

**CONFLICT, DEVELOPMENT & POLITICS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS
PROVINCE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA
WORKSHOP REPORT**

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The **Southern Highlands** workshop was held at Old Canberra House, Australian National University, 26th – 27th May, 2003. The workshop, supported by AusAID, was hosted by the Centre for Conflict and Post-Conflict Studies, Asia Pacific (ANU), in collaboration with the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Project (SSGM). Ron May, convenor of the Centre for Conflict and Post-Conflict Studies, Asia Pacific, officially opened the workshop, followed by a short introductory address by Stephanie Copus-Campbell of AusAID.

Over two days, nine sessions were held, exploring key issues in the Southern Highlands, land, economics and development in Southern Highlands, the dynamics of conflict, the roots of conflict, local perspectives on conflict, conflict resolution and local level development, the future of resource development, political prospects and key issues arising from the workshop. On Wednesday the 28th May, a number of workshop participants visited AusAID in order to further discuss issues raised during the workshop, with a particular view to informing donor practice.

The workshop involved representatives from various groups in the Southern Highlands, from civil society, the media, academia and the donor community. Primarily, it aimed to explore key issues in the Southern Highlands, the nature of conflict, the prospects for conflict transformation, and the possible roles for donors in conflict and post-conflict situations. These objectives were met via both formal seminar presentations and informal panel discussions, allowing policy community actors, local people, stakeholders and researchers to dialogue on these complex issues. The following report summarizes each of the nine workshop sessions. As each session was summarized by an individual

rapporteur, slight variations in reporting style are apparent. Please note that the report does not offer a verbatim record of individual presentations but rather it seeks to offer a general outline of each session.

SESSION ONE: KEY ISSUES IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Joe Kanekane

Joe Kanekane, News Director for The Independent newspaper, PNG, opened the workshop with an overview of what he sees as the key points in historical and contemporary sources of conflict in the Southern Highlands. Kanekane's analysis stems from a decade of investigative journalism experience with The Independent, and prior to this, with the Financial Review, based in Sydney. One of his key considerations was the question of whether politicians are contributing to conflict crises in the Southern Highlands Province (SHP). Historical points raised by Kanekane included:

- 1972 - Ron Neville, previously a Kiap, was the original member for the Southern Highlands and saw 'the big picture for a united Highlands',
- 1977 - Wiwa Korowi took the seat from Neville and introduced schemes such as the mini-hydro to Tari, and
- Wiwa lost to Francis Pusala from Mendi, which resulted in a transfer of power to Mendi.

Kanekane's perception is that the two men leading the pre-independence SHP were not conventional 'bigmen'. Nevertheless, their official capacity as premiers raised issues of representation regarding their division of loyalties between the SHP and federal duties. This translated into two tiers of power, that of original members for the SHP, and provincial governments, which included political members from other areas, who were often perceived as conflicting with Southern Highlanders' power sources.

Between 1992-1997, Dick Mune held the position of governor in the SHP. Mune instigated a transition from Provincial to council presidents and created expectations

regarding the profiles of politicians in the SHP. The death of Mune in a car accident in 1997 was noted by Kanekane as the beginning of post-independence conflict in Tari and Nipa.

Two key issues implicated in conflict in the SHP have been people's expectations of governance, and the government's desire for provincial elections to run smoothly. Following the 2002 elections, these two expectations clashed. The election of Michael Nali and Peter O'Neill was met with ground-level confusion as to what happened to the other six candidates. With no official statement forthcoming, conflict became local-level. People wondered why they were not being represented when six seats were still not declared. Legal wrangles ensued and combined with electorate apathy at a lack of representation to produce animosity towards a government perceived as abandoning the electorate.

At the local level, perceptions of a lack of government representation were followed by problems with law and order. In remote areas, schools were closed, there was a general breakdown in infrastructure and feelings of abandonment by the government became stronger. Key services such as health and education required travel to regional centers like Tari, and issues with law and order were prevalent.

To sum up, key public issues following the 2002 SHP elections were:

- public confusion,
- breakdown in basic services, and
- law and order.

For the government this prioritized putting the Province back in order. Michael Nali was appointed head of a restoration project. After only one month, Nali was sacked and a neutral player was appointed amid worsening public opinion.

Had police been prepared, the elections would have run more smoothly. As they stood, people's basic right to vote was hampered. It was felt that the political aspirations of

politicians were overshadowing integrity. Among these problems, Kanekane identified two primary responsibilities that the current political system fails to meet:

- transparency and accountability, and
- adequate organisation of political parties¹.

In the aftermath of the elections, the government took several positive paths, namely it:

- allowed a period of time to elapse in order to observe what it could do to restore calm,
- appointed neutrals to oversee events,
- appointed a competent police superintendent to Tari; Simon Nicholl, and
- questioned locals about resolutions.

The Catholic and Uniting Churches were also instrumental in restoring calm. There are nevertheless legal issues remaining.

Discussion

Following Kanekane's presentation, the floor was opened for questions. The following points were made:

There are additional factors contributing to the conflict, namely:

- ineffective administration throughout the SHP,
- the appointment of unqualified public servants through improper channels, and
- a lack of administrative accountability e.g. no legal requirements for the implementation of development oriented administrative programs and projects resulting in a lack of public faith in administrative organizations.

It was proposed that a complete overhaul of the SHP administrative system, whilst challenging, would restore faith as well as enable the administration to effect policy change from the federal to local level. It was suggested that this would be achievable by

¹ For instance, a signed statement of full term and political integrity from elected members might reinforce responsibilities.

appointing educated leaders in administrative roles, and making them subject to legal accountability.

It was noted that proper administrative roles are obstructed by a total focus on politics. Examples of the broad dysfunction of basic services included:

- absence of doctors in Tari hospital, where there should be four,
- people dying from treatable diseases,
- total decay of the education system, which was conservatively estimated to be operating at 40% of its capacity,
- breakdown in social values,
- deprivation, and
- violence and vandalism of infrastructure.

It was noted that the public service has also contributed to conflict and that a reconstruction of the administration would of necessity entail an examination of public service members. For example:

- What are their qualifications?
- Are they working?

It was clear from the contributors and ensuing discussion that the SHP is in a state of dysfunction. Lack of accountability for politicians and public servants has meant that delivery of basic health and education services is close to nonexistent. Whilst public frustration grew following the 2002 provincial elections, social decay has occurred over the last three decades due to ongoing corruption within the political and administrative systems. While it is clear that changes need to be made, the big question remains: ‘What will happen next?’

SESSION TWO: THE SETTING – LAND, ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Bryant Allen, Mike Bourke and Charles Yala

Bryant Allen is a senior research fellow at the ANU with 35 years experience working in PNG, most of which he gained working in the East Sepik region. Allen gave a general introduction to the Southern Highlands Province (SHP) using census data from 2000 relating to population, health, education, nutrition and literacy. Early in the discussion Allen noted that some of the data is flawed – resulting from people misunderstanding the purposes of doing a census. In the course of the presentation the following points were made.

Background

- The Southern Highlands is located at the end of the highlands highway approximately 600 kilometres west of Lae. In the past, patrols came into the area from the Lake Kutubu area, which is located to the south. In this province, altitude ranges from 100m to 4300m at Mount Giluwe making many districts in the Southern Highlands ungovernable due to the difficulty of access. It was suggested that the province's boundaries could be reorganised to make governing more manageable.

