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# Non-Governmental Organizations and Natural Resources Management

# MAURITIUS

March 1993

PVO-NGO/NRMS Project
Private Voluntary Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations
in Natural Resources Management
(a USAID-funded project)
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PVO-NGO/NRMS PROJECT

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# MAURITIUS
## Country Assessment

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# Foreword

This document is one of 18 assessments done in 18 African countries under the aegis of the PVO-NGO/NRMS project. Broadly speaking, the assessments cover:

- the general context and issues impacting NGOs and NRM in each given country;
- the content of NGO work in NRM in each respective country;
- the needs of NGOs in NRM in each country
- types of activities that could be feasible in NRM in the given country; and
- the overall feasibility for a project like PVO-NGO/NRMS to operate in each given country.

The focus of the assessments is on institutional and technical programming issues rather than natural resources issues as might be addressed in a formal natural resources sector assessment.

It is important that readers of the document understand that the individual country assessments in both the executive summary document and the papers encompassing full length assessments are not by any means exhaustive of the NGO situation in NRM in any country. Rather, the PVO-NGO/NRMS assessment attempts to render an accurate overview of active and potential opportunities in the natural resources sector. Far more information could have been provided in the assessments than was, had time and funding permitted. Nevertheless, we feel the thrust of the overall analysis would probably not have changed significantly.

The information and analysis provided is felt to accurately portray the current situation in each country. This should prove to be useful to help orient both potential donor and NGO programming in NRM in each country. For those ultimately interested in assessing a particular country's situation in greater depth for programming purposes, we hope this assessment will provide a strong foundation from which to begin.

To provide a sense of the limitations under the assessment we note the following:

- 14 of the countries assessed were covered in six or less days in the field,
- One country (Tanzania) for logistical reasons benefited from an assessment over a 10 day period;
- Two countries and one region -- Namibia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea (a region under its own independent provisional government) -- were covered by 'desk' assessments due to logistical reasons, each over a five day period.

Other full length country assessments are also available from the PVO-NGO/NRMS project. Requests for either the entire full length document, or individual sections relevant to the readers interest may be made to the PVO-NGO/NRMS project. Comments on the assessments are welcomed.

Throughout the assessments, community-level groups are distinguished from NGOs; the latter refer to service-providing or membership organizations which work for the benefit of communities. Private voluntary organizations (PVOs), for simplicity, is the equivalent term for U.S. NGOs working internationally.

Finally, for comparative purposes, the introduction and overview of findings section of the 18 country synthesis document is provided as an annex (1) to this country-specific document.

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*March 22, 1993*

**MAURITIUS**
**Country Assessment**

## DISCUSSION

### *I. The Context of NGO Work in Natural Resources Management (NRM) in Mauritius*

**NGO EXPERIENCE:**

Historically, NGO activities in Mauritius have focused on provision of social services. The majority of the 94 members of the Mauritius Council of Social Service (MACOSS) conduct social work-types of activities in the areas of senior citizen welfare, physically handicapped welfare, adult education, development and the child, AIDS information, and more recently, the environment.

A second category of NGO exists in Mauritius which focuses on environmental issues (as distinguished from natural resources management issues). These NGOs work on awareness raising, environmental education, advocacy and socio-economic and environmental assessment types of activities. The group is relatively limited in number, but represents a well trained nucleus of articulate and committed organizations. Similar to the situation in the Seychelles, most of these NGOs operate on a purely voluntary basis. This limits the extent to which NGOs in Mauritius have been, or could become, involved in NRM activities.

Mauritius, being one of the few economic success stories in the Africa region, offers a fertile environment for business enterprise along with democratic participation. The open and diversified economy has reached what could be characterized as 'full employment.' Mauritius is one of the countries of Africa and the Commonwealth with the longest democratic tradition and a quite lively multi-party system. Its first elections go back to 1790, just after the French Revolution. Following its accession to independence, the country became a parliamentary democracy like the British model with a legislative assembly. The head of state was Queen Elizabeth II until March 12, 1992.

The foundation for economic growth in Mauritius since the 1700s has been sugar cane. The sugar industry receives subsidized EEC price supports. Nevertheless, over the last 20 years since independence, there has been great diversification of the economy. While as much as 60 percent of the island may still be under sugar cultivation (while another 20 percent of the island is Crown Lands where sugar cannot be grown), most residents except for the least educated have opted for factory or urban related work versus field work. This is despite the fact that field labor still pays preferentially over factory work.

Few NGOs in Mauritius work in agriculture, and fewer still on sustainable agriculture. The most significant environmental related work in Mauritius undertaken by NGOs has to do with

awareness raising and advocacy related to environmental impact. Due to the incredible pace of development in Mauritius, negative environmental impacts are being increasingly felt. In response, NGOs have taken a lead in raising the nation's awareness.

## NGO PROFILES:

The **Mauritius Council of Social Service (MACOSS)** is an umbrella organization focusing on promoting social work in Mauritius. It was appointed by the Commonwealth to coordinate NGO activities throughout the Indian Ocean region, including activities pertaining to participation in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) meetings in Rio. Judging from its roster of 94 member organizations, it is apparent that MACOSS is able to tap into considerable expertise from its members on social work-related activities.

Ongoing activities which MACOSS coordinates involve leadership skill training, computer applications, and management development training.

MACOSS receives support from the Government of Mauritius (GOM) in the form of office space and partial coverage of administrative overhead. The Commonwealth Foundation has provided MACOSS with computer, fax and phone. Due to the ongoing support role that government plays, MACOSS cannot be said to be, technically speaking, an independent NGO umbrella organization.

In natural resources or, more particularly, the environment sector, MACOSS professes an interest to help "professionalize" NGO capability in environmental awareness and protection activities. To date, other than participation in the pre-Rio planning meetings and the UNCED meeting itself, MACOSS has not had much involvement in environmental activities, at either an advocacy or project level.

The **Wildlife Clubs of Mauritius** (WCOM) has been operating since 1984, when the International Council for Bird Protection (ICBP) and the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust (JWPT) signed an agreement to undertake a consolidated research program on wildlife and the environment in Mauritius.

The official objectives of WCOM are to identify environmental problems which are likely to become a national concern, and to develop feasible strategies for the protection of endemic flora and fauna. In addition, awareness raising and information exchange are highlighted. Due to the support from ICBP and JWPT, WCOM has also promoted the work of these European NGOs, along with that of the World Wildlife Fund.

