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LAND SETTLEMENT REVIEW

Settlement Experiences and
Development Strategies in the
Onchocerciasis Control Programme
Areas of West Africa

ADDENDUM

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The findings and recommendations in this report engage only their authors
and do not necessarily represent positions of the Sponsoring Agencies

ADDENDUM

I. Introduction

During the recent Land Settlement Review Seminar Dr.Samba, as Director of the Onchocerciasis Control Programme (OCP), reminded participants that the ultimate purpose of the OCP is socioeconomic development. As contractor for the Land Settlement Review, the Institute for Development Anthropology (IDA) made a special effort to familiarize the eleven OCP countries, the Committee of Sponsoring Agencies, and the donors with the global experience with land settlement in the tropics and subtropics, and with the relevance of that experience to the West African river basins in which vector control has occurred or is intended. Emphasis was placed on the dynamics of the settlement process as illustrated by the global experience and on the wide range of critical issues that should be addressed to increase the chances for success. Success was defined as increases in production that are environmentally sustainable; rising living standards for the different categories of settlers, for the host population, and for pastoralists; and significant spread effects at a financial cost that could be borne by the OCP countries.

As a result of such a broad social science approach to settlement experiences, it was possible to present in the Final Report low-cost development strategies for the eleven countries that were considered appropriate for two reasons. First, they were at a sufficiently high level of generalization to be applicable to each country. Second, sufficient flexibility was built into the strategies to allow each country to modify them in accordance with national policies and distinctive national features.

These strategies, along with the conclusions and recommendations of the Land Settlement Review, were discussed in detail during the Land Settlement Review Seminar that was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 25-27 September 1990. At that time participants requested further clarification concerning the type of land settlement recommended by the consultants, and further commentary on a number of critical issues as outlined in the Compte Rendu of the Land Settlement Review Seminar. The purpose of this Addendum is to provide clarification and further commentary as requested. The Addendum therefore complements, but in no way substitutes for, the discussion in the Executive Summary and the Final Report produced during the Land Settlement Review.

II. Types of Land Settlement Appropriate for the OCP Countries

In rejecting "spontaneous settlement" and "government sponsored settlement" as appropriate types for the OCP countries, the Land Settlement Review advocated "Assisted-Guided Models" and "Government Sponsored Settlement in Combination with Spontaneous Settlement."

Although it dominates the literature on land settlement, the term "spontaneous settlement" can easily be misunderstood. As used in the Land Settlement Review, it refers to self-motivated settlement whereby individuals and households (and in some cases extended families, kin groups, and communities) decide to move to a new environment on their own initiative (hence the term "spontaneous"). Such settlement is not a response to government or other agencies (hence is not "sponsored"), but rather is a response to unsatisfactory economic, social, and/or political conditions as perceived by those who decide to move. Because spontaneous settlement in the tropics and subtropics -- which is the commonest type of settlement -- tends to replicate economic systems of low productivity that are environmentally destructive and are associated with few spread effects, the Land Settlement Review does not recommend it.

On the other hand, a primary emphasis on government-sponsored settlement was also rejected by the Land Settlement Review because of the relatively low success rate associated with both rainfed and irrigated sponsored settlement projects throughout the world and in the OCP countries, and because of the very high financial costs whether calculated by household settled or by hectare developed. Even before the increased competition for development aid that is related to recent political changes in Eastern Europe and the USSR, donors were backing away from financing government-sponsored settlement projects both because of economic returns, which were perceived as too low, and because of other priorities. IDA believes that the likelihood for such aid continues to decrease.

While unassisted (by government) spontaneous settlement and government-sponsored settlement were rejected as development strategies during the Land Settlement Review, IDA concluded that two other types of settlement had considerable potential not just in terms of the development of OCP river basins but also in terms of spread effects to other rural areas (including the areas from which settlers originate) and to urban centers. These are government-assisted settlement that guides ongoing spontaneous settlement, and, in some cases, combines it with government-sponsored settlement.

There was some misunderstanding at the September Land Settlement Seminar about the nature of this recommendation, which some representatives (who favored an active government role) saw as too "passive." This misunderstanding was unfortunate since IDA's recommendations assume an active government role regardless of the specific settlement strategy that is adopted. During the conference the misunderstanding was partially corrected by substituting the phrase "government-guided spontaneous settlement" for "government-assisted spontaneous settlement." But even that phrase may suggest a more restrictive range of government strategies for land settlement than IDA intended.

