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ASSESSING THE NEED TO MANAGE CONFLICT IN COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE PROJECTS

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This paper considers the role of 'conflict management assessment' in community-based natural resource projects. The importance of conducting an assessment of the potential for conflict and its management in relation to a project intervention is stressed, and an assessment framework described. Within this framework the advantages of managing conflict through a consensual 'win-win' process of stakeholder negotiation are discussed.

Policy conclusions

- Interventions to assist in the management of conflict within community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) should be preceded by a 'conflict management assessment' (CMA). This assessment should consider: (a) whether the conflict is likely to overwhelm the existing customary, institutional and legal approaches to conflict management, and if so whether it is appropriate to try to strengthen these; (b) whether, if the conflict is left alone, new conflict management mechanisms will organically materialise within an acceptable time-frame; and (c) whether the long-term benefits of allowing the conflict to transform itself into a positive force for social reform are outweighed by the short-term costs.
- Interventions for improved conflict management should be guided by an overall strategy which considers the full range of management options, including: 'do-nothing', force, withdrawal, accommodation, compromise and consensus.
- Capacity building is a critical component of effective conflict management, involving *inter alia*: facilitated institutional re-organisation; skills training for the conflicting parties in direct face-to-face negotiations; and training of community leaders and 'outside' agencies in third-party facilitation/mediation/brokering.
- Although stakeholder analysis of a conflict situation is valuable, it is through a process of stakeholder negotiations that the most creative and durable solutions will be found.
- Two factors support consensual 'win-win' negotiations as an effective strategy

for managing conflicts in CBNRM: (a) the multi-stakeholder nature of such conflicts; and (b) the common ground that exists for sustaining renewable natural resources.

- Implementation of an overall strategy of conflict management will need to be periodically monitored to ensure that new external forces are neutral to the conflict, and that either a ‘do-nothing’ strategy is having the expected impact, or that the commitments embodied in a negotiated agreement are implemented in full and are effective.

Introduction

The word ‘conflict’ carries negative connotations. It is often thought of as the opposite of cooperation and peace, and is most commonly associated with violence or the threat of violence. This view of conflict is not always helpful. In many settings it should be seen as a potential force for positive social change—its presence a visible demonstration of society adapting to a new political, economic or physical environment.

It is difficult to think of anywhere where there is currently more rapid social change than in some of the rural areas of developing countries. The introduction of new technologies, commercialisation of common property resources, privatisation of public services, growing consumerism, new government policies for CBNRM and the general decline in the terms-of-trade for agricultural produce, all exert pressure on individuals and community groups towards change. The conflicts that arise from these environmental perturbations are not something that can be avoided or suppressed. A ‘conflict management assessment’ (CMA) aims to acknowledge these potential conflicts, manage their excesses, and transform the residual into a positive force.

External assistance

Interest from donors, governments and NGOs in the role of conflict and conflict management in CBNRM is emerging within two distinct areas of international development: peace-building and sustainable livelihoods.

Peace-building—The resolution of armed conflict through mediation, followed by programmes of reconstruction and development, have long been the building blocks of peace-building. More recently emphasis has been placed on the promotion of conflict prevention, both in post-conflict and pre-conflict situations. ‘Good governance’, democratic involvement and strengthening of civil society are common conflict prevention strategies. Less common but of increasing interest is the use of targeted programmes of conventional community development (education, health, CBNRM etc) (Craig *et al*, 1998). Although the deployment of community development projects as part of humanitarian assistance in post-conflict situations has been criticised for being open to political manipulation (ODI, 1998), less is known about the effectiveness of such strategies in regions of pre-conflict. Specifically, effort is needed to explore how the design of conventional community development projects in pre-conflict regions might be enhanced in order to maximise their contribution to conflict prevention.

Sustainable Livelihoods—Conflicts over natural resources among different stakeholder groups can be a barrier to equitable and sustainable rural livelihoods. Poorly designed CBNRM projects can introduce new conflicts and/or exacerbate existing or latent ones. Conversely, new projects or regimes which pro-actively consider conflict can help reduce existing disputes, prevent new ones forming and provide for crisis management as and when conflicts arise.