In practice, WCOM is a comprised of concerned Mauritians, many of them young, who are activists on issues pertaining to protection of indigenous forests and endemic flora and fauna species. The club promotes outings of its members to encourage active participation in the

monitoring of habitats which the club considers of biological or other importance. For instance, the club is involved in cleanup activities in cave areas where endemic swallows are found.

WCOM also works on securing protected status for endangered endemic species in Mauritius, such as the Mauritius kestrel. Here the availability of reports from one of WCOM's key benefactors, ICBP's The Threatened Birds of Mauritius and Rodrigues, prepared for the ICBP/IUCN Red Data Book in 1985, has provided WCOM with the objective data required to launch their awareness raising and protection campaigns. This partnership relationship with ICBP has clearly been important to WCOM.

**SPACE** is a four year old organization started by academicians from the University of Mauritius. SPACE seeks to integrate environmental concerns into development. SPACE's work is mostly awareness raising and advocacy oriented, and is based on the perception that there tends to be an absence of strong analysis leading to sound planning currently in Mauritius.

Its work has specifically focused on problem identification in regard to the impact of development on species/habitat relationships in general. In the first year of operation it focused on endemic pigeon populations, and the relationship between road construction and the impact on habitat in the Bassin Blanc, one of the richest areas in Mauritius. In this, SPACE did an inventory of scientific work relevant to impact on the Bassin, and the government was unable to refute SPACE's assessment.

Recently SPACE has been raising national awareness on deforestation issues on the island of Rodrigues, delving into causes of deforestation along with potential solutions. It also was critical of early government discussions to establish a nuclear power plant in Mauritius.

SPACE currently operates without any core financial support, and thus has no infrastructure or assets. It is therefore a self-proclaimed 'bootstrapping' operation.

**Friends of the Environment (FOE)** is a member of the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the African NGO Environment Network (ANEN). It is an organization that has enjoyed the support of professional private sector benefactors, along with a full time executive director with a doctorate in the sciences. FOE does therefore not fall into the category of avocational organization which many other NGOs in Mauritius do.

The types of projects that FOE has initiated in Mauritius include:

- establishment of a high quality environmental library with support from the US embassy, World Bank and UNDP;
- landscape development project for a major highway;
- treatment of effluents from sugar mills;

- upgrading and rehabilitating of a historic site;
- radio talks targeting children and 45 video films; and
- environmental newsletter production.

Given the scope of FOE's activities, the funds required to meet the group's recurrent annual expenditure is proving to be a daunting task. While Mauritian private sector firms have helped launch FOE, FOE's long-term financial sustainability remains doubtful. This reality is despite the sophistication of FOE's work.

There are two full time staff members at FOE.

**Fleurir Maurice** is a voluntary NGO which works on awareness raising in regard to protecting and beautifying the environment. The driving force behind Fleurir Maurice has been the deputy director of the Tourism Division Ministry for Tourism and Employment.

Fleurir Maurice promotes annual competitive tree planting activities such as "Operation Force Verts," along with flower planting days. Wherever possible, Fleurir Maurice would like to support the planting of indigenous flower and tree species, though in the past this has not always been done. In the competitions, district councils, government ministries, rotary clubs, schools, hospitals, hotels, etc., all participate and the prime minister awards prizes.

Fleurir Maurice operates on the principle that it is not enough to do advocacy work alone, it is necessary to complement that with concrete hands-on projects.

The **Documentation, Research and Training Center on Indian Ocean issues (CEDREFI)** was formed in the early 1980s by Mauritian university graduates. CEDREFI believes that the economic, political and even cultural development of the countries in the Indian Ocean sub-region cannot be achieved unless they work in close collaboration one with the other.

The CEDREFI objective of promoting and disseminating concepts related to "people centered development" is done through CEDREFI's bulletin IBION - *Issue Based Indian Ocean Network.*

In IBION existing information and analysis of topics of concern to the sub-region are covered. CEDREFI conducts a certain amount of original research to advance this information and analysis. A case in point is the excellent bilingual publication: *Directory: Institutions/Organisations & Individuals in the South West Indian Ocean Islands and other French Speaking Countries/Areas Bordering the Indian Ocean.*

Another primary CEDREFI objective is to initiate and/or support integrated projects pertaining to development/environment in collaboration with or by grassroots NGOs. Here the promotion of activities which are complementary between NGOs in the region is emphasized. CEDREFI believes that this will diminish NGOs' marginality, will increase their autonomy, and will help NGOs "professionalize."

There are two full time staff and ten volunteers.

**Mauritius Marine Conservation Society (MMCS)** was founded by a group whose interest for the marine environment originated from their association with the "Mauritius Underwater Group," a group of amateur divers.

The MMCS objectives are to raise awareness of the need for making conservation, to generate interest in the creation of marine parks; to establish breeding-under-captivity programs and regeneration of depopulated areas; and, to reinforce laws forbidding dynamite fishing, net fishing in lagoons and coral reef destruction. It is particularly interested in introducing "artificial reefs" as a means to reintroduce species and at the same time, promote sustainable development through eco-tourism.

There are no full time staff and 30 to 50 volunteers.

The **National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs** is an organization parented by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1962. Its objectives are to promote sustainable agricultural development in Mauritius through teaching, specialized trainings, public awareness raising, and grassroots level actions.

The Federation engages in such activities as: creation of gardens across the island, recycling of materials, diversifying cropping systems, promotion of minimum pesticide application, and the cleaning of beaches. There are 33 full-time staff and 5,000 volunteers.

## ENABLING ENVIRONMENT:

The fact that Mauritius is a republic with a functioning democratic parliamentary system and a dynamic economy focusing on sugar and textile exports, with low unemployment, puts it in a unique category in the Africa region. Mauritius therefore offers a very favorable environment for NGO work. While the Government of Mauritius (GOM) may not always agree with NGO positions and vice versa, there is a healthy critical give-and-take between government and the NGO community. The fact that NGOs can really challenge government positions, and do so, is testimony to the positive environment in which NGOs work in Mauritius. Nevertheless, there may be reason to hope that government could be even more responsive to NGO input. Perhaps if there were more coordination between NGOs (the lack of which government perceives as a weakness), the environment within which NGOs work would be even more positive, and NGO impact would be enhanced.

