Chapter 2

Consensus-Building Processes in Society and Genetically Modified Organisms: The Concept and Practice of Multistakeholder Processes

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This chapter begins by outlining key conceptual issues in multistakeholder processes. Three examples of such processes from across the globe are then presented: first, an electronic multistakeholder dialogue from India; second, scenario workshops from Denmark; and third, a rights-based approach from the World Commission on Dams. The three examples have been selected to illustrate key issues outlined in the three conceptual pieces. Although the examples do not focus on biotechnology, and although only one of them is from a specific developing country (India), together they help build understanding of the kinds of conceptual and practical issues that must be addressed in multistakeholder processes. It is also important to recognize that the various attempts to raise awareness and build consensus on biotechnology in developing countries have not been explicitly conceived or implemented as multistakeholder processes in the sense that they have not taken full account of the central challenges facing such processes. These challenges are outlined here, along with the most promising approaches to addressing them.

The Concept of Multistakeholder Processes

Whether in dialogues or in partnerships, a multistakeholder approach is fundamentally about negotiation between different sectoral and societal interests. Conventional

wisdom regarding negotiation sees the activity as inherently defensive, and often manipulative. It is often assumed that adversarial position taking and concession trading is the only way for each party to achieve a solution that meets his or her minimum demands. Parties to a negotiation, it is believed, artificially inflate demands and dissemble to avoid appearing "weak," a condition that would be immediately exploited by those on the other side.

Yet this adversarial approach usually produces only "lowest-common-denominator" project, program, and policy outcomes. These outcomes are almost never sustainable over the long term, environmentally or in any other way. If people feel coerced or cheated in some way during a negotiation, they will fail to live up to the agreement. What is more, when people feel excluded from decision-making, when they are not given "a voice at the table," they will not identify with the directives agreed to and will ignore or even boycott them.

Even the so-called winners in a negotiation conceived of as a strategic cat-and-mouse game often could have done much better with an "integrative bargaining" approach. Such an approach rejects the logic of aggressive destabilization and undercutting of the "opponent." Instead, it recognizes that parties in negotiation almost always have both competing and complementary or compatible interests. The challenge then becomes to structure the negotiations such that these common interests are allowed to emerge so that they may serve as the basis for a mutually satisfactory resolution. In short, the negotiation becomes a joint discovery and problem-solving exercise that typically moves through the following stages.

1. *Information gathering and exchange.* The key is to focus the deliberations on needs and interests and the reasons underlying the positions typically put forth as demands in negotiations. An example highlighting the difference between positions and interests can be drawn from the Camp David talks between Israel and Egypt, which bogged down over the issue of control of the Sinai Desert (the position "control is ours"). When it became apparent that Israel wanted to retain control for "security reasons" (Israel's interest), whereas Egypt was primarily interested in restoring its "sovereignty" as a nation (Egypt's interest), the stalemate could be broken. Based on this revelation, an arrangement was forged that addressed both interests, though through different means than the ones demanded by the respective parties (because, of course, it was impossible to simultaneously give control of the territory to both disputants).

2. *Invention of possible options.* Parties should be given the opportunity to put forth proposals that meet their needs as well as those of other stakeholders. The best way to elicit creative thinking in this phase is to assure participants that they will not be bound by any suggestions they make at this stage, which separates

inventing from committing. This is meant to be a brainstorming phase during which people can bounce ideas off each other, and can build on others' proposals or modify them to make them more acceptable ("reality testing").

3. *Packaging.* Negotiations are rarely about one issue alone; a conflict can be disaggregated into multiple elements, and the parties are likely to have differential priorities and preferences that can be capitalized on to maximize joint gains by trading across issues. For example, if *X* is very important to me and *Y* less so, and for you the preference ranking is the reverse, we will likely be able to find a settlement whereby I will get more of *X* and you will get more of *Y.* To ascertain such preference rankings (because often they are not clear even to the negotiator unless he or she is faced with making choices) and to engineer the trading game, the parties should consider several different packages of options and jointly piece together the one that is the best fit for as many parties as possible.

4. *Finding mutually acceptable criteria for dividing joint gains.* Inevitably a negotiation hits a point at which trades are no longer possible. It then becomes what is often called a "zero-sum game," meaning that some parties will be able to extract a better outcome for themselves than will others. As implied earlier, many negotiations start with this dynamic, and the purpose of phases 1–3 is to delay it long enough for creative solutions to emerge and for positive relationships to solidify between the parties. In order not to undo all that hard work, it is important at this stage to jointly establish criteria that will guide the division of the gains created. Such criteria may include efficiency and equity considerations or make reference to ethical principles, community practice, or legal precedent. Such criteria not only ensure that the process of division will not break down into a mere show of force; they can also serve as points of orientation in the next negotiation among the same parties (because of professional affiliations, community ties, and so on, parties typically find themselves reunited in different negotiating fora again and again).

5. *Including contingency plans and monitoring provisions.* Often the most difficult phase begins once the agreement is signed. Not only are resource constraints a common problem that inhibits implementation; agreements are often based on assumptions that turn out to be wrong. Because it is impossible to predict the future, uncertainty is an inherent factor to contend with, and this problem is especially acute when dealing with science-intensive environmental issues. It is important to account for uncertainty and render the agreement robust in the face of this uncertainty by building into the accord itself contingency plans (if *A* happens, we agree to do *X;* if *B* happens, we agree to do *Y*) as well as provisions for ongoing consultation and dispute resolution mechanisms. To ensure that a group of stakeholders is able to move through these various phases, the services of a professional nonpartisan facilitator or mediator may be needed. Facilitation is the nonintrusive

management of an exchange of views between parties; it ensures that all parties are heard and minimizes misunderstandings. Mediation is "assisted negotiation," the shepherding of the parties through a structured process that aims to achieve an agreement or plan of action. Third-party intervention is especially desirable when the issues at stake are multifaceted and complex or when relations between the parties are characterized by hostility at the outset. Indeed the difficult task of hearing out opposing interests, lessening fears, and opening minds is a key purpose of multistakeholder efforts and a precondition for multiparty on-the-ground execution of joint action plans. As a publication of the Mining, Minerals, and Sustainable Development Project (described later) asserted, "One of the Project's main outcomes will be the set of relationships it is building through this process and their capacity to continue, and perhaps implement, a change agenda in the future" (IIED/WBCSD 2001).

The Shift to Participatory Planning and Multistakeholder Dialogues

The recognition that top-down approaches often do not produce the desired results has led to what might be characterized as a radical shift in development policy over the past decade. While some key development-related institutions (especially the international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization) are still largely closed to perceived outsiders, many government organizations have, to varying degrees, opened their doors to civil society.

Indeed the years since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) have seen a virtual explosion of experimentation with multistakeholder approaches, both at the national level and increasingly at the international level. These usually take one of two forms:

Site-specific approaches. An example would be the placement in an ecologically sensitive area of a polluting coal-fired power plant considered vital to the economic development of the region. Here representatives of affected government, business, environmental, and community interests would together work out a construction, mitigation, or compensation package. At this project level, participatory planning is intended to ensure that intended beneficiaries as well as those potentially negatively affected by a project have a say in the conceptualization and implementation of a particular economic development scheme or planning measure. Where appropriate, so-called "local knowledge" should be heeded to tailor generic program blueprints to specific contexts and circumstances and to disrupt as little as possible the social, economic, and ecological fabric of communities that are to be the project hosts.

Policy-focused approaches. An example would be working out guidelines for and elements of a national energy policy, elaborating rules governing hazardous waste disposal, or devising recommendations for future large hydrological projects, as was done by the World Commission on Dams recently. Here consultations take on various forms. In the United States, a practice that has come to be known as "negotiated rulemaking"—the involvement of stakeholders in the crafting of administrative provisions that serve to interpret and enforce legislation—has become quite common in the environmental arena. Those efforts are led and brokered by the responsible executive authorities, such as the Environmental Protection Agency. Sometimes stakeholders themselves, alone or in conjunction with others, launch a multistakeholder initiative. One example is the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development Project, a two-year effort of participatory analysis of the sector managed through the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, and a global network of regional partners, which canvassed stakeholders from the world's biggest mining companies to some indigenous communities. Through commissioned papers, thematic workshops, and interviews the project has generated a substantial database of information, some of which was synthesized in the final report issued in 2002 (IIED 2002). More and more frequently, different policy enterprises of this sort are loosely grouped under the umbrella term "multistakeholder dialogues" (MSDs).

