

Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy (SPCS)

SPCS Reloaded

Report of the SPCS External Review Team

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I. Summary of Findings

Note: This section is not an Executive Summary, although it does draw on and reproduce text that is in the

respect of terms of trade, access to credit, conditionality attached to loans and grants from donors, and the policy “overrides” linked to the global and regional political situation. Part of the answer lies in creating transparent and participatory mechanisms of governance so that development action is more responsive to the needs identified by the affected people and communities themselves. And part lies in offering responses and applying experience and expertise in such a way that these needs are met in ways that promote social justice and sustainable use of the environment and its resources.

SPCS has a role at all three levels. It must intervene to help put in place a policy framework that offers incentives for sustainability and ceases to reward unsustainable behaviour. It must help strengthen the participatory structures at the provincial level but especially at lower jurisdictional levels so that development addresses the real needs of people and communities. And it must bring to bear its environmental and natural resource-based expertise so that the development approaches are sustainable.

Mainstreaming Sustainable Development

One of the implications of bringing development down to the level where people’s concerns prevail, and of basing it on democratic structures through which they can to some extent steer the development process, is that environment will no longer be the central thread that unites the development process. Indeed, this is already the case. In part because the donors were taking it that way and in part because development is increasingly based on definition of needs at the base, the principal focus of development is now on poverty alleviation. Instead of trying to graft sustainable development onto the root stock of traditional development concerns, SPCS must **mainstream** its sustainable development message into the current of people-centered, poverty-focused development.

This requires more of a shift than most people realize. SPCS is, after all, a complete framework in its own right, and is generally acknowledged to offer a compelling paradigm for sustainable development. SPCS must accept now that the principal framework is another one – one that SPCS has helped to bring about and in which it can take pride – but one that is nevertheless not the SPCS and one for which sustainable development is not the central objective.

The framework for development, for now and for the conceivable future, is the framework of poverty alleviation, as articulated in the Federal PRSP, as is being elaborated in the Provincial PRSPs, and as set out in myriad donor frameworks. It is not that these frameworks are complete nor perfect, but it is precisely their incompleteness and imperfection that offers the entrée to SPCS.

The principal challenge for SPCS in the next phase is to bring its influence, experience and vision to bear on the poverty-based development framework, so that what results is an approach to development that not only relieves poverty and

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to sustainable approaches to development. Indeed, one of the clear criticisms that can be made of the PRSP and similar poverty alleviation strategies is that they have taken insufficient account of the need for a sound and well-managed resource base and for a healthy environment. Without these, success in poverty alleviation will always be compromised, and many early results will prove to be unsustainable.

II. Scope of the Mission

This report summarises the findings and recommendations of the Mid-Term Review (November 2003) of the Sarhad

Pakistan” unit submitted a funding proposal in support of the MTR to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The three members of the ERT were recruited between November 2002 and March 2003.

In May 2003, an Inception mission visited Pakistan and held a first meeting with the Steering Committee for the Mid-Term Review. This mission – and the Steering Committee – validated much of the Concept Paper, but introduced some amendments as well. In particular, it introduced the notion of focus group discussions and structured interviews with stakeholders, which turned out to be an important input to the ERT.

Between May and October 2003, two streams of activity took place in parallel. First, the ERT reviewed and absorbed a significant collection of documents pertaining to the SPCS and related issues in Pakistan and NWFP. The list of the documents reviewed is attached at Annex 2. It included the series of PSDN case studies mentioned in the Concept Paper, material from SPCS and NCS reviews, Annual Development Plans of the Provincial Government, sample PC 1s of projects relating to the SPCS, and much more.

At the same time, IUCN organized a series of eight Focus Group discussions around key topics of the SPCS and in the two Districts – Chitral and Abbottabad – that benefited from District Conservation Strategies. The Focus Group discussions were reflected in comprehensive reports prepared by local consultants, and were supplemented by a series of interviews which, again, were written up and made available to the ERT. A list of the Focus Group reports and specific interviews is included at Annex 3.

The ERT visited Pakistan in the period from 1 - 13 November. During this time, they met with the rapporteurs of the Focus Group reports, senior government officials and IUCN staff. They visited Abbottabad, where a workshop was held, and Islamabad for discussions with Federal Government Departments, donors, and IUCN staff. Back in Peshawar, they visited field projects, held a stakeholder consultation and, on completion of their work presented the preliminary results to the Steering Committee and to IUCN’s Senior Management. In addition, they read and absorbed many hundred pages of additional documentation relevant to SPCS.

This report, then, is the result of an intense process begun in May with the Inception mission, and concluding here with the delivery of the final conclusions and

And yet there is a strong continuity, not only in the ultimate goals being pursued, but also in the assumptions that underlie the pursuit of sustainable development. With a perspective of almost ten years on the SPCS, of some fifteen on the PNCS and of almost twenty five on the WCS itself, it is important to examine these assumptions and to determine how well they hold up in a world that, in many ways, has been profoundly transformed. It is important, where the assumptions are found to be in need of modification, to understand the consequences for the choices made in the SPCS process, and on options for the future of the process.

This is the purpose of this chapter of our report: to sketch out what we understand to be the context in which the goal of sustainable development is today pursued. What are the elements of that context, and what do they imply for the objectives of the SPCS at global, national and provincial levels? We will see that a series of deep shifts have taken place in the policy context in which SPCS is working. When one further considers the political earthquakes that have gripped the region, it is clear that the challenges of constructing the sustainable development edifice are today very different from those facing IUCN and its partners in the Provincial Government when they embarked upon the task in the early 1990s.

Basic Assumptions

Perhaps the greatest assumption the sustainable development community made is that the stream is basically running in the right direction. We tended to believe that, for all the

economies to trade and investment would generate, through their own growth, the resources needed for their development and, consequently, the resources to address their social and environmental challenges. Trade, not aid, was the answer. Countries should not beg but grow their way out of poverty.

Not coincidentally, this approach was being promoted as the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations was coming to a conclusion (the agreements were signed in April 1994), resulting in a massively expanded reach of trade policy into the field of domestic decision-making. Coupled with the requirements of economic policy reform and the increasing linkage of development assistance with governance-based conditionality, the scope for sovereign decision-making by developing countries was greatly curtailed. Henceforth, developing countries' access to credit, markets for their goods, and even technical assistance was linked closely to their performance against the criteria set by the Washington consensus.

SPCS, like the PNCS and the WCS before it, is firmly in the tradition of the **Rio consensus**, with its belief in the determining action of governments in the achievement of development, and its reliance on strategies and plans as a fundamental tool to guide that action. Yet if there is one central impact of the Washington consensus, it is to undermine the ability of governments to do much more than put in place a favourable policy framework for development and to help orchestrate the different actors involved. It also removed from the hands of national governments the decisions that are central to achieving development – transferring them upwards to multilateral institutions, downwards to local jurisdictions or to civil society, and outwards to the market place.

We shall return to this reality later, but for the SPCS there are two implications – first, that fewer of the decisions fundamental to achieving the SPCS' objectives are in the hands of the project's principal partners in the Sarhad government and, second, that the nature of the policy framework governing development in Sarhad is likely to make the difference between success and failure for the SPCS.