Some NGOs feel that an NGO capacity building activity in Mauritius like PVO-NGO/NRMS would be quite worthwhile at this point. These tend to be NGOs which operate on more of a full-time basis. For those NGOs which are more voluntary, the desire for a PVO-NGO/NRMS activity is less clear.

Government appears to be supportive of the idea of a project which will help coordinate NGO activity and strengthen NGO capacity. The government sees a need to provide a complement to NGOs strong advocacy skill level, specifically by launching a hands-on implementation capability enhancement effort.

As NGO analytical and advocacy skills, in a small but important number of cases are already very high in Mauritius, it is clear that a nucleus exists from which to build. With the correct coordination and support, national NGOs could provide technical assistance to other national NGOs and thereby strengthen the community as a whole. And further strengthening will only serve to reinforce Mauritius' strong democratic tradition.

## DONOR TRENDS IN NRM PROGRAMMING:

Like the Seychelles, Mauritius is relatively isolated from donor programming in NRM. One exception involves the World Bank, the Ministry of Environment and the Quality of Life program. It is a follow-up to the ongoing environmental development project.

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) has no program in NRM in Mauritius, and none planned. The USAID representative in Mauritius agrees that strengthening NGO capacity in NRM is quite important, even if USAID is not targeting this sector. The U.S. embassy's small grant program has funded several environmental initiatives undertaken by NGOs, including SPACE.

The Fondation de France is planning, as part of its Indian Ocean regional effort, to support NGO activities in the region. These activities will involve improved information exchange and increased NGO coordination on regional issues, some of which will relate to NRM or the environment. The Commonwealth Association is already supporting similar initiatives, albeit with more focus on an "anglophone" versus a "francophone" development agenda

## NATURAL RESOURCES ISSUES:

Mauritius occupies 1,865 square kilometers. Fifty-eight percent of the island is under cultivation, 31 percent is woodlands, and four percent is pasture. The population in 1989 was 1,121,000, with 41 percent concentrated in urban areas and 28 percent engaged in the agricultural sector. Population growth rate is 1.3 percent.

Mauritius is a low middle income country according to the 1987 World Bank index.

Mauritius is severely degraded with patches of less-disturbed evergreen forest and lowland palm vegetation in some of the reserves. Mauritius has suffered through a devastating rate of species extinction through loss of habitat and introduction of alien species. Surviving endemic populations of plants and birds are so low that survival is doubtful.

Mauritius, like the Seychelles island group, is found in the gradient of peak bio-diversity in the Indian Ocean. As such, the biological richness of Mauritius rivals that of the Caribbean and even some South Pacific islands. Unfortunately, coral reef eco-systems in Mauritius are largely degraded, due to poor land use planning and indiscriminate reef destruction. Shoreline stabilizing structures, misguidedly built to protect beaches for aesthetic and recreational use, have had a particularly devastating impact on coastal processes and eco-system health. Hence the benefits which would have been accrued to local people and visitors from a productive set of coastal and marine habitats have been sharply curtailed and short-term in nature.

There are several suggested natural resources management activities:

- In existing reserves such as the Macchabee-Bel Ombre nature reserve, urgent measures are needed to combat the worst effects of introduced species of plants and animals. On the north of Rodrigues Island consideration could be given to establishing some form of protected areas in the remaining forests. Opportunities for intensive terrestrial and marine conservation exist to prevent further species extinctions on Mauritius and its coralline islands. Perhaps most importantly given the nature and importance of the remaining resource, an overall coastal zone management plan should be developed to address resource use issues on coastal wildlife. The feasibility for establishing marine parks should be studied.

- The Nature Reserves Board advises government on reserve establishment procedures, and on local participation issues. Here the role of NGOs in the design and implementation of conservation actions, in and around protected areas, should be carefully investigated.

- On marine conservation issues, Mauritius urgently needs NGO-motivated conservation of its coastal eco-systems, targeting the important ecological processes of the entire, inter-linked eco-system.

## *II. Institutional and Technical Issues*

### LOCAL NGO CAPACITY:

NGO capacity to effectively advocate on NRM issues is being increasingly demonstrated by a small but growing number of NGOs in Mauritius. NGO capacity to consult on NRM issues, while limited to a few NGOs, is solid. NGO capacity to design and implement actual NRM activities is however quite limited, due to staff and funding limitations, along with a circumscribed program mandate.

FOE, WCOM, SPACE, Fleurir Maurice and MMCS are all experienced in advocacy and consultative work regarding environmental issues. SPACE and CEDREFI are experienced in the socio-economic impact assessment aspects of development, with the latter responsible for information dissemination on issues of regional import related to the social and environmental impact of development.

## COLLABORATION:

The linkage between NGO capacity and actual project implementation (beyond advocacy or studies) could surely be strengthened in Mauritius. To do so, however, those NGOs now working on environmental or social issues would need to assume a more 'professional' (versus voluntary) status. They therefore would need reliable core funding to obtain a minimum of infrastructure. The groups would also benefit from some type of coordinating mechanism which could serve to maintain a more formal network than now exists. The purpose of this network would be to coordinate NGO input/critique of proposed activities with environmental repercussions, and to serve as a source for possible consultation in the design and monitoring of projects with potential environmental and social impact.

One would assume that MACOSS could, if confidence among environmental NGOs were built, serve a coordinating function for not only meetings, but for the dissemination of information on environmental issues to its approximately 100 member NGOs.

If MACOSS could not effectively assume this role, the necessity for establishing an environmental NGO network in Mauritius is even more apparent. In this case, the nucleus of an informal network of development NGOs already organized by CEDREFI could be strengthened. The scope of this informal network could be broadened to include developmental/environmental issues.

Collaboration between a developmental/environmental NGO network in Mauritius and other such networks in the region -- i.e., COMODE in Madagascar, perhaps LUNGOS in the Seychelles, etc., -- could be made. A coordinating role falls squarely within CEDREFI's mandate. As this is also the official mandate for MACOSS, resolution of who will be responsible for NGO coordination among development/environment NGOs will need to be made.

## NGO TECHNICAL STRENGTHENING NEEDS:

The key issue facing NGOs will be the extent to which they are technically capable of playing a role in project implementation. The GOM is reportedly supportive of the idea that NGOs will play a greater implementation role than heretofore, particularly as new post-UNCED (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) monies become available for sustainable development activities in Mauritius. Unfortunately, NGO technical

capacity to implement is constrained institutionally. Again, most NGOs are voluntary organizations lacking full-time staffs. While many of the development/environmental NGOs have good potential as technical implementors, their current range is limited by lack of infrastructure and full-time staffing.