Population

- Between 1960 and 1990 the population in the SHP increased by between 1-3% and between 1990-2000 it increased by 7%. It was suggested that these figures are probably incorrect due to double counting etc. with the real figures lying somewhere between these percentages.
- 50% of the province is not occupied due to the difficult terrain, lack of resources and lack of fertile land. Slides highlighting population density were shown and it was noted that the Wahgi, Mendi, Erave, Tagari, Iaro and Poru valleys are the

most sparsely populated areas in the SHP = 80/sp km (the Tari and Mendi areas are the most densely populated areas = 190/sq km).

Agriculture and Terrain

- Contrary to popular belief, the SHP does not have an abundance of resources. The majority of good land is located around Mendi, Tari and Yalibu, with the rest of the land in the province being difficult to cultivate due to the steep slopes, high altitude and increased cloud cover, which make plant photosynthesis – and therefore growth – difficult. These difficulties have resulted in good land being put under increasing pressure, with little room being left for future agricultural growth in the province.
- Sweet potato is cultivated for both pigs and humans, with sago and sweet potato still being regarded as the most important food sources for Southern Highlanders.

Health and Education

- In the 2000 census it was found that SHP children as a rule are malnourished, they are generally shorter and heavier than others in the country – a classic symptom of long-term malnutrition.
- Birth weights are 300g lower than those in other provinces. Women in the SHP produce 20% less sweet potato for the same labour as women in the more fertile swamp environments.
- Literacy levels don't reach more than 50% for males and 30% for females anywhere in the SHP.

Income

- Generally incomes in the SHP are low to very low, with the exception of the people to the south, who are benefiting from mining royalties, and the people close to Mendi where government funds flow.

- The SHP is generally a very disadvantaged area with a mostly poor environment, the people have low incomes and there is a general lack of penetration by government to their communities. In places (e.g. Nembi plateau) where there is fertile land it is under increasing pressure and there is very little room to move in order to alleviate this pressure. Children's birth weights continue to be below the national average, with little improvement in the standard of people's health and education.

Discussion

During discussion, it was noted that:

- Agriculture is a large subsistence activity with a negligible commercial outcome. The people who are making money are making it on natural resources – oil and gas – with very little of this trickling down to the communities.
- The distribution of resources is a potential source of conflict in the SHP.
- The problems of the Southern Highlands raise risks in Papua New Guinea as a whole. If you have political instability in the highlands it can affect the flow of resources throughout the country.
- Between 1991 and 1992 it took 1-1 ½ hours to Lake Kutubu, however the road was closed in 1992 due to government pressure. At the time it was also said that people further to the south wanted the road to close because they didn't want highlanders moving in. This comment was followed by general discussion about the likelihood of new roads being built and the general lack of access to places in the Southern Highlands. It was noted that there are not likely to be new roads into the SHP in the near future.
- A participant said that in 1989 he walked from Poroma to Lake Kutubu to register groups for royalty distributions. Conflicts began to develop from people with very

faint connections to the area claiming strong ties. These problems have the potential to get worse in the next few years if the oil and gas pipelines go ahead.

- The SHP was a relatively quiet place through 1970s and 1980s in terms of warfare. It has only been since money and royalties have come into the picture that the stakes have risen high enough for people to fight for what they can get.
- It was noted that the power-lines to one of the mines get knocked over on a regular basis.

SESSION THREE: “HOO-HA IN HULI” – CONSIDERATIONS ON COMMOTION AND COMMUNITY IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS PROVINCE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Laurence Goldman and Laurie Bragge

Laurence Goldman is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Queensland and has done the majority of his fieldwork with the Huli in the Southern Highlands. Until recently, **Laurie Bragge** worked for the community affairs section of Oil Search and was based in the Southern Highlands. A comprehensive paper of this session is available at Attachment II.

This session explored conflict in the Southern Highlands, with a particular focus on the Huli, their reasons for engaging in conflict and their strategies for conflict resolution. For the Huli fighting is a recurrent and legitimate means of expressing problems. In particular, Goldman and Bragge questioned risk management strategies for talking and fighting and looked at the political and economic advantages of undertaking an approach based on these mechanisms.

For the Huli, ‘pay-back’ is the traditional system used to redress social unrest. Contrary to some beliefs, it is not conducted randomly – there is a series of principles determining how and why people are being paid back. In this way, this system is built on the analogy

of sickness and health; people need to apply compensation (or pay-back) in order to make a 'sore' better. People may wait several years before payback is enacted, due to the fact that people seek compensation for multiple claims rather than one claim at a time – as is common in western courts. This multiple claim approach means that 'talk never dies' among the Huli, as there are always a number of issues that remain undiscussed and undisputed (as in our culture) and someone is always making a claim against someone else in order to redress past injustices suffered. Goldman and Bragge suggest that such a rationale is geared towards the giving and displaying of pigs, as such acts assist in redressing shame, provide people with closure on specific issues and perhaps most importantly, reaffirm people's social networks and their cultural identity. For these reasons, Goldman and Bragge believe that traditional patterns of identity affirmation have not been expunged – there has been no ideological change in conflict resolution – people are just using different methods to achieve the same end.

Over the years people from neighbouring groups have moved into the margins of the Huli area and have taken on a 'naturalised' Huli identity, even though these people are still seen as being different, and in fact are given labels by more 'traditional' Huli.

Goldman and Bragge suggest that we need to explore the contours of cultural change. They state that a one-model fits all approach – as is being trialled in other places in the province – may not be the answer in Huli and the Southern Highlands generally. In their paper they discuss the history of conflict resolution processes and their relationship to resource development in the region. They then move on to look at possible solutions to the rise in violence, stating that little to no help can be expected from the national government in its current state, and suggest that community level micro-management is most likely to yield positive results at this point in time.

Discussion

Much discussion ensued over the kiap system, dispute resolution, conflict and compensation, with the following points being made:

- The colonial time was a period of stability in SHP and Papua New Guinea generally. From 1974-1976 Bragge worked in Keriba and at this time there was back up for the government system, people were satisfied with their level of education and health and the police were there when they were required.
- In the 1970s the Southern Highlands Province was peaceful but things were not good in the Western Highlands Province and by 1974 people were beginning to worry that guns would be used in conflict.
- People have suggested that we return to the old 'kiap' system but this would no longer work because there isn't the backup in place to support such a move.
- There is good evidence to suggest that the various court systems were at odds with the traditional systems. The higher the fines people received in court the more people needed to fight to regenerate their own wealth status.
- The kiap system is alien, as the court system can only deal with one issue or claim at a time – not several – which is totally at odds with the traditional method of solving problems.
- Conflict is a serious impediment to development for the Huli. They are not able to enforce resettlement, thus it was asked how we bring about any kind of development for people who are largely inaccessible, who have a general lack of understanding about how the economy works and whose profits erode due to traditional responsibilities? Disposable incomes are used on consumables. People buy things and they fall to bits almost immediately thus driving replacement expenditure. These people are stuck between two worlds; they depend on horticulture (which brings in very little income) and still want to participate in western consumerism. From the 1980s traditional leadership has changed, with the more senior/older people devolving their responsibilities to younger and more articulate males with a better understanding of western processes.

- The use of weapons has increased deaths, however, compensation continues to occur. Among other things, compensation demonstrates pride, alleviates shame and realises obligations that people have towards their personal networks.

SESSION FOUR: ROOTS OF CONFLICT

Richard Alo, Nicole Haley and Jimmy Weiner

Session four, chaired by Mark Mosko, featured the panelists Nicole Haley, James Weiner and Richard Alo, each of whom spoke on the roots of conflict in Southern Highlands Province.

According to **Nicole Haley**, the roots of conflict in the Southern Highlands are to be found in the encompassing political environment, specifically relating to inequitable access to state services for the province as a whole and for ethnically based groups within the province. At present the province has not benefited from the resource exploitation projects that have been undertaken there. State service provision is negligible and the lack of infrastructure has undercut private economic programs.