SPCS and Market Liberalization

Perhaps not surprisingly, the Washington consensus has proved disappointing, especially for developing countries. It 0 e in the hands of tgl0422 Tw Tc 3.7l th odevelopment

So, while the Washington consensus has tended to work for its chief proponents, it has proved disappointing to most others, and especially to most developing countries. How has this generally recognized failure been received? For the proponents of the reform package, the fault lies in the incomplete application of the prescriptions, and in the governance failure that bedevils too many countries, especially in the developing world. For the victims, it has led to a vocal “anti-globalization” movement, an undermining of social stability nationally and internationally, and a new effort on the part of developed countries to oppose or reform policies that they are convinced are not in their national interest. The failure of the recent WTO Ministerial meeting in Cancun is an example of the latter process in action.

The problem in dealing with this situation is that there is merit to the arguments on both sides. It is perfectly clear – and is growing increasingly so – that the global economic system is grossly skewed in favour of the rich countries, and that the liberalization of trade and capital that lies at the heart of globalization has deepened the gap between rich and poor countries, and between the rich and poor in most countries. As it is, the system is unsustainable and both rich and poor countries face serious problems if the situation is not addressed soon.

At the same time, it is equally clear that countries that undergo reform half-heartedly, because it is required as a condition of access to financial markets, tend to do the minimum necessary to meet the conditions of the creditors. The limited reform that they do undertake tends also to underline the governance failures built into their present systems, providing a double motive for voter dissatisfaction. Without substantial governance reform in many countries, the benefits that could be derived from economic openness tend not to result in real advances for development and poverty alleviation.

Did the Rio crowd go down without a whimper? Not exactly. Increasingly disturbed at the steady weakening of government services, and the sacrificing of the public good to private interests, the world community made a series of attempts to muster their forces. The UN's special Millennium Assembly set a range of specific targets to be reached by the collective efforts of the world community over the coming ten to fifteen years. The UN Summit for the Least Developed Countries examined the situation of the world's most destitute, and the UN Conference on Financing for Development (FFD) sought to mobilize resources to meet the development challenge. These culminated in the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in September 2002.

Development Assistance after WSSD

To most observers and participants, WSSD was a disappointment. Almost no firm and enforceable commitments were made, no significant new resources were pledged, and the task of implementing the outcomes was handed back to institutions that have proved their ineffectiveness beyond the shadow of a doubt. Taken together with the weak Millennium Goals, the slender outcomes of the Least Developed and FFD summits, and the continuing decline in untied aid allocations, **it is now clear that we will not tame the tide of**

These pressures, and in particular the dual pressures of globalization and for governance reform, has substantially changed the paradigm facing development planners, and those dedicated to the advancement of sustainable development. The impact of this new paradigm is nowhere more strongly felt than in the field of development cooperation, and *ipso facto* in respect of the conditions under which a process such as SPCS unfolds and develops. Several factors may be noted.

First, there is a growing recognition on the part of both donors and civil society that progress towards sustainable development is not possible in a negative policy environment. It follows that many aid approaches used in the past – to compensate for governance failures, misguided policies, or as stop-gap measures – are now subject to much closer scrutiny and to more critical examination. **The need to demonstrate the s**

V. Changes in national and provincial context

SPCS preparation started in early 1990s. The Strategy was approved by the Provincial Cabinet in 1996. SPCS was inspired by the global movement for environmental protection. It developed within the national and provincial context prevailing during the period of its formulation. Much has since changed, and SPCS cannot be assessed without taking into consideration the significant changes in the political and social context in Sarhad during the period under consideration.

The geo-political setting

Many of the relevant changes in the context are known and reasonably well understood. The impact of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and, in particular, the escalation of its war against the Mujaheddin in the mid- and late-1980s, not only led to the arrival of over 2 million Afghan refugees in Sarhad, with all the attendant pressures on the natural resource base and the economy, it also turned Peshawar into a theatre for high-level political maneuvering on a scale rarely seen anywhere. The withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan during the late '80s could have been an opportunity for the stabilization of the region. Afghanistan, however, continued to face ceaseless turmoil throughout the 1990s, a situation that continues today.

This has had numerous implications for Pakistan – particularly for Sarhad. The emergence of many social problems - such as the “kalashnikov culture”, the drug trade and indigenous drug addiction - are seen as spill-overs from the war in Afghanistan. The situation on the Province’s western border has been complicated by political upheavals, corruption, polarization of the society, and resurgence of narrow political ideologies resulting in intolerance and violence that has undermined social order and stability.

Both the internal instability and the external threats caused by the war in neighbouring Afghanistan are significant in considering the challenges faced by the SPCS, and the obstacles facing Sarhad in placing its development on a sustainable footing. These political and social upheavals have taken place precisely in the period that corresponds to the development and implementation of the SPCS. The “aid” resources that poured into the Province in support of the Afghan refugees or “freedom fighters”, and the central stake of various international players in their success, fundamentally altered many of the balances on which Sarhad’s society and governance had previously rested. **Among the changes were a growing interlacing of the Province and its economy with the economy beyond the border, the growth of the illicit or frankly illegal economy, the growth of religiously-motivated assistance, and the natural suspicion of the presence and motivation of some aid actors.**

It is often said that sustainable development cannot thrive in an atmosphere of insecurity and instability. Indeed, security is the basis for planning, and planning for sustainable development. A return to a situation of security is a precondition to advancing once more in the direction of sustainable development. From 1989, when the last Soviet armoured car retreated over the bridge at Termez, to the present day, there has been no stability in the

The public sector reforms designed for the Province are broadly directed towards improving public governance, stimulating the private sector through creation of a business-friendly environment, promoting human development and enhancing the quality of the public service. These reform plans have found international support as it is broadly acknowledged that an economically healthy and secure Sarhad is critical for the stability of the region and national efforts to promote tolerance and moderation. To what extent has that goal been achieved?

Social Indicators of Sarhad

It is useful to look at the social indicators for Sarhad to ascertain the social development status of the Province during the period of SPCS formulation and implementation. The NWFP district-based multiple cluster survey of 2001 confirms the poor social indicators and high gender disparities in the Province. Gender gaps in Sarhad are larger than those for the country as a whole – and these are already disturbingly large! The social and economic position of women in Sarhad is extremely weak. Women have a very restricted opportunities to participate in socio-economic development and are traditionally occupied in the household. Women enjoy limited land holdings, low agricultural productivity and an inadequate resource base.

The survey cited above provides startling disclosures - also highlighting the variations in different districts of the Province. The infant mortality rate in the Province is 79 per 1000. Over one third of children (38%) under 5 years of age are underweight for their age. Only 39% of children of primary school age (5-9 years) are enrolled in a primary school. The completion rate for grades 1-5 primary school in children aged 5-9 is 68%. Only 40% of the population 15 years and over is literate; with the wide disparity between males and females (59% versus 21%). About two thirds (63%) of the population has access to the safe drinking water - 88% in urban and only 59% in rural areas. The average daily per capita income of the population is some Rs. 20! 41% of all income earners over 15 years of age receive less than Rs. 60 per day (US\$ 1).

These indicators provide a flavour of the social development situation in Sarhad. SPCS embraced the Social Action Programme (SAP), the major social sector development endeavour in the 1990s, as the primordial vehicle for addressing social progress in the Province. However, rather than developing explicit linkages between SPCS and SAP, and exploring how to bring about mutual reinforcement, SPCS tended to assume that, with the SAP addressing social development, it could concentrate on natural resources and the environment. SAP, too, culminated in 2002 with mostly unsatisfactory achievements (ref. the Implementation Completion Report – Second Social Action Programme Project). It achieved a minimal impact on the human development position of the Province.