To clarify IDA's meaning, three types of settlement that emphasize guided spontaneous settlement are briefly outlined. Though the balance between the types should vary between countries owing to national circumstances, and should vary within countries through time, all involve active government intervention in regard to planning and implementation.

The first type involves a "site and service" approach to provide services and infrastructure based on appropriate soil and hydrological surveys, and socioeconomic surveys among the host population. Ideally this sort of intervention would be "proactive" -- ie, could be used to work with, and "guide," spontaneous settlers to move into areas of higher potential through the deliberate placement of roads, water points, and social and economic services. Simply because of the numerical predominance of spontaneous settlers in each OCP country, this type requires prompt government attention.

The second type of settlement advocates combining from the start a "core" of sponsored settlers with a larger population that incorporates hosts, government-guided spontaneous settlers, and pastoralists. Such an approach has a number of attractive features. For example, in planning for a core of sponsored settler households, government has the opportunity to create or expand markets and service/regional centers than can serve not just the sponsored settlers but the larger population in the surrounding area. Because sponsored settlement allows a greater degree of government control, such a core of sponsored settlers also provides the opportunity to introduce more sustainable production systems, which can subsequently be extended to the surrounding population.

Though combining government-sponsored with government-guided settlement is more expensive than relying entirely on government-guided settlement, IDA suspects that there is scope for this approach in each of the eleven OCP countries not as "stand alone" projects but as a means for increasing the benefits of other government interventions by incorporating a land settlement component. An obvious example involves dam construction in areas of relatively low population density, where the core of sponsored settlers is made up of those who must relocate from the reservoir basin. The attached annex outlines how this type of settlement might be combined with the construction (currently under way) of the Bagre Dam in Burkina Faso. Other types of projects that might combine sponsored settlers with other types of households (including guided spontaneous settlers) include the establishment of forest reserves and national parks, and the integration of irrigation projects involving sponsored settlers into a wider zone of rainfed agriculture.

The third type of settlement involves integrating hosts, spontaneous settlers, and pastoralists into existing government-sponsored settlement areas. The field trip on the second day of the

seminar to Rapadama and Linoghin was intended to show seminar participants a situation where the L'Autorité pour l'Aménagement des Vallées des Volta (AVV) had the flexibility to shift from an initial emphasis on high-cost sponsored settlement to a strategy that facilitated the integration of sponsored settlers, hosts, spontaneous settlers, and pastoralists into a single system based on community land management committees and land-use zoning.

The Land Settlement Review supports findings from elsewhere in the tropics and subtropics that show that these three types of settlement can, in the correct policy environment, have significant development potential. This potential can be measured in terms of increased crop and livestock production; the development of environmentally sustainable crop, livestock, and forestry production systems; and wider spread effects to other rural areas (including the areas from which settlers originate), and to urban centers.

III. The Selection of Settlement Areas

In the fifth recommendation in the Executive Summary, IDA emphasized that "Government strategies ... should emphasize the less-isolated areas that settlers prefer as opposed to remote areas with poor access to markets and services -- the exception being where isolated areas contain resources (such as water and forests) that require protection or are the focal point for other development programs (such as dam construction)." This recommendation was based on a number of considerations. First, spontaneous settlers (who constitute by far the largest number of settlers) show a definite preference for less-isolated areas. Second, the most successful settlements, as illustrated by case studies in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Togo (as well as elsewhere in the tropics and subtropics), are those closest to such capitals as Ouagadougou and Bamako or to major regional towns. Third, financial costs rise significantly as the degree of isolation of an area increases.

As the exception in the recommendation indicates, IDA was not suggesting that only the less isolated areas be developed. On the other hand, more emphasis should have been placed in the Land Settlement Review on circumstances under which more-isolated areas might be selected. For example, the pace of spontaneous settlement in some countries is such that the less-isolated areas are rapidly filling up so that there is a need for governments to select (on the basis of appropriate surveys) and develop appropriate follow-on areas. Moreover, the increasing pressure on pastoral peoples warrants careful consideration of setting aside and developing appropriate areas of low population density for their use -- areas that are apt to be quite isolated. Because of the financial costs involved, however, and the difficulty of finding donors willing to commit funds for the extended time periods that are generally necessary for development to occur, such areas must be carefully selected and

severely limited in number.