Technical areas in which NGOs could benefit from capacity building activities could include the following:

- training of trainers in participatory rural appraisal (PRA) to give NGOs the skills to develop resource management plans together with communities (communities here could be interpreted as local level groupings, or as amalgams of local and national groups, government agencies included);
- project design and technical proposal design;
- environmental impact assessment skills; and
- small protected area management skills.

**STRUCTURING A PROGRAM:**

The program objectives in Mauritius would seem to be twofold: strengthen national NGO capacity to participate more effectively as both advocacy and implementation organizations; and create the framework in which NGOs in Mauritius could collaborate with other NGOs in the Indian Ocean sub-region on NRM issues.

With support, it is not inconceivable that Mauritian NGOs could play an important role in providing technical support services to NGOs in the region, particularly in Madagascar. As Mauritius becomes an increasingly important economic force in the Indian Ocean region, the opportunity for Mauritian NGOs to play a support role to other organizations in the area would appear excellent. Here Mauritius's bi-lingual capacity serves it in excellent stead.

In the case of Madagascar, it has, through COMODE, a well established NGO network which already focuses on NRM issues. The needs of COMODE's members for technical support will remain important, particularly after the PVO-NGO/NRMS project withdraws its technical support to COMODE in March 1993. With relations increasingly solidifying between CEDREFI and COMODE, it would appear that opportunities for Mauritian NGOs to provide technical support to their Malagasy counterparts would be excellent.

**LEAD ROLE:**

For many development/environment NGOs in Mauritius who are acquainted with MACOSS and who are involved in environmental activities, there is a degree of skepticism over MACOSS's ability to deliver services to promote increased environmental awareness, or to

deliver services to NGOs which would strengthen their technical capacity in the natural resources sector.

While MACOSS is clearly more experienced in social service related issues versus natural resources management issues, MACOSS professes the desire to assume a more active role in environmental issues. To gain credibility as an institution capable of working effectively at some level on environmental issues however, MACOSS will need to develop closer collaboration with the very NGOs which feel that it is unable to assume a coordinating role.

One of these NGOs, CEDREFI, has already organized an informal NGO network on development/environmental issues. Close consideration must be given in structuring any program in Mauritius as to whether it would be preferable to attempt working through MACOSS which already has a well established infrastructure and NGO forum which the government recognizes (and supports) or through a group based on a more independent CEDREFI model.

## STRUCTURING RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL NGOs:

While it would be hoped that any support activity would further reinforce NGO autonomy to promote pluralism in Mauritius's democratic process, it would be important that the activity also stimulate constructive collaboration between the NGO community and government. NGOs feel that GOM is not doing all it can to support sustainable development which is environmentally sound. In this, it is doubtful that the situation is much different from that existing between NGOs and North American or European governments; the situation anywhere from a NGO standpoint is far from perfect.

Given the size of the country, the strong NGO community, its comparative wealth, and government's supportive rhetoric for NGOs and sustainable development in Mauritius, any activity undertaken in Mauritius should focus on helping the NGO community and government build bridges, not barriers. Sustainable development will not be accomplished otherwise.

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The existing human resources in Mauritius are impressive. Two networks exist which could serve as the basis for a strong NRM activity, one perhaps better suited than the other for supporting an NRM mandate. With the appropriate degree of support, NGOs in Mauritius could not only expect to have a greater impact on government activities in development and environment, they also could

have a strong supportive influence on NGO colleagues and their eventual impact in other Indian Ocean countries.

- It is doubtful that PVO-NGO/NRMS could justify developing a focal country program in Mauritius. The fact that Mauritius like the Seychelles is perceived as a middle-income country according to World Bank indices, constrains PVO-NGO/NRMS from establishing a focal country program there. This may not, however, impede other potential donors/partners.

- It seems that Mauritius, like the Seychelles, could greatly benefit from an NGO strengthening activity. Given that most NGOs operate on a voluntary basis, it is likely that an intensive activity in Mauritius may not at this time be justified.

- On the other hand, a program which was systematic and focused on strengthening an NGO network with a regional overview would be very well received in Mauritius. Because of this, it is probably worth thinking of structuring a Mauritius program in conjunction with the Seychelles and other Indian Ocean countries. Here economies of scale, the experience of COMODE in a NRM activity over the last three years, and tremendous opportunities in the Seychelles would justify at the least structuring a program on a regional basis.

- Because Mauritius is small and relatively affluent by African indices, it, like the Seychelles, suffers from donor inattention. Rather than look at the opportunities to achieve something in Mauritius through leveraging existing human and financial resources, donors seem largely to shy away from Mauritius because it is too rich. This conclusion is short-sighted, and avoids the opportunities which Mauritius presents.

- A less intensive consortium building activity strengthening NGO technical and institutional skills would be highly appropriate in Mauritius. It would need at the outset to be structured around Mauritian NGOs schedules and desires; i.e., if the NGOs could make the time and human resource commitment to go far with the program, it could likely achieve more than we have suggested in this assessment.

- It is recommended that any program for Mauritius be structured around a regional Indian Ocean program, in which Mauritian NGOs not only benefit themselves from capacity building activities, but are enabled to help other NGOs in the region increase capacities.

**Attachment A**
**Contact List**

- **Centre de Documentation, de Recherches et de Formation Indianocéaniques (CEDREFI):** Pynee Chellapermal.
- **Conseil Malgache des ONGs Pour le Développement et l'Environnement (COMODE):** William Ramaroharinosy.
- **Fleurir Maurice:** C.K. Bhackory, director.
- **Fondation de France:** Michele Barriere, director, Third World programs.
- **Friends of Environment:** Monique Koenig, executive secretary.
- **Government of Mauritius:**
  - **Department of Environment, Ministry of Housing, Lands and Environment:** Mr. Kallee.
- **Mauritius Council of Social Service (MACOSS):** Dipsingh Lodeechand, assistant secretary.
- **Mauritius Council of Social Service (MACOSS):** L. Deepchand, chairman and assistant secretary.
- **Mauritius Marine Conservation Society (MMCS):** Yann von Arnim, aquaculture consultant.
- **Mauritius Wildlife Conservation Society:** V. Lutchman.
- **SPACE:** Nilanie Burn, director.
- **Wildlife Clubs of Mauritius (WCOM):** Saroja and Khemraj Sooknah, ecologists.
- **World Wildlife Fund (WWF):** Dr. Tundi Agardy, conservation biologist.