Haley made the following general points, drawing upon the Rural Development Handbook:

- Southern Highlands has around 475,000-500,000 inhabitants.
- About 100,000 inhabitants live in areas reachable only by air or foot.
- Air travel is exorbitant between regional centres and the provincial capital in Tari. For example, tickets from Kapiago to Tari are 371K/one way. Mt Hagen is more accessible and affordable, costing 10K to travel there by PMV.
- Local incomes are uncharacteristically low.
- Average income is about 20 kina a year.
- Kutubu/Pangia area has moderate income because of its access to the oil/gas fields and extensive coffee plantations in the area.
- Service provision is poor.

In addition, she noted that:

- In Kopiago, graded roads give way to 4WD tracks, making access difficult.
- Lack of infrastructure combined with banditry have crippled infrastructure.
- Incentives for economic activities are dwindling.
- Store goods are increasingly scarce (Noticeable downturn since the mid-1990s).
- No Medical Extension Officers are present.
- Most nurses and teachers have relocated to Hagen and continue to draw their government wages, despite no longer fulfilling their duties (Comment from crowd: Public servants may still draw wages in Hagen because of its superior infrastructure; none are available in Tari.)
- There is no magistrate.
- Only one teacher goes to work.
- Ongoing lack of teachers has resulted in one cohort without schooling and there has been negligible primary education for over a decade.
- Income and access to state infrastructure is among the worst in Papua New Guinea.

Haley questioned why the people of Southern Highlands Province are so poor, given that the province has among the best natural resources deposits in Papua New Guinea? She noted:

- An emerging trend suggesting that natural resources have not brought about increasing local level development for communities.
- Indeed, resource exploitation projects elsewhere have failed to alleviate rural poverty; also resource exploitation has failed to raise regional and local incomes.

Haley then examined elections and conflict in the province, stating that:

- The imposition of state boundaries [electoral boundaries] over putatively ethnically differentiated groups has fuelled tension, especially at election time.
- Of the 16 languages in Southern Highlands, 3 (Huli, Mendi, Kewa) constitute nearly 80% of the population.

- Political leaders have jostled to establish a pecking order of language groups by manipulating state institutions.
- Elected representatives for Southern Highlands have mostly been Huli speakers.
- Individuals have claimed that they are incumbents for offices that do not exist.
- The leaders of competing factions claim to hold the same positions within the [skeleton] provincial administration. For example, three to four claim to be the provincial administrator (Dick Mune, Anderson Agiru, Nueman Pakalu).
- Pakalu has utilized an Item 10 account to disperse funds to his supporters and purchase materials.
- Interim officers (local level appointees) are not paid; those appointed by the factional leaders are paid. None are doing the jobs they are paid to do.
- During the recent elections [April 2003] elected representatives fuelled an arms race as contending groups vied for supremacy [Contestation of state institutions harnessed to local ethnic rivalry].
- One candidate flew in cartons of rifles and ammunition purchased in PRC before the elections commenced.
- Supporters of local candidates during the elections were armed heavily.
- Police, however, recovered few weapons and few were voluntarily handed in.

Following Haley, **James Weiner** spoke about the roots of conflict among the Foi. Weiner argued that disjunctures between state and local conceptions of exchange and personhood have exacerbated local tensions, contributing to unmanageable social relations. Moreover, the fixity of the state has impinged on local level strategies of ‘interruption’ designed as a means of sidestepping these unmanageable social relations and local strategies of mediating conflict are insufficient to counter large scale provincial violence. Weiner drew comparisons between the historical contingencies of statehood and the [largely, albeit teleologically] stateless communities of Southern Highlands [and PNG in general].

- Deriving from Locke and Hobbes, the state treats people as natural individuals. Social life is therefore imposed by a social contract and collective action is imposed by the 'boundedness' of the state.
- Among the Foi, social relations are not imposed, they are natural. No one is naturally individual; rather they are defined by their relations [that is, they are partible.]

In local [pre-contact] itineraries of movement, unwieldy social relations were controlled through a strategic process of interruption. That is, discrete groups move away and establish new settlements elsewhere. Weiner suggests that this is common in the origin narratives of the Foi; none answered definitively that they were from the place in which they resided. The dissolution of clan ties was thus a response to conflict of unmanageable social responsibilities. The concepts of collective interests or shared principles, therefore, are non-existent although they might be invoked in certain exchange situations. However, the density of social life was therefore fluid until the imposition of the state. The effects of representative politics therefore countervail the impulse to disaggregate.

Taken together these points suggest that the fixity of the state increases the potential for conflict in the Kutubu/Pangia area because groups are no longer so free to relocate. Moreover, economic forces have made the management of exchange relations more difficult in that exchange expectations have risen [greater reliance on the cash-economy/wage labour etc]. Compensation and bride-price payments have increased exponentially. For example:

- In 1971, small Kina payments for brideprice equaled 7 or less pearl strings, cowry and a pig.
- In 2003, 10-20,000 kina plus cowry shells and several pigs.

However, Weiner suggests that 'traditional' dispute resolution mechanisms in Southern Highlands Province cannot at present be utilized to mediate the much larger and more violent disputes that have arisen in the province, viz. there is a disjuncture between local and state responses to violence. Thus, although one has to fight in order to fix or control

the networks of indebtedness in both the ‘ideal’ [pre-contact] forms of tribal warfare, and the modern ‘electoral’ form of organized fighting, the difference is in the magnitude and extent of the modern forms of violence. Balancing these interests – i.e. what people do in the course of social life/politics – is therefore crucial. Cutting off the flows of money between, for example, senior elected politicians and local militants is crucial to that task. For example, the Anganen – traditional marriage partners and trading allies of the Foi – interdict the road and block supply to the Foi. They also require the Foi to effectively pay Danegeld – ransom money – so they won’t blockade the road. Moreover, these incidents have risen since the Foi have received royalties from Kutubu. The continuation of danegeld reifies and legitimates practices such as this, albeit while disbursing funds throughout the province.

After Weiner’s discussion of the Foi, **Richard Alo** questioned the value of talking about the roots of conflict in the Southern Highlands without commensurate and concrete moves to alleviate poverty and end fighting. [You talk about this but what will you do?] Drawing on his own experiences as a father of children with limited education prospects and as a volunteer worker who has contributed to school building projects, Alo foregrounded the constant frustration for local people caused by endemic corruption. Alo received education only to the equivalent of grade 8 but sees that his son faces more difficult prospects in that he is 15 years old and has only been able to complete grade 5. Much of Alo’s time has been spent trying to raise funds for his son’s education but he is constantly frustrated that the money he has earmarked for education is siphoned off by cascading demands for kickbacks and bribes by corrupt public servants; no education funds reach his home community. Consequently, local schools have been forced to combine classes, extending elementary kinder from years 0-2 to 0-3.

Discussion

General discussion orbited around three key points:

1. The disjunctures between traditional forms of fighting and modern ones,

2. The inability of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms to counter the emergent forms of fighting, which are larger in scale, involving high-powered weaponry and more violent, and
3. The origins and impetus for violence: are they local in origin, or do provincial, national or foreign agents/forces foment them?

Speaker Nicole Haley stated that elections were fought on ethnic grounds, meaning that people are rewarded for their clan loyalty after electoral victory; elections therefore exacerbate clan and ethnic rivalries.

It was suggested that most disputes were not of landowners' making:

- There is a need to differentiate the levels of conflict,
- Different types of identity are being harnessed, and
- Big blocs form to fight provincial elections organized along ethnic lines yet elections also break clan allegiances and have inspired payback killings.

