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# Sustainable Development of Biodiversity Resources in the Eastern Caribbean: Triple Alliances and Policy Implementation

JONATHAN ROSENBERG<sup>1</sup>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1992 Rio Summit, increasing numbers of development assistance agencies (DAAs) have required participatory project implementation methods and systematic attention to environmental impacts as preconditions for granting aid. By itself, however, such conditionality guarantees neither meaningful participation in project implementation nor a sustainable outcome. While some committed environmentalists can usually be found in the governments, states, civil societies, and business communities of the countries that receive aid, their political resources are usually inferior to those of the pro-development forces well-connected in the public and private sectors. National governments and regional associations openly embrace environmental sustainability as they seek critical funding for resource development and management projects. The political commitment of small, poor, developing states to environmentally sustainable development is often only skin deep, however. And given the recent resentment of neo-liberal conditionality in some states and regional associations, new impositions are resented. States do not or cannot commit the resources needed to involve stakeholders or make credible assessments of environmental impacts. For their part, the providers of aid are limited by considerations of state sovereignty, insufficient oversight capacity, and wavering commitments to environmental protection. They may lack the ability and motivation to carry through on the stated intent of the conditions they impose. Achieving institutionalized commitments to environmentally sustainable development and participatory

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practices represents, therefore, a multi-level challenge. Conditionality can, in other words, require institutional arrangements and relationships in some recipient countries that do not exist at the time the loans and grants are made.

All may not be lost, however. The prospect of what I call, here, triple alliances among aid agency personnel, environmentalists in government, and organized grassroots stakeholders can overcome some of the difficulties these mid-level actors face when confronting more powerful alliances of high government officials, local business interests, and foreign investors.

## 2. SUSTAINABILITY AND TRIPLE ALLIANCES

In recent years, significant scholarly attention has been paid to expanding the capabilities of states in the global south and of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to promote sustainability. The collective behavior of southern states,<sup>2</sup> the growth of sustainability networks as part of a global civil society,<sup>3</sup> and the evolution of international regimes in which southern states and/or NGOs play decisive roles have all been examined.<sup>4</sup> Other work shows how global environmental challenges expose the limitations of the state *per se* for dealing with sustainability issues.<sup>5</sup> And several studies analyze the ways in which NGOs change their structures and tactics to take a more direct role in global environmental governance.<sup>6</sup> There is still insufficient attention, however, to institutional innovations *within* developing states that feature the same three classes of actors (non-governmental, governmental, and inter-governmental) that have starring roles in international regime formation and global civil society.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Adil Najam, *The View from the South: Developing Countries in Global Environmental Politics*, in *THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT: INSTITUTIONS, LAW, & POLICY* 225-243 (Pamela Axelrod, David Downie & Norman Vig, eds., 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Ann Marie Clark, Elisabeth J. Friedman & Kathryn Hochstetler, *The Sovereign Limits of Global Civil Society: A Comparison of NGO Participation in UN World Conferences on the Environment, Human Rights, and Women*, 51 *WORLD POLITICS* 1-35 (1998).

<sup>4</sup> *THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL REGIMES: CAUSAL CONNECTIONS & BEHAVIORAL MECHANISMS* (Oran Young, ed., 1999).

<sup>5</sup> James N. Rosenau, *Environmental Challenges in a Turbulent World*, in *THE STATE & SOCIAL POWER IN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS* 71-93 (Ronnie Lipschutz & Ken Conca, eds., 1993); LAMONT HEMPEL, *ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE: THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE* (1996).

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Peter Newell, *Environmental NGOs, TNCs, and the Question of Governance*, in *THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE ENVIRONMENT* 85-107 (Dimitris Stevis and Valerie J. Assetto, eds., 2001) on the changing relationships between environmental NGOs and businesses; and John McCormick, *The Role of Environmental NGOs in International Regimes*, in *THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT: INSTITUTIONS, LAW, AND POLICY* 83-102 (Regina S. Axelrod, David Leonard Downie & Norman J. Vig, eds., 2005) on the ways that environmental NGOs have been affected by their involvement in international conventions and organizations.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Keohane, *Analyzing the Effectiveness of International Environmental Institutions*, in *INSTITUTIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AID: PITFALLS & PROMISE* 3-28 (Robert Keohane & Marc Levy eds., 1996); Ann M.

Not surprisingly, in the small island developing states of the Eastern Caribbean, national development priorities, expressed as macroeconomic goals, frequently conflict with environmental protection goals. This leads, on the one hand, to weak state commitments to environmental safeguards and, on the other hand, to the inclusion of participatory requirements in externally funded projects.<sup>8</sup> But there are at least a few cases where effective sustainability coalitions provide a level of accountability not provided through regular political channels.<sup>9</sup>

I now want to argue that these coalitions, while not perfectly effective, have more potential than previously recognized. I call them triple alliances among local representatives of development assistance agencies, the line agencies of recipient states charged with policy implementation, and grassroots stakeholders affected by assistance programs. By flying under the radar of national politics, triple alliances can introduce sustainable approaches to resource management and development that then become difficult for politicians to undo. A triple alliance is not the same thing conceptually as the bilateral activism Steinberg has observed, where the international and domestic spheres overlap in development politics.<sup>10</sup> In a triple alliance the state agencies which are responsible for various aspects of development policy, and are supported by external funding and the on-site help of field representatives from assistance agencies, join with grassroots stakeholders, organized at the community, national, regional and/or sectoral levels. Together they shape and implement specific resource management policies and programs on the ground.