# ANNEX 1

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1. Background to PVO-NGO/NRMS

The PVO-NGO/NRMS project is a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)/Washington-funded project which has operated since September 1989. The first phase of the project was completed in September 1991. An extension was granted for the project to function through March 1993. Both phases were funded under the Natural Resources Management Support Project (698-0467).

The project is managed by a Management Consortium of US private voluntary organizations which includes World Learning Inc. (formerly the Experiment in International Living), CARE and World Wildlife Fund. The overriding objective of PVO-NGO/NRMS since its inception has been to strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Africa in the field of natural resources management (NRM). The project has focused on provision of technical assistance, training support and information exchange as a means to accomplish this objective.

The project has targeted activities during this period in Cameroon, Madagascar, Mali and Uganda. In each country, a country working group (CWG) or country consortium was formed which set the agenda for what activities in NRM would be prioritized. A lead agency (CLA) was selected from within the CWG. In Madagascar and in Mali the CLA is a national NGO or consortium of national NGOs, while in Cameroon the CLA has been an international NGO, and in Uganda it has been a consortium of both national and international NGOs.

In all instances, the Management Consortium empowered the four CWGs and CLAs to take the lead in identifying what specific activities in NRM would be undertaken. The role of the Management Consortium and project staff has been to provide the technical and institutional support to the four CWGs and their respective CLAs so that they were empowered in fact, not just rhetorically.

In addition to the target or focal country programs, the project has supported a regional program which has undertaken a diverse range of activities including the following: (1) an international workshop on buffer zone management bringing together NGO, government and resource-user populations to jointly analyze three different buffer zone situations in Uganda; (2) an assessment of economic options to development in the Dzangha-Sangha Forest Reserve in the Central African Republic; (3) development of a methodology to assess the potential for natural regeneration on farmers' fields in the Sahel; (4) an assessment of NGO approaches to NRM in the pastoral sector in East and West Africa, with an international workshop on the subject held in February 1993; (5) a workshop on research center/NGO approaches to

agricultural research held in Kenya for representatives from four African countries; (6) a participatory rural appraisal (PRA) workshop bringing NGO and government representatives from six African countries to Kenya; (7) an international workshop on NGO/community-based approaches to conservation in Southern Africa; (8) a workshop in Mali bringing together journalists from several Sahelian countries with Malian NGOs to develop ways to strengthen the interaction between the two to achieve production and dissemination of higher quality oral and written information on NRM to the Sahelian public; (9) presentation of the PVO-NGO/NRMS approach to NRM with NGOs in Africa at the Global Forum meetings coinciding with the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro; and (10) an assessment of NGO impact on natural resources policy at the government level in Kenya and Uganda.

Based on the 1992 external mid-term evaluation of the PVO-NGO/NRMS project, it appears as if PVO-NGO/NRMS has largely achieved its stated objectives. The primary questions confronting PVO-NGO/NRMS as of March 1993 are the following: (1) will financial sustainability for the four target country programs be secured in the coming months from respective USAID missions, through other donors, or via some combination thereof; and, (2) will the PVO-NGO/NRMS project succeed in obtaining additional funding to start new rounds of focal or target countries activities, maintain a strong regional program, and in so doing offer USAID or other donors with a proven model for working with NGO consortia in NRM in Africa or elsewhere in the world? A proposal to this effect has been submitted to USAID/Washington at the time of this writing.

## 2. Rationale for this Assessment

The PVO-NGO/NRMS project incorporated a "pre-catalytic activities" or "new initiatives" fund into its activities during the one and a half year extension phase running from October 1991 through March 1993.

The purpose of the new initiatives fund was to lay the groundwork for countries in which the project could potentially focus activities during a Phase II. It was decided by the Management Consortium that the first major activity under new initiatives should be to undertake a rapid, albeit accurate and analytical, assessment of NGO situations in NRM in a number of African countries.

In addressing the issue of a multi-country assessment, the objective of the Management Consortium was to assess a broad sample of countries throughout Africa. Nations were selected to assure that a range of countries bearing different characteristics be assessed. These characteristics in the sample included both small and large countries, both land-locked and coastal or island countries, countries where USAID support for NRM is strong or conversely where it may be weak. Countries were selected where ongoing Management Consortium programs operate or where the Management Consortium has no presence at all and in countries where new opportunities for working with NGOs appear exciting and, finally, countries where the knowledge base on NGO activities in NRM is either strong or else very limited. In sum, countries were selected not only because they may have promise

in terms of future funding opportunities with USAID, but also because the exercise may highlight information which could prove useful for the NGO community in the particular country and for potential collaborating agencies from outside the country.

To arrive at a sample, the following procedure was followed. Each member of the Consortium -- World Learning, CARE and WWF -- all nominated three countries it wished to see assessed; USAID/Analysis, Research and Technical Support (ARTS)/Food, Agriculture and Resources Analysis (FARA) nominated three countries; the consortium associates to the PVO-NGO/NRMS project, comprised primarily of a group of PVOs and several private sector firms, nominated two countries, and finally the project director of PVO-NGO/NRMS nominated two countries. The project director and the Management Consortium assured that several lesser-known countries were assessed.

In selecting countries, the objective was to assure that many types of situations would be assessed. It was felt that a driving objective of the assessment should be to provide all interested parties to NGO activities in NRM in Africa with the opportunity to benefit from this assessment. Again, the assessment was meant to complement USAID's analytical agenda which seeks to determine how different policies and programs can positively impact on NRM activities in Africa.

The greatest constraint to the assessment was the amount of time which was available for each given country. So too, the necessity of receiving clearance from the USAID missions forced the elimination of several countries, including South Africa, Botswana and Angola.

In the process of countries falling out, several additional countries were added, including Togo, Congo and Mauritius. Togo was added because the Management Consortium felt it would be interesting to look at Togo and Benin together as a possible "NGO unit." Congo was added at the behest of USAID/Washington. Mauritius was added due to proximity to the Seychelles and complications surrounding a planned assessment in Namibia. This opened the opportunity to visit another unique, very small country.