The new emphasis of donors on social inclusion and access for the poor to land, resources and markets provides an additional dimension to conflict management. Carefully designed management strategies can bring disenfranchised stakeholders into equitable and collaborative negotiations with more powerful stakeholders, so helping to resist the capture of resources by elites and promote ‘pro-poor’ natural resource policies at the local level. In short, a process of conflict management as it is interpreted here can be a means to operationalise ‘pro-poor’ participation in regions where effective participation is non-existent or weak.

Types of conflicts in CBNRM

In the context of conflict within CBNRM it is helpful to distinguish three broad types of ownership/management:

- *community owned, community managed* (e.g. rotational grazing of communal land);
- *community owned, outside managed* (e.g. harvesting or processing of communally owned forests by commercial logging companies); and
- *outside owned, community managed* (e.g. community group management of state owned forest reserves).

Each of these regimes can be either initiated by local people themselves or by some external government, non-governmental or private organisation.

Conflicts can be categorised in terms of whether they occur at the *micro-micro* or *micro-macro* levels, i.e. among community groups or between community groups and outside organisations (Grimble and Wellard, 1997). Micro-micro conflicts can be further categorised as taking place either within the group directly involved in a particular resource management regime (eg a forest 'user' group), or between this group and those not directly involved (eg between the 'user' group and women entering the forest to collect fuelwood) (Conroy *et al*, 1998). Further categorisation of conflicts in terms of the 'active' and 'passive' parties is unhelpful. Apportioning blame in

Box 1. Types of conflicts arising in CBNRM

Intra micro-micro conflicts

- disputes over land and resource ownership, eg between private and communal land owners;
- disputes over land boundaries between individuals or groups;
- latent family and relationship disputes;
- disputes due to CBNRM projects/schemes being captured by elites and/or those who happen to own resources of a higher quality;
- breaking of common property resource (CPR) constitutional or operational rules, such as protection agreements for grazing areas, fish net sizes, forests, or misappropriation of funds etc.
- disputes over the unfair distribution of work and profits.

Inter micro-micro conflicts

- conflict between 'land owners' and 'resource users';
- conflict between indigenous CPR groups, and more recent settlers;
- disputes generated by jealousy related to growing wealth disparities;
- lack of cooperation between different community groups;
- disputes over renewal arrangements for leased land;
- internal land ownership disputes ignited by the speculation activities of commercial companies; and
- resentment built up due to lack of representation on village committees.

Micro-Macro conflicts

- cultural conflicts between community groups and 'outsiders';
- project management disputes between community groups and outside project-sponsors;
- disputes caused by political influence (national, provincial or local);
- disputes arising from differences between the aspirations of community groups and expectations of NGOs or commercial companies; and
- off-site environmental impacts affecting unintended third-parties.

this way tends to be heavily value-laden.

Examples of both intra and inter micro-micro conflicts and micro-macro conflicts within various CBNRM regimes are given in Box 1. The effects of these conflicts can range from a temporary reduction in the efficiency of resource management, to the complete collapse of community initiatives or abandonment of government, NGOs or donor-sponsored CBNRM projects. In extreme cases conflicts over natural resource management can escalate into physical violence.

Causes of conflict in CBNRM

Conflicts within CBNRM can be divided into two principal types: those caused directly by new developmental pressures, and those that are normally latent but which can be disturbed as an indirect consequence of these pressures.

In many rural areas the competition that arises because of a combination of demographic change and the physical limits to sustainability of renewable natural resources (forests, water bodies, grazing areas, marine resources, wildlife and agricultural land) is often cited as the underlying cause of micro-micro conflicts. In reality the problem is more complicated. Two further causal forces need to be added to these factors. The first is the increasingly complex array of developmental pressures which can skew access to natural resources, accentuate existing levels of competition and concentrate resource degradation within small areas. The second is the presence of deeper-seated latent conflicts. These include structural inequalities inherent in legal definitions of land ownership and resource use; regional economic and political elites supporting commercial interests over-and-above those of local groups; and longstanding ethnic and cultural differences. These latent conflicts often lie dormant until 're-awakened' by a particular set of developmental pressures.

Conflict management or conflict resolution?