A participant commented that democracy has fractured old identities and fuelled the creation of new ones.

Speaker James Weiner reiterated that traditional dispute resolution mechanisms are necessarily limited and therefore incapable of countering the widespread nature of modern warfare. Warfare and compensation moreover are two means of including people you are not related to in networks of exchange.

It was suggested that in certain contexts violence was a natural extension of group identity. Violence in terms of the state was depicted as rupture whereas in local contexts it is often depicted as normal.

Speaker James Weiner suggested that in the modern context power often comes not from the troops but from the adroit manipulation of paper (bureaucratic warriors) and reciprocity.

Speaker Nicole Haley made concluding remarks to the discussion but raised other points that needed to be addressed. She referred to the possible implications of state activities of widespread belief in witchcraft and sorcery, e.g. teachers from other provinces have been ejected from rural schools based on charges of witchcraft. Furthermore, she noted that the majority of infrastructure had been built and paid for by the Australian administration but few governments had contributed to its upkeep.

SESSION FIVE: LOCAL VOICES – PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICT

Richard Alo, Duriyame Tumbi and Noel Walters

Session Five was chaired by Alan Rumsey, with panellists Duriyame Tumbi, Noel Walters and Richard Alo offering local level perspectives of conflict in Southern Highlands.

The first panellist was **Duriyame Tumbi**, Community Relations Officer for Chevron, based at Kutubu. Ms Tumbi is a Southern Highlands woman of Huli and Foe parentage, who has worked with Chevron for 12 years. Prior to working for Chevron, she was employed as a public servant.

Ms Tumbi noted that companies such as Chevron operate under great stress and with great risk in a rapidly changing social landscape. This risk is compounded by a number of factors including:

- inflated landowner expectations,
- general decline in law and order, service provision and the general economy,
- lack of governance by the state,
- lack of respect for government services, and
- political instability at all levels of government.

It was also noted that leadership structures are rapidly changing, with education providing the key to success for young educated English speakers, who are more able than their elders to interact with foreign company representatives.

Ms Tumbi noted a number of causes of conflict, specifically:

- minimal commitment to leadership and management,
- disuse of existing policies and guidelines,
- absence of a local sense of ownership of government, NGO & company initiatives,
- mismanagement of government funding, and
- manipulation of the wantok system rather than recruitment by merit.

In response to these problems, Ms Tumbi called for capacity building at all levels (with local ownership of all initiatives) and the need for aggressive education on rights and obligations, as well as improved communication. She also noted that leaders need to 'lead and manage', not 'rule'.

Following Ms Tumbi, **Noel Walters** provided an overview of problems in the Southern Highlands, based on his experience of over 40 years in the region.

Mr Walters noted a number of factors that contribute to conflict, including:

- youths' disregard for the norms and morals of their elders, who now hold little authority,
- diminishing sense of group unity and shared purpose, and increased group factionalism,
- growing gun culture,
- absence of a government to solve disputes,
- break down of the compensation process, which is unable to cope with changed circumstances, including increased deaths and excessive compensation demands,
- lack of accountability,
- ineffective public services, and

- a poorly funded and demoralized police force.

Mr Walters noted that in addition to (and contributing to) large-scale conflict, stealing is prevalent, as are the destruction of crops, the restriction of movement, gang rape and vandalism. As a result of these problems, people have poor access to health and education services, as personnel are unwilling to work in the province and government resources are rapidly destroyed.

The session was concluded by **Richard Alo**, a Southern Highlands man, who reiterated the need for improved health, education and law and order. Mr Alo expressed his embarrassment at hearing people discuss the problems in his province and urged people to translate talk into action by working on improving the situation in Southern Highlands, rather than just talking about it.

SESSION SIX: CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND LOCAL LEVEL DEVELOPMENT

Neryl Lewis and John Vail

During session six, Neryl Lewis and John Vail discussed conflict resolution and local level development.

Neryl Lewis of AusAID stated that AusAID was interested in understanding the dynamics of the Southern Highlands Province (SHP) in the hopes of implementing initiatives to support longer-term development. She noted that it was important that a system in need of serious overhaul should not just be propped up and that for AusAID to be effective, there needed to be the political will for change. Some key issues as to how AusAID might support reconciliation and development in the province included:

- Support to police
- Weapons disposal initiatives
- A collaborative relationship between donor, land owner and resource groups
- Targeting education and health

- Identifying means of generating cash incomes, given the minimal benefits of mining at the grass roots level
- Involving church groups in the process

An overarching problem in achieving such objectives is state failure. A broad question for AusAID therefore is how to proceed without a state network. Key civil society organizations, such as major church groups provide the majority of services in the SHP, and are therefore seen by AusAID to be more suitable channels for donor activities than state networks.

Following Lewis, **John Vail** identified key development issues in Tari and surrounding rural areas. These included:

- ‘the decline and fall of rural PNG’
- failure of the 2002 elections, with major violence
- looting and closure of the last major store in Tari, and
- collapse of infrastructure and services.

The ideologies of the Family Health and Rural Implementation Program (FHRIP), the community-based development organization that he has been involved with, are broadly stated as:

- community building and infrastructure run by locals
- maximum involvement of locals
- appropriate and realistic scope of development

Its aims include:

- family preventative health
- stimulation of small-scale rural enterprise
- water supply at family homes
- adequate sanitation (for example replacing unsanitary pit toilets with concrete ones, equipped with independent water supply)

- nutritional gardens as a step towards preventative rather than curative health care (this includes taking into account variable soil qualities and planting accordingly for maximum protein yields)
- small livestock initiatives as a supplement to nutritional gardens

FHRIP achievements include:

- 312 families participating
- 45% of families had good results
- skills were transferred to team and field workers
- the base farm, Koli, was an effective resource station
- water supply and rabbits as protein supplement were adopted widely

FHRIP failures included:

- 27% attrition of original 312 participant families
- making necessities wants – consumption items were still prioritized over health and nutrition needs
- community spirit
- capacity and sustainability

The major obstructions to achievements were perceived to be:

- an inability to persuade the community to act as one
- finding cohesive, able and motivated groups to implement initiatives given that existing groups tended to be established on directed actions (for example women's work groups and church organizations)
- an inability to persuade locals to get involved at management levels

Vail made a comparison between FHRIP and Community Based Health Care (CBHC). CBHC was established in the Western Highlands Province in 1995, and has become involved in six communities in the Tari district since 2000. Its outlook and methods include:

- a concept of community self-reliance

- a holistic outlook
- the establishment of community management committees
- training of local health workers
- building of links with the government at administrative and functional levels
- expansion by role model (e.g. one village or census unit to act as a role model to others)

In 2000, CBHC took over FHRIP and later became a partner of the Farmer First Network (FFN). The FFN objectives were to:

- strengthen technical and management capacity of communities
- provide access to information resources
- develop low-cost networks

FFN sought to achieve these objectives via:

- exchanges between groups
- training
- sharing management expertise

Its program requirements were:

- Benefactors
- Technical: management, capacity building and training
- Infrastructure: communications and transport

A functioning administration is a necessity, however, community level training and implementation is considered by FFN as the only real way ahead.

In conclusion, Vail and Lewis noted that donor and development organizations are in difficult positions in that they are trying to implement programs and funding without a functioning state administrative system to collaborate with. While church groups can be useful organizations for channelling funding and objectives, the general message from both the AusAID representative and John Vail was that local-level inspiration and

implementation of ideas are essential to restoring calm and establishing aid development initiatives in the SHP. The local development programs discussed by John Vail have found particular success by working at a grass-roots level.