### 3. IMPEDIMENTS TO SUSTAINABILITY AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION

Cases of successful triple alliances have never been systematically counted, but they are probably rare. And where they do occur their prospects for becoming a lasting factor in development policy remain uncertain. When they do come into play, however, triple alliances help overcome three types of impediments to compliance with the sustainability and participatory requirements of aid assistance.

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Florini & P.J. Simmons, *What the World Needs Now?* in *THE THIRD FORCE: THE RISE OF TRANSNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY* 1-15 (Ann M. Florini ed., 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Rosenberg & Fae L. Korsmo, *Local Participation, International Politics, and the Environment*, 62 *J. ENVTL. MGMT.* 283-300 (2001).

<sup>9</sup> Jonathan A. Fox & L. David Brown, *Introduction*, in *THE STRUGGLE FOR ACCOUNTABILITY: THE WORLD BANK, NGOS, AND GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS* 1-47 (Jonathan A. Fox & L. David Brown eds., 1998); Jonathan Rosenberg & Linus Spencer Thomas, *Participating or Just Talking? Sustainable Development Councils and the Implementation of Agenda 21*, 5 *GLOBAL ENVTL. POL.* 61-87 (2005).

<sup>10</sup> Paul F. Steinberg, *Understanding Policy Change in Developing Countries: The Spheres of Influence Framework*, 3 *GLOBAL ENVTL. POL.* 11-32 (2003).

### 3.1 Sovereignty-Related Rules and Restrictions

The states that depend on aid agencies for capital tend also to set development goals based on economic exigency and changing external markets. Globalization and neo-liberal economics further pressure states to maintain open markets for goods, services, and capital, and to avoid policies that put them at a competitive disadvantage with other developing states. The result is a natural resistance by recipient governments to the sustainability concerns of aid agencies, and it is politically difficult to overcome.<sup>11</sup> As globalization erodes sovereignty it also pressures governments to steer development policies toward growth and, thus, strengthens the political position of foreign investors and their allies in domestic private sectors. One response by recipient governments is to resist pressure from aid agencies to implement sustainable and participatory practices.<sup>12</sup>

Many development assistance agencies, and especially multilateral development banks, are further limited by statutory requirements that they deal directly with recipient governments. Despite substantial post-Rio changes in their policy and doctrine, the aid agencies still have to grapple with the ambiguities and cross pressures created when they meld their traditional role as providers of development capital with their evolving role as promoters of environmental sustainability and social responsibility.<sup>13</sup> There have been some propitious changes in the nature of development assistance. In small democratic states, such as those in the Eastern Caribbean, project-oriented assistance has declined and governments have had trouble attracting foreign direct investment. But new initiatives by development banks, bilateral aid agencies, and European NGOs wanting to promote democratization, civil society, and public sector capacity building have given aid agencies some leeway to work directly with implementing agencies, subnational governments, and NGOs in recipient states.<sup>14</sup> The global characteristics of environmental problems and activism have some capacity, therefore, to transform the nature of sovereignty and to open political spaces within which triple alliances can form.

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<sup>11</sup> Barbara Connolly, *Increments for the Earth: The Politics of Environmental Aid*, in Keohane & Levy, *supra* note 6, at 328-365.

<sup>12</sup> Paul J. Nelson, *Deliberation, Leverage, or Coercion? The World Bank, NGOs, and Global Environmental Politics*, 34 J. PEACE RES. 467-472 (1997).

<sup>13</sup> Günther Handl, *The Legal Mandate of Multilateral Development Banks as Agents of Change toward Sustainable Development*, 92 AM. J. INT'L L. 642-665 (1998).

<sup>14</sup> Jean Grugel, *Romancing Civil Society: European NGOs in Latin America*, 42 J. INTERAM. STUD. WORLD AFF. 87-107 (2000); World Bank, *Small States: Meeting Challenges in the Global Economy*, Report of the Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Taskforce on Small States (London & Washington D.C., 2000). As one observer noted, the environmental issues associated with development reveal the complex nature of sovereignty, the necessity to unbundle it conceptually, and the capacity for "environmental action [to] lead to meaningful shifts in patterns of authority." Karen T. Litfin, *The Greening of Sovereignty: An Introduction*, in *THE GREENING OF SOVEREIGNTY IN WORLD POLITICS* 1-27, at 10 (Karen Litfin ed., 1998).