IV. The Role of Irrigation in Land Settlement Strategies

Various participants at the seminar believed that IDA had placed insufficient attention on the role of irrigation within land settlement strategies. While this criticism applied especially to small-scale irrigation, the success of small-scale irrigation projects over the longer term is not much better than that of medium- and large-scale projects. During the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, for example, small-scale village irrigated perimeters along the left bank of the Senegal River were widely acclaimed as major successes because of higher yields per hectare with lower capital development and recurrent costs than larger government schemes. Recent analysis, however, raises serious doubts about the sustainability of such small-scale village irrigation projects. As Niasse points out in the Spring 1990 issue of IDA's Development Anthropology Network, many such projects in Senegal are no longer operational; indeed, in general such schemes have been labeled "shifting irrigation" owing to the propensity of villagers to favor new projects after several years' use of old ones.

The general experience throughout Africa is for small-scale farmers at the community and household level to incorporate irrigation as a component into their production system wherever feasible -- a component, however, that tends to be de-emphasized in favor of rainfed agriculture in areas of higher rainfall or in semiarid zones during years of higher rainfall. Though there should be exceptions, and experimentation should continue, IDA recommends this approach rather than an approach that attempts to restrict household activities to a single irrigated plot. Accordingly, the emphasis should be on low-cost irrigation, including vegetable gardens (especially important for individual women and women's groups), bas-fond irrigation, swamp irrigation, and flood-recession irrigation.

V. Land Tenure

Granted state ownership of land in most OCP countries (Ghana being the major exception), and the limitations of customary systems of tenure (in terms of lack of security for immigrants and susceptibility of land custodians to influence by prominent individuals), some concern was expressed in the Review Seminar about the IDA recommendation (number 10) that "Customary tenure systems should be the starting point for providing security of tenure to hosts, settlers, and pastoralists in OCP areas." This recommendation arose out of the discussion of Land Tenure in Chapter VI of the Final Report. Given the need for settlers and pastoralists to live with host populations who claim customary tenure over the local resource base, including land, and the abuses that have followed from state ownership of land, IDA believes there is no option but to use

customary tenure systems as "the starting point." The important phrase here is "the starting point." As with other institutions in Africa, systems of land tenure are undergoing changes whose implications are not well understood. Nonetheless, it is hard to imagine how such systems of land tenure can be ignored. Thus customary tenure systems should be a starting point, but ideally control over tenure should be handed over eventually to legally mandated community land management committees of the sort that have shown initial promise in Burkina Faso.

VI. The Impact of Diversification of the Household Production System on Agricultural Productivity

A major IDA recommendation (number 8 in the Executive Summary) concerned the need to diversify production systems at the household and community levels. Some participants were concerned that such diversification might have an adverse effect on agricultural production. Their concern is legitimate and points up the need for further research. On the other hand, what evidence is available suggests that "an increasing diversity of income sources, including off-farm opportunities, contributes to the development of sustainable cropping systems" (page 66 of the Land Settlement Review Final Report).

VII. Incorporation of Pastoralists

Participants at the Review Seminar differed in their approach to the incorporation of pastoralists within settlement areas. Citing conflicts, some wished to keep them well separated from villages; others -- noting the benefits that could be expected to arise from a symbiotic relationship between herders and villagers -- wished to see them incorporated through such mechanisms as the establishment of agropastoral and pastoral zones. IDA believes that rapidly changing circumstances among pastoralists favor the second approach. Especially significant is the desire of pastoralists to be incorporated within settlement areas and the desire of the more successful farmers for such incorporation. Equally significant is the trend among an increasing proportion of pastoralists toward a more sedentary form of agropastoralism -- in part a response to significant contraction of former zones of transhumance both within nations and across national boundaries. Such trends reduce the differentiation between farmers and pastoralists; in fact during a visit to Bagre after the Review Seminar, some of the most intensive cultivators we saw were Peul. Formerly transhumant, in recent years they had not only settled down in the Bagre area, but they had also begun to cultivate fodder crops for their livestock both individually and communally.