The important point is that MSDs—whether organized by nongovernmental organizations on a one-time-only basis or structured as ongoing exchanges organized by a country or a multinational organization—bring nongovernmental actors into the conversation. While multilateral policymaking organizations—such as the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the World Bank—remain entities to which only countries can apply for membership, these institutions are increasingly finding that they must incorporate the views and inputs of nongovernmental interests in order for their work to be seen as legitimate and to gain access to the relevant knowledge and skills required for complex problem solving. In a sense, this is the culmination on a global scale of a trend that took hold as far back as twenty years ago in planning efforts at the local, regional, and national levels in the United States, Canada, and Europe and is fast spreading to other parts of the world.

Lessons Learned from Multistakeholder Initiatives to Date

Scholarship assessing the proliferating multistakeholder initiatives is in its early stages. Nonetheless, it appears fair to conclude that experiences to date have

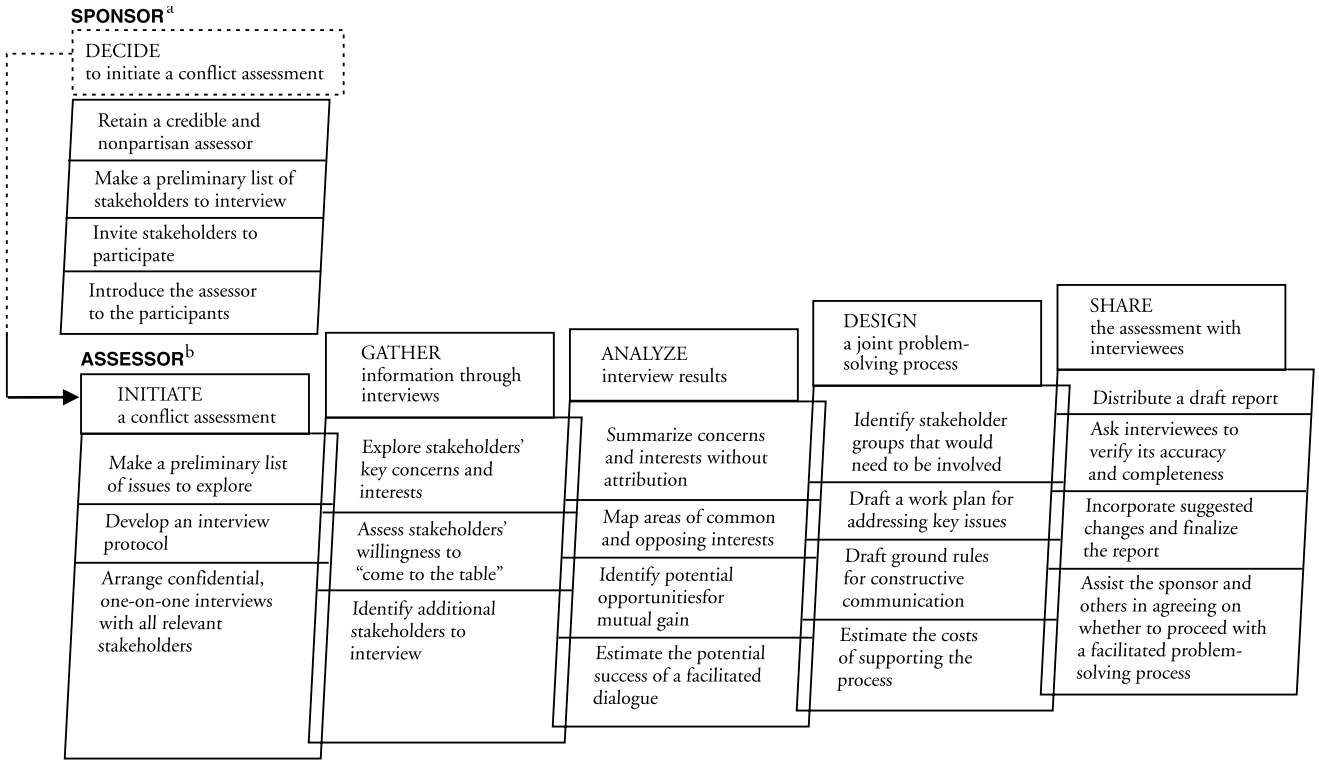
highlighted four particular challenges in the organization of multistakeholder efforts for sustainable development: We will deal with each of these in turn.

1. Ensuring that all the relevant parties are involved in negotiations. Carlson (1999) defines stakeholders as "key individuals, groups, and organizations that have an interest in the issue at hand. They may be responsible for seeing a problem resolved or a decision made, they may be affected by a problem or decision, or they may have the power to thwart a solution or decision." The values or interests they represent often categorize stakeholders. Some institutions divide stakeholders into three groups—government, business, and civil society. However, more fine-grained distinctions among stakeholders have sometimes been made, especially in UN proceedings since the 1992 Earth Summit identified nine major groups—women, children and youth, indigenous people, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, scientific and technological communities, and farmers (a chapter is dedicated to each of these in line with its openly participatory vision in Agenda 21 [UNDESA 1997], a comprehensive plan for safeguarding the environment that was adopted by the countries participating in the seminal UNCED). The World Commission on Dams created an advisory forum to act as a sounding board for its commissioners, which included 68 stakeholder organizations. After a closer examination of the large-dams policy arena, the World Commission on Dams distributed representation on the forum across ten stakeholder categories, including private sector firms, river basin authorities, utilities, multilateral agencies, bilateral agencies and export credit guarantee agencies, government agencies, international associations, affected people's groups, NGOs, and research institutes.

Involving such varied constituencies requires that each be sufficiently organized to speak with something approaching a unified voice. Completing internal negotiations in which each group irons out its own differences before the larger dialogue begins may be very difficult. The negotiation process must therefore require transparency and viable modes of access for all interested groups (depending on the situation, Web-based communication may be an appropriate tool). It must also allow for repeated rounds of consultation and be structured as a continuing sequence of inside-outside negotiation. Such a structure promotes ongoing feedback and forestalls the tendency of negotiators to lock into one position before hearing the others. It also ensures that the representatives are accountable to their constituencies and do not stray from their wishes in a way that would imperil the wider acceptability of an agreement.

A technique called "conflict assessment" helps ensure that the right parties are involved in the negotiations (see Figure 2.1). As part of such an assessment, an

Figure 2.1 How to conduct a conflict assessment



Source: Consensus Building Institute 2001.

[a]A sponsor is any individual or organization interested in assessing the feasibility of a facilitated dialogue.

[b]An assessor must be neutral, impartial, and experienced in dispute resolution.