### 3.2 Insufficiencies of Capacity and Political Will

Small, highly mobile populations and limited resource bases are typical of poor states in the Eastern Caribbean. They suffer from chronically insufficient capacity to make and implement development policy. The problems include insufficient numbers of trained personnel, lack of equipment, inadequate information, and limited infrastructure. Donor requirements for environmental sustainability bring with them additional scientific and organizational burdens, and they are insurmountable without dedicated external support. Although aid agencies often have the technical and organizational capacity that recipient states lack, they do not possess the necessary social capital and may lack the commitment needed to implement the pre-conditions they set for granting aid.

Nevertheless, as assistance agencies concentrate more of their funding and support on capacity building, and as they enlist locally based civil society groups as implementing agents, they provide some of the resources needed to compensate for limited formal administrative capacity. When project task teams are assigned to promote participation, they can sometimes develop common purpose with likeminded government officials. Thus, new accountability coalitions form to keep both DAAs and recipient governments on track.<sup>15</sup> And they also provide some of the new reserves of social capital needed to give formal environmental and participatory conditionalities real substance.

#### 3.2.1 *Growth v. Sustainability Conflicts*

For small states with open economies dependent on exports, competition is fierce for markets and foreign investment. In the Eastern Caribbean, the tourism market is especially competitive and the recent World Trade Organization (WTO) decision ending preferential access to the European Union for locally grown bananas has increased competitive pressures even further. Economic changes such as these tend to privilege already well established, pro-growth coalitions of government officials at the ministerial and cabinet level, as well as foreign and local investors in manufacturing, infrastructure development, financial services, and conventional tourism, with its luxury hotels, cruise ship visitations, and all-inclusive beach resorts. By the same token, they limit the ability of domestic coalitions based on common interests in environmentally sustainable development to affect resource management policies.<sup>16</sup> The challenge, therefore, is to make conditionality in aid assistance successful for particular resource management projects in the face of national government resistance and DAA indifference by linking local,

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<sup>15</sup> Fox & Brown, *supra* note 8.

<sup>16</sup> Rosenberg & Thomas, *supra* note 8.

national, and international supporters of sustainable, participatory approaches to sustainable development.

In the case of projects that do not directly affect essential national development goals, triple alliances, as they coalesce, can fly under the radar of national politics. Local DAA representatives can extend support to counterparts in line agencies of the state by convening groups of grassroots stakeholders to design and implement management strategies. And once the alliance goes public with its accomplishments, and garners national, regional, and international recognition, national government officials have little choice but to acknowledge, if not embrace, the results.

#### **4. THE CASES**

There are several cases in the Eastern Caribbean where aid agencies claim to have assisted local stakeholders, government agencies, and regional and international NGOs in the creation of new institutions for the sustainable management of natural resources.<sup>17</sup> But detailed, published analyses of the particular roles played by each type of actor and the relationships that developed among them are hard to find. The two cases that follow were examined over a four-year period, including three visits to the project sites and several interviews with participants. Each demonstrates, albeit in a somewhat different way, the potentials of and the challenges still facing effective triple alliances.

##### **4.1 The Grenada National Forest Policy**

The Grenada National Forest Policy was developed under the auspices of the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries. It articulates the authoritative, long-range goals and implementation requirements that are supposed to guide the sustainable use of Grenada's remaining forests. The policy planning process was initiated by the Forestry Department and was intended from the outset to include local stakeholders at every step. The goal was to achieve sustainability by including all users of forest resources in the design, revision, and implementation of the policy. A substantial portion of the funding for this process was provided by the British Department for International Development (DFID).<sup>18</sup>

As envisioned by the Forestry Department and the DFID Forestry Adviser assigned to the department as part of the aid package, the process

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<sup>17</sup> Some of these cases, including the two examined in this paper, are described by the Small Island Developing States Network at <http://www.sidsnet.org/successstories/>.

<sup>18</sup> Although the National Forest Policy process was jointly funded by DFID and the Government of Grenada, no breakdown of costs has been made and one cannot, therefore, determine which source contributed more (e-mail correspondence with Robert Dunn, DFID Forestry Adviser, Forestry Department, St. George's, Grenada, 31 May 2000).

was at least as important as the resulting policy. Their goal in gathering stakeholder input was a major and unprecedented departure from the normal policy-making process. By design, the process itself evolved in response to stakeholder input. And, although the process has already led to some significant statutory and institutional changes, its effects on forest management have yet to be fully tested. Officially, stakeholder participation was initiated at the request of the Chief Forestry Officer after a two-day “visioning” workshop convened in May 1997. His proposal for the process emphasized the inadequacies of the existing forestry policy, written in 1984, and cited Agenda 21 on the importance of consultation and participation.<sup>19</sup>

Although the plan was carried to its conclusion by the Forestry Department, under the leadership of the Senior and Chief Forestry Officers, DFID support and the activities of the DFID Adviser were essential in shaping the process. DFID had a stated commitment to sustainable forestry policy and participatory practices, but the guidelines for implementation were vague. The DFID Forestry Adviser in Grenada was allowed a great deal of discretion by the supervisor for the Eastern Caribbean region, headquartered in Barbados, to design a process that he felt would best fulfill DFID requirements.

