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Fulfilling the Development Promise

KEMPE RONALD HOPE, SR.

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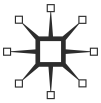

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To OMC
Troublesome but my beloved

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Preface

Africa is a continent with abundant natural and human resources. Yet, it has been beset by poor development performance stemming principally from bad political and economic governance and, until recently, had lacked the wherewithal to ful"ll its promise of good development outcomes for sustained improvement in the lives of its citizens. In fact, Africa was a region that was characterized by, among other things, frequent con"icts, rampant corruption, neopatrimonialism, weak governance systems and institutions, statist economic policies, persistent poverty, and disease. All of these factors either contributed to, or were a manifestation of, generally unsatisfactory development performance for the continent. However, in recent years, Africa has been on the move positively and this book is about that achievement.

Most books on Africa are about doom and gloom and I may also be guilty of previously contributing some share to that perspective. This book, on the other hand, is forward-looking. It is about hope and promise. Its essays analyze Africa's past and current development problems, and the continent's now improving development performance denoted by rising growth rates, declining poverty, better macroeconomic indicators, increasing exports in many countries, an improving investment climate, a decline in con"icts, an enhanced governance environment, and greater self-reliance and the factors that have given rise to that state of affairs.

Having endured a lost decade in the 1980s and established a new partnership for development at the beginning of the twenty-"rst century, African countries now need to make even more serious and concentrated efforts to implement additional policy reforms, as outlined in this work, to further improve their governance and economic performance, and sustain momentum to meet their development goals. In this book, I argue that Africa can and must ful"ll its promise of better development performance. The prospects are much better now than ever as demonstrated throughout this work.

For some of the chapters in this volume I have drawn on some of the content from some of my previously published work. The

acknowledgements are as follows: •Child Survival, Poverty and Labor in Africa, *Journal of Children and Poverty* 11(1), 2005: 19 42 (available at www.informaworld.com); •Toward Good Governance and Sustainable Development: The African Peer Review Mechanism, *Governance* 18(2), 2005: 283 311 (Blackwell Publishing); and •Prospects and Challenges for the New Partnership for Africa's Development: Addressing Capacity De"cits, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 24(2), 2006: 203 28 (available at www.informaworld.com).

This work has also bene"ted from comments received from some of my colleagues at various academic and international institutions. They know who they are. I am grateful to them for taking time out from their busy schedules to read all or parts of the manuscript. As is customary, any errors or omissions remain my sole responsibility.

Finally, the views expressed in this book are private and entirely my own. They do not necessarily represent the views of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or any other organization with which I am af"liated.

Kempe Ronald Hope, Sr.

Acronyms

ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
ADF	African Development Forum
AfDB	African Development Bank
AIC	Africa Infrastructure Consortium
AIDS	Acquired Immune De“ciency Syndrome
AMCOW	African Ministerial Conference on Water
APF	Africa Partnership Forum
APR	African Peer Review
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AU	African Union
BNPC	Botswana National Productivity Center
BOO	Build-own-operate
BOP	Bottom-of-the-pyramid
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CBNRM	Community-based natural resource management
CCFA	Commission on Capital Flows to Africa
CFA	Commission for Africa
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CPRC	Chronic Poverty Research Center
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSC	Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers
CSOs	Civil society organizations
DFID	Department for International Development
DPT	Diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAP	Education Action Plan
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDI	Foreign direct investment
G8	Group of seven industrialized countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, and United States of America) plus Russia
GCI	Growth competitiveness index