VII. How to Achieve Local Institutional Structures for Land Management and Development Purposes That Are Sustainable through Time

Although they supported national initiatives toward decentralization of decision making and management, many participants wondered about the potential for creating local institutional structures that are sustainable through time, especially where appropriate community institutions do not exist or are insufficiently developed to support new functions. IDA shares this concern. While Africa contains many cases where promising local institutions have been developed, or are in the process of being developed, it is too early in the history of practically all of them to assess their sustainability. Whether community populations are relatively homogeneous and egalitarian, stratified, or ethnically heterogeneous, the problem of institutional sustainability is a major one. Indeed, far too little attention has been paid in development circles to the question of the sustainability of local institutions (or to what seminar participants referred to as "social resource management") as opposed to the environmental and economic sustainability of production systems. What is known is that it takes time to form viable local institutions, time measured in years rather than months. Hence in Zambia's Middle Zambezi Valley, it has taken a number of years for a highly motivated nongovernmental organization to facilitate the emergence of local economic and social service institutions, which may or may not be sustainable over the longer term, among egalitarian village communities. As for what is probably the most successful grazing association in Lesotho, it took the local community over a year to agree on its constitution.

While some Review Seminar participants were hopeful that a blueprint as to how to proceed might be available, no such blueprint exists. Until more research has been carried out on existing efforts to create sustainable local institutions, it would be unwise to proceed beyond the steps for creating Community Land Management Associations outlined on pages 115-116 of the Final Report. As for research, high priority should be given to examining the more promising efforts currently under way to create sustainable institutions at the local level. Examples include the Village Associations in Mali, Land Management Committees in Burkina Faso, Grazing Associations in Lesotho, wildlife management at the district, subdistrict, and village levels in Zimbabwe, and credit organizations and varied types of village (as opposed to government) cooperatives throughout Africa.

ANNEX

SPONSORED SETTLEMENT IN CONJUNCTION WITH NATIONAL PROJECTS AS A MECHANISM FOR PROVIDING SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS, EXTENSION, AND OTHER SERVICES, AND MARKETS AND REGIONAL/SERVICE CENTERS, TO A LARGER NUMBER OF HOSTS, SPONTANEOUS SETTLERS, AND PASTORALISTS: BURKINA'S BAGRE DAM

While the construction of dams and other national projects provides a major opportunity to combine a core of sponsored settler households and communities with regional planning for a larger population that includes hosts, spontaneous settlers, and pastoralists, we are aware of no examples in the OCP countries where this opportunity has been exploited. Part of the reason may be that such projects tend to be planned and implemented for a single major purpose such as the generation of hydropower or the establishment of a national park or a classified forest. Another reason may relate to the national character of such projects, which are planned and implemented by central ministries and/or parastatals with little involvement of regional and district officials, and even less involvement of local populations.

Though not an ideal case, since dam construction has already begun, Burkina's Bagre Dam illustrates the potential that such projects present for developing a previously isolated area through systematic settlement planning that combines government-sponsored with government-guided spontaneous settlement. It is used as an example because an IDA team visited the area following the September Land Settlement Review Seminar.

As with other dam projects, Bagre will require the relocation of hundreds of households, including host villagers and recently sedentarized Peul pastoralists. Their resettlement provides the opportunity to use a core population of sponsored settlers as a mechanism for providing services to a much larger population in a previously isolated area. This opportunity is enhanced by the fact that the Bagre reservoir will also be used for irrigation purposes.

Reservoir relocation and the irrigation project will provide two sources of government-sponsored settler households. They could also provide an opportunity to provide services and more sustainable production systems to the dam-accelerated movement of spontaneous settlers into the area, to the host population, and to recently sedentarized Peul agropastoralists as well as to an unknown number of transhumant pastoralists. Services might include using the construction "township" as the nucleus for a market center that could also provide extension services and inputs to the surrounding population. Implementation of more intensive, and economically and environmentally sustainable, production systems among the more

Annex

manageable sponsored settlers offers an opportunity to extend such systems to the surrounding population. Broadening the planning process also presents an opportunity to develop community land management associations, and to zone the Bagre area for different types of land and water use including utilizing the potential of the reservoir basin for fisheries, flood-recession agriculture, and grazing during the dry-season draw-down period.

The necessary planning to realize such opportunities has yet to commence at Bagre, nor have local officials and local residents been involved in what planning has occurred to date. In the absence of such planning, not only will major development opportunities be lost but also the likelihood of conflict will increase because of the influx of spontaneous settlers coupled with a significant reduction, when the reservoir fills, of riverine fields for the host population, of homesteads and fields for the agropastoral Peul, and of grazing areas for transhumant pastoralists. A Bagre settlement project would be an effective way of reducing the risk of conflict and of realizing the potential that dam construction projects present (but seldom realize) to the OCP countries.

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