DFID provided new computers, vehicles, and a small operating budget which allowed the Forestry Department to recoup some lost capacity resulting from budgetary and staff cut-backs in the mid-1990s. In addition, at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture, DFID provided funds for the Chief Forestry Officer to pursue a Masters of Science in Forestry Extension at Reading University in the United Kingdom. This training, one of four M.Sc. degrees provided for forestry officers under the project, was a key element in DFID’s support of the policy process. The Chief Forestry Officer gained increased technical knowledge of comprehensive forestry planning and returned to his post instilled with the ethos of participation and sustainability that is integral to Reading’s forestry programs.<sup>20</sup>

The initial visioning workshop determined that widespread consultations and direct participation by all stakeholders would be essential to a sustainable, workable plan.<sup>21</sup> The policy process was then designed by a group of stakeholders convened by the Forestry Department as a Forestry

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<sup>19</sup> Forestry Department, Grenada’s Forest Policy Development Process, St. George’s, Grenada, (photocopy, n.d.); Forestry Department, Non-Legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests, St. George’s, Grenada (photocopy, n.d.).

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Robert Dunn, St. George’s, Grenada, 23 June 1999.

<sup>21</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the following description of events comes from the following interviews and documents: interview with Rolax Frederick, Acting Chief Forestry Officer, St. George’s, Grenada, 9 June 1998; interview with Alan Joseph, Chief Forestry Officer and Robert Dunn, DFID Forestry Adviser, St. George’s Grenada, 15 June 1999; interview with Robert Dunn, St. George’s, Grenada, 23 June 1999; Forest Policy Drafting Committee, “Forest Policy for Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique,” St. George’s, Grenada: Forestry Department (photocopy), 1998; Robert Dunn, “Grenada’s participatory

Policy Process Committee.<sup>22</sup> The design included the use of participatory data gathering methods and directed department senior staff to produce technical papers as a basis for discussion among stakeholders in various substantive areas. There were also to be widespread and intensive public information campaigns and a series of public consultations.

In November 1997, "Forestry Policy Questionnaires" were published in local newspapers and distributed personally by Committee members. Informational films were televised, and announcements on television and radio sought support for the policy process. Open-ended questions asked about forest use, problems facing the nation's forests, suggestions for remedies, and the role of government and communities in forestry. To encourage return of the questionnaires, a prize drawing was held for respondents. These surveys helped in two ways. They gave substantive input to the Committee for developing both the policy and the next steps of the process. They also identified additional stakeholders the Committee could invite to future meetings and workshops. Over the next few months, more data came from a series of direct community consultations and individual interviews with stakeholders.<sup>23</sup> By April 1998, when the Committee met to discuss the results of the questionnaires, public consultations, and radio phone-ins, and to plan a Consensus-Building Workshop, the list of stakeholders had expanded to include secondary school students, market women, sawmill operators, boat builders, craftspeople, tour guides, taxi drivers, teachers, and engineers.

At the Workshop in July, the new Forest Policy was actually drafted by a subcommittee consisting of the Chief Forestry Officer, the Senior Forestry Officer, the Secretary-General of the Agency for Rural Transformation, which is a national rural development NGO, a representative of the Ministry of Finance, and the head of CANARI. The draft circulated among the participants, was revised according to their recommendations and submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture in November 1998. In March the next year, the Cabinet approved

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Forest Policy development process: empowerment through appropriate support," St. George's, Grenada (photocopy), n.d.; Forestry Department, "Proposed 10-year Strategic Plan for the Forestry Department: 1st January, 2000 to 31st December, 2009," St. George's, Grenada (photocopy), 1999.

<sup>22</sup> The Committee had 19 members; 11 from the cognate functional ministries and agencies of government, three from local NGOs, and three from local producer and industry groups in forestry, tourism, farming, and furniture manufacturing. The other two members were the Chair, Yves Renard of the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) and the DFID Forestry Adviser as Secretary. CANARI is a regional NGO and leader in the use of participatory methods for natural resources management. Renard's participation was funded by DFID (e-mail correspondence with Robert Dunn, 30 May 2000). The DFID Forestry Officer had a mainly clerical role, although some Forestry Department officials describe it as more tutelary (personal interview with eight Forestry Department Unit chiefs, St. George's, Grenada, 17 December 2001).

<sup>23</sup> Fifteen community consultations on forest policy were held throughout Grenada, including one exclusively for women's groups. The Department also sponsored four radio phone-in programs on eco-tourism, land use policy, tree planting, and watershed management.

the new policy and the Prime Minister called it an exemplar of participatory management planning.<sup>24</sup>

The proof of the policy will be its ability to promote sustainable forest use, and to keep stakeholders involved in the management of forest resources. At the time the policy planning process concluded, the prospect of these outcomes was favorable. For one thing, the policy triggered an institutional transformation at the Forestry Department, which became the Department of Forestry and National Parks and was made the primary steward of Grenada's natural heritage. This was a turn away from an emphasis on "timbercentric" technical forestry and a previous disregard for stakeholders who either lacked technical expertise or were not direct consumers of forest products. The reorganized department is service oriented, and makes responsiveness to stakeholders its prime responsibility. Another favorable sign was the distribution of responsibility for implementing the new policy among eight senior officers in the functional areas that define the department's expanded responsibilities.<sup>25</sup> Policy implementation is now also reviewed by a board of twenty stakeholders, only two of whom are from the department. In addition, each senior staff officer is charged with organizing a group of community, governmental, and NGO stakeholders to help implement, review, and revise the policy.