Ordinary citizens benefited neither from expanded investment and active donor involvement in the social sector since service delivery continued to be of poor quality. Assessments of the SAP rate achievements in education as unsatisfactory, and in health as marginally satisfactory. Rural water supply and sanitation also received an unsatisfactory rating, while only the population welfare sector was rated satisfactory. The net school enrolment rates in Sarhad increased from 39% in 1998-99 to 41% in 2001-02. For males, it moved from 47% to 48%, while in case of females it climbed from 30% to 33%. The percentage of children

immunized climbed from 54 to 57%. These marginal improvements were offset by the high population growth rate.

It was in this bleak setting that SPCS was expected to define the sustainable development policy agenda of the Province. That it failed to penetrate the policy priorities pursued by the Province's elected representatives is not a surprise, though it is a bit disappointing. Without a clear strategy for improving quality of life, SPCS was bound to remain a conservation effort - somewhat in isolation from the pressing development needs of the people of the Province. Meanwhile, poverty continued to deepen and to threaten social stability.

Poverty in Sarhad

Sarhad is the poorest province of Pakistan. There is evidence that poverty became exacerbated in the Province during the 1990's compared to the situation in Pakistan as a whole. Sarhad's population is close to 20 million and is growing at 2.5% per year. Nearly 50% of the population lives in mountainous and arid areas. The overall incidence of poverty in Sarhad is substantially higher than that for the country as a whole (poverty head count in 1998-99 is 43% as compared to 33% for Pakistan). Average per capita consumption is lower when compared to the rest of the country. While urban poverty in Sarhad declined by six percentage points from 1990-91 to 1998-99, rural poverty increased by more than four percentage points during the same period. Urban poverty remained much higher than in the urban areas in the rest of the country.

The percentage of the Province's population living in poverty in FY93 was 35.3%. It escalated to 42.6% in FY99. During the same period, the incidence of poverty for Pakistan moved from 26.6% to 32.2%. Certain characteristics of poverty of Sarhad - poor social indicators and high gender disparity have already been mentioned. Gender gaps are significant for all socio-economic indicators in Sarhad. These tend to be wider in rural areas than in urban areas. Even as the population growth rate registered a downward trend, the average family size remained at 7.8 members per household, which compares unfavourably with the average of 6.8 for Pakistan. The average farm size in the Province is only 2.2 acres, compared to 9.4 acres in Pakistan as a whole.

These indicators explain some of the pressure on Sarhad's limited resource base, which is mostly confined to unexploited minerals and hydro-electric potential. SPCS was developed and implemented in this environment of poverty and deprivation. Little wonder that the Strategy remained on the fringe of provincial development endeavours as it did little to offer solutions to the pressing issue of poverty alleviation and improving livelihoods.

Drought

Another change in the national and provincial context is the severe drought that hit parts of Pakistan towards the end of the 1990s. Drought spread to 14 districts of Sarhad - Abbottabad, Bannu, Buner, Chitral, D.I.Khan, Dir (Upper), Dir (Lower), Hangu, Haripur, Kohat, Karak, Kohistan, Tank and Lakki Marwat. Precipitation during 2000 was 20-35% lower than the historical average. Lower than average temperatures in the snow/glacier melt zones further resulted in shortfall in the availability of water in the Indus River System. The drought affected agriculture, damaged crops and orchards and led to death, slaughter and distress sale of livestock. The impact was greatest in the barani (rain fed) areas.

District Based Planning Mechanism under LGO 2001

The local government system creates new institutions and processes for district-based planning and development. Apart from the inputs of the elected local leaders, it also provides for institutional participation of the civil society organizations through the mechanism of Citizen Community Boards (CCBs).

The Zila Nazim (ZN) is the elected head of the District Government. S(he) is expected to provide a vision for district wide development as well as leadership and direction for efficient functioning of the district government (P-73 – Section 18 LGO). ZN is also to oversee formulation and execution of the annual development plan, delivery of services and functioning of the district government.

The devolution of power and responsibility to lower tiers of government is still taking place. The main areas of concern relate to the integration of the devolved structures of governance with the still existing provincial and local government structures, as well as the prospects for developing a coordinated and collaborative approach. It is also clearly a high priority to enhance the capacity of local government structures and to set in place district-level compliance mechanisms. Though the LGO 2001 defines the scope and mandate of the local

Provincial reforms

Sarhad is undertaking a Provincial Reforms Programme (2001-2004) to address its multiple socio-economic problems. This is being undertaken through the NWFP Structural Adjustment Credit (SAC), which is worth US\$ 90 million and aims to transform the way the provincial government provides services. The programme expects that 'decentralization would shift the locus of responsibility to the local governments, enhance local capacity and develop a new strategic emphasis on development outcomes and primary service delivery'.

Specific objectives of the reforms programme are:

- Good governance through rationalization, professionalism and accountability
- Strengthening public services delivery systems and devolution of responsibilities
- Financial management reforms
- Private sector development for sustainable economic growth
- Priority allocations to social services
- Maintenance of public assets
- Improved service delivery
- Increased fiscal space
- Efficient and equitable provincial revenue system
- Reliance on own revenues
- Increased cost recovery
- Complete devolution of fiscal functions
- Release of funds
- Sustainable fiscal outlook
- Reduced debt burden

Concurrently, Sarhad has also prepared its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). This paper provides extensive analysis of the poverty situation in Sarhad; presents medium-term budgetary frameworks for enhancing effectiveness and accountability of expenditure and strengthening of resource mobilization. It lays great emphasis on accelerating human development and creating social assets. The main tmal assets. T9813.5 TD -0.03.5 naperewmcreco2c9iespore

SPCS presaged the development of district strategies. Devolution has heightened the need for district-based institutions and mechanisms for development planning and action. It is this requirement that SPCS should meet if it is to find relevance in the new development paradigm.

VI. Assessment of the SPCS

Introduction

As noted in Part I above, this report is focused on the SPCS itself, and not on the projects and programmes through which its implementation was advanced and supported. That has been done elsewhere. This section focuses on the SPCS – on the framework for sustainable development that it offers, and on the institutional mechanisms it adopted or pioneered. **It aims to assess how well SPCS has stood the test of time and how useful it is in facing today's challenges.**

Assessing a process of this nature is not a simple task, given the large variety of issues that can be addressed. The SPCS Review focused on a limited number of key aspects of the strategy:

1. Nature of Strategies
2. SPCS Assumptions
3. SPCS Format and Content
4. Institutional arrangements for implementation
5. Application and effectiveness
6. Monitoring, evaluation and learning
7. Ownership and adoption
8. SPCS and the development agenda
9. Gender integration in SPCS
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1. Nature of strategies

As noted in Part III above, the adoption of the NCS by the federal cabinet in 1992 spurred the Government of Sarhad to develop a provincial conservation strategy. Key political and civil service leaders in the province were attracted to the development of a strategy as offering a flexible approach to secure the economic, social and ecological well-being of the people of the Province through conservation and sustainable development of its natural resources. Civil society partners perceived it as an opportunity to penetrate the heretofore closed public sector planning process and to engage with the public sector. The donors, too, were amenable to the idea as strategic planning fitted the dominant development paradigm of the period. The time was propitious for the preparation of an ambitious statement of concerns and solutions. Adoption of a conservation strategy, it was hoped, would raise the political profile of the environment and enable key environmental issues to be dealt with on a priority basis.

