Policies for sustainable land management in the highlands of Ethiopia

Summary of papers and proceedings of a seminar held at the International Livestock Research Institute, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22–23 May 2000
Policies for sustainable land management in the Ethiopian highlands: Project objectives, activities and organisation

J. Pender
International Food Policy Research Institute, USA

Motivation for project

- Severe interrelated problems of low agricultural productivity, land degradation and poverty in the Ethiopian highlands.
- Cereal yields less than 1 tonne/hectare (t/ha) are common.
- Evidence of severe soil erosion and soil nutrient depletion.
- Most farmers surviving with less than 1 ha of land and incomes less than US$ 1 per day.
- Large public and private investments (infrastructure, research and extension, education, conservation measures etc.) being made to address problems.
- Although proximate causes of problems known, underlying factors and impacts of policies not well understood.

Genesis of project

- Initial planning (1996–98)
  - Literature review, consultations and field visits.
  - Participatory planning workshops
    - National workshop: November 1996.
  - Key problem areas identified: soil erosion, soil fertility depletion, overgrazing and deforestation.
  - Key policy issues identified: impacts of land policies, market policies, infrastructure, research, extension, conservation measures and decentralisation/governance.
- Initiation of project: late 1997 (Tigray) and late 1998 (Amhara and Oromiya).

Objectives

- To improve understanding of land degradation and its causes in the Ethiopian highlands.
To identify major pathways of development in the highlands, their causes and implications.
To identify and assess policies and strategies to facilitate more productive, sustainable and poverty-reducing pathways of development.
To increase awareness of land degradation problems and strategies to promote more productive and sustainable land management.
To strengthen the capacity to conduct socio-economic and policy research related to sustainable land management in the region.

Activities

- Problem characterisation and generation of hypotheses—literature review, consultations, field visits and evaluation of secondary data.
- Identification of development pathways and land management practices, their causes and implications—community-, household- and plot-level surveys.
- Assessment of policy, institutional and technology options to improve land management—analysis of surveys and bio-economic models.
- Outreach activities—including policy workshops, dissemination of papers and policy briefs, and the National Advisory Committee.
- Capacity strengthening activities—including involvement of collaborators in research and publications, support to Ethiopian graduate students, training workshops etc.

Organisation

- Overall project leadership and co-ordination: IFPRI and ILRI
- Tigray
  - Leadership: IFPRI, ILRI, Mekelle University
  - Collaborators: Tigray Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Tigray Bureau of Planning and Economic Development, and others
- Amhara
  - Leadership: IFPRI, ILRI, Amhara National Regional Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the Agricultural University of Norway
  - Collaborators: Amhara National Regional Bureau of Planning and Economic Development, and others
- Oromiya
  - Leadership: IFPRI, ILRI, Oromiya Agricultural Development Bureau, Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organization, Purdue University (USA) and Manchester University (UK)
- Linkages to other international research programmes and similar IFPRI-led research in Uganda:
– African Highlands Initiative
– Soil, Water and Nutrient Management Programme
• Financial support: Switzerland, Norway, Italy, USA, IFPRI and ILRI core resources