Some of the senior officers in the new department were uncertain about how to proceed with the implementation of the policy in a participatory way,<sup>26</sup> and were especially unclear about methods they could use to sustain participation. The same uncertainty about the future attached to their evaluation of how the Chief Forestry Officer would behave. They believed that his new role required him to be less a chief technical forester and more a lobbyist and grant writer in pursuit of the resources needed to sustain participation and enhance management capabilities. They were unsure, however, how long his commitment to this new role might last.

Senior officers also saw multiple and persistent questions about how policy making and implementation roles for stakeholders might be organized

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<sup>24</sup> *New National Forestry Policy approved by Cabinet*, 18(6) *The Grenadian Voice*, Internet Edition (16 April 1999).

<sup>25</sup> These are Mangroves and Coastal Woodlands, Forest Conservation, Wildlife Conservation, Upland Watershed Management, Environmental Education, Tree Establishment and Management, Forest Recreation, and Heritage Conservation.

<sup>26</sup> The officer for Upland Watershed Management, for example, reported good working relationships with the National Authority for Water and Sewage (NAWASA), and the country's largest rural development NGO, the Agency for Rural Transformation (ART). But he also noted that in working with farmers to establish constructive relationships with grassroots stakeholders on watershed conservation, he encountered problems similar to those his colleagues had reported. Farmers understand the benefits of watershed conservation, but do not see how they accrue directly. So, while farmers are convinced of the general merits of practices that contribute to a cleaner, more ample water supply, they see most of the immediate benefits going to the big hotels.

and sustained: questions, for example, about the formal role of stakeholders in policy implementation; the formal and informal relationships between stakeholders and the department; the relationship among the units of the department and the stakeholders identified by each during the policy process; how to turn informal relationships with stakeholders into formal ones; how to create lasting, sustainable cooperative relationships with other departments and ministries where jurisdictions overlap; how to obtain and distribute the resources and incentives needed to sustain stakeholder participation; how to raise the awareness of stakeholders to the importance of the policy; how to create sustainable relationships with large numbers of stakeholders given the department's limited resources; and how to get Government to give more than rhetorical support to participatory implementation of the policy. They felt in short that, while the policy process had created relationships of trust between the department and its stakeholders that were atypical of state-society relations in Grenada, they could be undermined by lack of government support.<sup>27</sup>

#### **4.2 Scott's Head/Soufriere Marine Reserve (SSMR) and Local Area Management Agency (LAMA)**

Scott's Head/Soufriere Bay and the adjacent coastline on the southeastern tip of the island of Dominica are the primary sources of livelihood for three fishing villages: Scott's Head, Soufriere, and Pointe Michel. They provide fresh seafood for restaurants and markets in the nearby capital city of Roseau, and are used for recreation by locals and tourists. The quality of the waters, the cleanliness of the beach, the fisheries, and a delicate coral reef are all seriously impacted by these direct uses of marine resources and by run-off from the villages on the steep volcanic hillsides that surround the crescent-shaped bay. Thus, stakeholders in local resources include fishers, restaurateurs, hoteliers, merchants, dive operators, residents, tourists, and urban consumers.<sup>28</sup>

The proposal to put this area and its resources in a marine reserve and make it subject to a local area management authority began as the response of the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture to complaints from local fishers that divers and pleasure craft were interfering with their fish pots and beach seining and damaging coral by dropping anchor in the bay. The bay was declared a no-anchorage zone, mapped, and registered for particular uses. The Fisheries Division then moved to procure grants from external sources to install mooring posts for visiting yachts and to fund educational and organizational activities among the local population. This

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<sup>27</sup> Personal interview with eight Senior Forestry Officers, St. George's, Grenada, 17 December 2001.

<sup>28</sup> This and the following description of events come from an interview with Harold Guiste, Fisheries Officer, Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment, Roseau, Dominica, 22 June 1998; and Nigel Lawrence, Andrew Magloire and Harold Guiste, "Soufriere/Scott's Head Marine Reserve Management Plan," Roseau, Dominica: Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment, n.d.

was accompanied by a determination that the most effective and cost efficient way to manage the marine reserve and obviate conflict was to set up an independent management authority of stakeholders. So, in this case, the goal of the development assistance project was to support an idea that had already been locally conceived; the formation of a fully autonomous management authority comprised entirely of stakeholders and with full rule making and enforcement powers, including the employment of armed wardens who could board watercraft, make arrests, and call in the coast guard when necessary.