Discussion

John Vail was asked about the problems that he had experienced in organizing communities and what the aspirations of local people had been. Vail said that the organisations' main foci had been on technologies, such as demographic surveillance systems, as well as awareness campaigns aimed at locals, with which they had had some success during the pilot program. Vail also identified the need for CBHC to have more intensive community consultation and interaction in order to emphasise community self reliance and highlight the incentives surrounding community-based development initiatives, as well as fostering voluntary spirit and community self-reliance.

The following questions were posed:

- In the SHP, what is 'civil society'?
- What sort of role can civil society play in resolving the current situation? For instance, can the collapsed state be replaced with a notion of civil society, or is civil society a complementary force that can be developed alongside a functioning government?

An audience member responded by asserting that civil society requires a stable foundation of law and order. In the current situation, the ability of rural leaders to make progress is undermined by the fact that they continue to face violence. Another participant stated that changes could be made, but people must work together. Given that civil society is a complex organism, people must be willing to participate at all levels of governance. Several key aspects that would contribute to a successful civil society in the SHP were identified, namely:

- Landowners, who must be willing to initiate change
- Education
- Awareness

- Appropriate leadership, administration and public servants, the underlying focus of which would be minimization of corruption

The participant asserted that the planning process should proceed with two initial questions:

1. What do we need now?
2. What can we do in the next five years?

It was noted that the networking and coordination of groups such as women's groups, church organizations and AusAID addresses questions of how to proceed. This should be a process of community consultation that meets transport and communication needs. Essentially, more money is needed for successful resolutions. At this stage, given the PNG government deficit of several hundred million kina, a reliance on intact church organizations is crucial.

A participant acknowledged the indispensable role of law and order, but isolated the question of who should deliver social services. Should donor-funding focus on rebuilding the government, or funding churches to provide basic community services like health and education?

A participant responded that while eventually the government would have to take responsibility for such services, in the meantime, church groups were viable vehicles. In the long term, the SHP needs partnership between:

- Aid groups
- Government tiers
- Church groups
- Communities

SESSION SEVEN: THE FUTURE OF RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Kai Lavu, Kenn Logan, Gai Pobe and Chris Warrillow

During session seven, chaired by Colin Filer, speakers Gai Pobe, Kai Lavu, Kenn Logan and Chris Warrillow provided background information on the relationship between resource project operators and local communities and landowners, and the longevity of existing resource projects in Southern Highlands Province. They also discussed community expectations of companies, the viability of establishing new resource projects in the province and the perceived failure of the government to fulfill its responsibilities to both the indigenous population and resource project operators.

Suggestions for possible solutions to the problems discussed focussed upon communication, leadership and the restoration of a functioning justice system, operational in all domains of conflict and at every level of governance. Subsequent comments and discussion further explored some of the above issues as well raising new questions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Interaction of company and community All speakers made reference to community development programs instituted and supported by resource project companies. For the most part, these activities were portrayed as routine and unproblematic, a responsibility that was simply required of and met by companies. Gai Pobe stressed the fact that Chevron was (particularly in its early days) first and foremost a business, not an aid or infrastructure supplier, but that it was now required to take on 'non-core' activities of 'semi-government'.

A great challenge to community - Porgera Joint Venture relations is the frequent felling of the pylons supporting the Hides-Porgera powerline. According to Lavu, this accounted for three months of lost production in 2002. However, Kenn Logan made the point that aggression was rarely directed against companies themselves, but was expressive of inter-

clan rivalries and a general dissatisfaction with the government. Logan described a crowd that he had encountered during the reinstatement of a felled pylon as ‘heavily-armed but apologetic’, with the pylon-dropping campaign being mounted in order to attract government attention, rather than being an instance of resentment-fuelled vandalism. Logan maintained that this was especially the case because the powerline itself had ‘minimal impact’ on the environment, affecting only a narrow corridor of land.

Longevity of current resource projects Gai Pobe and Kai Lavu noted that most current major resource operations in the region are now drawing to a close. Pobe reported a 35-40% decline in production at Gobe, and asserted that there was little hope of relying on continuing benefits from resource projects. Lavu explained that Porgera Joint Venture will finish open-pit mining in 2006, continuing to process stockpiles until 2013 when the mine will shut down completely.

PROBLEMATIC ISSUES

Expectations of the community Gai Pobe, Kai Lavu and Chris Warrillow described difficulties involved with managing expectations of communities and landowners, and this was felt to be a source of conflict. Warrillow made reference to the rumours and inflated expectations clustering around the proposed Hides-Queensland Gas Pipeline, which has assumed large proportions in the eyes of local communities but is actually a comparatively small operation. Lavu mentioned the distrust and disbelief of locals upon being told that the PJV will be closing, as there is an apparent expectation that “it will be there for ever”. Unrealistic expectations lead to disappointment, aggression, and fiercer competition for land title.

Future resource projects The possibility of further resource projects in the Southern Highlands was also seen to be problematic, and an area of concern. While there are currently several exploration projects underway, it was concluded that no company would be willing to begin a new large-scale operation in the existing climate of distrust and lawlessness. Warrillow explained that new small-scale enterprises may be able to make use of existing infrastructure (e.g. at Kutubu), but that the investment required for the

establishment of new infrastructure is considered too risky at present. The fact that commercial companies are obliged to provide support for community development programs was also viewed as a disincentive for beginning new projects. The success of the Hides-Queensland Gas Pipeline was judged to be critical in determining the continuing presence of resource development operations in the province.

Perceived failure of the state The overwhelming majority of conflict centred around current resource projects was interpreted as a direct result of state failure, including:

- inadequate provision of government officials to aid in the resolution of royalty disputes,
- inadequate provision of basic services such as health and education,
- inadequate provision of police,
- inadequate presence of government representatives ‘in the field’,
- the lack of a functioning justice system at both the rural and town levels, and
- the lack of accountability in the government’s use of funds generated by resource projects.

It was felt that the above points fuel dissatisfaction within communities, increasing destructive activity that impacts on resource projects, and simultaneously failing to provide punitive measures to dissuade potential offenders. Logan maintained that local communities are angry about the government’s lack of interest in their well-being (as demonstrated for example by the lack of basic services), and by the lack of evidence that the money generated by resource projects is being channeled back into rural areas. This leads to people shutting down mining operations in attempts to hold the government to ransom, with the hope of extracting money, services and the accountable expenditure of company-derived money.

Logan also asserted that while royalty disputes between clans/individuals were originally managed effectively by government officials, they are now insufficiently arbitrated, thus escalating into increasingly violent and protracted conflicts.

SOLUTIONS

Communication Chris Warrillow stressed that clear communication and extensive contact between companies, government and communities was crucial to good relations and the management of local expectations. He also maintained that resource project operators were doing a better job than the government in this regard, as evinced by the extreme scarcity of government representatives in rural locations.

Leadership Both Logan and Warrillow dwelt on the necessity of good leadership in the province, and expressed the view that it would be most valuable to focus on improving higher-level governance. Logan particularly stressed that the grassroots communities were functioning well but that they were being let down by incompetent and corrupt officials. Warrillow highlighted the need for a Southern Highlands ‘nationalist’ in parliament, a local with broader perspectives. Warrillow was also strident in his call for a stricter, more autocratic style of leadership in order to reinstate ‘respect for authority’, and maintained that the right leader must initially be able to ‘rule’ rather than ‘manage’.

Restoration of justice system The cornerstone of conflict resolution was perceived as being the establishment of a functioning justice system at all levels of government. As an example of the potential for small outlay in this area to produce impressive results, Kenn Logan described the impact that a small mobile police patrol had in Tari. Logan was impressed that a squad of 32 policemen and two senior officers had been able to restore a ‘semblance of law and order’ in only three days, and argued that effective changes would not be difficult to achieve given adequate support and resources by the state. Warrillow strongly advocated the use of harsh measures in dealing with intractable individuals in all social spheres.