Finally, because of perceived future potential opportunities, desk studies were undertaken for Namibia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, despite the fact that USAID mission clearance to undertake assessments in these countries was not obtained.

### 3. Overview of Results

While the assessment was more cursory in several countries, key NGO issues in NRM along with a sense of the appropriateness of PVO-NGO/NRMS (or other similar capacity building projects) to operate in all of the countries has been obtained. Due to time constraints, in-depth information on NGO activities in NRM for several of the countries is lacking. While Namibia could unfortunately not be visited, available written documentation on NGO activity in Namibia is available. Discussions with people familiar with Namibia rounded out the picture to a degree.

Overall, countries were considered to be appropriate or inappropriate to work in on the basis of a number of criteria relating to:

- NGO experience in the country;
- enabling or disabling environment from a policy perspective;
- government and donor trends in NRM programming;
- USAID programming in NRM and potential support for a PVO-NGO/NRMS style project;
- NGO perceived needs;
- the feasibility of targeting NGOs for institutional strengthening;
- NGO technical capacity in NRM; and
- potential linkage with existing NRM networks.

In countries where USAID is unable or disinclined to provide support for a potential activity, the assessment still provides valid information for other interested actors. A number of the country assessments fall into this category.

Finally, because the country assessments were undertaken by six different consultants and because different countries offer such different situations, the assessments vary in terms of length and content. The assessment for Senegal for example is not comparable with that of Burundi, since so much more information on NGO activities is available for Senegal than for Burundi, and since donors have simply been far more active in NRM activities in Senegal than in Burundi. Differences between countries in the quantity and quality of information available on NGOs in NRM is most visible in the full length country assessments.

## 4. Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations are based on the criteria "bulleted" in Section 3 above. While the primary focus of the assessment has been to gauge the NGO/NRM situation and on that basis recommend where the PVO-NGO/NRMS project could consider working, the recommendations have been prepared with a wide readership in mind.

Recommendations are organized on a country by country basis, and are structured according to highlights coming out of the assessment criteria. Table 1, the NGO/NRMS Assessment Ratings, provides an overview of where a PVO-NGO/NRMS type activity is recommended on the basis of:

- objective NGO/NRM criteria independent of USAID interests, or
- USAID/ Washington or individual USAID mission interest.

The Overview of Findings Matrix provides in summary form an overview of the major findings.



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## II. OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

Results of the assessments found that there are many countries in Africa which could benefit from PVO-NGO/NRMS style activities, and in which such activities could be feasibly undertaken given NGO needs and the enabling environment. As might be expected, many opportunities and needs identified in one assessment resonate in one or more of the other country assessments. The Overview of Findings Matrix summarizes the findings.

This section of the executive summary highlights where opportunities to work with NGOs on NRM exist in the countries assessed. Emphasis in this section is not on whether USAID missions are or might be interested in this type of activity. It therefore is meant to be of use for any reader interested in the results of the NGO/NRM assessment. This section provides some of the rationale behind the NGO/NRM assessment ranking shown above.

Countries assessed which offer strong opportunities for NGO work in NRM include the following: Benin, Congo, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles and Tanzania.

Countries assessed which offer a fair opportunity include: Central African Republic, Eritrea, Ghana and Togo. "Fair opportunity" here means that while there is some in-country interest, the enabling environment may not be optimal, the NGO community may be too disorganized and/or preoccupied in other sectors, or there may simply be too much political instability for the time being in the country.

Countries with slight opportunity include Burundi and Zambia. "Slight opportunity" refers here to the NGO community being highly limited, their interest in NRM being slight, and for the enabling environment not necessarily being as optimal as it could be.

While the specific reasons differ country by country, the over-arching reason for a "strong" assessment rating in these countries relates to: (1) the self-perceived needs of the NGO community and expressed desire to become involved in an activity like this; (2) the objectively perceived opportunity for a consortium-building project focusing on capacity building to strengthen NGO skills; (3) the enabling environment, specifically government attitudes toward the activity; and, (4) NGO experience in NRM activities (or desire to become more involved).

The ranking involves more than a degree of subjectivity. The ratings do, however, reflect the tenor and recommendations of each of the assessments.



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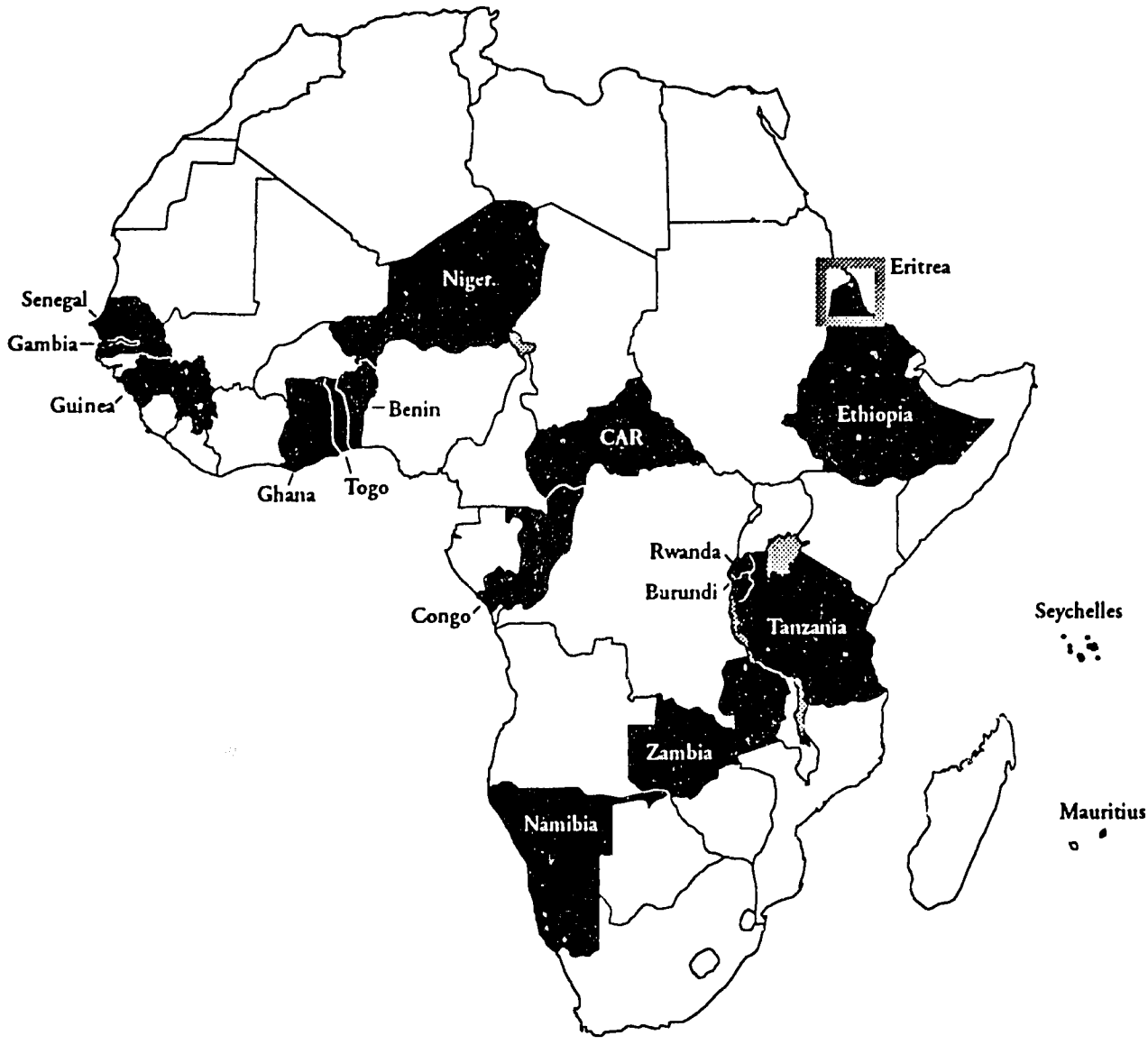