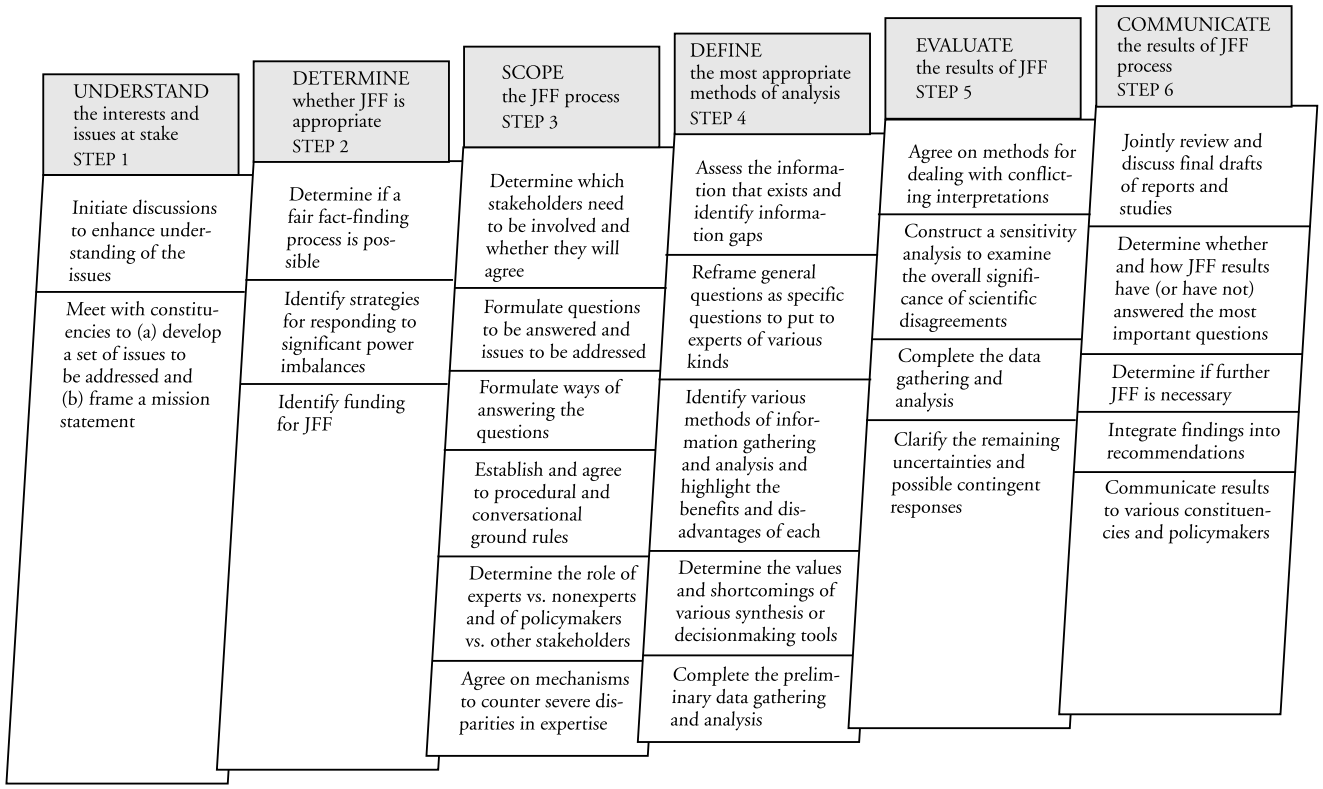
impartial mediator conducts a series of confidential interviews in which stakeholders clarify their concerns and identify additional players that should be brought into the process. Based on such an assessment (in which no statement is attributed by name to ensure confidentiality) a mediator can also identify the degree of overlap of the views and aspirations offered by different stakeholders (which often are closer than the parties themselves realize). Such an analysis of potential areas of agreement can serve as a useful starting point for structuring an agenda for the ensuing MSDs; it provides an indication of the way key issues should be worded and framed, and the order in which they should be treated. This is especially important when dealing with highly controversial issues, when tensions between the groups can run high and a good group dynamic is crucial for moving toward consensus.

2. Getting accurate scientific and technical information on the table. Environmental management decisions must be based on credible scientific and technical input. Water management, for example, depends on matters such as the hydrological and ecological effects of watershed modification, supply and demand forecasts for a multiplicity of uses, and actions that can help maintain and enhance the resource. In many court and legislative proceedings, as well as in many larger policy debates, parties on opposing sides use what has come to be known pejoratively as "advocacy science" in trying to support their objectives. Each side frames the questions and hires the experts that will yield a predetermined "correct" answer. The result is a juxtaposition of conflicting claims that exacerbate rather than help resolve the underlying policy dilemma.

Collectively working toward solutions is easier if a process of "joint fact-finding" (see Figures 2.2 and 2.3) helps produce a common understanding of the likely effects, benefits, and costs associated with alternative policy options. In joint fact-finding a neutral facilitator typically assists the negotiators to identify experts acceptable to all stakeholders and to frame the questions that these scientists are commissioned on behalf of the whole group to investigate. Their findings can help reduce uncertainties and factual disagreements, set priorities for action that may differ from country to country, and help establish "red lines," or thresholds of resource damage and depletion, that would trigger more stringent obligations (known, as referred to earlier, as "contingent agreements").

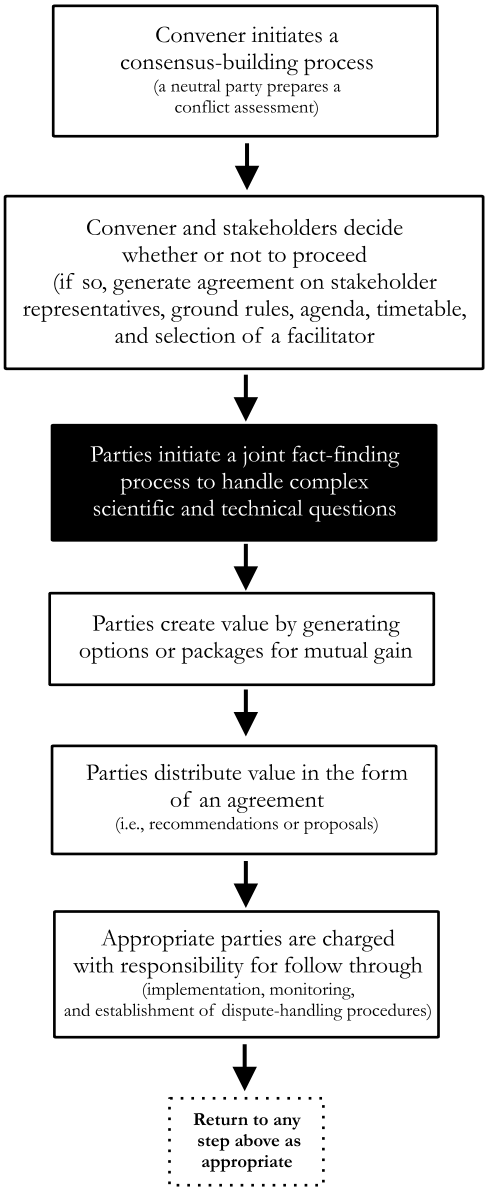
3. Promoting links with official decisionmaking bodies. The outcomes of multistakeholder initiatives are typically not legally binding unless taken up by the relevant governmental authorities. MSDs are meant to complement, not in any way to supplant, the legitimately constituted decisionmaking channels (nor are they

Figure 2.2 Key steps in the joint fact-finding process



Source: Consensus Building Institute 2002.

Figure 2.3 The consensus-building process and the role of joint fact-finding



Source: Consensus Building Institute 2002.

intended to serve as lobbying sessions). The style of these dialogues often differs from that of traditionally more rule-bound and hierarchically structured diplomatic negotiations or administrative proceedings. The best results are typically achieved when relative informality characterizes the deliberations; an open, free-flowing dialogue, preferably facilitated by a skillful chair who enforces agreed-upon ground rules to ensure equity and civility, allows for creative problem solving and (often) allows consensus positions to emerge.

Consensus is achieved when almost all participants agree that they can "live with" a proposed "package" after every effort has been made to address the interests of the participants. In practice, while MSDs seek unanimity, most reach a point at which an overwhelming majority agrees, but one or two have more to gain by dissenting. If the group discovers, after probing the concerns of the holdouts, that nothing more can be done to meet the interests of those who do not agree, they conclude their efforts (Susskind 1999). It should be remembered, however, that reaching consensus is not an absolute requirement in every case. When MSD designers are hoping to build new relationships, generate a new way of framing a seemingly intractable problem, or pass along new information, a non-consensus-seeking process may be most appropriate. The aim then becomes to generate "some good ideas" or the group's "best advice."