GDP	Gross domestic product
GEMAP	Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program
GFHR	Global Forum for Health Research
GMACL	Global March Against Child Labor
GNI	Gross national income
GUD	Genital ulcerating disease
HIPC	Heavily indebted poor countries
HIV	Human Immunode“ciency Virus
HSGIC	Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee
ICLS	International Conference of Labor Statisticians
ICZM	Integrated coastal zone management
IEC	Information, education, and communication
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFI	International Financial Institutions
ILO	International Labor Of“ce
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPAA	International Partnership Against AIDS in Africa
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KBS	Kenya Bus Services
LEAPs	Local Environmental Action Plans
LHWP	Lesotho Highlands Water Project
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MAP	Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Program
MCA	Millennium Challenge Account
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MELISSA	Managing Environment Locally in Sub-Saharan Africa
NAI	New African Initiative
NEAPs	National Environmental Action Plans
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Nongovernmental organizations
NPM	New Public Management
NPS	New Public Service
ODA	Of“cial development assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PACT	Partnership for African Capacity Building
PHR	Physicians for Human Rights
ROSCA	Rotating savings and credit association
ROSCAs	Rotating savings and credit associations
SACI	Southern Africa Capacity Initiative
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SEACAM	Secretariat for Eastern African Coastal Area Management
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association
SEWU	Self-Employed Women's Union
STIs	Sexually transmitted infections
SWAPs	Sector wide approaches
TECCONILE	Technical Cooperation Committee for the Promotion of the Development and Environmental Protection of the Nile Basin
TI	Transparency International
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UPC	Union des Patriotes congolais (Union of Congolese Patriots)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WITS	Work improvement teams
WRI	World Resources Institute
WSP	Water and Sanitation Program
WUC	Water Utilities Corporation
WUP	Water Utility Partnership
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Chapter 1

Poverty and Environmental Degradation: Policy Implementation for Reversing the Spiral

Poverty, in all of its manifestations, remains a serious problem in Africa despite the fact that the incidence of poverty on the continent has recently been declining. The nature of poverty in Africa keeps its eradication as a central objective of socioeconomic development. Also, strategies for reducing poverty in the African region have begun to pay more attention to the relationship between environmental degradation and that poverty. This nexus of poverty and environmental damage has led to a situation where the poor are both the victims and perpetrators of environmental damage in Africa. Environmental degradation contributes to poverty through, among other things, worsened health and by constraining the productivity of those resources upon which the poor rely, while poverty restricts the poor to acting in ways that are damaging to the environment.

This two-way relationship between poverty and environmental degradation in Africa is therefore a signi"cant one. Consequently, caring about the environment and poverty in Africa is not a luxury but a prime necessity. Reversing the downward spiral of this relationship is a key element in the strategy to improve and sustain socioeconomic development in Africa and, in particular, to eradicate poverty. This chapter examines the primary issues contributing to the downward spiraling two-way relationship between poverty and environmental degradation in Africa, and then discusses and

analyzes priority areas of a managed policy framework for reversing that spiral.

The Poverty and Environment Nexus in Africa

Poverty in Africa continues to be a major socioeconomic problem despite the gains in economic progress in some of those countries since embarking on the process of economic liberalization or structural adjustment in the early 1980s. Understanding the nature and features of this poverty in Africa is a basic precondition to designing policies to eradicate poverty in the shortest feasible time. Moreover, it is an important reference point for development strategy in Africa and for engaging policy makers in an informed dialogue on how best to fashion such strategies in the quest to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

African poverty has many facets. It is characterized by a lack of purchasing power, rural predominance, exposure to environmental risk, population displacement, insuf"cient access to social and economic services, rapid urbanization, and few opportunities for formal income generation. The poor in Africa are, however, not a homogeneous group. They instead fall into three categories. The "rst category can be designated as the chronic poor. These are individuals at the margin of society and who constantly suffer from extreme deprivation. The second category can be referred to as the borderline poor. These are individuals or households who are occasionally poor, such as the seasonally unemployed. The "nal category can be termed the newly poor. These are individuals or households who may be the direct victims of stagnant economic performance in their countries. They include retrenched workers (Hope, 2004).

The key features of Africa's poverty history include the past poor record of economic growth, high inequality in income and asset ownership, and inadequate access to basic social services, which result in low levels of human resources development and low agricultural productivity. Although economic performance in many African countries has been improving since the mid-1990s, growth across Africa is still inadequate to reverse the existing poverty throughout the continent. Looking at the historical record, sub-Saharan Africa is one of the few regions where per capita incomes had been falling. In 1980, sub-Saharan Africa's gross national income (GNI) per capita was US$650. However, by 2004, GNI per capita was US$600 and the region had ended the millennium 5 percent poorer than it was in 1990 (UNDP,

2002, 2005, 2006; World Bank, 2004). With a population growth rate averaging more than 2 percent per year, the number of people living in poverty tended to increase before recently declining. However, since 2003 GNI per capita has been increasing and was US$842 by 2006 while growth rates have exceeded 5 percent since 2004 (World Bank, 2007).

