

6th Annual AfD / EUDN Conference
12nd november 2008, Paris.

Population and natural resources. Managing pressure
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Growing pressure on natural resources (agricultural lands, forests, water spaces, pastures, fossil fuels, etc.) occurs as a result of population growth and increasing demand accompanying improvements in standards of living in various parts of the world. The following questions inevitably arise in this context. Is such a pressure sustainable in the long run and, if it can be somehow managed by human intervention, what is the role played by behaviour responses on the part of private agents acting in a decentralised manner, and what is the part to be played by public policies? Which is the nature of the desirable public policies, not only on the level of technologies but also of institutions (property rights, in particular)? In addition, to the extent that scarcity of resources generates considerable rents in the hands of those who own a large chunk of them (oil states, for example), the question also arises as to how these rents could be managed in a manner that is both efficient and compatible with the interests of the many? In attempting to provide answers to these difficult and topical questions, the speakers will illustrate their statements by referring to case studies of particular resources and areas.

Programme

9h15-9h30: opening session

Jean-Philippe Platteau, EUDN and **Pierre Jacquet**, Agence Française de Développement.

9h30-10h15: Keynote address: Jared Diamond (*University of California, Los Angeles*)

"Coping with Change"

How do societies and individuals adapt successfully or not to crises?

10h15-10h45 Debate

10h45-11h: Coffee break

11h-12h45: 1st round table. Agriculture: how to reconcile demographic pressure, productivity and sustainability?

Michael Carter (*University of Wisconsin*)

"Investing in agricultural innovation: the role of financial markets"

The theory of induced agricultural innovation suggests that there is a path of appropriate technological change even for economies characterized by rapid population growth and increasing land scarcity. While some believe that market signals alone are adequate to foster agricultural growth—recent experience suggests otherwise. This presentation will first consider the evidence on rural financial markets: how and why they tend to constrain investment needed for agricultural productivity growth, especially in economies in which small farms predominate. We will then consider a new generation of risk management interventions designed to alter the conditions that lead to dysfunctional rural financial markets and ultimately crowd in both the institutions and the innovations needed for sustainable technological change in agriculture.

Discussants:

Michel Griffon (CIRAD), to be confirmed.

Ernest Aryeetey (University of Ghana, Legon), to be confirmed

12h45-14h: lunch break

14h-15h30: 2nd round table. What policies to fight against forest degradation in developing countries?

Jean-Marie Baland (*University of Namur*)

“Forest degradation and the role of public authorities: the case of the Indian Himalaya”

Forest degradation in Indian Himalaya leads to spectacular soil erosion and threatens the equilibrium of the major rivers of the region. Different kinds of public interventions to reduce human pressure on forests will be studied here, taking advantage of several field studies. This pressure will most likely rise in the coming years due to demographic growth and weak elasticity of households' wood consumption to wood collection costs. Policies meant to reduce wood-heating, the subsidization of alternative energies such as natural gas and the modernization of property rights will be analyzed.

Discussants:

Melissa Leach (IDS), to be confirmed.

Denis Loyer (AFD), to be confirmed.

15h30-15h45: coffee break

15h45-17h15: 3rd Round table. Natural resources and rents: how to lift the resource curse?

Chair: François Bourguignon (to be confirmed)

Alan Gelb (*World Bank*)

“The second time around: Have oil exporters learned from the last oil boom?”

Oil exporters need to confront two main problems in seeking to harness resources for development. First the extreme volatility of revenues; second the severity of the principal agent problems between oil companies, producer governments and the (current and future) citizens of producing countries. Citizens may be the ultimate "owners" of the resources, but it is not clear how ownership is to be effectively exercised, especially in countries with weak institutions. Moreover, it is not clear that electoral competition alone will solve the problem because of the incentives for it to turn into competition for rents. The paper will present lessons from past experience, provide a comparative analysis of exporters' trajectories through the start of the current oil boom, and consider approaches towards creating "agents of restraint" that can help to support better policies.

Discussants:

Thomas Sterner (*University of Gotenburg*)

Pierre-Noël Giraud (*Ecole des Mines de Paris*), to be confirmed.

17h30-18h30 Final round table

Monique Barbut, CEO, Global Environment Facility, to be confirmed.

Wangari Maathai, 2004 Peace Nobel prize, to be confirmed.

Jean-Philippe Platteau, EUDN President.

Jean-Michel Severino, CEO, AFD.