SPCS combines a strategic approach to the conservation of natural resources in Sarhad with the outline of an action plan for implementation. Part 1 lays down the context; Part 2 outlines the strategy; and Part 3 spells out the implementation mechanism. Implementation is largely assigned to the government departments. **The SPCS stresses that it does not offer a detailed road map for implementation, suggesting that further action-oriented plans would follow. This has not been the case.** While some projects and initiatives appear to be inspired by the Strategy, there are no well thought-out action plans to guide its effective implementation. To make matters worse, the numerous actions that the Strategy recommends (and expects to be implemented) are not prioritized to provide the basis for feasible plans of action. The wish list is simply too long.

The MTR of NCS points out the need to explain more fully and deal with the varying expectations of what is meant by ‘strategy’ and ‘strategic planning’ (P26-MTR-NCS). These terms are variously understood. To some a strategy implies detailed designs and budgets. At the local level, it is seen as more projects – predominantly more infrastructure. The MTR-NCS concurs with the view (held by some at the provincial level) that a strategy is a ‘market of ideas’ followed by concrete policies and laws only when they have been proven to be useful, through a process of policy, trial, monitoring and spread of ‘best practices’. Strategies are a blueprint for action, but as such they lead to frustration unless there is local capacity in place to translate strategy to action. Plainly, the strengths and limitations of strategy development for sustainable development need to be fully understood. This not only helps in defining next steps, but also facilitates shared appreciation of the enterprise.

It is also necessary to highlight that many organizations conceive strategies as processes aimed at strengthening awareness and empowerment, in which the key outcome is not the document but the participatory discussion it permits and the awareness created as a consequence. SPCS has performed much better under this conception than under the “blueprint for action” one.

2. Assumptions

Looking at the SPCS process and its products, the presence of some key underlying assumptions emerge:

1. Government is the key target of the process and governmental organizations serve as the principal mechanism for implementation
2. Influencing the provincial planning process, in particular by affecting Annual Development Plans, will lead to a growing number of environmentally-sensitive activities and to a larger allocation of the public budget to environmentally-related issues
3. Sustainability of key institutional mechanisms can be relied upon once they have demonstrated their usefulness, despite significant political changes at national or provincial levels
4. Environment is an ongoing priority in the international agenda, and hence a key criterion in the allocation of international development assistance funding

5. SPCS implementation can depend on continued external financing, with little need to ensure the reorientation of national and provincial budgets.

All of these initial assumptions about SPCS have proved to be completely or partially wrong in the course of the decade of implementation, and most have become a major constraint for the successful implementation of SPCS. A critical review and replacement of assumptions is a key task for any successful future existence for the Strategy.

3. Format and content

Analysis of the format of the SPCS is considerably affected by the changes in the global context presented above. SPCS was prepared in the immediate post-Rio era and reflects the optimistic outlook that was then prevalent. In development terms, the dominating outlook rapidly evolved into one based on free trade and markets (under the Washington consensus), only to be over-ridden by one that gives priority to security issues over all others. This analysis, undertaken in 2003, is made with this “itinerary” in mind.

Interestingly, this issue and its risks are very well analyzed in the introductory chapters of the SPCS, but the Action Plan shows evidence that this initial, well

to lack of capacity, absence of political will, clientilism or corruption. Non-enforcement of the rules creates a critical governance problem that puts a serious question mark on all efforts to promote change through Governmental action. This single issue is the most important reason why SPCS is widely regarded as obsolete.

- SPCS is strongly based in the assumption that enough external funding could be made available from Pakistan's donors to make serious progress towards implementation. When the context changed, as was the case following the explosion of a nuclear device in 1998 or the break in constitutional rule, with the consequent donor withdrawal from Pakistan, the momentum behind the Strategy was seriously tripped up.
- SPCS failed to secure the advantages of developing hypotheses and attendant scenarios, and therefore failed to identify changes whose achievement was less dependent on continuity in donor support for Pakistan. Much time was expended, and much wasted, pursuing approaches that depended on assumptions that did not come to pass in reality.

4. Institutional arrangements for implementation

Implementation of SPCS is primarily the responsibility of the government, but not its exclusive domain. Government departments are actually expected to facilitate implementation by helping their own structures and all others to perform their respective roles. The Strategy devised innovative institutions and mechanisms to strengthen public participation and address environmental issues. Roundtables (RTs), Focal Points (FPs), and Government Focal Points (GFPs) are the key mechanisms for rendering the Strategy operational.

FPs and RTs were formed in NWFP during 1994 to address key themes of sustainable development. Government Focal Points were introduced in 1998 to institutionalize the concept of Focal Points in the concerned government departments.

Roundtables (RTs)

RTs are multi-stakeholder forums established for the purpose of developing the component strategies of the SPCS, supporting SPCS implementation, and assisting in any revision that might be necessary. They include representation from the public, private and non-governmental sectors. Roundtables are official forums (some have been formally "notified" by government), but they lack a clear legal charter.

RTs are an innovation introduced by the SPCS (although in fact they mirror to some extent the traditional *Mahraka* system of consultations in Sarhad). Apart from the aforementioned objectives, they also perform a range of ancillary functions, including facilitating participation, networking, capacity building and awareness.

The purpose and mandate of RTs evolved during the various phases of SPCS implementation. At the time the RTs were created in 1995, their broad responsibilities included assistance in the development of the component environmental strategy for their respective sectors and themes, monitoring the implementation of the strategy, and advising the government on implementation issues. Under the SPCS-II support project, the RTs were mostly involved in the refinement and development of sub-strategies for their respective

thematic areas, exploring opportunities for their implementation, and building a sense of ownership of the SPCS among stakeholders.

The Terms of Reference for the Roundtables were revised in 1999 and updated to allow them to:

- Act as an intellectual forum to debate, promote, and further refine the SPCS;
- Provide necessary guidance and input for the development of sectoral policies;
- Debate sectoral issues and constraints and identify interventions required for sustainable development of that particular sector;
- Provide a forum for interface between the public sector and the civil society;
- Review the programmes and projects being planned or undertaken in the sector and identify opportunities for establishing effective linkages among the initiatives;
- Identify innovative financing mechanisms to foster sustainable development.

Three different types of Roundtable are now in operation. Thematic RTs (NGO RT and Communication RT) are managed directly by the IUCN-SPCS support unit. Government notifies the five sectoral RTs (sustainable industrial development, sustainable agriculture, environment education, urban environment, and cultural heritage & sustainable tourism) and the Focal Points are housed in the concerned department. The RTs for the formulation of the District Conservation Strategies in Chitral and Abbottabad districts are consultative in nature.

Focal Points

Focal Points are technical staff appointed by IUCN and seconded to government departments on a full- or part-time basis, to strengthen those departments' capacity in areas essential to the SPCS. These appointments are short-term measures to enhance the capacity and awareness of government departments engaged in SPCS implementation. These individuals, stationed in the concerned line departments, act as the secretariat for the RTs.

FPs have made an important contribution to the vibrancy of the Roundtables, networking with the stakeholders, facilitating public consultation and raising awareness. They serve as an interface between government and civil society for inputs to government policy and decision-making. Some FPs have been the motivating force behind major initiatives – such as approval of the sectoral policy in agriculture.