The African Continent

## Table 1 NGO/NRMS Assessment Ratings

| Countries Assessed | Perceived NRM Opportunity[1] | AID Interest[8] |
|---|---|---|
| Benin | 1 | 1 |
| Burundi | 3 | 3 |
| Central African Republic | 2 | 4 |
| Congo | 1 | 2 |
| Eritrea[2] | 2 | — |
| Ethiopia[2] | 1 | 2 |
| Gambia | 1 | 1 |
| Ghana | 2 | 2 |
| Guinea | 1 | 1/a[3] |
| Mauritius | 1 | 4/p[4] |
| Namibia[2] | 1 | 3/b[5] |
| Niger[6] | 1[7] | 1/b[5] |
| Rwanda | 1 | 3 |
| Senegal | 1 | 1-2/a[9] |
| Seychelles | 1 | 4 |
| Tanzania | 1 | 2 |
| Togo | 2 | 3 |
| Zambia | 3 | 3 |

Key: 1 = Strong; 2 = Fair; 3 = Slight; 4 = None; a = conditional; b = uncertain; p = probable

*(1) Perceived NRM opportunity refers to the perception of PVO-NGO/NRMS based on assessment that an opportunity does or does not exist independent of USAID interest.*
*(2) Desk study only.*
*(3) Based on information from USAID/Guinea.*
*(4) Based on presumed USAID interest given current programming trends.*
*(5) USAID interest either not explored or uncertain.*
*(6) Based on PVO-NGO/NRMS assessment undertaken in Niger in 1990.*
*(7) Based primarily on 1990 assessment of opportunity.*
*(8) Refers to USAID Mission's interest in the respective country.*
*(9) Based on information from USAID/Senegal.*

## Overview of Findings Matrix

| Country | NGO Experience | Enabling Environment | Government/Donor Trends | NGO Needs | Feasibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Benin | • Recent burgeoning<br>• Weak skills generally | • Encouraging | • Decentralization through NEAP<br>• UNDP's Africa 2000<br>• USAID focus on health, education, socio-economic services, with potential NRM interest as "target of opportunity" | • Across-the-board technically and institutionally | • Excellent overall<br>• Potential constraint for USAID mission due to NRM as "target of opportunity" vs. focus |
| Burundi | • Very limited | • Becoming more conducive<br>• NGO status still somewhat confused | • Decentralization policy<br>• Forthcoming NEAP and Africa 2000<br>• National environmental education plan through Peace Corps.<br>• NRM is no longer a USAID focal area | • Across-the-board technically and institutionally | • Premature for focal country program given limited NGO community and Africa 2000 project<br>• Bring into regional program activities |
| Central African Republic | • Few NGOs<br>• Thin line between NGOs and government<br>• Overall somewhat weak relative to other countries | • Ambiguous in current political and economic environment | • Generally ambiguous pending elections<br>• Major EEC NRM initiative for April 1993<br>• Major WWF ICDP activity ongoing in southwest (Dzangha-Sangha)<br>• Low USAID priority in NRM | • Networking across regions<br>• Across-the-board technically and institutionally | • Premature for focal country program<br>• Potential to bring into regional program activities |
| Congo | • Most are bureaucratic creations<br>• Few national NGOs servicing communities | • Significant structural adjustment program theoretically providing strong NGO opportunities | • Significant interest<br>• Little programmed for local NGOs<br>• USAID "small country program" managed from USAID/W has environmental focus | • Across-the-board technically and institutionally | • Very good |
| Eritrea | • Embryonic after 30 years of war | • Strong provisional government role<br>• "Planned obsolescence" is objective for international NGOs from government perspective | • Department of Agriculture involved in NRM training for NGOs<br>• EAP planned<br>• Potential UNDP role<br>• USAID discussions with PGE not yet finalized | • Across-the-board technically and institutionally | • Premature for focal country<br>• Potential to bring into regional program |
| Ethiopia | • Over 75 NGOs with 80% of these international<br>• Strong experience in famine relief | • Strong government respect for NGOs<br>• Government accepting role for national NGOs in evolving pluralism and decentralization<br>• Supportive of skill transfer program<br>• Strong donor support as long as national reconciliation continues | • New government ministry for NRM<br>• World Bank financing for forestry Action Plan<br>• Reconstitution of national parks planned<br>• UNDP, IUCN, UNSO, WFP, NORAD, SIDA, UNICEF, USAID are all active<br>• USAID interest is function of how food security could be enhanced | • NGOs must shift programming from relief to development<br>• Limited financial resources for national NGOs | • Potential for becoming a focal country |