Undoubtedly, Africa is the poorest region in the world. It has the largest share of people living below US$1 per day. Currently, an average of 41 percent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa lives in absolute poverty compared to 32 percent in South Asia. In 2001, 47 percent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa lived in absolute poverty, so poverty is declining in Africa (UNIDO, 2004). About 30 percent of Africa's population is classi"ed as extremely poor (Hope, 2004). Poverty in Africa is predominantly rural with approximately 59 percent of the rural population living in poverty. However, urban poverty has also been increasing substantially. The most recent comprehensive data on urban poverty indicate that approximately 43 percent of the urban population in Africa lives in poverty.

The poverty situation in Africa can also be looked at from the point of view of the distribution of income. In many African countries, the disparity in income is quite signi"cant. Compared to other regions of the world, Africa has the second most unequal income distribution next to Latin America. The most frequently used measure of income inequality is the Gini index. It ranges from zero (complete equality) to 100 (complete inequality). The most recent Gini index for sub-Saharan Africa is 72.2 (UNDP, 2006). In some countries such as South Africa, Namibia, Swaziland, Lesotho, Central African Republic, and Sierra Leone, for example the data indicate that the Gini index exceeds 57.5 with the richest 20 percent of their population accounting for more than 62 percent of total income or consumption compared to an average share of 2 percent of income or consumption for the poorest 20 percent (UNDP, 2006).

Population Growth and Urbanization

Poverty in Africa is exacerbated by both population growth and the pattern of human settlements. The population in most African countries doubles within twenty to thirty years. This is a demographic explosion unparalleled in human history (World Bank, 1996). During the past three decades, the pattern of human settlements has shifted toward an urban bias. Because cities are the main catalysts of economic growth in Africa, their economic attraction and the resultant

urbanization have been major contributors to both urban poverty and environmental degradation. As more and more rural migrants voluntarily attempt to escape from rural poverty, they "ood to the cities in search of income-earning opportunities. This phenomenon has been noted by Farvacque-Vitković and Godin (1998, v) in the following terms: •The massive migration of people from rural into urban areas is the most spectacular demographic upheaval that Africa has experienced in recent decades. This not only intensi"es urbanization but also contributes in a major way to urban poverty with all of its attendant consequences on the furthering of environmental degradation (Hope and Lekorwe, 1999).

In addition, there has been some involuntary migration national (internal) and international into the urban centers in Africa. In both scenarios, the contributing factors tend to be civil wars, local con"icts, and bad governance as well as environmental degradation and resource scarcity resulting from a lack of arable land, deforestation, loss of natural habitats, soil erosion, depletion and pollution of water resources, and a cycle of droughts and "oods. At the same time, involuntary migrants exaggerate the scale of environmental problems when circumstances push them to move in large numbers simultaneously and therefore force them to compete for natural resources such as fuelwood, building materials, fresh water, and wild foods to ensure their survival.

Even with the current decrease in political breakdown and civil strife, the number of involuntary migrants could likely continue to expand across the African continent, from ecologically risky and economically fragile areas to more environmentally sound and prosperous areas as was argued by the World Bank (1996). This, in turn, will negatively impact the environment. However, natural disasters, such as the "oods that occurred in Southern Africa during the 2000 rainy season, have a tendency to concentrate the problem and increase the number of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Although it is dif"cult to derive precise estimates of the scope of the environmental damage done by involuntary migrants, some data have emerged from the few studies available. At the height of the refugee crisis in Tanzania in 1994 1996, for example, a total of 570 square kilometers of forest was affected, of which 167 square kilometers was severely deforested. An impact assessment study conducted in Zimbabwe in 1994, when Mozambican refugees had returned to their homelands, showed a reduction of 58 percent in the woodland cover around the camps (UNHCR, 2001a). In the early 1990s, an estimated 20,000 hectares of woodlands were cut each year in Malawi

to provide "rewood and timber for the various camps hosting Mozambican refugees. In December 1996, refugees from Burundi and Rwanda housed in the Kagera region in Tanzania consumed more than 1,200 tons of "rewood each day and a total of 570 square kilometers of forests were affected, of which 167 square kilometers were severely deforested (UNHCR, 2001b). In Liberia, population displacement was found to have led to widespread environmental degradation in the form of deforestation, loss of vegetation and soil cover, erosion, pollution, and the accumulation of waste (UNEP, 2006). The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has estimated that the environmental rehabilitation of refugee camps in Africa alone could cost as much as US$150 million a year (UNHCR, 2001b).