Resolving latent conflicts is a fundamentally more difficult task than resolving conflicts directly attributable to developmental pressures. In the first instance development-induced conflicts within CBNRM generally are local phenomena. Latent conflicts, by contrast, because of their structural nature, can usually only be resolved at the national or regional level, through policy or legal reform or education and wealth creation programmes. In the second instance, with respect to unsustainable resource competition, the competing parties can be encouraged to recognise that they share a mutual self-interest to sustain the resource-base upon which the development depends. Latent conflicts rarely offer such obvious opportunity for finding common ground. In the context of CBNRM therefore it is more accurate to talk of conflict 'management' rather than conflict 'resolution', and to define the objectives of a CMA as follows:

- to transform or mitigate conflicts brought about by developmental pressures; and
- to contain latent structural conflicts such that they do not interfere with the equitable, efficient and sustainable management of the project.

Where the CMA finds that the time is ripe for lending direct assistance to resolve structural conflicts, such action should be taken forward as a parallel intervention.

Conflict management assessment (CMA)

As a donor, government agency or NGO involved in CBNRM, rather than reacting to the presence of conflict or a conflict prone situation by immediately seeking to intervene, it is rational first to conduct a CMA. The assessment may be rapid or prolonged, depending upon the complexity of the issues and the urgency of the situation. The assessment has two main objectives:

- to determine whether the benefits of ‘doing nothing’ outweigh those of ‘doing something’; and
- if intervention is warranted, to determine how best to assist in managing the conflict situation.

Within the project cycle of a CBNRM project two key types of CMA can be identified. The most obvious is that which takes place at the time that a ‘live’ or ‘open’ conflict situation is drawn to the attention of an outside supporting agency. Less obvious, but potentially more effective, is to employ the assessment as a tool in project planning. In this latter case the methodology shares similarities with the process of environmental impact assessment in that an ‘initial screening’ of the project (perhaps built into conventional stakeholder analysis) would determine whether a CMA is justified (ie that a conflict prone situation is present or predicted). This would be followed by an assessment methodology that would weigh the effects of allowing existing conflicts to continue, against a combination of the conflict-reducing and conflict-worsening effects of the project, any new conflicts created by the project, and the effectiveness of conflict mitigation measures.

The ‘do nothing’ scenarios

It is important to note that many conflicts that arise in the process of CBNRM are effectively managed or resolved without intervention. In such cases the action of outside agencies should be to ‘do nothing’. At the micro-micro level indigenous approaches often remain active in conflict resolution. These approaches are commonly characterised by mediation through a third-party (village chief, council chairman, respected elder, etc.), with agreements reached either through consensus or in the form of an imposed settlement. Newer, institutional forms of conflict management may also be operating. Examples here can be drawn from the various resource access rules that govern common property resource management regimes and which are designed to prevent ‘free-riding’. Institutional mechanisms of conflict management can also function at the micro-macro level (for example, the agreements that govern the relationship of forest ‘user’ groups to state forestry departments within community forestry programmes). Finally, there is the legal system. Though not applicable to all types of conflict (and though prone to manipulation by more powerful stakeholders), the legal system is an explicit mechanism for conflict management and one increasingly used to resolve land claims and land boundary disputes.

The first phase of a needs assessment will therefore be to understand the effectiveness of the existing customary, institutional and legal approaches. The conflicts so assessed may be immediate and ‘live’, or those predicted in the process of project planning. Where the assessment finds that existing approaches are (or are likely to be) effective, then the ‘do nothing’ scenario should prevail.

The second phase of the assessment begins when it is concluded that the existing mechanisms are likely to be overwhelmed by the conflict/s. In these cases there are two subsequent avenues of investigations as follows:

Organisational Restructuring—The task here is to determine whether the presence (or prediction) of an overwhelming conflict will spur reform of the existing conflict management mechanisms or encourage development of new ones. The capacity for community groups and other players within civil society to self-reorganise is often overlooked. Tiffen *et al* (1994) have documented the capability of marginal farmers in Kenya to adapt to resource degradation, and more recently Conroy *et al* (1998) have shown how groups involved in participatory forest management in India have established new institutions to manage conflicts over forest protection and mismanagement.

This capacity for institutional self-reorganisation is supported by the evolving theories of chaos and complexity. Application of these theories to social systems argues that individuals, groups and institutions have an inherent capability and desire to position themselves on the ‘edge of chaos’—that place where institutions are at their most adaptable to change (Waldrop, 1994). Conflict, though painful, is part of the natural process of self-reorganisation; it is what maintains the institution at the ‘edge of chaos’.