Government Focal Points

The concept of GFPs, was initiated under the PSDN/OSPCS. GFPs, as staff of the respective departments, are expected to act as counterparts to the Focal Points and gradually assume responsibility for mainstreaming sustainability concerns in their departments. The intent is to institutionalize the SPCS process and its objectives in the public sector. GFP

GFPs are a more recent endeavour to sustain and implant the concept of FPs within the departments. The Chief Planning Officer of the concerned department is usually the choice for the position. The responsibilities of GFPs are assigned to him/her in addition to his/her normal duties. The departments do not have clearly defined internal work distribution. GFPs, therefore, end up performing *ad hoc* activities.

The concept of GFPs has two basic flaws –the officers designated as the GFPs do not always carry weight in policy formulation and decision-making; and rapid staff turnover results in lack of expertise for the newcomer. Since there is no explicit charter of duties, evaluation of performance is difficult.

Decentralization

Sustainable development is closely connected with local initiatives for conservation, protection and regeneration of natural resources. Communities cannot adequately be involved in the management of natural resources without decentralized, needs-based planning. Even

developed as a comprehensive blueprint for implementation, for all the stakeholders? How useful is the instrument of an all-embracing strategy? What are the best measures to determine the success of the Strategy?

SPCS evokes a variety of responses from the different stakeholders. It certainly was seen as a

- a) the SPCS strategy document, and related Action Plans
- b) the SPCS Support Projects, implemented by IUCN-Pakistan and the NWFP Government

The SPCS Support Project has been through several phases, each one monitored on the basis of the work plan and objectives set out in the respective project proposal, focusing on the implementation of the agreed activities and the delivery of the identified products. All of them were, it was concluded, completed in a satisfactory manner.

By contrast, the SPCS' own Action Plan was not clearly assigned for implementation to any particular organization. As a result, no organization specifically monitored its progress until the last phase of the SPCS Support Project that began in 2001. Some of the activities included in the Action Plan were completed by different organizations working on their own, while others were not undertaken at all. No organization or unit tracked these activities in a centralized way with a view to assessing how much of the action called for was implemented, that is until Phase 4 of the SPCS Support Project.

Under the current Phase 4 of SPCS, the Government of NWFP decided to engage public sector partners by developing a monitoring mechanism similar to SPCS Support Unit's internal M&E reporting system for effective monitoring of the project activities. In order to ensure such monitoring, projects developed two reporting templates: one for reporting progress against SPCS-4 project activities, and the other for reporting progress against the SPCS and its Action Plan. These templates, once approved by the Project Steering Committee, began to be used by the public sector partners for reporting and are submitted

Strategy Paper. This multiplicity of interventions poses a daunting challenge to integration and implementation of various programmes.

The process of integrating environment and development in Sarhad was initiated in the early 1990s, largely through support from SDC and the Netherlands. The Malakand and Dir Social Forestry Project and the Swiss-funded Kalam Integrated Development Project experimented with new participatory approaches. These projects achieved some success.

The preparation of SPCS was aimed to mainstream these experimental approaches at the level of the province, thus effecting a paradigm shift towards sustainable development. However, the integration of environment and development requires an approach that transcends institutional boundaries and will not succeed merely through structural arrangements. The paradigm shift depends on a cultural conversion that fuses the objectives and mechanics of environment and development. The PE & D department, despite its central role in the provincial development bureaucracy, was a far too restricted base for such a transformation.

Whatever the validity of these assumptions, the impact of SPCS on government planning in the form of the five years programmes appears to be extremely limited. It is barely visible, for example, in the ninth five year plan finalized in 1998, a mere two years following the adoption of SPCS! Clearly the desired effect of 'greening' development was not achieved.

Capacity development was also adopted as a major means of integrating environment with development planning, especially during SPCS implementation through the support projects. While these efforts have no doubt been useful, they have not brought about the critical mass of capacity development necessary to bring about such integration, especially in the absence of institutional restructuring and creation of an enabling environment.

The Provincial Government's approval of SPCS is a tribute to the political skill with which the process of strategy development was managed, and to the comprehensiveness of the approach followed. It did not, however, signify approval – much less adoption – of the total package of recommendations, policies and measures that the SPCS recommends. Indeed, there is evidence that the Provincial Government was motivated at least in part by the hope of donor funding following a strategy that so clearly enjoyed donor support.

It is now clear that integration of environment and development cannot hope to succeed if it is focused principally on the public sector. Indeed, such integration depends on a comprehensive rethinking of the role of the State in environmental management. What can be brought about through the planning and project approval process in the end affects only a limited range of the province's sustainable development priorities.

9. Gender integration in SPCS

The inception report of SPCS made specific reference to the position of women in Sarhad as an environment and development concern. It underlined the importance of education, literacy, population and community development approaches as critical in supporting women's development. The SPCS did not specifically import what is now a considerable

body of experience with 'gender and development' approaches. The importance of associating women in the policy planning process was not sufficiently emphasized. One example of this is the limited participation of women in the public consultations. At the village level, they did not participate until the consultative process was modified and the female facilitators used to facilitate five women's meetings.

The activities for gender integration in SPCS have mainly centered on building a basic understanding of the gender and development issues in the PSDN support unit team, interns and the Environment Protection Agency. The process so far has not progressed to strategic implementation of gender integration and environment planning/activities of government, PE&D department and other stakeholders.

The participation of women in the public domain is severely restricted in Sarhad. The process of SPCS development took tentative steps for promotion of women's participation in the public policy debate. Pioneering activities include women's consultations for the

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The PRSP is rather perfunctory in its reference to environment. It remarks that the 'National

review of the assumptions made for development in the province, must be reviewed and updated.

3. There is nothing that undermines political, social, and therefore environmental stability than the loss of livelihoods and prospects, especially when these involve a sudden and massive dislocation. For this reason, security must be regarded as a precondition to sustainable development. Progress towards sustainable development is inconceivable in an atmosphere of insecurity. Priority must be given to measures that promote security, and measures that undermine or threaten it must be abandoned. Of particular importance is livelihood security, and development interventions that favour secure livelihoods must be given top priority.⁵
4. A livelihoods approach to development will succeed only in a favourable policy environment. Where the policy framework offers incentives for unsustainable behaviour, one cannot count on people to act in ways that appear to them contrary to their interests. A great deal of work can and must be done to ensure that the policy framework operating in the province offers incentives for sustainable development, and that it is at least policy-neutral in terms of the signals given. Work at the policy level is too often neglected by development assistance programmes, and yet it can make the difference between success and failure.
5. A livelihoods-based approach is in many ways equal to a poverty-based approach, and there is a real need to ensure that the dedication of development efforts to poverty reduction is genuine, and not confined to the level of rhetoric, as is too often the case. Assessing development interventions against a scale made up of their likely impact on poverty is essential, and the consequences of these tests must be taken very seriously. Nothing offers a sense of security and the political stability needed to develop better than a sense that opportunities are being created or are expanding. Nothing undermines it more quickly and more surely than the sense of opportunities being foreclosed.
6. As important as a favourable or benign policy environment is the need for continued reform of governance institutions, and in particular those that operate on the principle of subsidiarity – where decisions are taken at the lowest jurisdictional level consistent with efficiency. Pakistan’s ongoing decentralization offers an example of subsidiarity in action, but much more attention needs to be placed on how local and regional institutions can become more participatory, more transparent, and more accountable.
7. Finally, a growing population with a rising level of expectations cannot find sustainability on the basis of a shrinking base of resources. The present downward trend in respect of several environmental or natural resource factors must be reversed if we are not to fall into the weir of mutually supportive degradation.