Still, the judicious use of outputs from an MSD—whether consensus-based or not—is crucial. Parallel processes engaging key stakeholders in the generation and evaluation of options and the formation of partnerships in furtherance of policy objectives should not be held in a vacuum. Constraints on enforcement are, of course, not limited to civil society processes. Nonetheless, the ad hoc nature of multistakeholder efforts makes it important to pay particular heed to the possible transformation of informal understandings into binding commitments or into recommendations that will be useful to, and therefore taken seriously by, the designated governmental decisionmakers. Ground rules for engagement and rules for channeling outcomes into official deliberations must be clarified from the beginning. Policy dialogues and alliances are painstaking endeavors, and civil society representatives will become disillusioned and distracted if their efforts are not given due consideration. Along with the responsibility that is increasingly assigned to civil society for realizing the transition to sustainable development should go the right to claim respect and recognition for the expertise and experience contributed.

Of course in order for the civil society recommendations to be taken seriously, they must be credible and well founded. This in turn requires that dialogue delegates be adequately prepared for the deliberations. The uneven quality of participant contributions is a complaint that commonly arises with respect to MSDs. Capacity constraints are one of the major obstacles to effective participation. This is a problem

particularly when stakeholders with vastly different resource endowments come to the table together. Again, the responsibility for evening out the playing field as much as possible falls to the mediator or facilitator, who can identify gaps in knowledge and coordination abilities faced by individual stakeholder groups and help overcome these, all the while being transparent with all parties about the process principles and guidelines to be followed to prepare participants for a useful exchange.

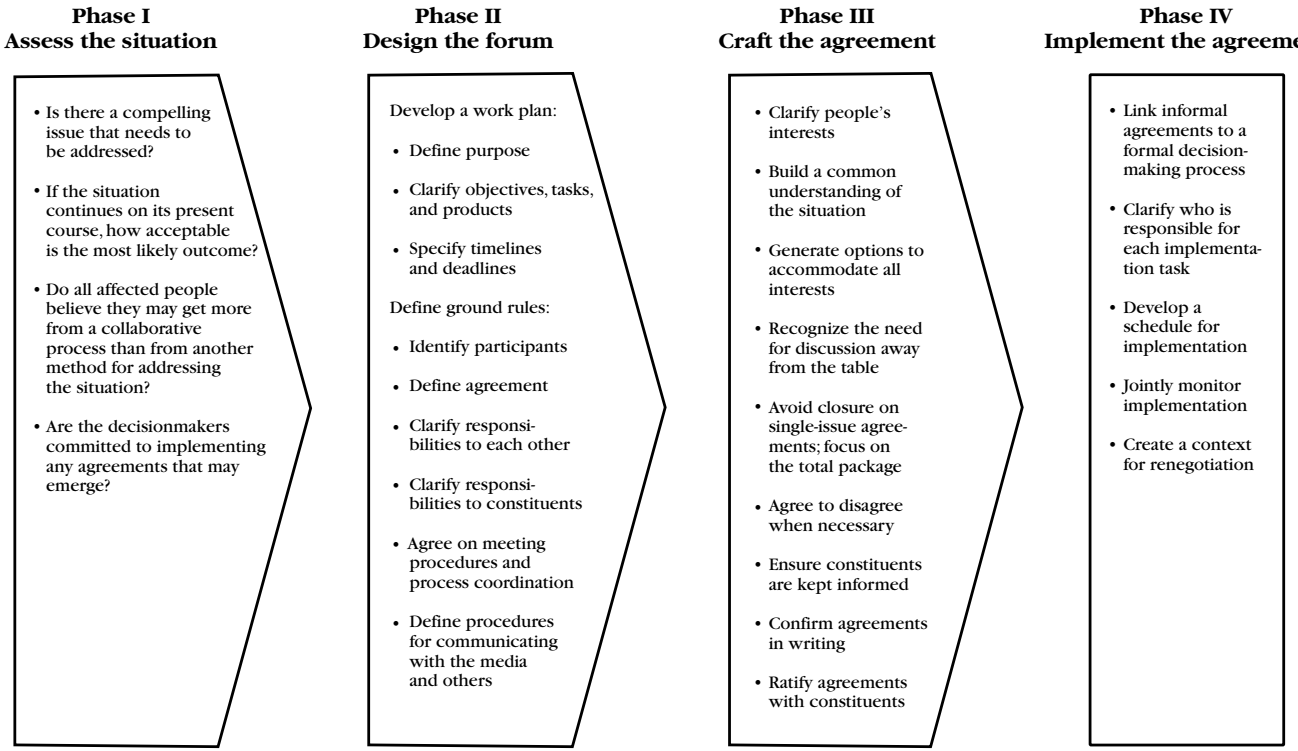
On the governmental side, appropriate national and local legislation matching the intent of an agreement reached can be crafted only when an adequate regulatory apparatus is in place. In many parts of the world where environmental problems are most acute, few people are available who have the background to engage in the monitoring, modeling, and analysis of technical and regulatory options. Transferring the requisite skills and housing such expertise in local institutions—governmental and nongovernmental—that are strong enough to muster adequate resources and autonomy from vested interests are priority concerns.

4. Establishing fairness and efficiency as criteria for evaluation of multistakeholder processes. I refer here principally to procedural fairness (or "due process" as it is known in the legal realm), which is most often measured in terms of stakeholder perceptions. It requires transparency and predictability of the proceedings as well as the preparatory stages that lead to them and the implementation stage that follows. It is paramount that all participants be given equal access to key information and equal opportunity to air their views. Efficiency, on the other hand, is a measure of the quality of the outcome. Here the key question is whether all plausible options were explored and all possible opportunities exploited. If potential "joint gains" are left "on the table"—that is, if information valuable to some stakeholders is left unstated by others, if partnerships that could have been fail to form, or if consensus eludes the group despite the compatibility of different interests—benefits were not fully captured.

A Checklist of Questions to Be Answered about How to Make Policy Concerning GMOs

Following is a list of questions that need to be answered concerning the process to be used in making policy under conditions characterized by multidimensionality and complexity such as those involving biotechnology and genetically modified organisms (GMOs). It roughly parallels issues to be addressed in the phases of building agreement listed in Figure 2.4 and is meant to give an overview of what policymakers need to consider. On the pages following this list are three brief examples that explore some answers to some of these questions.

Figure 2.4 Phases of building agreement



Source: Montana Consensus Council 1998.

Questions to Be Answered *before* the Process Begins

- What are the goals of the process?
  - Should the process result in decisions by those participating in the process?
  - Should the process be one for airing views so the decisionmakers can gain a better understanding of the issues?

- What are the possible outcomes of the process?
  - Should the process result in policy recommendations about *what* decisionmakers should do regarding biotechnology and GMOs?
  - Should the process result in recommendations about *how* to go about implementation—for example, recommendations about
    - how to draft legislation,
    - how to draft regulations,
    - how to hold further conferences and meetings,
    - how to educate the public, and
    - how to develop processes to monitor the performance of various players?

- Who should be invited to participate in the process?
  - Should all stakeholders be invited?
  - Should "stakeholder" be defined as any party significantly affected by the outcome of the process?
  - Should stakeholders include representatives of the public, policy decisionmakers, and representatives of industry?
  - Should every stakeholder be accountable to a constituency?
  - Should any one set of stakeholders be included or excluded?
  - Should scientific experts be included?
  - How can we be sure that all responsible scientific points of view are presented?

- Should we use a neutral party to manage the process?
  - Should we use a moderator (one who keeps order in the process, sets the agenda, and keeps records of the process)?
  - Should we use a facilitator (the same as a moderator, but also explores issues in some depth with the parties, helps clarify where differences lie, and helps organize the process to seek agreements)?
  - Should we use a mediator (the same as a moderator and facilitator, but also takes more initiative to help the parties find agreement with which they are comfortable)?

- How does the process selected relate to the larger public dialogue on the subject?
  - What is the role of the media in educating the public about issues and recommendations?

- What kind and size of staff is needed to make the process effective and efficient?

- What level and source of funding are necessary to make the process possible?

- What resources should be planned for (e.g., budgeted for) in advance so that follow-up will be possible after the process has been completed?

Questions to Be Answered *during* the Process

- What rules of decisionmaking will be used?
  - Is unanimity required for any decision?
  - Is consensus (lack of any strong objector) sufficient? (Consensus suggests agreement among all or many of the participants, or at least a willingness by some to go along with the final recommendations.)
  - Are dissenting views to be part of the final report?