Weighing the costs and benefits of doing nothing—In cases where the capacity for self-reorganisation is also overwhelmed, the task of a CMA is to determine whether the long-term benefits of leaving the conflict situation unmanaged are outweighed by the short-term costs. Rushing to resolve a conflict (for example a dispute over lease extensions between indigenous land owners and more recent settlers) may indirectly serve to maintain deeper social inequalities (for example a legal system of land tenure which ignores investments made by the leasee).

Notwithstanding the potential benefits of each of these ‘do nothing’ scenarios, a key consideration in the CMA will be whether such benefits are likely to materialise within an acceptable time frame. Conflicts that are about to undermine some critical threshold of project sustainability may need to be addressed more rapidly than the speed at which existing customary, institutional or legal conflict management mechanisms are able to function (or new institutions and mechanisms be developed). Furthermore, leaving conflicts to fester in the hope that in the long run they trigger some wider social reform can be dangerous. Only in exceptional cases can resolving local level conflicts have any real influence on reforming structural inequalities and national policy.

The ‘do something’ scenarios

Where a CMA finds that a ‘live’ (or predicted) conflict is likely to overwhelm the existing capacities for conflict management or self-reorganisation, or where hope that the conflict sparks wider social reform is impracticable, a wide range of options are available for outside agencies to lend assistance. The options fall into four broad categories depending upon the extent to which:

- each party values the maintenance of good relations with other parties; and
- each party attaches importance to achieving its own goals.

Each category is discussed briefly below. Examples of the options are given in Box 2.

Force—Conflict can be managed through ‘force’ when one party has the means and inclination to win regardless of the consequences for the other party, and whether the process of winning causes damage to one’s personal or professional relationships. Not all will be able to use the same force. It will largely depend upon the power that one party holds relative to another. In some cases recourse to the legal system is a form of ‘force’ in that one party can use their superior resources to ‘buy’ better advice or raise the stakes (for example, by taking a lost case to an appeal court).

Withdrawal—This approach is suited to those parties whose desire to avoid confrontation outweighs the goals they are trying to achieve. The power of ‘withdrawal’ should not be underestimated, not least since it can be used as a threat to force reluctant and sometimes more powerful parties to negotiate in a more consensual fashion. However, disadvantaged groups may also withdraw out of a feeling of helplessness.

Accommodation—There are occasions when one party values a strong and continuing relationship with one or more of other parties above the attainment of its own goals. In these cases the party may elect to ‘accommodate’ the other parties, conceding to all or most of their demands. Although such outcomes may look as though they have been the result of ‘force’, the difference is that rather than losing outright, the accommodating party perceives itself to have gained by way of securing good relations, accompanied perhaps by an element of ‘good will’ and the option to achieve some greater goal at a future date.

Compromise—Compromise is often confused with consensus. To compromise in a negotiation may sound positive, but it means that at least one of the parties perceives that it has had to forgo something. In the planning of community-based natural resource projects, compromise—and in particular the notion of ‘trade-offs’—is now prevalent, spurred on by the perceived ‘tragedy of the commons’ and the need to make rational resource allocation decisions. Stakeholder analysis is an example of the compromise approach. The tool is used to analyse the potential distributional impact of a project between the various stakeholder groups, thence to feed into project design so as to minimise sacrifice and trade-offs.

Consensus—In a consensus approach the synergy of collaborative negotiations is used to widen the basis for decision-making, thereby avoiding trade-offs altogether.

Box 2. Categorisation of options in conflict management

Force—adversarial negotiations; legal channels; some electoral systems; mass media to rally public support; public protest; threat of withdrawal; lobbying.

Withdrawal—avoidance; opting out; deployment of delaying tactics; postponement of decision; temporary boycott; strikes.

Accommodation—maintain relationships; ‘goodwill’ nurtured.

Compromise—arbitration; cost-benefit analysis; trade-offs.

Consensus—direct consensual negotiation (no facilitator); third party facilitated/mediated negotiations.

CMA—the process

Drawing on recent field experience in Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Cameroon and India, the components of a CMA for conflict management are outlined in Figure 1. The components apply equally to the management of ‘live’ conflicts and to the process of project planning. The linkages between the components are not linear. However, some broad patterns of activities can be expected, as discussed below.

