deprivation in certain regions. In conclusion, there are three main problems caused by the war on terror which need to be addressed. The use of vague language and terms which are too broad seem to be common place in government and a common complaint amongst NGO and CSO workers. CTMs are also being used to stifle the work done by CSOs and NGOs on legitimate political problems such as poverty and other issues included in the Millenium Development Goals. Finally, according to CSO and NGO players, CTMs are masking human rights violations rather than preventing them. This book brings up many points which need to be discussed and addressed. CSO and NGO members are facing extreme challenges and this book, the research behind it, the discussions it puts

forward and the issues it raises illustrate the need for open discussions in order to work with existing CTMs in such a way that they can successfully achieve their aims to benefit society.