Several things will be clear from the discussion of the changed global and national contexts and from the assessment of the SPCS itself. Perhaps the central conclusion is that the challenge of sustainable development in Sarhad is substantially different from what faced the

⁵ This conceptual framework is picked up and elaborated somewhat in the chapter on Findings below.

Province when it initiated work on the SPCS a decade ago. The governance context in Pakistan has shifted substantially. Pakistan finds itself in the eye of a political storm that has radically altered the navigation signals. And the development community has gone through a re-examination and realignment of priorities that has left the development assistance scenario almost unrecognizable to those familiar with it in the early nineties.

The challenge for SPCS is to respond to these changes, to take advantage of the openings they offer, and to work out how best it can contribute to sustainable development in light of the new realities they present. **It is our view that the current context is so different from the one on which SPCS was based that it is not a matter of making minor adjustments to the approach adopted in SPCS implementation. Instead, the challenge is to reconsider the relevance of the SPCS approach, tools, methods, project activities and even its assumptions in light of the opportunities that present themselves today.**

The ERT offers seven principal conclusions as an introduction to the Recommendations that follow.

1. First, we offer a conceptual framework to guide the SPCS into its next phase of existence. We propose a focus on **sustainable livelihoods**, on what factors favour the creation or – at least – maintenance of sustainable livelihoods, and what factors threaten or destroy them. We believe that livelihoods lie at the root of human development. More to the point, livelihood security is an *a priori* condition for both poverty alleviation and sustainable development. In a situation where livelihoods are being lost, where they are being undermined or threatened, the conditions for investment in sustainable development are not assembled. Livelihood insecurity increases social tension, breaks down social cohesion and solidarity, leads to an increase in power-based behaviour and, in the worse cases, degenerates into outright conflict. Where there is conflict, a negative spiral is engaged, where hostility further increases social tension, undermines mechanisms for cooperation and renders impossible the solidarity on which sustainable development must be based. On the other hand, security tends to be self-reinforcing, in that it engages the positive spiral, where security permits the development of cooperative institutions, engenders mutual dependence, and permits the advance towards development goals essential to all parties. In particular, it creates the environment in which the investment in actions with a longer-term pay-off – essential to the achievement of sustainable development – becomes possible.

Thus stability and predictability are essential preconditions for the pursuit of sustainable development, and security of livelihoods is essential if this stability is to be achieved. So, if security is the gateway to sustainable development, and sustainable development cannot be successfully pursued where security is absent, it is the security of livelihoods that provides the key to security at the local level. It follows that sustainable development must be pursued through a focus on the preservation and creation of livelihoods at the local level.

In order to preserve and create sustainable livelihoods, we need to understand what is threatening these livelihoods. The answers are multifarious, but offer a guide on where SPCS should concentrate effort. Part of the answer lies at the policy level, both in terms of the national framework of policies, incentives and regulations, and at the global level in respect of terms of trade, access to credit, conditionality attached to loans and grants from donors, and the policy “overrides” linked to the global and regional political situation. Part of the answer lies in creating transparent and participatory mechanisms of governance so that development action is more responsive to the needs identified by the affected people and communities themselves. And part lies in offering responses and applying experience and expertise in such a way that these needs are met in ways that promote social justice and sustainable use of the environment and its resources.

SPCS has a role at all three levels. It must intervene to help put in place a policy framework that offers incentives for sustainability and ceases to reward unsustainable behaviour. It must help strengthen the participatory structures at the provincial level but especially at lower jurisdictional levels so that development addresses the real needs of people and communities. And it must bring to bear its environmental and natural resource-based expertise so that the development approaches are sustainable.

2. There has been a paradigm shift in the approach to governance in Pakistan, a fact that, more than anything else, has changed the outlook of development in the provincial level so that

This bears some explanation. Transparency and access to information are essential preconditions for good governance. Unless decisions are made in an open manner, the basis on which the choices were made are also open to scrutiny by the public, and the information on which the decisions were made can be seen to be accurate, the value of the decisions made will always be in doubt.

Similarly, if the people positively or negatively affected by decisions are appropriately involved in the taking of those decisions, it is far more likely that the resulting decisions will advance their legitimate interests. But on what basis should people participate, given that not everybody can be involved in every decision? On the basis of the extent to which their rights are affected or their responsibilities engaged. Thus a farmer whose lands will be flooded by a dam reservoir has a direct stake in decisions concerning the dam, because his rights are fundamentally affected. A city dweller who will benefit from the electricity the dam will produce is only marginally affected (in this case positively) and so his right to participate in the decisions are similarly less compelling.

Participation – the very core of the new governance – is contingent on democratic institutions, so that those with a right to participate can choose those who will defend and represent them. These institutions – whether village committees, Citizen Community Boards (CCBs), Union Councils, or others – must in turn respect the principles of the new governance, and be transparent, participatory and accountable in their functioning.

Finally, those entrusted – by vote or administrative mandate – to implement decisions must be answerable for their performance. Mechanisms for the exercise of accountability close the governance loop, and ensure that the value of participation and transparency translate into real improvements to people's lives. The CCBs have been designed to serve as a force for accountability, ensuring that Union, Tehsil and District governments fulfill their promises and respect the new rules of participatory decision making and transparency. If these grass-roots mechanisms function as is intended, the entire development culture of Pakistan may well be turned on its head. They must be helped in order to ensure that they are able to fulfill their role, perhaps through a series of umbrella organizations that support CCBs, provide information on best practice, build capacity and take their defense when they are attacked.

Devolution, by focusing on the development of democratic structures at the District and lower levels of jurisdiction, has laid the basis for the new governance to emerge and take hold in the public administrative culture. For SPCS, it offers a hope for sustainable development that never – even remotely – existed before. **Should the new governance catch on, prospects for implementing sustainable development will be greatly improved. It follows that SPCS must place a great deal of emphasis on making the transition work.**

Seven elements of environmental governance

Source: 2003. World Resources 2002-2004: Decisions for the Earth: Balance, voice, and

power. United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, World Bank, World Resources Institute.

1 Institutions and laws: Who makes and enforces the rules for using natural resources? Who resolves disputes?
What are the rules and the penalties for breaking them?
Government ministries; regional water or pollution control boards; local zoning departments and governing councils; international bodies such as the United Nations or World Trade Orga

3. There is a special case to be made for good **environmental governance** (see box above). As the World Resources Report 2002 – 2004 states: “Better environmental governance holds special promise for the poor – the people most vulnerable to environmental degradation, whose opinions and ideas are most often muted in environmental decisions.” It is the poor who are most vulnerable to environmental governance failures, because environmental degradation, loss of access to natural resources or of natural resource-based employment hits them most directly. The poor are much more likely to live on marginal lands, steep slopes or other lands subject to rapid degradation. They are more likely to depend on common property resources. Several studies have showed that the poorer the household, the greater the importance of natural resources in family income. When these resources degrade or disappear, poor households are particularly vulnerable.

In urban areas, too, the poor are more likely to be confined to polluted areas, and much less likely to have an effective voice in articulating complaints. Their lack of political organization, poor access to information and reluctance to take on the politically powerful also means that they receive far less attention from government services, adding to their marginalization.

It is for these reasons that effective action on the environment depends on providing for effective participation of the poor in decisions that affect the environment. This in turn means targeting the poor as a matter of priority, providing the mechanisms for them to participate in the taking of decisions on environmental matters, and building their capacity to articulate and defend their interests.