The external sources of funding for the project included the French Technical Cooperation agency (FTC), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the Organization of American States (OAS) under its Inter-American Strategy for Public Participation in Environmental and Sustainable Development Decision-Making in the Americas (ISP). Aid from FTC, which was by far the largest funding source, came with requirements for stakeholder inclusion and government accountability, and was supported by on-site advisers. Aid from CIDA was mainly of a technical nature for specific aspects of the project. The OAS offered the smallest amount of aid but stipulated the most stringent requirements for stakeholder participation, demanding a fully autonomous statutory body of stakeholders, organized and authorized by the Government of Dominica according to a strict timetable.

Fisheries officers soon realized that the two biggest obstacles to making the project a success were a lack of administrative infrastructure in the villages and the low levels of education and awareness of the village stakeholders. The first problem was addressed in two ways. First, the Chief Fisheries Officer took the lead in convening stakeholders and chairing LAMA meetings until the stakeholder members themselves could establish functional committees and elect their own officers.<sup>29</sup> Second, the Fisheries Division office in Roseau became the “home address” for the LAMA. All communications to the LAMA board, whether by regular and electronic mail, telephone, fax, or marine radio, were received at the Fisheries office and then relayed. The office was also the hub for communications among LAMA members and constituent groups. By taking such a central role in the formation and operations of LAMA, Fisheries raised suspicions among local and outside observers as to whether LAMA would be, in fact, an autonomous and effective body.<sup>30</sup>

Fisheries addressed the second problem through an educational program in local schools and a national SSMR Day celebration in Scott’s Head

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Kris Simelda, Chair, LAMA Education Committee, Scott’s Head, Dominica, 12 June 1999.

<sup>30</sup> This view was expressed by informants outside of LAMA and the Fisheries Division (interview with Henry Shillingford, Programme Director, Dominica Conservation Association, Roseau, Dominica, 8 June 1999; telephone interview, Zoila Girón, Project Manager, ISP, OAS, Washington, D.C., 16 April 1998; and personal interview, 19 May 1999). One LAMA member confirmed that this impression may have been warranted in 1998 (interview with William Lawrence, Executive Secretary, Dominica Watersports Association, Roseau, Dominica, 10 June 1999).

village. Innovation and flexibility were required to engage stakeholders with various levels of education, knowledge, interest, and sophistication, including semi-literate fisherman, school children, business people, professionals, and government officials. Area students were enlisted, for example, to take an inventory of the sources of garbage found on local beaches and attend three sessions on conservation of the marine environment offered at their schools. The aim was to develop cadres of environmentally aware young people who could help change some of the non-sustainable behaviors of the community and convince their elders to cooperate in the management of the reserve.

Fisheries officers considered fishers the most difficult stakeholders to reach. They are among the least educated groups in Dominica and governments have traditionally paid little attention to their needs. Many fishers are illiterate. To address the communication problem, Fisheries Division organized public meetings in the village squares on Sunday afternoons, and gave secondary school students the task of coming up with slogans, sayings, or other ways of reaching the fishers, both in English and Creole, which is the first language of many rural Dominicans. The students wrote and performed a skit. Fisheries Division provided them with the equipment they needed to write and perform skits and, on the students' recommendation, rum to get the fisherman to attend.<sup>31</sup>

FTC took a direct role in supporting these educational activities. It assigned five officers over a period of four years and substantial funding. It worked with Fisheries to push the education process forward and did much of the technical work related to protection of the marine environment. CIDA funds also helped in the production of television and radio programs, pamphlets, slide presentations, and posters. The result was a general barrage of public information on the need for maintaining marine resources through environmental protection. Building on a relatively strong tradition of local government, Fisheries also made sure that the village councils got involved. But Fisheries officers believe that the students were the key to sensitizing the community.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the apparent success of the education programs, LAMA has experienced difficulties that it has, thus far, been unable to surmount. The difficulties were the combined result of demands made by external funding agencies and a growing lack of trust among the principals.

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<sup>31</sup> The first public information campaign was so successful that the Fisheries Division has followed up with annual SSMR Day activities. Fisheries officers visit schools one month before the celebration to teach the students about the marine environment and fisheries issues. They hold a quiz competition on the radio for which local businesses donate expenses and provide prizes. On SSMR Day all school children congregate at the marine reserve for the final quiz contest.

<sup>32</sup> Interviews with Harold Guiste, William Lawrence and Kris Simelda confirm this assessment. But in 1999, the Programme Director the Dominica Conservation Association was unaware of SSMR Day.

By June 1998, LAMA was fully formed.<sup>33</sup> It had elected its first president and board of directors, all the functional committees were in place, and the Chief Fisheries Officer had begun to devolve his leadership role. Although the board and the committees then met regularly and made significant progress in developing plans of action, they accomplished little. The main obstacle was funding. Although FTC allocated sufficient funds, about US \$225,000 for LAMA to begin its operations, and the OAS promised an additional US \$45,000, FTC withheld the majority of its funds, and the OAS withdrew from the project entirely in May 1998. This loss of external funding has made it impossible for LAMA to recruit, train and hire wardens, arguably its most important function and the most tangible expression of its authority and autonomy. Without wardens LAMA can exist but cannot have any real impact.