The benefits of a functioning justice system are fairly transparent, but advantages that were particularly highlighted by the speakers included:

- the provision of a strong disincentive to violence in both rural and town areas,
- the ‘cleaning up’ of administrative centres,

- increased safety and security would be an encouragement to commerce in Tari, boosting the local economy, and
- the ability to effectively prosecute higher officials and actually make them feel it (e.g. through confiscation of real estate).

It was felt that the above would not only improve relations between companies and communities, assist in the smoother operation of resource projects, and reduce conflict in general, but also help restore the faith of the people in company and governing bodies. This would particularly be the case if higher-level corruption and the unsanctioned use of resource-generated profits could be clearly traced and punished. These factors would combine to create a much more encouraging and workable environment for future resource projects. In Logan's words, "making Southern Highlands Province a place where development can take place."

DISCUSSION

Discussion focused upon the already raised themes of:

- law and order,
- leadership, and
- failure of the state to meet its responsibilities to both Papua New Guineans and foreign resource developers.

Members of the audience also questioned:

- where answers could be found,
- the sustainability of current patterns of settlement in Southern Highlands Province, and
- the responsibilities of the Australian government towards Papua New Guinea, particularly with regards to economic policy.

Law and order One participant queried whether Chris Warrillow's notion of 'rule' called for military administration to take control in Southern Highlands Province, as exemplified in the 2003 supplementary election. Warrillow replied that the kiap system

was ‘practically military’ and that current gun owners could perhaps only be effectively challenged with a ‘paramilitary force’. Another participant noted that ‘strong government’ was only part of the solution – good administration and record keeping also had to be fostered and protected. It was also argued that it was extremely difficult to ensure that the policemen themselves remained accountable. It was noted that although the example of a small effective police force was attractive, it was a short-term solution, and that good magisterial and corrective services were essential.

Leadership A call was made for ‘charismatic national leaders’. Another participant commented that the people of provinces such as Milne Bay and Madang have consciously voted for ‘outsiders’ as their government representatives due to their general disbelief in the ability of local leaders to act impartially.

Failure of the state It was asserted that the current government must first admit that it has failed and publicly recognize the mess that it has created. It was also noted that the state had failed to honour promises made in ‘schedules of infrastructure’ in development agreements with resource project operators. There are currently millions of kina worth of un-kept promises, exceeding the actual value of the oil extracted. The tremendous costs involved are simply not viable.

Where can answers be found? Are situations in other places (e.g. Africa) informative for planning ‘solutions’ in Southern Highlands Province and ‘What can arrest decline? What can create a functioning indigenous system?’ It was noted that there are smaller case studies available for study, outlining possibilities for ‘transfer of policy’. Answers may also be found in the small-scale, at community level, and it could be both possible and powerful to ‘aggregate the small successes’. These should be given encouragement. Such encouragement is certainly lacking at present. For example, an experienced policeman in Tari recently made a detailed and modest request for resources that the government had nevertheless been unable to meet.

Sustainability of current settlement patterns It was proposed that radical change was necessary to achieve effective governance in Southern Highlands Province. The original constitution and principles of PNG as a nation had attempted a structure to suit cultural diversity and dispersed settlement patterns, in which ‘the government will come to you’, wherever you are. However, the resources needed to maintain this are unworkable, and this framework creates an untenable and draining repetition of structures and processes. A more appropriate policy would be to support voluntary migration and centralization of the population in more fertile areas. Services should be prioritized over the maintenance of geographically-motivated cultural identities.

Engagement of the Australian government The Australian government should take a more active role in PNG as it has so far failed to engage sufficiently. The Australian government should be encouraging closer contact, particularly with regards to economic policy, and representatives such as Peter Costello should be regularly visiting Port Moresby and working with Papua New Guinean ministers. One participant warned that this could be disastrous if mishandled.

In summary, the most constantly reiterated theme throughout this session was the necessity for a functioning justice system (‘law and order’) in Southern Highlands Province, and indeed in Papua New Guinea as a whole. The likelihood of future new resource projects in Southern Highlands Province was not fully explored, although it was clear that further exploration and prospecting are currently underway. However, there was a general consensus amongst the panelists that there was only modest potential for further generation of revenue from resource extraction. It was implied that there would be no *inherent* problem with setting up new projects, provided that the current ‘law and order’ problems (including government corruption) were resolved.

SESSION EIGHT: POLITICAL PROSPECTS

Nicole Haley and Bill Standish

Bill Standish is a political scientist at the ANU with 30 years experience working in Papua New Guinea. He has recently been in SHP observing the election process.

In last year's national parliament election the Southern Highlands elections were the most violent in the country. There was considerable intimidation by wealthy candidates now known as warlords. People were killed, policeman were kidnapped and there was mass block 'voting' in which most people never touched their ballot papers. Eventually six of the Southern Highlands elections were declared to have 'failed'.

There has been considerable pressure to elect MPs for the SHP, and indeed to show that elections can be conducted properly there. For this reason the supplementary elections in April and May were managed by officers of the PNG Electoral Commission, aided by 2000 security personnel - about half the national police force. Clearly this level of input is not sustainable on a wider scale in the future

Over 5 million Australian dollars were spent on the election, with 7 million kina being allotted to security. In the hope of streamlining the election process and making it a less volatile experience the Australian and Papua New Guinean electoral commissions tried to educate people about the election. They published a series of three posters for this purpose, which stated (rough English translation):

- Think well and put your mark down, work together to have a good election.
- Don't steal ballot boxes. Candidates can't buy votes. Only vote once.
- Don't fight with guns. Don't force people to vote.
- Talk well, win votes and follow your own choice. Don't destroy infrastructure.

In addition to this, a prominent Catholic priest and a Uniting Church bishop told people not to engage in mass voting and allow intimidation, and Radio Southern Highlands ran

their statements as ads. However, despite the attempts at education, free and fair elections were hampered by the strong security presence.

Standish said that there is a need to educate polling officials and security forces, as there was some police intimidation during voting and police assaults occurred, which made it difficult for people to vote. This resulted in lots of people being too intimidated to vote. Despite this:

- twice as many people voted in the Nipa electorate as actually live there,
- one official marked people's votes before they said anything. A senior official from Nipa was later beaten up by police after seeking to put unsigned (and hence invalid) votes into the count, and
- during counting for several electorates, if officials or scrutineers raised questions regarding the validity of votes in boxes from certain places they were told to shut up or they would be bashed. Several were bashed by police at the counting centre in Mendi.

Since the elections, people from the Nipa and Tari areas have been coming forward claiming that they didn't get to vote because there was mass 'voting' by candidates' core supporters assisted by officials with police collusion (apparently this is alleged in several other places as well) and as a result electoral appeals are pending. Clearly there are enormous problems in trying to conduct elections when the government administration is in a state of collapse.

Standish went on to discuss William Zartman's (1995) edited volume "Collapsed states: the disintegration and restoration of legitimate authority" in which the authors' examine the collapse of African nations. Significant points raised related to:

- civil war, conflict between elements of the state,
- power devolving to the peripheries, and
- power withering at the centre due to government malfunction and decision avoidance, political flabbiness and fending off challenges.

Although the picture tends to vary from country to country these factors are central to the collapse of nations and result in governments losing total control of their of their own estate agents.

How do you reconstruct a state after its collapse?

- Determine whether reconstruction or modification of the state is necessary.
- Sovereignty needs to be re-asserted as it is a key criterion in maintaining a civil society. Although civil society will continue to an extent after state collapse, it cannot fill the vacuum left by the demise of the state.