- How can all parties be given an opportunity to present their viewpoints to all participants?
  - How can we give speakers a feeling of being heard?
  - How can we give listeners a feeling that they understand what they are hearing?
  - How can we encourage candor in presentations rather than posturing or mechanical restatements of what everyone expects to hear?
  - How can presentations be "translated" across disciplinary and cultural barriers?
  - How can we manage difference inside each stakeholder group?

- How can we frame issues and questions so they can be answered to the extent possible?

- How can we manage scientific information?
  - How can we decide who is an expert?
  - How can we know which questions are predominantly ones of science and which are predominantly ones of politics?
  - How can we ensure that laypeople are comfortable with and knowledgeable about scientific language and judgments?

  - How can we help decisionmakers and the public deal with differences among scientific experts?
  - How can we help the public and decisionmakers deal with different predictions of the future as different experts express them?

- How can we frame areas of possible consensus or agreement (if these are the goals of the process)?

- How can we hold stakeholders accountable to their constituencies?
  - How can we ensure that representatives have the backing of their constituencies?
  - How can we ensure that representatives can deliver what they agree to?

Questions to Be Answered *after* the Process Ends

- How can we monitor decisions or obligations undertaken during the process?

Examples That Explore Answers to Some of the Questions

India: An Electronic MSD

The following example of a dialogue has been adapted from Scoones and Thompson (2003).

In 2002 a report titled "Prajateerpu: A Citizens Jury / Scenario Workshop on Food and Farming Futures for Andhra Pradesh" was published (Pimbert and Wakeford 2002). The workshop it described had been devised to enable those people most affected by the "Vision 2020" for food and farming in Andhra Pradesh, India—smallholder and marginal farmers—to comment on the development strategy of the state and to shape a vision of their own. The release of the report sparked an international debate over the use of participatory approaches to inform and influence policy from below. Strong views were expressed, and questions were raised about citizen engagement in policymaking processes, the trustworthiness of participatory "verdicts" and the implications that could be drawn from them, ways to increase accountability and transparency in policymaking, and other issues. The E-Forum on Participatory Processes for Policy Change was established and moderated by two researchers at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in response to this debate. The forum was designed to create a constructive dialogue around certain key issues. This "forum on a forum" sought to draw attention to the important methodological, conceptual, and substantive lessons emerging from the citizens' jury and scenario workshop experiment and

encouraged all interested parties to contribute ideas and opinions on key issues arising from the Prajateerpu ("people's verdict") experience.

All those involved in the debate through informal e-mail and other means were invited to participate at the outset. This included the Prajateerpu partners in Andhra Pradesh, the directors and staff of Institute of Development Studies and the IIED, NGO and donor personnel, academics, and other interested observers. Many made contributions. The e-forum ran over 40 days in August and September 2002.

The e-forum was organized around four issues: (1) evidence, (2) representation, (3) engagement, and (4) accountability. These open-ended but generic issues were chosen to allow those not directly involved in the Prajateerpu exercise or familiar with Andhra Pradesh to share their knowledge and insights. A Web site was created to make all the contributions available to those interested. Clear principles of engagement were also set out at the beginning of the process to assure contributors that the moderators would not seek to impose their points of view in the process. A wide range of views were expressed in the forum on each of the issues, and yet in several areas some consensus emerged.

Issues of evidence. Nearly every participant in the e-forum agreed that the Prajateerpu exercise had been a significant effort to develop and extend methodologies for popular participation in policymaking. On the issue of evidence, some commentators believed strongly in a conventional positivist view of knowledge and truth. But the majority of the commentators took a more reflective view of the issue, arguing that all knowledge is necessarily situated and constructed, and that no simple truth can come out of highly contested, complex, and uncertain deliberations about future scenarios of the kind that the Prajateerpu participants had considered.

Several commentators expressed their disappointment that the Prajateerpu exercise (or at least the report) did not seem to capture the range of dispute and debate and the nuances of deliberation among the participants. Others remarked that the commentary of the authors added a layer of interpretation to the participants' statements. They thus raised the question of how facilitators can avoid accusations of partiality and manipulation of results. As these sorts of exercises increasingly come to be used to influence policy, it will be important to address this question, or those who do not like what they are hearing will discredit more deliberative and inclusive engagement.

An underlying theme of many of the contributions was the related question of the politics of methodology. Many commentators agreed that concerns over methodology have been used by those in power to discredit those who challenge a

dominant discourse, as was certainly evident in the controversy over Prajateerpu. With a focus of the debate on issues of "quality" defined in narrow, positivist terms, those who objected to the results of the workshop were able to reframe the discussion and divert attention from more pertinent issues. The contributors to the e-forum by and large rejected this position and argued for a more plural and open approach with a wider view of acceptable criteria for evaluating "evidence" and assessing results. Many contributors emphasized the importance of plural perspectives, open debate, and diversity of views. Open deliberations rarely result in neat consensus, let alone a jury-style verdict. Thus many participants argued for more open-ended outcomes than those allowed for in the Prajateerpu exercise.

Issues of representation. Every development organization today seems to need "the poor" to speak in support of their policy positions to give them legitimacy and credibility. Much commentary in the e-forum dwelt on the representativeness of the jurors and the scenarios used as a focus for the deliberations. Many of the contributors acknowledged that representativeness is a contested and loaded term. Several contributors remarked that the Prajateerpu "citizens' jury" was not strictly a jury. The jurors, made up of poor people, mostly women, who were reliant mainly on farming and came largely from a Dalit caste background, had been selected not randomly, but purposively. They were intended to "represent" not society at large, but rather a particular marginalized group with a particular set of interests and livelihood constraints.

Much e-forum commentary also dwelt on the "representativeness" of the scenarios used to inform the Prajateerpu jury's deliberations. Some viewed these as biased, and therefore as creating a "self-fulfilling prophesy." The range of scenarios presented to the farmer-jurists may have limited the debate. Some participants called attention to ongoing research in Andhra Pradesh that highlights a greater complexity of livelihood pathways than was captured in the three scenarios used in Prajateerpu. Perhaps a more interesting route would have been to focus on the trade-offs between scenarios, explore the gap between polarized positions, and avoid the perhaps artificial "verdict."

Issues of engagement. The Prajateerpu event had been only one part of a longer process of policy engagement and debate, the moderators reminded us. Critiques of the Vision 2020 approach adopted in Andhra Pradesh did not start and will not end with Prajateerpu. But to develop an alternative vision for a sustainable rural future, much more work will have to be done beyond simply rejecting Vision 2020 as the farmer-jurists did. Processes of influencing policy outcomes are a critical complement to any deliberative forum or event. How do we locate citizens' juries,

panels, or scenario workshops in broader policy processes? The e-forum contributors discussed different alternatives both implicitly and explicitly.

Issues of accountability. To what extent do deliberative processes, such as that used in Prajateerpu, offer opportunities for holding the powerful to account? One of the specific aims of the jury process was to hold the government of Andhra Pradesh and its donors to account, allowing the "beneficiaries" to question their motives and strategies. Follow-up meetings with Andhra Pradesh and U.K. government officials were clearly designed toward this end. The commentary contributed by the Department for International Development (DFID)–India to the e-forum in fact revealed that the process has encouraged reflection within DFID on its approach in Andhra Pradesh, and indicated some success in this regard. But are complex, necessarily expensive, high-profile events like that in Prajateerpu the model for improving accountability? Or are other routes, such as more informal lobbying or the normal channels of representative democracy, likely to be more effective?

Much of the discussion surrounding the Prajateerpu results has been focused on DFID and the U.K. government rather than on the Andhra Pradesh government. Inadvertently the Prajateerpu exercise has raised some important questions about the accountability of aid donors. Is it acceptable for foreign donors to say that their support is granted to an elected government that is responsible to its electorate as to how the money is spent? Participants in the Prajateerpu exercise clearly did not think so. Though this issue was not explored in depth in the e-forum, it will be raised again.