The loss of the small OAS grant was arguably just a minor setback. It was originally offered to support the legal and legislative processes leading to the full official designation of LAMA as an independent management authority. The conditions attached to the grant were very explicit and a variety of frustrations in meeting them, which will not be detailed here, proved impossible to overcome.

The impasse involving the FTC, by contrast, was a major impediment to moving forward with the project. FTC had a more comprehensive role than the OAS, providing most of funding for the technical, educational, and organizational work needed to make the reserve and the management authority a success. But even though an FTC representative attended LAMA meetings, contributed to the planning process, reviewed LAMA proposals, and made inspection tours of the marine reserve, the perception was that FTC wanted to replicate in Dominica a form of local management authority it had recently helped establish in St. Lucia. And this became a point of contention for some Fisheries officers and local stakeholders.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, although FTC originally said it would disburse funds to LAMA gradually over a three-year period, to help monitor compliance with its conditions, the disbursement period ended with more than half of the funds unexpended.

Relationships between LAMA and the Fisheries Division, although generally reported to be constructive, were spoiled by one critical failure.

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<sup>33</sup> LAMA represents eight categories of stakeholders: Fishermen's Organizations, Village Councils, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, Hospitality Industry Entities, Community Groups, the Dominica Watersports Association, the Fisheries Division and the Dominica Police Force Marine Section. From these categories representatives of 15 different associations, departments, and businesses were elected to a Management Board, broken down into four sector committees: Education, Operations and Development, Scientific and Research, and Finance. The management board elects a chair, vice-chair, treasurer, and two trustees to one-year renewable terms. The first Chair was a medical doctor and dive operator from Soufriere.

<sup>34</sup> This marine protected area, also called Soufriere, is managed by an autonomous stakeholders' association that was developed under the guidance of Yves Renard of CANARI and is considered a model of its kind for the region.

The government authorized the levying of fees for dive permits and the SSMR management plan made those fees the main source of funds for the ongoing operations of LAMA. The government did not, however, officially authorize wardens to collect the fees. Without that level of power sharing, LAMA is bound to remain dependent on a government that is suspected of wanting to spend whatever revenues are generated locally on non-local projects.<sup>35</sup>

LAMA still exists and, although regular meetings of its full membership are rare, the board meets and members confer periodically.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the SSMR has been mapped and zoned, signs have been posted, rules and regulations for its use have been published in the official gazette of the Government of Dominica, and SSMR Day continues to be a popular annual event. The first chair of the LAMA Management Board won re-election and claims that LAMA is working with local organizations of fishers to improve their ability to participate in management decisions. To accelerate the process of training and hiring wardens, the Dominica Watersports Association donated the proceeds from its annual Dive Fest, a recreational and educational event promoting eco-tourism, to LAMA.<sup>37</sup>

The case of the SSMR and LAMA illustrates in interesting ways some of the problems that can occur within and among the branches of a triple alliance when the affected population is small and has an established history of both positive relationships and animosities. The Chief Fisheries Officer who oversaw the formation of LAMA left government for the private sector in 2001. In his current role as journalist, publisher, and resident of Scott's Head he retains a seat on the LAMA board and has become a vocal critic of the current government and the parliamentary stalemate that has blocked progress on all sorts of legislation, including the full empowerment of LAMA.<sup>38</sup> He represents and advocates for the local private sector's interest in keeping LAMA alive. But his continued presence in a leadership role reinforces the impression held by some local fishers and small business people that a small cadre of elites dominates the board in order to manage resources for their own profit.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Interview with Dr. V. Moise, Chair of Management Board, LAMA, Soufriere, Dominica, 12 June 1999. This negative assessment of the government, including accusations of corruption, was echoed by three other well-positioned informants who prefer to remain anonymous.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Nigel Lawrence, former Chief Fisheries Officer, member of Management Board, LAMA, Roseau, Dominica, 8 February 2002.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with William Lawrence, Executive Secretary, Dominica Watersports Association.

<sup>38</sup> The 2000 elections in Dominica resulted in an evenly divided parliament and an unstable coalition government headed by an unpopular Prime Minister.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Francis Charles, LAMA member and guesthouse owner, Scott's Head, Dominica, 4 February 2002.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Making aid projects subject to conditions will not in and of itself create triple alliances. There must also be adequate levels of external support from DAAs, not just in terms of financing but also to ensure the presence on the ground of dedicated and attentive personnel. These people can then use their resources to nurture and facilitate local commitments to sustainable development, and even to implant notions of sustainability among government officials. The particular methods for doing these things depend on the nature of the local actors, the political situation in which they find themselves, and the nature of the resource management project. But in all cases, DAA personnel must have both a clear dedication to stakeholder participation and the discretion, whether it arises from the active support or indifference of superiors, to tailor their decisions to emerging needs. The crucial role of DAA personnel in a triple alliance is that of catalyst in the formation of coalitions, at the level of domestic politics, through which stakeholders may hold each other accountable.