Conflict analysis

It is safest to analyse a conflict situation before engaging people in negotiations. Conflict analysis should take place first ‘in the office’ on the basis of existing or readily accessed information; and second, in participation with the relevant stakeholder groups, either individually or together. Types of analysis for both activities include:

- mapping of the conflicts (their magnitude and connectivity);
- the geographical distribution of the conflict/s;
- prioritisation of the conflict/s into ‘urgent’ and ‘significant’;
- for the prioritised conflict/s, identification of the key stakeholder groups and their prospective representatives;
- the motivating objectives and underlying ‘needs’ and ‘fears’ of the different stakeholder groups.

It is important to realise that entering into participatory analysis will begin the critical process of building rapport which underpins successful conflict management. Only when sufficient trust and effective communications have been developed among the conflicting parties, and/or between a facilitator or mediator and these parties, will it be possible to begin collaborative negotiations.

Process design

Office-based and participatory conflict analysis will need to continue iteratively until a process design can be agreed (this is a plan outlining the way in which the conflict will be managed). It is at this point that the decision will need to be taken whether to simply ‘do nothing’. Assuming that this option is rejected, the process design will need to consider the following:

- the overall strategy of conflict management, combining various options from those outlined in Box 2;
- how rapport and communication can be strengthened and maintained;
- how capacity will be built to support the process of conflict management. In particular, the ways in which women, the poor and disenfranchised groups will be brought into equitable negotiations with more powerful stakeholder groups;
- how the negotiations will be handled: eg direct ‘face-to-face’ negotiations, third-party facilitated, and whether the facilitator will be impartial or partial; and
- the logistics of the future negotiations: human resources, timing of workshops, participants etc.

Capacity building, negotiation and monitoring

The capacity building, negotiation and monitoring components of a CMA generally

take place after the conflict analysis has been completed and the process design agreed (although elements of capacity building and negotiation may come into play during participatory conflict analysis). Unlike other stakeholder-based project planning tools (such as environmental impact assessment (EIA) or stakeholder analysis) the analysis phase of the CMA is not dedicated to informing the project design, but to paving the way for stakeholder negotiations. In conflict management, 'negotiations' inform project design to a far greater extent than does 'analysis'. This difference is significant. In EIA or stakeholder analysis the search for solutions is generally confined to working within the initial project objectives stated by the different stakeholder groups. Conflict management sets about clearly redefining these objectives by drawing on the synergy and creativity that the process of negotiation unleashes.

Figure 1 suggests that 70 per cent of time and effort should be invested cumulatively in conflict analysis, process design and capacity building, relative to 30 per cent for the processes of negotiations and monitoring. These figures are indicative only. What is critical is that even though the solution lies not in the analysis but in negotiations, those involved in a process of conflict management should not rush towards these negotiations unprepared.

Conflicts represent a dynamic force. Their degree of seriousness can rise and fall in response to external factors not present at the time of a needs assessment. These unpredictable forces can influence not only the effectiveness of conflict management interventions but also the expectations of a 'do-nothing' strategy. Furthermore, commitments made in a negotiated agreement may not always be fully implemented. Monitoring of the overall strategy for conflict management is therefore needed to inform on each of these eventualities.

Consensual negotiations

Consensual negotiations are one approach to conflict management. They are a response to the inequalities and unsustainability that accompany more adversarial approaches. Types of consensual negotiation include conflict resolution, alternative conflict management, alternative dispute resolution (ADR), principled negotiation and conflict transformation (see Fisher, 1992).

The goal of all these is to generate agreements and outcomes which are acceptable to the conflicting parties with the minimum of compromise or trade-off. It is about achieving a 'win-win' solution where each participant is able to describe the outcome as one in which 'I am happy and you are happy'. This contrasts with adversarial approaches to conflict management, such as those common in judicial systems where one party tends to 'win' and the other 'lose'; or negotiations where the outcome involves compromise.

Conflicts over community-based natural resources characteristically involve multiple stakeholder groups. The resolution of such conflicts is also dependent upon the conflicting parties recognising that their mutual interests are best served by sustaining the resource base. These two factors suggest that a process of consensual negotiation may be an effective approach to conflict management in CBNRM projects. It also points to the particular role that CBNRM projects have as a potential catalyst to peace-building and reconciliation.