Despite differences of opinion and interest in issues, the e-forum showed much more common ground than first appeared. The insights contributors offered demonstrated that the practical, the political, and the process are all intertwined, and that simple responses based on narrow framings or limited methodological viewpoints are insufficient. The debate the Prajateerpu experience ignited also revealed a number of significant issues regarding the people-centered approaches and processes that can be used to influence policy from below, which were highlighted in the many constructive offerings made to the e-forum. Few issues were resolved, however, and most will require further deliberation. In the future this debate will occur in a range of fora and among a variety of networks. The e-forum was simply one contribution to that broader set of exchanges.

Denmark: Scenario Workshops

The following example has been adapted from Andersen and Jaeger (2002).

The scenario workshop method was developed in the early 1990s by the Danish Board of Technology (DBT), an independent institution the Danish Parliament established in 1986. The DBT has experimented with and developed participatory

methodologies that allow ordinary citizens to be involved in technology assessment. A basic principle of the DBT is that technology assessment should include the wisdom and experience of ordinary citizens or laypeople, integrate the knowledge and tools of experts, respect the political processes and the working conditions of policymakers, and build on the democratic tradition in Denmark.

The DBT's understanding of technology assessment has a background in Danish democratic traditions. As technology becomes more and more integrated into society, influencing more circumstances in life, citizens should have a right to influence its development democratically. This viewpoint initiates a discussion about democracy and technology assessment. As a result, scenario workshops have been used for a variety of issues.

A scenario workshop is designed to find solutions to a problem. It is a local meeting that involves dialogue among four groups of actors: policymakers, business representatives, experts, and ordinary citizens. The participants carry out assessments of technological and nontechnological solutions to the problems, and develop visions for future solutions and proposals for realizing them. A facilitator guides the process. Dialogue among participants with different types of knowledge, views, and experience is central. Various techniques can be employed to accomplish good dialogue and to produce results in the form of identification of barriers, visions, and proposals for action to be taken.

In 1991 the DBT agreed on "sustainable housing and living in the future" as a topic for a new project. The project, it was believed, would benefit from broad consensus on how to develop and transform cities and urban communities to make them ecologically sustainable. The concept of "urban ecology" became a focal point around which the project could formulate more concrete ideas of what was needed in an overall effort toward sustainable development. Urban ecology was defined as the interaction between people and nature in urban areas. To think and act in an ecological way implies saving resources, recycling and reusing products and materials, and returning materials to nature in a nonharmful form. It is concerned with the interaction among different types of technology and various actors, different criteria for assessing technology, different types of knowledge, a wide range of laws and rules from different agencies, various places and levels of action, and several possible solutions. It soon became clear that this project was dealing with an extensive process of societal transition. The project had to address the whole technical infrastructure for managing energy, water, wastewater, and solid waste, as well as the daily life, habits, and values of all the actors involved.

Scenario workshops were conducted in four local communities during 1992. The criteria for choosing the communities were that they have some experience

with making a positive effort regarding urban ecology, and that the four communities be of different sizes and levels of urban development. According to the established method, before the workshops took place a set of scenarios was written describing alternative ways of solving the problem. These had to be different with respect to both the technical and organizational solutions described and the social and political values embedded in them. In the workshop the scenarios would be used as visions to provide inspiration for the process.

The workshop process had three principal steps:

1. Commenting on, and criticizing, the scenarios by pointing out barriers to realizing the visions

2. Developing the participants' own visions and proposals

3. Developing local plans of action

The participants first met at "role group" workshops at which participants from the same role group, for example, businesspeople, met in the four localities selected to comment on the scenarios. Reports from these workshops were used as input for the next round of workshops—local workshops, with a mix of members from across each of the four communities. The crosslocal dialogue gave new knowledge on barriers and new ideas on visions to both participants and organizers.

At the local workshops participants were split into "theme groups" according to their experience and interests. The task of each group was to agree on a common vision and produce local action plans for managing energy, water, and waste. The outcome of the whole process was a report and a national plan for urban ecology, which was presented at a public conference in January 1993. Subsequently this was partly implemented by the Danish minister of the environment.

The results of the workshops were threefold:

1. Barriers to urban ecology were identified.

2. Visions were developed.

3. Action plans were proposed.

The results of the workshops in these three areas have played an important role in the Danish debate on sustainable housing and planning during the years since the

conference. The following give an idea of some of the changes that have been made because of the workshop:

- In 1993 the minister of environment established a national committee on urban ecology inspired by recommendations from the national action plan.

- In 1995 the Urban Ecology Committee decided to establish a Danish Center of Urban Ecology to support experiments and give advice to those engaged in local activities, and a Green Foundation to finance activities such as those of the Ecological Council and the Association of Green Families.

- The DBT has developed a fund to supply grants for local activities. It has supported hundreds of local meetings with material about urban ecology and money to arrange the meetings.

- The public debate in general has developed scenarios to solve urban ecology problems toward more awareness of the importance of urban ecology principles to be integrated in regulation- and lawmaking.

An evaluation completed by all participants shortly after the project showed that the experience had been an important learning exercise and had paved the way for better dialogue at the local level. However, the DBT has not followed up on the long-term changes resulting from this project in the four communities.

Through the scenario workshop method all the actors contribute the knowledge, vision, and experience they have acquired from local activities to proposals and plans of action on important technology issues. They can all be regarded and defined as experts, because local experience and knowledge are crucial factors in this method. Furthermore, the workshop process tends to bring together people who do not usually engage in dialogue even if they live in the same place.

The scenario workshop method offers a new way of hearing "the voice of the people" and is a supplement to the conventional avenues for participation, such as elections, referenda, and opinion polls. The method cannot claim to express the voice of all the people, but it does offer an opportunity for citizens to present their ideas and opinions in a more open way, which they have the opportunity to structure themselves.

It has been shown that the results from scenario workshops have had some direct effects on decisions taken. More important, though, is their indirect influence, because they give politicians new knowledge about citizens' views of the threats and opportunities of technology, and give citizens new knowledge and awareness. In

general, it is difficult to measure and document both the direct and indirect effects of this method.

Local participation may also have a negative aspect, because the results may not be usable at a more general level. More than one workshop process may be needed, as in the case of the Danish urban ecology project, to produce results that can be generalized and used by other local communities or at a national level. This is a question of the availability of resources and time. The success of this method therefore depends on the existence of a body that wants to use the results at the local, national, or even international level.

The scenario workshop method also requires good preparation, planning, and facilitation. If the results are to be used as input for decisionmaking, it may also require that the organizers document the results and present them in a structured way. What becomes increasingly clear from both the Danish experience and initiatives in other countries is that there is one indispensable requirement if success and real change are to take place: the policymakers to whom the results are addressed must be willing to listen and take the results seriously as proposals from the public.

Dams: A Rights-Based Approach

The following discussion is based on World Commission on Dams (2000).

In 1998, through a process of dialogue and negotiation involving representatives of the public, private, and civil society sectors, the World Commission on Dams (WCD) was created. In light of the international debate over large dams, the commission's objectives were to review the development effectiveness of large dams, assess alternatives for water resources and energy development, and develop internationally acceptable criteria, guidelines, and standards, where appropriate, for the planning, design, appraisal, construction, operation, monitoring, and decommissioning of dams.

The commission's 12 members were chosen to reflect regional diversity, expertise, and stakeholder perspectives. The WCD was created as an independent body, with each member serving in an individual capacity and none representing an institution or a country. For two years the commission, together with the WCD Secretariat, the WCD Stakeholders' Forum, and hundreds of individual experts and affected people, conducted a broad and independent review of experience with large dams. This review included public consultations on every aspect of the dams debate and consideration of a large number of submissions. In its report the WCD presented its findings, but also proposed an approach not only to large-dam construction, but to dam development in general. This approach is one based on the recognition of a broad set of human rights and the fact that development often impinges on people's rights, particularly those of the poor. As a result of its review,

which was a kind of MSD, the WCD thus developed an improved process framework for governments and donors to adopt for use in the future when considering the creation of a large dam.