Zartman (1995) cites the following 3 points as being crucial to the reconstruction of the state:

Power

- Need to legitimate the power of leaders and make the state central once more in order to bring civil society and state power together.

Social Participation

- The state needs to be legitimated by social participation in its reconstruction. It is necessary to create civil peace before running elections etc, as elections should function predominantly as a forum for free expression.
- If possible, restore the old order, as societies need a state before they can work together.
- Encourage people to think about things politically rather than in terms of war or continued conflict.

Resources

- Resources are needed for the new state to manage and to give something to the population. These resources need to be internal as external resources only provide a temporary solution.

- Military prevention and external assistance may be needed. Standish noted that these are not recommended as solutions – especially in PNG.
- A catalyst may be necessary to stop the fighting – perhaps a new infusion into the economy.
- Indigenous leadership that takes into account local practices and resources is needed. Obviously people need resources and security and there is a need for people to look both backwards and forwards to be able to achieve results.

Following Standish's overview of the 2003 elections and Zartman's edited collection, Nicole Haley spoke of moves towards the establishment of a Hela Province. Nicole Haley has spent the last 10 years working in the Southern Highlands Province with the Duna in and around Lake Kopyago. She discussed the central idea behind the Huli push for a Hela province and the ramifications the introduction of such a province would have for the Duna, Huli, Hewa and Bogaia peoples.

According to traditional cosmologies, these four groups evolved from a common ancestor and they hold the common belief that the world was formed from mud and is held together by a python. Central to this is the belief that expenditure of substance (e.g. though mining) will eventually lead to the end of the world. In the past these groups participated in ground making rituals in order to replenish the earth and this was regarded as moral behaviour. It is said that such behaviour conserves the earth's fertile substance, whilst inappropriate or immoral behaviour can make this substance infertile. In recent years the ceremonies ensuring the conservation of fertile substance have not occurred and the royalties to be gained through mining have become foremost in the minds of the Huli. Due to this, the Duna now charge the Huli and Ipili with pillaging the earth's fertile substance, which should be being conserved for the whole region. The Duna believe that the Huli have sold them out and that the Huli alone reap all of the benefits from their collective ritual efforts.

The Duna feel that they have a unique identity and do not support the move to a Hela province. They say that the Huli have forgotten their common links and believe that a

Hela province will mean that the Duna will lose everything. Significantly, the Duna feel that they have been colonised by the Huli and are seeking to maintain their own identity. They hold the Huli responsible for their lack of support and resources and seek to reclaim their ancestral lands. As can be seen, there is very little support among the Duna for a Hela province, as emphasized by the results from the last election.

Discussion

During discussion, the following questions and points were raised:

Traditional Duna ritual leaders have taken over church roles, giving the Duna the opportunity to speak more openly about what a Hela province would mean to them. Petrus Thomas (the newly elected Duna MP) is strongly supported by the Church and elders for pushing for a Duna province.

Will pushing for a Hela province cause conflict?

- Yes there is huge potential for such a push to cause conflict in the region. Obviously the issue needs to be discussed because it is constantly on the agenda but what the Duna are most concerned about is whether or not their services will be blocked for not supporting the plan.
- It sounds as if attempts are being made by the Huli to control the spread of resources.
- We need to support the people we have in government or we'll get kicked out – the Hela province is creating heaps of problems
- It is a huge source of conflict and groups want to say they don't want to be a part of it but in doing this they risk losing the little they do have. The fact that Petrus was campaigning for Duna unity means he doesn't support a Hela province because the two are not compatible. Petrus has a wide appeal; he is new to the scene, well educated and young. He isn't going to engage in old style politics and he's brought a totally different style with him. People don't talk about a Hela province in Mendi, as for the majority of the people the greater concern is that the

older politicians are going to cut off the few resources that people currently do have.

- At the moment there are expectations that MPs (especially the Governor) can deliver goods but they can't, there are no funds, all that they do is make a mess.

What are the passions driving people to stand for parliament? It didn't used to be such a violent and passionate thing – Why has it become this way?

- Provincial governments used to have the resources but now that power has been taken by national MPs starving provincial governments. As a result of this, national government seats have become a prize. MPs have the power to manipulate the majority of the funds in the government purse. Further, in the more profitable provinces it has become commonplace for politicians to have guns to intimidate people. This has been going on for at least 15 years – it works well so they continue to do it.

Last month the prime minister promised that before 2007 there would be a Hela province, now that this has been stated it will be difficult to stop the process.

Are you saying that out of these political problems you've got people coming through with strong cultural beliefs?

- Yes, they are reinvigorating their cultural cosmologies and many people strongly believe that when the resources run out the world will end.

If the province boundaries were based around the local languages would it make areas easier to govern?

- The problem in the western end of the province is that there aren't enough people in it to constitute an electorate. It may be possible though to form a Duna, Hewa, Bogaia and Bosavi electorate though because they see each other as similar despite the fact that they are geographically quite spread out.
- Another problem with this though is that when you change the electoral boundaries you have to change the district boundaries to realign the

administrative structure. At the moment these boundaries are geographically aligned, like the physical infrastructure (e.g. roads).

- 20 years ago John Ballard stated that identity and ethnicity derive in part from administrative structures and services – this is still true today.

The Western end of the province is suffering the most at the moment. If we could get money and the public servants into these areas it would work because a civil society still exists. Perhaps then we need to look at the ways in which we are channelling the funds so that they reach these places.

SESSION NINE: WHERE TO NOW?

Laurence Goldman, Joe Kanekane and Ron May

During session nine, Ron May, Laurence Goldman and Joe Kanekane explored key issues raised throughout the workshop.

Ron May summarized the workshop in two sentences: The situation in the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea concerning law and order, infrastructure, policy and economy is bad. However, the question that arises is what can be done about it?

Ron May began by rebutting inadequate responses to this question.

1. The argument that more political will is needed should be dismissed, as it neither explains nor helps the situation. According to May, there is no lack of political will among the people but rather, the problem lies in the structure of politics
2. The issue of re-establishing indigenous systems of governance should be dismissed, since such systems are unable to operate at a national level. There is no single indigenous system that can cope with so many different people and multinational companies. According to May, indigenous mechanisms can be used, but not an indigenous system as such. Rather, one should seek small successes, not grand solutions.

3. The argument that outsiders can solve the problems because they are not involved in local issues and are thus considered trustworthy by the local people should be dismissed, as this can only be a limited and temporary solution. The days of the kiap are gone
4. The intensified use of resources is not a long-term solution. Most projects are winding down and are threatened with extinction. Places are burnt down or looted, creating much waste. Thus, it is pointless to intensify the use of resources without first solving the problem of maintaining them. Increasing resources would also exacerbate the unrealistically high expectations of local people, concerning the income of government companies and their benefits. People are already beginning to return to the subsistence economy and there are suggestions to make a new start in managing the SHP economy after the big projects have collapsed.

According to May, the problem relates not to income shortage or lack of money as such, but to the distribution and reinvestment of that money. May argued that the aforementioned arguments should be dismissed in favour of a focus upon the following substantive points.

