

D+C

MONTHLY E-PAPER

DEVELOPMENT AND
COOPERATION

ENTWICKLUNG UND
ZUSAMMENARBEIT

D+C

E+Z

International
Journal

ISSN

2366-7257

June 2017

VENEZUELA

A country sliding
towards full-blown
dictatorship

ISLAMISTS

How Saudi Arabia
and Qatar disagree
on faith based politics

TAXES

African countries
must generate
domestic revenues



Land ownership

Land ownership

Roots of violence

Riots in Kenya are not only linked to ethnic identities, but relate to issues of land ownership too, as Paul Kawegah of GIZ elaborates. Some problems date back to the colonial era. **PAGE 19**

Secure tenure

Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development is promoting poor people's right to land. Sustainable agricultural development depends on secure tenure, writes Gunther Beger, one of its leading officers. As journalist Elijah Grega spells out, smallholders in Sierra Leone are frustrated about land being leased out to foreign investors. In Chad, disputes over land often trigger violence, as human-rights activist Djeralar Miankeol reports, and the livelihoods of smallholders are being destroyed. **PAGES 21, 23, 24**

Colonial legacies

Namibia became independent in 1990, but land is still distributed in an unfair manner. According to the political scientist Henning Melber, colonial legacies are evident. Things are similar in Guinea-Bissau, where the government must implement its new land policy to prevent violence, as peace activists Armando Mussa Sani and Jasmina Barckhausen argue. **PAGES 26, 29**

Cambodian controversies

Many smallholders in Cambodia fear they may lose the land they depend on. Development consultants Frank Bliss and Karin Gaesing discuss approaches to improve matters. Journalist Sun Narin explains how land controversies became common in Cambodia. **PAGES 31, 34**

Crowded slums

Since urban land is very expensive, masses of poor people live in densely populated informal settlements. In India, many of them are at constant risk of eviction, according to Roli Mahajan, a Delhi-based journalist. **PAGE 36**

Dangers of displacement

Displacement in the context of major infrastructure projects compounds problems of poverty. A World Bank scholar has done seminal work on the matter. Korinna Horta of Urgewald, a German non-governmental organisation, demands that international financial institutions must heed his lessons. **PAGE 38**

Monitor

The growing role of philanthropy in the USA has impacts on global affairs | Assessing the merits of foreign direct investments in Africa | Better education and more investments are key to African development | Nowadays: Small ethnic community in Zimbabwe is blamed for climate change | Imprint **4**

Debate

Comments on Venezuela's crisis, the need to generate tax revenues in Africa, tensions between Qatar and its Arab neighbours and US President Donald Trump's decision to opt out of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change | Letter to the editor **9**

Tribune

CORNELIA HEINE

Both human and animal health depend on access to water and proper sanitation **14**

MARTIN NOLTZE AND SVEN HARTEN

To achieve SDGs, development agencies must close knowledge gaps **16**

Focus: Land ownership

PAUL KAWEGAH

In Kenya, land conflicts and ethnic tensions are historically interrelated **19**

GUNTHER BEGER

Secure tenure is key to the sustainable development of agriculture **21**

ELIJAH GREGA

Smallholder farmers in Sierra Leone are furious about land being leased to foreign investors **23**

DJERALAR MIANKEOL

Chad's land conflicts are escalating, and farmers tend to lose out **24**

ARMANDO MUSSA SANI AND JASMINA BARCKHAUSEN

To prevent violence, Guinea-Bissau must implement its new land policy **26**

HENNING MELBER

In spite of independence, Namibia's land distribution remains inequitable **29**

FRANK BLISS AND KARIN GAESING

Poverty will persist unless legal certainty is provided in regard to land ownership **31**

SUN NARIN

Why land disputes have become common in Cambodia **34**

ROLI MAHAJAN

Masses of Indian slum dwellers live in fear of eviction **36**

KORINNA HORTA

International financial institutions must heed the lessons learned in regard to displacement and poverty **38**

Concern for the most vulnerable

“De-risking” is a new catchword in development finance. It means to reduce the risks that are linked to any given project or programme. The “crucial question”, in the eyes of the prominent development sociologist Michael Cernea is: “whose risks?” Not only investors need protection, he argues, but so do the people who are displaced, victimised and at risk of poverty. Once the World Bank’s new Environmental and Social Framework comes into force next year, however, they will be even more likely to be neglected than they have been so far.

By Korinna Horta

Cernea certainly knows about risks that go along with aid. In 1974, he was the first ever sociologist to become a member of World Bank staff. He spent the next quarter century fighting intellectual battles inside and often outside the institution, demanding that official development assistance take into account social-science knowledge, and not only consider economic modelling. He edited a seminal book “Putting people first” (1985/1991), which was translated into many languages and has become a classic text on participatory development.

Formally retired from the World Bank, Cernea continues to be a prolific writer. At the World Bank he was responsible for several ground-breaking achievements, but is perhaps best known for his work on forced displacement. In 1980, the World Bank published a policy he had drafted on the matter. It ushered in a new era because other multilateral and bilateral agencies fast adopted similar approaches in their policy guidelines.

The new policy pointed out that development-related large-scale displacement affects millions of people. It must be avoided to the extent possible. If it cannot be avoided, the negative impacts must be contained. The poorest people must not be forced to bear the costs of development. The World Bank has to assume responsibility and cannot leave the issue to local authorities relying on local means.