No other region in the world has experienced such high rates of urbanization with such levels of economic growth. Currently, the urban population in sub-Saharan Africa is estimated at 35 percent of the total population, from only 5 percent in 1900 and 21 percent in 1975. Africa's current annual urban growth is the highest in the world at close to 4 percent (United Nations, 2006). By the year 2030, it is projected that 54 percent of the population of the African continent will live in cities (United Nations, 2004). Urbanization in Africa presents both bene"ts and costs. An additional resident may spend money in the city and thereby contribute to the urban economy. However, an extra resident can also drive up the cost of providing public services, increase poverty, and add to the avoidable damage of the environment. For example, the majority of the poor tend to live in ecologically fragile zones. They overuse the surrounding lands for, among other things, fuelwood and subsistence and small cash-crop production, further endangering their physical environment, their health, and the lives of their children. At the same time, they are disproportionately threatened by the environmental hazards and health risks posed by living in poverty. However, it must be noted here that reducing poverty will often lead to improved environmental quality and vice versa (Hope and Lekorwe, 1999).

The poor are therefore both the perpetrators and victims of environmental damage in Africa. Their poverty status is reinforced by lack of access to jobs in the formal sector. As a result, the bulk of the poor make their living through subsistence activities or informal sector jobs, which tend to be more pronounced in the urban areas as discussed in chapter 2. Informal sector employment accounts for the majority of total employment in Africa. It also accommodates a signi"cant proportion of the new entrants into the African labor force.

Survival Tactics and Access to Services

For the poor in Africa, dealing with environmental problems of which their poverty status is both the cause and effect tends to be in"uenced by short-term considerations (Mink, 1993). Since they are struggling at the edge of subsistence levels, the poor therefore are preoccupied with their survival on a day-to-day basis. To ensure their survival, the poor are forced to act in ways that, in turn, degrade the environment and put them and their households at further risk. The immediate and most pressing environmental problems affecting the poor in Africa are those related to lack of access to safe water and sanitation services; poor management of solid wastes, especially in the urban areas; inadequate access to health care; inappropriate land use and housing; degradation of environmentally sensitive lands such as coastal areas; and the deteriorating natural resource base and ecological environment.

Water and Sanitation Access

One of the most serious threats to the quality of life in Africa is the lack of access to water and sanitation services. By 2004, approximately 56 percent of the total population of sub-Saharan Africa had sustainable access to safe water compared to 48 percent in 1990, while an estimated 37 percent had access to improved sanitation services compared to 32 percent in 1990 (World Bank, 2002; UNDP, 2005, 2006; WHO and UNICEF, 2004). However, there is considerable variation in access to safe water and sanitation services among the countries in Africa. The population without sustainable access to safe water ranges from 5 percent in Botswana to 78 percent in Ethiopia, while for sanitation services the range is from 6 percent in Mauritius to 99 percent in both Chad and Eritrea (UNDP, 2006). Mauritius is also the only African country with safe water coverage to 100 percent of its population. Groundwater is extremely important in Africa. It is estimated that 75 percent of the African population uses groundwater as the main source of drinking water supply. However, groundwater accounts for only about 15 percent of the continent's total renewable water resources (World Water Forum, 2000). The demand for water is expected to grow by at least 3 percent annually until 2020 as populations increase and economies develop (UNFPA, 2004).