As a result of the process of dialogue, study, and reflection, which was an inclusive process that brought all significant players into the debate, the commission

- conducted the first comprehensive global and independent review of the performance of essential aspects of dams and their contribution to development;

- shifted the center of gravity in the dams debate to one focused on investing in options assessment, evaluating opportunities to improve performance and address the legacies of existing dams, and achieving an equitable sharing of benefits in the development of sustainable water resources; and

- demonstrated that the future for the development of water and energy resources lies with participatory decisionmaking using a rights-and-risks approach that will increase the importance of the social and environmental dimensions of dams to a level once reserved for the economic dimension.

The WCD's report found that dams have made a significant contribution to human development, but in too many cases an unacceptable and often unnecessary price has been paid to secure those benefits, especially in social and environmental terms, by people displaced, by communities downstream, by taxpayers, and by the natural environment. Perhaps most significant is that social groups bearing the social and environmental costs and risks of large dams, especially the poor, the vulnerable, and future generations, are often not the same groups that receive the water and electricity services or the social and economic benefits of these. The lack of equity in the distribution of benefits has called into question the value of many dams in meeting water and energy development needs when compared with the alternatives. By bringing to the table all those whose rights are involved and who bear the risks associated with different options for the development of water and energy resources, the WCD created the conditions for a positive resolution of competing interests and conflicts.

The commission's review made it clear that to improve development outcomes in the future a substantially expanded basis for deciding on proposed water and energy development projects is required. All parties should have a complete knowledge and understanding of the benefits, impacts, and risks of large dam projects, and new voices, perspectives, and criteria should be introduced into the decisionmaking process, as well as processes to build consensus. A new paradigm for

decisionmaking will improve the outcomes of future decisions. Involving all the stakeholders might bring increased competition for water and thus greater conflict, but it also will lay a foundation for cooperation and innovation.

The work the commission conducted led it to view the controversy within a broader normative framework. This framework builds upon international recognition of human rights, the right to development, and the right to a healthy environment. The WCD decided on five core values that should inform its understanding of the issues:

- Equity
- Efficiency
- Participatory decisionmaking
- Sustainability
- Accountability

The members of the commission believed that these core values are necessary for improved decisionmaking processes that deliver improved outcomes for all stakeholders.

Reconciling competing needs and entitlements is the single most important factor in understanding and resolving the conflicts associated with large-scale development projects. The approach developed by the commission—recognizing rights and assessing risks (particularly when rights are at risk)—offers a means to apply the WCD's core values to decisionmaking. Clarifying the rights context of a proposed project is an essential step in identifying the various claims and entitlements that the project or its alternatives might affect. It is also a necessary step in determining the stakeholder groups entitled to participate in the decisionmaking. The assessment of risk adds an important dimension to understanding how, and to what extent, a project may affect people's rights. This requires seeing risk as something faced not only by governments and developers, but by those affected by a project and by the environment as a public good. Once all the parties whose rights are at stake have been brought to the table, a transparent process and negotiated outcome are possible.

Based on its core values and rights-based perspective, the WCD developed seven strategic priorities for the process of decisionmaking on dams. These priorities were designed to provide guidance in translating the rights-based approach into practice

and to help development processes move from a traditional, top-down, technology-focused approach to ones that are inclusive of those the project will affect and of normative considerations.

1. Gaining public acceptance through recognizing rights, addressing risks, and safeguarding the entitlements of all groups of people affected. Decisionmaking processes and mechanisms are used that enable informed participation by all groups of people, and result in the demonstrable acceptance of key decisions.

2. Assessing options in a comprehensive and participatory fashion through all stages of a project based on the needs of all groups. The option selected is based on an assessment of the full range of policy, institutional, and technical options.

3. Improving existing dams and addressing the outstanding social and environmental issues. Management must adapt to changing circumstances continuously over the project's life.

4. Sustaining rivers and livelihoods for ecosystems and human communities dependent on them. Options assessment and decisionmaking around river development prioritize the avoidance of impacts, followed by the minimization and mitigation of harm to the health and integrity of the river system.

5. Recognizing the entitlements of affected peoples through joint negotiations to produce mutually agreed-upon and legally enforceable mitigation and development provisions, and sharing benefits.

6. Ensuring compliance, public trust, and confidence by requiring governments, developers, regulators, and operators to meet all commitments, regulations, criteria, guidelines, and project-specific negotiated agreements made for the planning, implementation, and operation of dams.

7. Sharing rivers among and within countries for peace, development, and security through collaborative and innovative means.

These priorities were not intended as a blueprint. Instead the commission recommends that they be used as the starting point for discussions, debates, internal reviews, and reassessments of existing procedures and for an assessment of how these procedures might need to change. The experience of the commission in a dia-

logue among parties from different backgrounds illustrates that common ground can be found without stakeholders' compromising their interests and values. But it also shows that all the parties concerned must commit to the process if the issues are to be resolved.

Summary and Conclusions

Multistakeholder processes aim to address multidimensionality and complexity, the intrinsically politically charged issues of allocation of rights to resources, and the distribution of benefits and costs associated with technological change. This chapter has argued that success in reconciling deeply held positions and arriving at consensus on future paths hinges on the extent to which four basic factors are addressed:

1. The degree to which relevant parties are involved in discussions and negotiations

2. The extent to which accurate scientific information is brought forward

3. The quality and depth of linkages with official decisionmaking bodies

4. The degree to which fairness and efficiency are embraced as evaluation criteria

The three examples provided in the previous section illustrate the inherent context-specificity of multistakeholder processes. A unified, fully portable approach (model) does not exist, suggesting the need for contingent approaches that are cognizant of institutional and political details, and of the opportunities and constraints these details may imply. The examples also illustrate the decisiveness of the interactive effects of the nature of available evidence, the social and political context within which policy change is debated and implemented, and the facilitative mechanisms at hand.

A key recognition relates to the thin and incomplete nature of information about and understanding of the institutional and political context within which science and technology policy is made in developing countries, especially in Africa, and especially with respect to biotechnology policy. Biotechnology is a tool to be used to meet societal goals. Investments in alternative policy approaches are therefore best viewed in relation to particular constraints on achieving such goals. Again, the degree of understanding of how such investments might address key constraints is thin and incomplete. The need for contingent approaches is therefore especially great for multistakeholder processes dealing with biotechnology in Africa.

Appendix: Alternatives for Process Design

Following is a select list of methods that could be used for "deliberative and inclusionary processes." This list has been adapted from Holmes and Scoones 2000.

Area/Neighborhood Forums

Such forums are concerned with the needs of a particular geographically defined area or neighborhood. Meeting regularly, they may deal with a specific service area (e.g., planning or housing) or with a full range of local services and concerns. Area forums may or may not have dedicated officers attached to them. They may have a close link with relevant ward council members or with council members responsible for the service areas under discussion. Membership may be set or open. If there is a formally established membership (e.g., consisting of representatives of tenants or community associations in the area), members of the public may be allowed to participate in an open discussion at meetings.

Citizens' Juries

A citizens' jury is a group of citizens (chosen to fairly represent the local population) brought together to consider a particular issue set by a local authority. Citizens' juries receive evidence from expert witnesses, and cross-questioning can occur. The process may last up to four days, at the end of which a report is drawn up setting out the views of the jury, including any differences in opinion. Juries' views are intended to inform council members' decisionmaking.

Citizens' Panels

Research panels. Research panels are bodies made up of a large sample of a local population (500–3,000 participants) that are used as a sounding board by an organization in the public sector. They are part of a form of opinion research that tracks changes in opinions and attitudes over time. Members are recruited either through the mail or by telephone. Such panels have a standing membership, a proportion of whom will be replaced regularly and who will be consulted at intervals. Participants are asked regularly about different issues over a period of time. An example is the People's Panel on public services for the U.K. central government.

Interactive panels. Interactive panels also have a standing membership that may be replaced over time, but they consist of small groups of people who meet regularly to deliberate on issues. An example would be a health panel.

Community Issues Groups

The community issues group takes the focus group (described later) as its starting point, then attempts to introduce the core elements of deliberation. A group of up

to 12 people come together up to five times to discuss a designated issue in depth. Each meeting lasts for up to two and a half hours. The first meeting has a similar format to that of a focus group; participants discuss an issue from their current knowledge base. In subsequent meetings information is introduced so that their knowledge of the subject area is gradually increased. By the final meeting participants have become more informed and the opinions they express have moved beyond their automatic initial responses toward more thoughtful and anchored judgments (for example, the public vision of U.K. health service).