It is highly significant that in the Participatory Poverty Assessments recently undertaken by DFID, environment and natural resource-related issues routinely came out high on the list of concerns expressed by poor people and households in both the urban and rural areas. Indeed, some of the key issues emerging from these assessments were natural resources for livelihood security, access to land and tenure issues, and water quality and health. Health emerged as more important even than education, principally because the cost of health care due to polluted water is pushing households over the poverty line.

It is time to move beyond the earlier arrogance of the development ideologues who held that environment was a luxury the poor could not afford, to a recognition that, in many respects, addressing poverty requires that firm attention be paid to the quality of the environment and to the natural resource base on which the poor depend directly. Improving environmental governance offers the surest way to do that.

One key aspect of environmental governance is access to justice on environmental matters. This right, recognized in the Aarhus Convention (see box), is fundamental to making the new governance structures work for the environment in that it gives citizens standing to insist on access to environmental information, and the right to pursue grievances on environmental matters. The

design and establishment by the Sarhad government of environmental tribunals and the naming of environmental magistrates is a step in the right direction, but it must be followed up with their vigorous use in addressing complaints and ensuring compliance with environmental rules and regulations.

The Aarhus Convention: State-of-the-art access

Source: 2003. *World Resources 2002-2004: Decisions for the Earth: Balance, voice, and power*. United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, World Bank, World Resources Institute.

The Aarhus Convention is an environmental treaty that turns the 1992 Rio Declaration's vague commitments to the principles of access into specific legal obligations. Since its negotiation in 1998 as a regional agreement among the countries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), 24 nations in Europe and Central Asia have become Parties to the treaty, and 40 have signed it. It entered into force in October 2001, and is now open to signature by all nations of the world.

The Convention not only recognizes the basic right of every person of present and future generations to a healthy environment but also specifies how the authorities at all levels will provide fair and transparent decision-making processes, access to information, and access to redress. For example, the Convention requires broad access to information about the state of air and atmosphere, water, land, and biological diversity; information about influences on the environment such as energy, noise, development plans, and policies; and information about how these influences affect human health and safety. A person does not need to prove "legal standing" to request information or to comment on official decisions that affect the environment, and the Convention requires that governments respond to requests for information from any person of any nationality within one month.

The Aarhus Convention also gives citizens, organizations, and governments the right to investigate and seek to curtail pollution caused by public and private entities in other countries that are parties to the treaty. For example, a Hungarian public interest group could demand information on airborne emissions from a Czech factory. For most signatory countries, meeting the standards of the treaty will require authorities to change how they disseminate environmental information to the public, to create new systems of environmental reporting by businesses and government, to improve the practice of public notification and comment, and to change judicial processes.

Adopting and implementing the Aarhus Convention's principles beyond its European base could provide a straightforward route to better access at a global level. But while there is growing interest in endorsing the Aarhus principles in Latin America, southern Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region, many countries perceive the treaty's concepts of democratic decision-making about the environment as too liberal or threatening to commercial confidentiality. Some countries are also reluctant to adopt a treaty that they did not have a chance to shape initially. Nonetheless, the Aarhus Convention stands as an example of real progress toward a global understanding of what access is and how it can be manifested in national laws and practices.

4. One of the implications of bringing development down to the level where people's concerns prevail, and of basing it on democratic structures through which they can to some extent steer the development process, is that environment will no longer be the central thread that unites the development process. Indeed, this is already the case. In part because the donors were taking it that way and in part because development is increasingly based on definition of needs at the base, the principal focus of development is now on poverty alleviation. Instead of trying to graft sustainable development onto the root stock of traditional development concerns, SPCS must **mainstream** its sustainable development message into the current of people-centered, poverty-focused development.

This requires more of a shift than most people realize. SPCS is, after all, a complete framework in its own right, and is generally acknowledged to offer a compelling paradigm for sustainable development. **SPCS must accept now that the principal framework is another one – one that SPCS has helped to bring about and in which it can take pride – but one that is nevertheless not the SPCS and one for which sustainable development is not the central objective.**

The framework for development, for now and for the conceivable future, is the framework of poverty alleviation, as articulated in the Federal PRSP, as is being elaborated in the Provincial PRSPs, and as set out in myriad donor frameworks. It is not that these frameworks are complete nor perfect, but it is precisely their incompleteness and imperfection that offers the entrée to SPCS.

The principal challenge for SPCS in the next phase is to bring its influence, experience and vision to bear on the poverty-based development framework, so that what results is an approach to development that not only relieves poverty and addresses the needs of the most marginalized, but one that advances sustainability at the same time.

SPCS should work with and through the poverty lens, but in doing so it should emphasize the contribution made by the environment and natural resources to poverty alleviation and to sustainable approaches to development. Indeed, one of the clear criticisms that can be made of the PRSP and similar poverty alleviation strategies is that they have taken insufficient account of the need for a sound and well-managed resource base and for a healthy environment. Without these, success in poverty alleviation will always be compromised, and many early results will prove to be unsustainable.

5. The new governance is based on rights and responsibilities, thus elaborating on the basis concept of the Social Contract. In exchange for securing new rights through the devolved democratic institutions, it is important to insist that people and communities accept certain responsibilities. One of the most persistent problems in Pakistan – and no less so in Sarhad – is the **compliance gap** – the gaping chasm between what norms, standards, regulations and laws dictate, and

the way people actually behave. If devolved democracy is the carrot, the need to strengthen compliance is the stick.

The level of compliance with environmental rules and regulations (and no doubt with other fields as well, though this was not examined) is appallingly low. There appear to be several reasons for this. First, the capacity to implement the laws is weak, so that enforcement is sporadic and there is little capacity to follow up. Second, there is a culture of ignoring or skirting the law, and of using influence and powerful contacts to deflect its proper application. This in turn has a demoralizing effect right down the line, so that there is no incentive to comply. Finally, with the State giving the example that laws need not be complied with, a culture of non-compliance has replaced the culture of respect for what should be required.

This is not a cultural phenomenon but a governance one. Sarhad is characterized by an almost rigid adherence to cultural norms and traditions so that, in respect of tradition, religion and social interactions, Sarhad is one of the most law-abiding societies in the world. At the same time, there is no generalized sense that the respect and deference that the people show one another directly is owed directly through contributing to a sound environment.

Shakil Durrani observes that a single penalization of a senior official or powerful businessman for transgressing the law is not sufficient to encourage compliance. But he suggests that enforcement of the law is essential for the rule of law to be established. He also notes that the current legal system is not equipped to handle the complexity of environmental law. He suggests that the government should invest in training and resources to improve the legal system's ability to enforce environmental laws.

recommend is a roadmap that takes the best that SPCS can offer – its vision, its understanding of sustainable development, its experience with participatory structures, its bridging of government, civil society and the private sector – and

We propose that it should include IUCN, SDC, key players in Pakistan's decentralization process and key Pakistani experts on pro-poor development and local development approaches.

2. Mechanisms

- **Overall Steering Mechanism**

We recommend transforming the SPCS Steering Committee into a new body, with a suitable name such as Provincial Council for Sustainable Development, whose purpose is to oversee and direct the planning, coordination and monitoring of the work undertaken in this new phase pursuant to the SPCS. We recommend that it be chaired by the Chief Secretary (with, possibly, a civil society co-chair), and that the Local Government and Rural Development Department provide the Secretariat. It should also include suitable representatives from Planning & Development, Finance and Environment, as well as from the private sector, civil society, academia and IUCN.