Among the reasons for the signi"cant lack of access to safe water in many African countries is the deteriorating delivery infrastructure. That, in turn, results in considerable leakage and loss of water, which

then leads to erratic water supply and irrational distribution. Much water is also lost through over"owing service reservoirs after abstraction, pumping or treatment, or during distribution (UN Water/Africa, 2006). For example, Kyessi (2005) found that in Dar es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania, an average of 60 percent of the water pumped is lost and only 40 percent "nally reaches consumers. In this city, all potable water is supplied by Dar es Salaam Water and Sanitation whose daily total output of 204 million liters per day, to begin with, is less than one-half of the daily demand of 410 liters per day (Kyessi, 2005). Those who suffer most from this state of affairs are the people living in the impoverished areas.

Health Care Access

The lack of access to clean water and sanitation, in turn, threatens the health of the poor. As matter of fact, the lack of clean water and sanitation is the primary reason diseases transmitted by faeces are so common in Africa. Various diarrheal and other diseases are spread via the faecal-oral route, and this route is most ef"ciently traveled where water supplies and sanitary conditions are inadequate (Hope and Lekorwe, 1999). It is in these conditions that the poor are forced to live as they are unable to afford a better quality of life. Poverty therefore stands out for its overwhelming role in degrading health. Indeed, the World Health Organization (WHO) has called poverty the world's biggest killer (WHO, 1995). A research study found that the two biggest causes of death of the poor were respiratory infections and diarrheal diseases (Gwatkin and Guillot, 1999). Both are linked to environmental factors dirty air and dirty water. The study also found that diseases with strong links to environmental factors are highly concentrated among the poor. For example, 60 percent of all malaria deaths and one-half of all deaths from diarrhea occur among the poorest 20 percent of the world's population. In contrast, communicable diseases caused only 8 percent of all deaths among the rich (World Bank, 1999a).

Such a situation provides a major imperative for African governments to implement policies that result in greater access to health care services for the poor. However, in the poorest countries, there are still large numbers of the population without access to health care services. On average, about one-third of the population of Africa lacks access to health care services and the number of physicians per 100,000 people varies from a low of only 2 in Tanzania to a high of 134 in Tunisia (UNDP, 2006). Moreover, there are now even greater demands placed on these inadequate health care services due to the AIDS

pandemic currently sweeping across most of the African continent as discussed in chapter 3.

Solid Waste Disposal Services

Some African countries, particularly in their cities, can also be unhealthy places to live in due to their lack of capacity to collect and properly dispose of sewage and solid waste. Solid waste is a sizable and growing problem in Africa that is primarily in"uenced by urbanization. The concentration of waste in many African cities overwhelms the assimilative capacity of natural ecosystems within city limits and beyond, creating problems for surrounding neighborhoods and water use (Hope and Lekorwe, 1999). To be sure, solid waste often creates one of the most visible and foul-smelling environmental problems in Africa due to its sheer magnitude, indiscriminate disposal, decomposition, and lack of effective regulation of industrial sites.

Generally, most African countries are unable to keep pace with the growing volume of waste generated in their urban areas as a result of urbanization. For example, by 1994, Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana, generated almost 90 tons of solid waste each day from a population of 180,000 compared to the generation of 30 40 tons per day in 1985 1989 when the population was approximately 60,000. In 1988, the population of Dar es Salaam was approximately 1.5 million people and they generated 1,040 1,340 tons of waste per day. However, only about 180 tons of that amount was collected each day by the city council's garbage trucks operating on a small number of accessible streets (Beede and Bloom, 1995). Alexandria, the second largest city in Egypt, generates around 1,700 tons of domestic solid waste a day and, with nearly 40 percent of Egypt's industry, the city also generates nearly 800 tons of industrial waste per day (UNDP, 1998). In Accra, the capital of Ghana, residents generated about 800 tons of solid waste per day in 1990, with an annual increase of 6 percent. The major cities in West Africa produce between 150,000 and 300,000 tons of municipal solid waste per year and only about 40 60 percent of that is collected (AfDB, 2002). In Nairobi, capital of Kenya, about 1,600 tons of waste per day was generated in 2000 and only about 20 30 percent of that was collected (AfDB, 2002).