## Overview of Findings Matrix (continued)

| Country | NGO Experience | Enabling Environment | Government/Donor Trends | NGO Needs | Feasibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gambia | • Limited national experience in NRM<br>• Several strong donor-sponsored NRM programs<br>• Multitude of new NGOs | • Positive<br>• Strong state support<br>• Government playing increasing coordination role<br>• Policy constraints addressed in EAP | • Promotion of participatory planning and implementation<br>• USAID supports legislative reforms to enable greater local NRM<br>• UNSO supports EAP<br>• UNDP supports NGO umbrella organization (TANGO)<br>• GTZ works in BZM | • Across-the-board technically and institutionally | • Good potential<br>• Need to work fit with evolving USAID NRM portfolio to be feasible |
| Ghana | • Characterized by small community-based groups working largely in isolation<br>• Two umbrella groups exist: NENGO for environment and GAPVOD for development NGO work | • Welcoming<br>• Serious decentralization effort through NEAP<br>• Government support for NGO promotion | • Support for pilot village land management through World Bank project<br>• Dynamic African 2000 program<br>• UNDP support to GAPVOD<br>• AID support for non-traditional export crops | • Information sharing and across-the-board technical and institutional assistance | • Potentially feasible but perhaps premature given ongoing activities and apparent NGO community's internal strains |
| Guinea | • Recently burgeoning<br>• Few of the 200 plus actually operational | • Government decentralization encouraging NGOs<br>• Attempt to inject rigor between NGO categories: associations, service organizations, professional groups, etc. | • EAP in preparation<br>• USAID major watershed management activities in Fouta Djallon<br>• World Bank, UNDP, FAO, EEC, UNESCO are all active in agricultural sector activities and some biodiversity work | • Across-the-board technically and institutionally<br>• Inter-NGO coordination | • Good potential<br>• High demand for assistance could be challenging in service delivery |
| Mauritius | • Small but talented in environmental sector<br>• Large in social services with MACOSS umbrella organization | • Functioning democratic parliamentary system in country makes it unique in region<br>• Government reportedly hopes NGOs become strong implementors as well as excellent advocates | • Limited in environmental sector<br>• Government would like to develop larger portfolio post-UNCED<br>• USAID has no NRM program and none envisioned | • Attaining technical competence in project implementation<br>• Professionalizing staff<br>• Coordination | • Excellent on regional basis<br>• Focal country program could be constrained by NGO staff/infrastructure constraints<br>• "Middle income" status constrains donors in NRM |
| Namibia | • 125 NGOs<br>• Weak grassroot organizations<br>• A number of strong national NGOs | • As yet no intermediate government structures exist creating intersecting opportunity/constraint<br>• Scant extension capacity<br>• Land tenure remains potential constraint to community-based NRM<br>• No NGO legislation | • USAID's LIFE project targets NRM in Caprivi and Bushmanland<br>• READ will promote socio-economic development through community-based organizations | • Weak infrastructure and management systems<br>• Across-the-board technical and institutional strengthening | • Good if USAID recognizes the potential complementarity between LIFE, READ, and PVO-NGO/NRMS<br>• Danger of NGO community becoming overextended |

## Overview of Findings Matrix (continued)

| Country | NGO Experience | Enabling Environment | Government/Donor Trends | NGO Needs | Feasibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Niger | • Many international NGOs<br>• Few national NGOs<br>• Fairly undeveloped NGO umbrella organization compared with others in Sahel (GAP) | • Improving as of 1990 vis à vis government<br>• Constrained by overall economic crisis in country | • Government seeks to amend existing texts to facilitate NGO work<br>• Both government and donors try to amend Rural Code and resolve land tenure issues to promote greater community participation in NRM | • Clarified legal status<br>• Increased flexibility to work at community level<br>• Across-the-board technical and institutional strengthening | • Potentially good if government supportive<br>• Improving as GAP |
| Rwanda | • Considerable in agriculture and natural resources sector<br>• Wide variety of in-country training services | • Positive policy environment<br>• High percentage of country under protected area status<br>• Highly participatory NEAP with government/NGO collaboration<br>• Civil strife still unsettling | • Government support of private sector NRM initiatives<br>• Continued European donor support of tree planting/community woodlot projects<br>• USAID shift in portfolio away from NRM as key focal activity to "target of opportunity" | • NRM technical skill areas<br>• PRA<br>• Information exchange with communities in other countries | • Some potential through USAID PVO project<br>• Limited as stand-alone activity<br>• Civil strife problematic |
| Senegal | • Considerable since 1970s<br>• Reasonable technical strength in forestry-related activities<br>• Well known NGO umbrella organization (CONGAD) covering many sectors | • Government push to decentralization could favor NGOs<br>• Good potential for collaboration with USAID's PVO Strengthening project and Africa 2000<br>• Relative sophistication of Senegalese NGOs in donor dealings | • Much NRM activity on policy and field level<br>• With decentralization, support of grassroots participatory methodologies<br>• USAID bolstering linkage between agricultural research and NGOs to influence community adoption of improved NR-based technologies | • Greater coordination on environmental issues<br>• Project design and implementation skills<br>• Strengthened extension capacity of NRM technologies | • Good potential as complement to USAID and Africa 2000 activities if USAID perceived interest<br>• Excellent potential as non-focal country through regional program |
| Seychelles | • Few NGOs until recently, most operate ad hoc<br>• Nucleus of international conservation NGOs with local affiliates<br>• New NGO environmental lobby<br>• LUNGOS umbrella organization still weak | • Democratization processes permitting greater role for NGOs<br>• Government more supportive of NGOs | • No discernible trend<br>• World Bank/UNEP environmental management plan completed<br>• No USAID support for NRM<br>• Government open to NRM/environmental projects<br>• Particularly supportive of protected areas | • Financial support to develop NGO infrastructure<br>• Project design and implementation skills<br>• Sharpened awareness raising/negotiation skills<br>• Some EIA/integrating conservation with development skills | • Excellent for a donor willing to support an NGO program in a "middle income country"<br>• Good for PVO-NGO/NRMS if linked to other Indian Ocean countries |
| Tanzania | • Of 400 registered NGOs most in welfare and relief<br>• Most institutionally weak<br>• Limited technical capability | • Supportive of democratic processes<br>• Government anticipates much NGO participation in development broadly, and forestry activities in particular | • Canada, Sweden, Norway, U.K., and World Bank have broad NRM portfolios<br>• NRM is not an USAID focus | • Across-the-board technical and institutional strengthening | • Good if centrally-funded<br>• Potential through other donors |