1. The first question we should pose is: When did the collapse in the SHP begin? Apparently, in the kiap's time things worked. There was less violence and better economic prospects. May noted that problems began in 1975, or even before then. He asked whether there might be a relationship between the introduction of large resource projects and the decline of safety. Did the resource projects bring good things only?
2. Regional variations have to be considered. The problems of population density and declining yields for land influence local situations. Thus, the question here is which parts of PNG – and SHP – are doing relatively well and which are not?
3. The relationship between the state and civil society is important to consider. The state's influence on the region is limited. There is much fighting for state-support and for access to state delivered services. Establishing law and order, however, is only possible with a strong state. The question in this context is whether the

state's functions can be taken up by civil society? May proposed that partly, yes. For example, in SHP the institutions that are run by the church are working well. However, this is no long-term solution. The state must be strengthened in order to establish law and order and secure the fair distribution of wealth. But if the state is weak, how can it be reconstructed from below? The interconnection between state and society must be improved. Issues of leadership, corruption, law and order etc. must be addressed on a national level. May asked if regional issues could be dealt with solely at the local level and answered no. There is an interrelationship between the region and the state, and therefore, SHP problems must be dealt with at the national level.

Suggestions:

1. If we take a closer look at the situation in SHP, it is clear that the problems of SHP could be assisted by more and improved communication and information centres.
2. The idea of small successes should be explored. Since there are no single solutions at a great level, we should focus on small successes, which may lead to more general success as well.
3. The role of civil society could be strengthened. If we look at SHP it is worth considering the positive things that have been achieved by civil society. From there we can proceed forwards and ask how civil society can actually contribute to solve the province's problems.

Joe Kanekane emphasized the fact that PNG is a growing country and that the problems raised throughout the workshop are by no means specific to PNG. PNG is a country in the process of development and through experience; the people of PNG will find ways to deal with contemporary problems. Only through experience will a solution be found.

Kanekane also noted that contemporary Papua New Guineans are exercising their democratic rights more consciously than ever. People have had enough of the 'chaotic'

situation that their country is in, and show their frustrations in their votes. Kanekane questioned whether SHP should be treated as an isolated region, or rather, as a part of PNG. To his mind, as SHP is a part of PNG, it should be treated as such. The main public enemy in PNG is corruption. As a journalist, Kanekane finds the battle that he and others have taken up against corruption frustrating, as it seems to lead nowhere.

Kanekane made a number of suggestions, namely:

1. “Try to get the character of a person.” Here, Kanekane said that the feelings of loyalty and attachment that individual people have towards their gardens, families etc. should be transferred to a bigger scale, e.g. the country. It is important to get this commitment and attachment to the nation of PNG. Thus, there needs to be a transfer of morality and loyalty from the individual to the national level.
2. People who have been to the cities and go back to the villages should be utilised as information mediators. Usually, villagers believe the words of people who have been elsewhere and they take for granted what these people say. They have to rely upon these sources of information because most of them are illiterate and can only get information about the wider world through others. If these people are not utilised, people in the village will haphazardly gather information and thus gain an incomplete picture.
3. Access to information and communication is another important issue. There are ads on television but nobody in the village has access to a television, and newspapers are not accessible to the majority of people, many of whom are illiterate. So the question is, how can we improve communication and access to reliable information?

Laurence Goldman addressed problems of governance in Papua New Guinea. He stressed that PNG is in a process of social transformation, with notions of community dissipating; clans and subclans changing, and a greater emphasis being placed on small social units (families). According to Goldman, this trajectory began long ago, however, it is likely that resource projects have impacted upon the process. He agreed with the

general consensus that a stable civil society, law and order situation and governance are needed. Dispute settlement cannot be exercised solely in the traditional way, however traditional methods of dispute resolution must be considered.

Goldman noted that even if effective government systems were in place, not all problems would be solved in SHP. Development will not occur immediately, it takes time, and people's expectations are not fulfilled (which is a cause of much trouble). So what to do?

Goldman made the following suggestions:

1. Introduce small training programs in remote areas, like mending shoes or haircutting. This wouldn't have a great impact but would be a start to small successes.
2. The disarmament of people (groups) must be effectively policed.
3. The strategy should be 'bottom up' instead of 'top down'.

In general, Goldman suggested a multifaceted approach: law and order and development issues must be developed at the same time. He also referred to resource projects, which despite causing problems of dependency have also achieved success in developing business. Goldman stressed the fact that few people who receive royalties see it as their responsibility to reinvest their money into the community.

In summary, there are no magic solutions. AusAID should target major infrastructure (hospitals, roads etc.) and assure training programs and support (security).

Discussion

The following questions and comments were raised during discussion:

If education, health and roads are provided, it will lead to a better law and order situation.

At the same time, the security of institutions (e.g. hospitals) must be fostered through special training programs for security personnel.

One needs infrastructure to improve the health system. By unpacking the issues, the problem related factors become evident. The question is: What is realistic? The capacity of the AusAID program is limited, not everything can be solved from the outside.

The provincial plan and development must go together. Agencies in the area are needed to grant success, and these agencies must be coordinated.

One problem is that the resources, e.g. medicine supplies, may actually be there but they are not available or not distributed correctly.

Is the SHP case comparable to other places in PNG, like Enga?

- Enga is different insofar as there is only one language spoken in the region. In SHP on the other hand there are numerous different languages. Enga is better off in that there are more mining imports, but there is also a great law and order problem.
- The SHP situation is comparable to Bougainville and could be solved in a similar way.

Another problem is that the hospitals need staff. This is not only a question of law and order but also of economics. There are no banks in Tari and this makes the working possibilities hard. So how do you make hospitals work?

- Through a coordinated approach. Potential staff members don't want to go to Tari because of safety issues. So the aforementioned multipronged approach would be the only way of dealing with the problem.
- If AusAID plays the facilitator role, this multipronged approach must be on three levels:
 1. re-establish the government structure
 2. install infrastructure
 3. work with communities
- AusAID has successful projects in the Philippines and Indonesia that could be transferred to PNG. If AusAID wants to re-establish government structures and

systems, it has to get a commitment from the provincial and national governments. This is not easy to achieve but AusAID has to work on both levels. If the government is not willing to be one of the major donors, it can engage with big companies.

How can the violence we are talking about here be defined? Is it professional criminals? Are there any alternatives for criminals?

- There are different levels of violence and conflict. There is “normal” conflict and there is the destruction of facilities. The problem is that there are actually no alternatives for the raskols because there are no sustained activities. They have nothing else to do. The question is also what is crime? Stealing from someone’s garden, who is not related to you, is often not seen as a crime.

AusAID is at the moment in the process of restructuring and focusing more on issues that have to do with the community. A bottom-up approach is intended. We target aid on things that have maximum impact on the society. PNG is regarded as one of the most difficult places in the world because of its multi-ethnicity, its topography and the social situation. There are also a small number of bureaucrats who are overwhelmed with the cash that comes in through AusAID and who have problems in handling it. But AusAID is now focusing on long-term solutions and strategies.

There seem to be some major problems with AusAID projects. Some important things fall outside the projects. There were good small-scale projects that were not funded because of the scope of AusAID, it seems that it is easier to get 300 000 dollars than 3000. Some projects were rejected because people couldn’t raise the funds they had to contribute.

The public service does not reach the rural areas and the young people there have nothing to do. They are engaged in groups that often are destructive and violent. That needs to be changed and it can be done by giving these guys non-destructive activities that they can focus on, e.g. taking care of sheep or technical work. Development should be community

based. The community should set its own goals and the people should carry out the programs themselves. Only through this can the decline that has been taking place since the 1980s be reversed. It is a slow process that doesn't need much funding but much support. It's the small long-term approach.

The advantage of small-scale projects also is that one can easily change to something else if the first project is not successful.

There are some basic dichotomies: universal form of justice in PNG – custom 'law'; credit legal system – clan conflict resolution.

An important thing to mention is that we have not gendered our discussion at all. It would be interesting to discuss the matter again considering gender issues.

At this point, Ron May closed the discussion, thanking participants for their attendance. Laurence Goldman thanked Ron and the organizers of the workshop for their efforts.

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