Land Use and Housing Access

The problem of solid waste disposal and collection in Africa is also considerably in"uenced by the pattern and nature of land use and housing in those countries. The poor, and especially the urban poor,

have converted land and established housing settlements in ecologically fragile zones. Approximately 50 percent of the poor in Africa live on marginal lands of low productivity and high susceptibility to degradation (GFHR, 1999). Many of them live in shanty towns and squatter settlements. It is estimated that 72 percent of urban residents in sub-Saharan Africa live under slum conditions in such informal settlements (UNFPA, 2007). These informal settlements range from high density, squalid inner city tenements to spontaneous, peri-urban settlements lacking legal recognition (WUP, 2003). In Dar es Salaam, for example, squatter housing accounts for 70 percent of the total housing stock (Kombe, 2005).

These land settlements also tend to quickly deteriorate into further environmental hazards as they lack basic services such as water, sanitation, and electricity, for example. This, in turn, further endangers the health of the poor. Moreover, the housing in which the poor live tends to be substandard and overcrowded which, in turn, leads to rapidly deteriorating living conditions. This chaos in the housing situation for the poor in Africa has been attributed to the inability of governments to come to grips with the land management issue and this therefore makes it impossible, or very dif"cult, to provide basic services such as passable roads, storm sewers, drinking water supply, and so on (Farvacque-Vitković and Godin, 1998).

Influence and Exploitation of Coastal Zones

Another important factor contributing to the nexus of poverty and the environment in Africa is the changing nature of the coastal zones. A coastal zone is a dynamic area encompassing shoreline environments as well as adjacent coastal and marine waters. The characteristics of a coastal zone are (1) a dynamic area with frequently changing biological, chemical, and geological attributes; (2) it includes highly productive and biologically diverse ecosystems that offer crucial nursery habitats for many marine species; (3) it contains certain features such as coral reefs, mangrove forests, and beach and dune systems that serve as critical natural defenses against storms, "ooding, and erosion; (4) its ecosystems may act to moderate the impacts of pollution originating from land, such as sediments and human waste; and (5) its coasts attract vast human settlements due to its proximity to the ocean's living and nonliving resources, marine transportation, and recreation (World Bank, 1995). These coastal areas also house important economic resources such as oil and gas reserves and mineral deposits. For example, in Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Togo the majority of industries and oil and mineral mining activities are situated in coastal zones (UNEP, 2002).

Apart from the island states (100 percent coastal area), African coastal zones range from as little as 2 percent of country area in Sudan to 82 percent in Djibouti with a corresponding population, as a percentage of country population, of 2 percent and 93 percent, respectively (World Bank, 1995). These coastal areas and their natural resources are under increasing threat from unmanaged human activities such as population growth, shoreline construction, pollution, habitat destruction, over"shing, and other overexploitation of resources. These activities, in turn, lead to such environmental impacts as deteriorating water quality and sanitation in the urban areas, coastal erosion, degradation of marine resources, and destructive "shing methods, among others.

In African rural coastal areas, the major economic activities of the poor are "shing in the near shore waters and farming of coastal lowlands to supply seafood and agricultural products for the inhabitants and urban centers. In the urban coastal areas, high population densities, high rates of fertility, and mounting in-migration from the rural areas have resulted in the continent as a whole being caught up in a vortex of urban coastal overcrowding. The coastal corridor along the Gulf of Guinea, for example, is considered most likely to reach saturation exceeding the area•s environmental carrying capacity long before 2025 if current growth rates continue (World Bank, 1995). This rapid urbanization and poverty is resulting in •exploitative use of open access and common property resources while competing commercial interests in the "sheries and forestry sectors have taken advantage of poorly managed and monitored licensing regimes to mine resources to the point of depletion (World Bank, 1995, 19). The consequence in both the rural and urban coastal areas is extensive environmental degradation, which, ultimately, hurts the poor the most.

Natural Resource Depletion

The "nal issue of concern in this section pertains to the deteriorating natural resource base and ecological environment. Cleaver and Schreiber (1994) have amply demonstrated that in much of sub-Saharan Africa the natural resource base and ecological environment are deteriorating primarily as a result of deforestation, deserti"cation, soil erosion, and water resource depletion. This state of affairs results from both natural elements as well as the subsistence activities of the poor. In addition, excessive harvesting, poaching, and illegal trade also take a heavy and irreversible toll on animal and plant life. Excessive foresting, for example, destroys woodlands and the poor then