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Values - Identifying the key values and principles in designing and implementing the NRGF

By Jennifer Mohamed-Katerere
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Why does clarity about the values underpinning the NRGF matter?

- **Frameworks provide a reference level for undertaking various actions**. Constitutions, for example, set the foundation for legal and policy development by establishing a basis for determining what is legitimate. Similarly, the proposed Natural Resource Governance Framework (NRGF) serves as the basis for developing principles, guidance, criteria and tools for evaluating and assessing governance and identifying actions needed to improve governance. For this reason developing a shared understanding of core values is critical. **Values are not a description of some utopian ideal, but a basis for maintaining focus on the core priorities, and developing specific steps for achieving our core objectives.** These specific steps would include guidelines, principles, and assessment and evaluation tools. In this sense values are different from **principles**, which can be seen as **rules of action**.

- **Values are not simply about beliefs; they are also about knowledge** Values imply a level of judgment about what is important, in life, in conservation, in decision-making, for achieving sustainability, etc. Although they are framed by core beliefs, which may emanate from religion or other moral convictions, understanding (derived from knowledge and experience) of what works, and why it works, is equally important in making that judgment. For example, in the late 1980s and 1990s the conservation world came to a new shared understanding of conservation based on the links between environmental and human sustainability and wellbeing. In this context, values of *sustainability* and *justice,* as well as *sufficiency* of people and nature, shifted to the center. New framework conventions were adopted, including The Convention on Biological Diversity, which emphasizes the need for justice, sufficiency, and participation if conservation goals are to be reached.

- **Values shape practice.** Irrespective of whether values are hidden in existing practice or overtly expressed - represent the core priorities of an organization, society or other

entity, or individuals, and inform their decisions, programs and other activities. Values drive the interactions among the different parts of a society as well as between societies. For example if we value the inclusion of all people directly affected by natural resource choices in decision then our actions will be different from those who prioritize only the role of impacted land owners. **As such, values can be seen as a foundation from which the Natural Resource Governance Framework can be developed – and a touchstone for building coherence and internal rigor within the framework.**

What are the values we hold as a Union?

Historically, the priorities of IUCN have focused on conservation and sustainable development (cf., Caring for the Earth, 1980, 1991). IUCN has approached the issue of governance from the perspective of **how** to promote better conservation while ensuring sustainable development. Other values – democracy, equity, and inclusion – despite having been widely articulated among members and within the Commissions have largely been treated as secondary in the Secretariat-led conservation programmes. Consequently, the development of environmental governance principles (rules of action) has focused primarily on increasing the legitimacy of environmental decision-making and the effectiveness of conservation decisions, rather than, as the IUCN vision suggests, creating "*A Just World that Values and Conserves Nature*".

This historical tension within the values of IUCN presents some challenges for developing a coherent set of values and associated principles:

- The range of natural resource governance principles lack coherence and are at times at variance with each other, with, for example, the focus on positive conservation outcomes taking precedence over the rights of local communities and indigenous people to engage in democratic/participatory governance. Efficiency (time, money, planning) has, at times, been treated as equal to, and in some contexts overriding, entitlements to participation. **Consequently it is not appropriate, at this juncture, to "gather" sets of principles from existing work of IUCN**.
- The program decisions taken by IUCN over the years indicate that *"A Just World"* **has effectively been reduced in the identified principles to creating fair institutions** – "justice as fairness" in the tradition of John Rawls – rather than also enhancing the capability of people to effectively use these institutions and lead lives they value (including, for example, livelihood security). Principles that address aspects of social justice (e.g. non-discrimination, sufficiency, recognition of the territorial rights of indigenous people and traditional knowledge) that are addressed in IUCN documents and importantly with in the resolutions adopted at the WCC are less often reflected in actions. For example, although "livelihood security" is identified as a key aspect of the IUCN social policy program, it is not well reflected in emerging governance principles.
- **A touchstone for checking the appropriateness of identified principles against core values has been largely absent**.

With the adoption of two new programme areas – "Effective and Equitable Governance of

Nature's Use" and "Deploying Nature-based Solutions to Climate, Food and Development" – it is of critical importance that social issues will need to be more effectively integrated in IUCN's programmes. It is, for example, envisaged that under the first programmatic area IUCN will consolidate its work on people-nature relations, rights and responsibilities, and the political economy of nature (IUCN Programme 2013- 2016).