Consensus Conferences

Consensus conferences involve a panel of laypeople who develop their understanding of technical or scientific issues in dialogue with experts. A panel of between 10 and 20 volunteers are recruited through advertisements. A steering committee is set up with members chosen by the sponsors. The panel members attend two weekend meetings at which they are briefed on the chosen subject and identify the questions they want to ask at the conference. The conference lasts for three or four days and gives the panel a chance to ask experts any outstanding questions. The conference is open to the public, and the audience can also ask questions. Then the panel members retire and, independent of the steering committee, prepare a report that sets out their views on the subject. Copies of the report are made available to the members of the conference audience, and panel members present key sections to the audience.

Consensus Participation

The framework used in consensus participation involves six activities. First, stakeholder analysis involves identification of the relevant stakeholder groups. Second, stakeholder targeting involves bringing all stakeholders to a position in which they are able to negotiate with other stakeholders on a more equitable basis. Third, external stakeholder assessment involves investigating the policies, legislation, and activities of the government and other institutional stakeholders that may constrain or promote local actions. Fourth, community participatory assessments enable local people to identify their resource uses, assess perceived conflicts and concerns, and plan community strategies. Fifth, participatory preparatory workshops bring all the stakeholders together to cover a series of specific crosscutting issues. Participants produce a series of position statements that provide the basis for subsequent discussions. Sixth is the policy planning forum, where facilitators manage negotiations between stakeholders to build consensus and reach agreement on policies and projects. Seventh, participatory monitoring and evaluation take place using criteria agreed upon during the policy planning forum.

Deliberative Opinion Polls

These polls measure informed opinion on an issue. A deliberative poll examines what members of the public think when they have had the time and information necessary to consider the matter more closely. These polls usually involve 250–600 participants. A baseline survey of opinions and demographics is carried out, and the participants in the poll are then recruited to resemble the wider group in terms of both demographics and attitudes. Often briefing begins before the event by means of written information. Participants' views on a given subject are measured before the poll begins and again once it has finished. Changes in opinion are measured and incorporated into a report. Deliberative polls are often conducted in conjunction with television companies.

Electronic Democracy

Two forms of electronic democracy are informal on-line discussions and formal consultations using on-line debates. Informal discussions enable participants to share knowledge through informal writing aimed at a real audience, and they leave a record of conversations that can be referred to later. Because all communications must be in writing, contributions are often thoughtful, with everybody on an equal footing. Discussions are similar to face-to-face conversations but are a sequence of messages or postings that are "asynchronous" because contributors typically do not participate at the same time. Formal debates are moderated and focus on specific questions to be argued for or against. Moderators provide content relevant to the debate and facilitate discussion. In an online environment, formal debate can take place by dividing participants into teams and assigning each team a specific argument. Debates may take the form of heightened discussions in which participants discover and investigate concepts and conflicts within a topic or issue. Some participants may be assigned the task of respectfully disagreeing with others' stated points of view.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are similar to citizens' juries in that they bring citizens together to discuss a specific issue. Focus groups do not need to be representative of the general population, and may involve a particular group of citizens only. Discussions may focus on the specific needs of that group, on the quality of a particular service, or on ideas for broader policy or strategy. Focus groups do not generally call expert witnesses, and meetings typically last between one and two hours only, usually involving only 12 people.

Future Search Conferences

A future search conference is a two-day meeting at which participants attempt to create a shared community vision of the future. It brings together those with the

power to make decisions and those affected by decisions to try to seek agreement on a plan of action. The process is managed by a steering group of local people representing key sections of the community. About 64 people are recruited who are asked to form about eight stakeholder groups within the conference. They take part in a structured two-day process in which they move from reviewing the past to creating ideal scenarios for the future. Each of the stakeholder groups explains its vision, and then a shared vision is explored. The conference ends with the development of action plans. Self-selected action groups develop projects and commit themselves to action toward their vision.

Innovative Development

Innovative development is a methodology consisting of four participatory steps. First, an "action map" is formulated. This is a systematic vision for action toward an attainable and desired future that reflects the consensus of participants. Second, an estimate is made of the distance from the current situation to the attainable future and of the capabilities that are available. Third, a study is made of "potentialities," which includes the systematic identification and evaluation of each of the prospective actions. Fourth, a plan for action is designed. All methodological steps are carried out through the participation of "relevant actors or stakeholders" who are convoked by an appropriate and legitimate authority.

Issue Forums

Issue forums are ongoing bodies that hold regular meetings focusing on a particular issue (e.g., community safety or health promotion).They may have a set membership or may operate on an open basis, and they are often able to make recommendations to relevant council committees or to share in decisionmaking processes.

Multicriteria Mapping

Multicriteria mapping (MCM) is a method that attempts to combine the transparency of numerical approaches with the unconstrained framing of discursive deliberations. The technique involves deciding on a subject area, defining the basic policy options, selecting the participants, conducting individual interviews (two- to three-hour sessions in which additional options are selected, evaluative criteria are defined, options are scored, and relative weighting is given to criteria), quantitative and qualitative analysis is conducted by researchers, feedback on preliminary results is provided for participants, deliberation between participants takes place, and, after the final analysis, a report is produced.

Participatory Rural Appraisal or Participatory Research and Action

Participatory rural appraisal or participatory research and action (PRA) is a family of approaches, methods, and behaviors that enable poor people to express and analyze

the realities of their lives and conditions and themselves in order to plan, monitor, and evaluate their actions. In PRA outsiders act as catalysts for local people, enabling them to decide what to do with the information and analysis that they generate. PRA methods are similar to those used for rapid rural appraisal (see following).

Planning for Real

Planning for real is a hands-on planning process first developed in the 1970s as an alternative to traditional planning meetings. Using models and cards, it can be used to address many issues such as traffic, community safety, conditions of housing stock, and environmental improvements. Planning for real exercises are often initiated by a neighborhood or residents' group. Material is provided by the Neighborhood Initiatives Foundation to help people embark on a neighborhood survey to identify problems and issues. A three-dimensional model of a neighborhood is prepared by all sections of the community. The model is moved around the area to places accessible to the community. A planning for real event is an open meeting that focuses attention on the model. At the meeting "Movable options" cards are used to identify problem areas and discuss how they might be solved. The event is followed by workshops to prioritize options and identify responsibility for each action.

Rapid Rural Appraisal

Rapid rural appraisal (RRA) consists of data collection by outsiders (researchers or practitioners who are not members of the community or group with whom they interact) through the use of methods that include participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and visual techniques (e.g., maps, matrices, trend lines, and diagrams).

Service User Forums

Service user forums are ongoing bodies that meet on a regular basis to discuss issues relating to the management and development of a particular service (e.g., an older people's day care center, a leisure center, or park). Such forums may have a set membership or operate on an "open" basis. They may have the power to make recommendations to specific council committees or even to share in decisionmaking processes.

Stakeholder Decision Analysis

Stakeholder decision analysis is a method of combining a deliberative procedure (e.g., discussion and negotiation between stakeholders) with systematic multicriteria decision analysis. Deliberations among stakeholders elicits criteria that reflect under-

lying value judgments. The criteria are weighted according to their relative importance during a series of workshops. Each social or environmental issue of concern is then scored against its criterion. Weighted scores are summed to give a final score. This process can focus discussions between stakeholders, facilitating networking and partnership building, promoting negotiation, and avoiding confrontation. Because it is open and transparent, it is seen to be fair. The outcomes gain legitimacy from the procedure followed.

Visioning Exercises

A range of methods (including focus groups) may be used within a visioning exercise, the purpose of which is to establish participants' "vision" of the future and the kind of future they would like to create. Visioning may be used to inform broad strategy for a locality, or it may have a more specific focus (as in environmental consultations for Local Agenda 21).

For a description of other methods that could be used for participatory environmental policymaking, see Holmes and Scoones 2000.

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