The cases examined, here, illustrate just two ways in which scenarios for the formation of triple alliances can play out and have the potential to overcome what I have identified as the three major impediments to participatory and sustainable resource management at the national and international levels: sovereignty related rules and restrictions; insufficiencies of capacity and political will; and a bias toward economic growth in national development policy. But are such triple alliances durable and, more importantly perhaps, should we want them to be?

Optimistically, Grenada's reorganized Department of Forestry and National Parks and Dominica's marine reserve LAMA can be seen as pilots for more lasting arrangements, either formal or informal, for the promotion of sustainable management when natural resources are under pressure from multiple users. The danger also exists, however, that instead of becoming autonomous and vibrant accountability coalitions, triple alliances will degenerate into dependency relationships between state implementing agencies and DAA officials. In this respect it is encouraging, I think, that while senior forestry officers in Grenada have some nervousness about the post-DFID prospects for sustaining a participatory approach to their work, not even the most skeptical among them seems to have rethought his commitment to participatory practices or sustainability as appropriate and necessary management goals.

In Dominica, neither the suspension of FTC aid nor the withdrawal of the OAS brought about the total dissolution of LAMA. One founding member, as noted, has moved from the state to the private sector and others have dropped out entirely, complaining that the board is replicating established patterns of local politics that they had hoped the involvement of the FTC and the Fisheries Division would help them overcome. So, while LAMA clearly suffers from a lack of resources, it persists, at least in skeletal form. It may also be a positive

sign that the former Chief Fisheries officer remains active from his new positions in the private sector and the media, and that Fisheries Division officials continue to assert that LAMA will remain the focal point of their efforts to manage local marine resources. It is less encouraging that local stakeholders in Scott's Head and Soufriere remain deeply skeptical about LAMA's future.

The stakeholder groups convened by the Grenada Forestry Policy process face an uncertain future. Based in part on the success of the forest policy process, the Department of Forestry and National Parks obtained a grant from the Global Environment Facility for a Dry Forest Biodiversity Project. The grant funds a new iteration of the triple alliance in the form of a coordinator, on leave from a United States university and salaried by the grant, who has established relationships with the Forestry Department, and local NGOs. But the effects of the end of the DFID program and withdrawal of the DFID adviser on administrative and management capacity were still playing themselves out when Hurricane Ivan hit in September 2004.

Another caveat for the potential of triple alliances elsewhere is that the two cases considered, here, involved relatively low stakes for the two national governments. Conflicts between pro-growth and sustainable approaches to resource management, and between the coalitions that support each, are not likely to disappear. Indeed, they may ultimately prove to be the most intractable of the three impediments I have analyzed. So, while these two cases are indicative of the possibility for positive results, they do not adequately test the ability of triple alliances to prevail when severely impacted by national economic exigencies. The resources at issue simply do not figure prominently in national economic development strategies, nor are they major targets of foreign investment.

It also needs to be said, however, that pro-sustainability coalitions may have lasting effects even when powerful commercial and/or political interests are at stake. In Grenada where, as noted, forest products *per se* are not major exports or important sources of wealth or employment, sustainability advocates flew under the radar of national politics and created a space in which new policies and institutional structures could be tried. But when nutmeg, which is a tree crop and Grenada's chief agricultural export, suffered major damage from Hurricane Ivan, flying under the radar was not an option. It was quickly announced, nevertheless, that the recovery process would be guided by a national plan, and that it would promise both rapid redevelopment and environmental sustainability. The recovery plan even calls for the full implementation of the National Forestry Policy and will provide a test of the relationships established through the Forest Policy process far more severe than the initial triple alliance could have imagined.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Grenada Ministry of Health, Social Security, the Environment, and Ecclesiastic Relations, National Environmental Policy and Management Plan for Grenada (Government of Grenada, St. George's, 2004).

Finally, and from the perspective of development assistance agencies, triple alliances are a mixed blessing. Their great advantage is that they bring together people and agencies from different realms, in a model of cooperation where the ability to implement policy is substantially and materially enhanced. Indeed, even in circumstances where leaders and policy-makers in national governments and assistance agencies fail, for whatever reasons, to make good on promises of sustainability and participation, middle and lower level officials may still be able to reach innovative solutions working through triple alliances.

This happens because everyone brings something to the table. Those from assistance agencies bring significant levels of guidance and technical capability, as well as scientific, administrative, political, and moral support. Officials from government or state agencies bring their legitimate authority to implement policy and their ongoing relationships with other state, civil society, and regional stakeholders. The stakeholders in turn bring knowledge of the needs and limitations of their communities and sectors, their credibility with other stakeholders, and the ability to grant or withhold cooperation as implementation proceeds.

Despite all this, it is also true that by working with and through triple alliances, development assistance agencies risk losing some of the control they now exercise over resource management, particularly in the smaller and poorer states of the global South. It is an open question whether this tradeoff will seem unattractive to assistance agencies worried about their reputations for power and influence, and for some it may not counteract the ambivalence they feel about pressing sustainable development on governments wanting to attract more conventional forms of development capital. But it seems to me to be a tradeoff well worth the risk.