

A fairer, more just world in which poverty has receded

A Vision Statement: The Planet2050 Workshop, Lund, 26-31 October 2008 – Jennifer Mohamed-Katerere

Its 2050, Africa prospers and her people have secured sustainable livelihoods; hunger and the lack of opportunity no longer persist. In Southeast Asia the benefits of economic growth are shared more equitably. Worldwide a new understanding of community has emerged in which all are ‘citizens’

Many policy changes underpin this reality, but **rights** – negative and positive, procedural and substantive – are the transforming force catalysing positive, reinforcing, and sustainable changes that enlarge the capacity of poor and other marginalised people, including women, to achieve desired futures. In 2008, global food and financial crises, and the prospect of huge climate-related declines in human wellbeing and global instability make the transformation of policy and institutional architecture urgent. With human rights – and obligations – at the heart of this transformation power relations are recast, sustainability is secured, and human dignity ensured. Five core changes are evident:

- More *rigorous interlinked and inclusive knowledge-policy processes* support improved understandings of the links between sustainability and rights. *Knowledge exchanges* (between scientists, communities, policymakers) and *alliances* based on mutual respect are pivotal.
- Better understanding of the *interconnectedness* between all people (and nations) and the recognition that rights play out in a global context leads to more active, willing engagement with historical realities and related issues of equity, justice, and responsibility. The *Right to Development* along with rights to water and food are widely recognised and implementation efforts are supported by developed and developing governments, and other dutybearers and rightsholders. This engenders multiple changes in development practice, the private sector, international and regional law, and interstate cooperation that improve opportunities for local people. For example, shared water management makes a decisive break with physical allocation systems, approaches now emphasize the *equitable sharing of benefits*; at times this exchange of benefits and opportunities cuts across a range of resources. The complexity of the institutional landscape including the plethora of rightsholders is acknowledged. .
- The recognition that governments have an obligation not only to *refrain from harm* but to *positively contribute to the realization of fundamental rights* – to water, food, health – that underlie human dignity and wellbeing inform this new focus on rights. This sets a new standard for assessing decisions prior to implementation and evaluating performance.
- *More secure rights to natural resources, knowledge, and cultures* support more efficient, equitable, and sustainable production systems. The diverse use of resources is supported by enhancing *synergies* between divergent tenure regimes, including water rights in agricultural, pastoral, industrial and wildlife-management systems. Rights of Indigenous People (recognised in 2008 by the UN) are extended to other resource producer communities. Consequently, perverse development and tenure policies that pit one set of livelihoods against another are avoided. Resource appropriation – for climate mitigation (REDD, CDM), protected areas etc – that undercut livelihoods no longer drives environmental response and practices emerge that empower people. ‘Fences’ between protected areas and people, landed and mobile peoples, etc come down. The fragmentation of ecosystems and governance is avoided and *more viable, diverse and dynamic landscapes* in which people and biodiversity flourish emerge. More secure tenure has many positive outcomes including strengthened access to credit which in turn buttresses livelihoods and resilience.
- Increased emphasis on *inclusion, transparency and accountability* in decisionmaking and the development of supportive legal frameworks (including prior informed consent) ensures that

development policies do not extinguish livelihood paths. Access to information is enhanced as better communication systems are achieved and the information technology divide is bridged through more secure rights and obligations.