- **Steering Mechanism: Policy**

We recommend that a sub-committee of the overall steering body be established to oversee two aspects of the work undertaken in the new phase. These are: the work on the provincial policy framework, and the work on greening the poverty frameworks. We recommend this sub-committee be chaired by the ACS, and the secretariat provided by P&D. It should include members from Finance, Environment, Agriculture, Energy, Industry, Forestry, and from the private sector, civil society, academia and IUCN.

- **Steering Mechanism: Local-level Action**

We recommend that a second sub-committee of the overall steering body be established to oversee all the work aimed at the District, Tehsil, Union and community levels. We recommend that it be chaired by the Local Government Department, and include representation from among the District Nazims, District Coordination Officers, EDOs for Community Development, NGOs (such as SRSP, Sungi, SPO and others), Local Government Associations, CCB umbrella organizations and IUCN.

- **IUCN**

We recommend that either IUCN or a formal public-private partnership of IUCN and the Provincial Secretariat be considered the "executive body" for the above steering body and sub

3. Outline of roles

Provincial Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD)⁷

It is the apex body whose main tasks are to:

- Provide orientation, guidance and approval to proposed actions
- Analyze and approve work plans
- Receive and approve the regular progress reports
- Take the decisions of the Council to the respective organizations of its members (Government, private sector, NGOs, etc)

Provincial Policy Committee (PPC)

Under the guidance and oversight of the Council it should:

- Identify the key interventions needed to influence the Provincial Policy framework in favour of sustainable development and to introduce environmental considerations in poverty reduction policies and plans.
- Develop an annual work plan in a participatory way, outlining the areas to be addressed and how the different organizations might combine their efforts in addressing the priorities identified.
- Monitor the implementation of the annual work plan.
- Generate progress reports for the Council on a periodic base (e.g. every quarter).

Local-level Action Committee (LAC)

Under the guidance and oversight of the Council it should:

- Identify the key areas of work in relation to poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods and the sites where these actions will be implemented.
- Develop an annual work plan, through a participatory process, outlining the work to be done at:
 - Local (village) level, including location, activities and partners/participants for each initiative.
 - Tehsil and District levels in terms of capacity building, initiatives for improved local governance, support to Tehsil

⁷ The PCSD should be assisted by a research think tank – eg. a Provincial Centre for Sustainable Development. It should help research and debate policy positions and perform the task of third-party monitoring of policy decisions, initiatives and compliance. Administratively it could be located in the P & D department, but must be an autonomous entity. This could even be an existing academic facility. Donor support could be tapped to upgrade the facility.

and District governance bodies, local communications, etc., and how the different organizations may join efforts to achieve them.

- Monitor the implementation of the annual work plan.
- Generate progress reports for the Council on a periodic base (e.g. every quarter).

Consideration should be given by this Committee to identifying target districts, or clusters of districts, for priority attention.

Executive Secretariat (ES)

Under the guidance and oversight of the Council, the Secretariat functions (initially performed by IUCN but with a gradual transfer to P&D Department or other organization chosen by the Council) will be to:

- Support the preparation of Annual Work plans by the Committees
- Support the monitoring and reporting tasks of the Committees
- Coordinate the network of organizations and agencies working under the umbrella of the Council related with both the policy framework and local actions.
- Coordinate and contribute to the training and capacity building plan
- Coordinate and contribute to the communications plan, with special focus on public information in local languages.
- Undertake other tasks, as decided by the Council

The implementing structure outlined above will also oversee the implementation of the following recommendations, under the oversight of the Provincial Council. Each recommendation includes, in brackets the acronym of the Committee that will take responsibility for it. In all cases, the Executive Secretariat will assist the pertinent Committee.

4. Provincial Government level

- Work with the Department of Local Government and the Environmental Protection Agency to ensure compliance with environmental and natural resources legislation, build capacity to support devolved government, and assist Districts to develop a Sustainable Development Vision, on the model of the work underway in D.I. Khan, and on District Strategies, on the model of Abbottabad and Chitral. (LAC)
- Work with and through the Decentralization Support Programme (DSP) and the Structural Adjustment Credit (SAC) to provide policy support to the Provincial government in the process of devolution of

should consider promoting the establishment of an NGO in this area, with representation at the Provincial and district levels.(PPC)

5. District and Local Jurisdictions

- Assist District Governments to take informed decisions relating to natural resources management, through the establishment of baseline

based natural resources management. IUCN should link the Province to the work of its Co-Management Working Group (of the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy), and help provide best practice on CBNRM approaches worldwide.(LAC)

- Launch an NGO-Business partnership initiative, based on the guidelines set out in the Asia Foundation's guide. More generally, help to organize business for environmental action at the district level. Public-private partnerships might also emerge from this partnership.(LAC)
- Building partnerships with the key NGOs working at the District and Local levels (SRSP, SPO, Sungi, Khwendo Kor, etc.) and the various District and Local level umbrella bodies being established under devolution (e.g. Association of Local Governments, umbrella bodies of CCBs). All work that is implemented at the local level should be undertaken with and through such partners and not directly.(LAC)
- Work closely with the donors supporting devolution or those implementing poverty alleviation frameworks in Sarhad to seek synergies and openings to introduce both the sustainable development perspective and practical sustainable development input to these.(PPC & LAC)
- Identify elements from the international experience that are relevant to Sarhad in closing the digital divide and providing access to information at the District Level. The experience of Development Alternatives through its Tara Haat initiative may prove to be particularly relevant. (LAC)
- Look into the possibility of effecting a conversion of ODA debt from select donors to create a fund aimed at strengthening sustainable development in poverty alleviation programmes at the District and local jurisdictional levels. (PPC).

5. Monitoring and Evaluation (PPC & LAC)

Wherever the monitoring and evaluation function is located, it should feed directly into the Sustainable Development department proposed above, so that the latter becomes the repository for the lessons learned and enhances its ability to support district-level initiatives for sustainable development.

- To develop an integrated monitoring, evaluation and reporting system, covering all organizations and activities inscribed in the sphere of the PCSD (policy initiatives, local work, etc.) and focusing on the following aspects:

- ? Preparation of the Annual work plans identifying outputs and outcomes to be achieved in the different parts of the system
- ? Monitoring the implementation of the work plan undertaken by different organizations, and the timely delivery of outputs (products and services) of accepted quality.
- ? Track the investments and their use, to monitor how well the current flow of resources is matching the expectations.
- ? Monitoring the changes in behaviour by targeted actors identified in the work plans.
- ? Monitoring key impacts (people's well-being, environmental condition, policy framework status) in the areas and themes where PCSD is active.
- ? Establishing a baseline to monitor changes in the entire Province. This work should start by establishing a baseline situation based on quantitative indicators developed from current frameworks for

cultural characteristics that constraint gender integration. This fact should not obscure the need to keep advocating for that integration and for developing new innovative ways to achieve that aim. Therefore the SPCS MTR team recommends to all stakeholders and parties in the SPCS process to:

- Maintain and intensify the gender integration advocacy activities in a way that balances good advocacy with proper respect for the local cultures in order to help the gender integration process instead of obstructing it.
- Develop new strategies and innovative ways to incorporate women and other marginalized groups into all possible aspects of the poverty alleviation and sustainable development process.
- Develop a specific affirmative-action focus for gender integration in all the activities and processes related with SPCS at all levels, from local development to provincial and national policy making.

Annexes:

1. Concept Paper for the Mid-Term Review
2. List of documents reviewed by the ERT
3. List of Focus Group reports and specific interviews