At first sight the likelihood of achieving a ‘win-win’ outcome in a conflict over natural resources may appear remote. The conflicting parties often have entrenched positions, may be hostile towards one-another, and view the other party’s demands as unacceptable and often diametrically opposed to their own. However, these positions carry with them a high degree of perception. In addition, as a conflict escalates, people’s capacity for rational judgement declines and their demands rise. What consensual negotiation seeks to do is to transform these perceptions and increasing demands by steering the parties:

- away from negotiating over immediate positions, towards the ‘underlying needs’ that motivate people’s demands;
- away from thinking about only one solution (ie the immediate demand), towards a wider and more creative range of options for meeting underlying needs; and
- away from personalised and often exaggerated demands, towards clarity and precision in describing ‘underlying needs’ and the range of proposed ‘options’. Two broad types of assistance can be given to promote consensual negotiations:
 - direct provision of facilitation or mediation services; and/or
 - training in negotiation, facilitation and mediation skills.

Both approaches are underpinned by the objective of ‘facilitating people to bring about change of their own choosing’ (Resolve, 1994). It is training, however, rather than mediation that is likely to build capacity for the self management of conflicts into the future. Such training can be directed at one, some or all parties to a conflict, and can be used both to strengthen the existing customary, institutional, or legal approaches to consensual negotiation, or to help establish new independent mechanisms.

The need for an independent mechanism of consensual negotiation is most likely to arise in micro-macro conflict situations. Conflicts between community groups and more powerful commercial interests or government agencies often lack formal mechanisms for public participation or conflict management. Building the capacity of the conflicting parties to negotiate, or of NGOs or government agencies to act in facilitation or mediation roles, can provide new forums for consensual negotiation. In certain cases independent mechanisms may also be relevant to micro-micro level conflicts. This is most likely where the existing customary or institutional approaches to conflict management have begun to break down (such as in some multi-caste villages in southern India) or where the parties involved are from different ethnic groups (such as in Fiji between the indigenous Fijian and Indian populations). Box 3 summarises some of the options available for external agencies to assist in the promotion of consensual negotiations. These are divided into options based on strengthening existing approaches and those associated with developing new independent mechanisms.

Box 3. Options for assisting in the management of community-based conflicts through consensual negotiations

Options for strengthening existing approaches to conflict management through consensual negotiations

- provision of facilitation/mediation/brokering services in support of existing customary, institutional or legal approaches;
- training community groups already involved in customary approaches in improved personal communication and negotiation skills;
- training community leaders already involved in customary approaches to more effectively facilitate/mediate conflicts, both at micro-micro and micro-macro levels;
- training outside agencies already involved in institutional forms of conflict management to more effectively facilitate/mediate conflicts, both at the micro-micro and micro-macro levels;
- training legal representatives in how to achieve mutually acceptable settlements, thereby avoiding court proceedings (eg training for local Land Mediators); and
- training legal representatives in interpreting court decisions into mutually acceptable judgements (eg training for Local Magistrates).

Options for developing independent mechanisms of consensual negotiation

- provision of facilitation/mediation services independent of existing customary, institutional or legal approaches;
- contracting out the various conflict analysis and process design activities in order to protect the perceived neutrality of facilitators/mediators;
- training community groups involved in the conflict (or the representatives thereof) in direct 'face-to-face' negotiations (including both personal communication and negotiation skills);
- training of impartial community leaders to facilitate/mediate conflicts, both at the micro-micro and micro-macro levels;
- training or employment of outside agencies in providing facilitation/mediation services to manage conflicts, both at the micro-micro and micro-macro levels;
- combining various aspects of the the existing customary and/or institutional approaches together to develop a new 'integrated' mechanism for conflict management; and
- facilitating the development of common visions and goals.

Conclusions

Scope exists to undertake CMA within many different types of CBNRM ownership/management regimes and to apply it as a tool to both the crisis management of 'live' conflicts during project implementation and the process of project planning. The multiplicity of stakeholders and commonality of underlying interests that characterise CBNRM suggest the management of conflicts through consensual negotiation. It also singles out CBNRM projects as potential catalysts for

peace-building and reconciliation by necessitating conflicting parties to cooperate with one another.

It is important that conflict management strategies that promote consensual-negotiations should not become a panacea. Such interventions should await the outcome of a CMA—one that measures the effectiveness of consensual negotiation against the whole ‘basket’ of conflict management options, including the various ‘do-nothing’ scenarios. What consensual negotiation represents is a beacon that shows the way in which conflicts *can* be managed if there is the collective will.

This paper has described a CMA process designed specifically for CBNRM projects. There is no reason why a similar process could not apply to all types of development projects, and for the preparation of country strategies as well.

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