Developing Principles for the NRGF

Governance principles are not values, but a determining characteristic or essential quality of "good governance". These may include, for example, the principle that all people are entitled to access to information or to participate in decisions. Principles are not so much about a desired outcome or a statement of a perfect world, but *a guiding compass for taking steps towards realizing that vision*. As such, they constitute an accepted or professed rule of action or conduct/ direction. Principles in the environmental governance domain, for example, reflect a set of core rules and limitations about actions and processes needed to achieve a desired outcome that moves us closer to realizing our values.

Only where these principles are locally grounded and tested can they have the characteristic of an essential quality. They should not be derived abstractly, but rather based on *lives lived, research, experience, and the sharing of knowledge* among different actors, including across existing cultural, social and economic barriers in specific, real contexts that evolve according to myriad factors (war, market-driven changes, etc.). Recognizing and giving voice to historically excluded and marginalized communities, especially those that are dependent on natural resources, will be needed to develop rigor about the choice and content of principles. Such an inclusive, discussed, and thoughtful understanding of natural resource governance - what works as well as the gaps and problems within it - will help us identify where principles/ guides for governance are weak or conflated with other principles (free market, neoliberalism, one man one vote vs. consensus, etc.).

What are our building blocks for strengthening the key (and shared) IUCN understandings about governance?

Agreeing to a credible and shared understanding of governance and principles will help us identify the areas in which the further development of principles, criteria and tools is needed in the NRGF. Existing resolutions, and the organization's vision and mission agreed to at the various WCCs provide a "hard law" basis for IUCN, as do the programmatic developments as included in the WCC-adopted Programme 2013 -2016.

Hints of these principles and values can be found in:

1. Our Vision: A Just World That Values and Conserves Nature

adopted in the context of a growing global focus on *sustainability* in the 1990s, as well as a growing body of research and experience in conservation within IUCN, particularly in developing countries, that demonstrated that conservation is not possible without justice.

- Does this vision effectively place "ensuring justice" and" conserving nature" as *twin*

"founding" values of IUCN's work?

- How do we understand this notion of "just-ness" in relation to nature (environmental justice)?
- Could this serve as a touchstone for developing principles, criteria and tools for evaluating and assessing environmental governance?
- What steps do we take over the next two years to develop consensus on these principles and prepare them for discussion at WCC 2016?

2. **RESWCC3.012 Governance of Natural Resources for Conservation and Sustainable Development** suggests, *'governance of natural resources' is "the **interactions** among structures, processes and traditions that determine **how power and responsibilities are exercised,** how decisions are taken, and how citizens or other stakeholders have their say in the management of natural resources – including biodiversity conservation".* This suggests that our governance principles must address:

- Power relations.
- 'Equality' in the interactions among people/actors in mediating between multiple, conflicting interests.
- The factors that shape the choices (about natural resources) that people make, the lives they are actually able to lead (the distribution of power, responsibility, etc.). This would, for example, include their experience of discrimination, inequality, and social and economic exclusion.
- The link between these lived realities and the principle of sufficiency, which is the value that all forms of life have enough goods to live on and flourish. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, for example, identified these as including natural assets, such as land and water, but also social components (many of which are closely related to the quality of environmental governance) such as health and good social relations. Other ideas around "primary goods", capabilities, etc., as reflected in the seminal works of John Rawls and Amartya Sen, are also useful for refining our understanding.
- The links between people "having their say" and procedural rights (participation etc.), as well as their state of being (health, economic exclusion, language, knowledge).

Existing synergies in the work of the Secretariat and the Commissions (including CEESP and WCEL) around human rights approaches to conservation and governance could potentially provide an important starting point for building a shared understanding about core values. This includes, for example, the recognition that the reality of how people live their lives, and the opportunities and capabilities they have, is critical for the success of conservation:

IUCN recognizes that, without a peaceful, safe, and respectful setting where human lives are valued, and without livelihood security - i.e. security of tenure and access to lands, natural resources, and other basic assets, no conservation commitment can be expected from local people. This concept, which calls for full respect for human rights, is connected with the right to a decent quality of life and to other related rights recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and

Cultural Rights. Further, in conditions of political oppression and marginalization, as frequently occurs with indigenous peoples and local communities, their active participation in, and support to, the development and enforcement of environmental laws and policies becomes impossible. The more people live in security and have their rights respected, the more they will be willing to engage in biodiversity conservation and care for their lands and resources. (IUCN website: Social Policy)

This brief was written with the intent of stirring discussion during the Inception Workshop for the NRGF- as this pilot One Programme finds its bearings.

References and suggested readings

IUCN website (Social Policy webpage)
http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/social_policy/sp_themes_hrande/

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