The policy stated that, when a project leads to displacement and necessitates re-

settlement, the related costs are an integral component of that project. The point was that financiers and governments cannot treat people like disposable goods. People have rights, ownership and aspirations.

THE IRR MODEL

IRR is a planning tool that Cernea developed and made quite popular. The three letters stand for “Impoverishment risks and reconstruction model for resettling displaced populations”. He first presented it at a conference on hydropower in China.

The model identifies eight fundamental and recurrent risks that recur in the context of forced displacement:

- landlessness,
- joblessness,
- homelessness,
- marginalisation,
- food insecurity,
- loss of access to common property resources,

- loss of health and
- community disarticulation.

These risks must be controlled. Depressingly, that is not what “de-risking” as used in the current jargon of international financial institutions (IFIs) means. Instead, de-risking is a one-sided strategy to mobilise private capital from risk-shy investors. One option is to provide risk insurance, another is to ensure that the regulations of developing countries permit attractive returns to private investors.

IFIs including the World Bank and its regional multilateral sisters are keen on leveraging private investments for major infrastructure projects. Unless private-sector capital flows in large amounts, the investment goals set by the G20 cannot be met as it will prove impossible to channel trillions rather than merely billions of dollars into infrastructure.

Top IFI managers are fond of de-risking, but it is alarming that they tend to only consider investors’ risks. At least that was evident at this year’s spring meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in Washington. Local people’s risks of being uprooted, marginalised and impoverished in the context of large

Indigenous people protest against Belo Monte dam in Brasilia in 2013.



infrastructure projects was hardly considered. The lessons that Cernea taught are not being heeded.

IFIs must do more than state their commitment to inclusive and sustainable development. The risks poor people face – and in particular displacement – must be recognised in advance and addressed transparently in cooperation with the communities concerned. The IFIs have adopted environmental and social standards that oblige them to do so.

The depressing truth, however, is that the standards are not enforced stringently for several reasons, and things are likely to get even worse. Typically, the governments of the countries where infrastructure is being built show little concern for poor and marginalised groups. They want new roads, dams, mines, power plants et cetera. IFI managers, in turn, are interested in implementing many projects fast, not least because they fear to be crowded out by private-sector banks and new multilateral banks, such as the China-led Asian

Infrastructure Investment Bank, which is based in Beijing.

The World Bank's new Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) will become effective in 2018. Experience shows that it is likely to be emulated by other IFIs. The new Framework takes a "risk-based approach", which means that risks do not have to be identified early on, but will be tackled as they emerge in the course of a project. Moreover, the new Framework increasingly relies on the environmental and social standards of borrowing governments rather than on multilateral standards.

According to Cernea's experience, the "risk-based" approach means that displacement risks will increase without mitigation. He says the World Bank should not be "learning by doing" because that means that "others will have to pay the costs" of lessons. Moreover, the Bank will keep forgetting what it has just learned. "The next project will be just the same," Cernea warns.

Cernea points out that infrastructure projects require land and, in past decades,

have uprooted millions of people. In his view, it is a growing pathology in development finance that projects are given "right of way", whilst displacement and impoverishment are not properly addressed.



KORINNA HORTA
is a senior adviser with Urgewald, a non-governmental organisation based in Germany.

korinna.horta@gmail.com

REFERENCES AND LINKS

- Cernea, M., 1991: Putting people first: sociological variables in rural development. 2nd edition, Oxford: University Press.**
- Cernea, M., 2004: Impoverishment risks, risk management and reconstruction: a model of population displacement and resettlement. Washington: World Bank.**
<https://commdev.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Impoverishment-Risks-Risk-Management-and-Reconstruction.pdf>

Marked by displacement

Michael Cernea, the sociologist who had a strong impact on World Bank policies on preventing forced displacement, was born in Romania. He is the child of a Jewish family who miraculously escaped the Nazi Holocaust, including a pogrom that killed over 12,000 Jews in



Michael Cernea.

his hometown Jassi. In mid-life, in 1974, he and his family moved to the USA. He personally knows hardship.

Nazi rule and the personal experience of oppression deeply marked his thinking. His family lost its livelihood and became impoverished. Racist laws barred him from going to a state school. It was dangerous to walk the long way to a poor community school. He spent a year at home. In 1944, as the Soviet offensive was beating back the German army, the family managed to flee to Bucharest.

Cernea stayed committed to fighting discrimination of any kind. The violence and terror that marked his early life

has contributed to his approach to social exclusion, marginalisation and injustice.

Cernea studied philosophy, paying particular attention to social matters and political economy. After the war, however, Romania's democracy did not last long. The Communist Party's early promises of freedom, equality and social justice soon evaporated. In a spirit of defiance, he wrote a doctoral thesis on the "Contradictions in Socialist Society". It took him four years to get it accepted, and by then he knew that it would be impossible to pursue his interest in action-oriented sociology in his own country.

Academic institutions in North America became aware of his empirical work. He was invited to the USA and Canada and eventually decided to stay.

With support from US senators, he managed to get the Communist Regime's permission for his family to join him. Then World Bank President Robert McNamara, who was focusing on rural poverty alleviation, hired him, thus providing him with a prominent public platform to work as a development sociologist.

At the World Bank, Cernea made key contributions to laying the foundations of the socio-anthropology of development, a new field in applied social sciences. He won prestigious awards, the Kimball Award (1988) and the Malinowski Prize (1995), for his pioneering work on basing public policy and development programmes on social-science knowledge. Cernea continues to be a scholar and a leading authority on forced displacement and resettlement.