

There is also growing concern that all the World Bank wants from NEAPs is early warning that its programmes do not create major environmental scandals over environmental damage (e.g., Yao Graham, 1993). Already some areas of conservation interest in Uganda have been passed into private hands. Chambura Game Reserve and Kabalega National Park stand out as good examples. Should privatisation of land be pursued even in environmental terms in a country like Rwanda with, until recently, the highest human population density in Africa the likely thing to happen is that more and more people will be impoverished. The impoverished will then do more damage to their environment.

Unaware of this plot, the Government of Yoweri Museveni in Uganda is keen on implementing NEAPs to the letter along with pursuing industrialisation and modernisation. Although the Government has already established the National Environmental Management Agency (NEMA), it is clear that the broad masses of Ugandans have not even heard of NEAP several years since the idea reverberated in the Uganda environment. Frantic efforts were underway in the Constituent Assembly (CA) to constitutionalise the possession of all land by the state. What this pointed to was that once government became the undisputed custodian of all land, the government would have the licence to do anything with any piece of land anywhere in the country in pursuit of its World Bank-initiated NEAP, industrialisation and modernisation strategies.

The end result would most surely be further pauperisation of the indigenous people and hence a generation of even more internal refugees with dire consequences for the environment. Fortunately, for the time being, the idea of placing all land in the hands of the Ugandan Government has been rejected in the CA. However, if the future parliament is dominated by forces calling for "all land to Government," the CA rejection of the idea will be short-lived, unless what befell the NRM/A Land Bill of 1990 repeats itself.

### 3.3. Despotism

Despotic regimes are those whose political manifestation is geared towards monolithisation of society through encroaching on the inalienable rights of people to associate, express themselves in organised groups or otherwise, and choose their leaders without coercion or manipulation. The end result is reduced pluralism of politics, society, ideas and information, and depletion of the human population either through state-inspired murders and terrorism or migration. For example, the refugee crisis that led to the October 1990 invasion of Rwanda by elements in the NRM/A who called themselves RPF/A was a question of despotism in both Rwanda and Uganda (Mamdani, 1995).

Quite often despotic regimes may use the poverty and illiteracy of the population as tools for social and political control. Where such control is the rule rather than the exception, political development which equips the people with the capacity to demand accountability and transparency of their leaders or rulers, and intellectual development which empowers the people to question what is happening or to resist oppression, deceit and brainwashing by leaders or rulers, is a remote possibility. People's fundamental rights of association and choice of leadership will be systematically abused. With declining intellectual development, people will be easily oppressed, brainwashed and deceived.

Rwanda is perhaps the best example of a country where despotism, ethnic animosity, insurrection and political change in another country (Uganda) have recently combined to produce one of the greatest environmental refugee problems and instances of social collapse in Africa in modern times. As pointed out earlier, one million people belonging to the Hutu ethnic group, which composed 80% of the population of Rwanda, were forced to leave their country in 1994 by the invasion of the country by a well-trained Tutsi-dominated politico-military organisation from Uganda called Rwandan Patriotic Front/Army (RPF/A), whose members were determined to return to their country by force.

Interestingly many of the top leaders of RPF/A such as Fred Rwigyema and Paul Kagame had also been top leaders in the related politico-military organisation - the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) - which had captured the instruments of power in Uganda nine years earlier by force of arms. Events prior to the invasion have been reviewed earlier on in this paper. Much environmental damage was inflicted on the Rwandan environment when the RPF/A succeeded in overrunning the country following the assassination of President Habyarimana. One of the most visible indicators of environmental abuse during the RPF/A invasion were the thousands of bodies of Rwandans which were dumped in River Kagera, subsequently ending up in Lake Victoria. Ugandans abandoned eating fish and became threatened by environmental diseases such as cholera, dysentery and typhoid fever.

Despotism does not only enhance the militaristic instincts of the leaders and the beneficiaries of it, but it equally enhances the militarism of the politically, economically and socially discontented. Conflict is inevitable, and this sets up a vicious cycle of violence and environmental disruption and collapse.

The likely scenario is that as discontent rises in the country's environment, government will tend to respond to purely environmental crises with a show of force in the belief that it is doing so in the national interest to ensure national security. However, the adversaries of Government will also be responding militarily to the militarism-cum-terrorism of the Government upon the people in the belief that the national interest should be the broader environmental security whereby the ecological, social, food economic, cultural, political intellectual and psycho-social security of the people is guaranteed; not just military security.

As the conflicts between the despots and those struggling for justice, democracy and human right grows, environmental and ecological security risks also increase. The result is that the frequency of natural disasters grows and the ecological and environmental refugee problem becomes a pollutant of the environment. Ultimately, social collapse and exploding settlements become a characteristic feature of the environmental landscape. New environmental crises emerge, further decline in peace is inevitable, government response becomes even more militaristic and a further generation of refugees is the logical consequence. This scenario manifested itself perfectly in Rwanda prior to the 1990 invasion.

There is no doubt that despotism is a serious cancer in the body politic of Africa. Many of Africa's rulers have seized power by the gun, are kept in power by the gun, and can only be removed from power by the gun. Recognition of this fact has helped to make these rulers despotic in their governance of the countries with dire consequences for the national and regional environments.

#### **4. Environmental Impacts of Refugees**

Although the problem of refugees in the African environment has been a perennial one for most of the post-independence period, very little is known about the environmental impacts of forced migration of large populations in humanitarian crises. What is becoming increasingly clear, however, is that a relationship exists between environmental degradation, the refugee problem and socio-political conflicts

The impact of refugees on the environment should be apparent in all dimensions - the ecological-biological, the socio-economic and the socio-cultural. These impacts must be adequately assessed if any future responses to human disasters such as the Rwandan debacle are to be effective both in the short and long term.

The influx of millions of Rwandan (Bahutu) refugees into Zaire in 1994 offered a crisis opportunity for such an assessment to be made (e.g. Biswas and Tortajada, 1995). The gravity of the crisis was

recently under-scored by Zaire's attempt to expel the refugees from her territory, and the broadening of the political dimension of the crisis by Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni in August 1995 when he issued a stern warning, accompanied by threats of extermination, to any refugees attempting to invade Rwanda from Zaire while he was on a state visit to Kigali in Rwanda. The regional nature of the Rwandan crises was emphasised recently at an Arusha conference on Academic Freedom and Conflict resolution.

The enormous Rwandan refugee crisis in Zaire was unfortunately seen at the international level almost exclusively in humanitarian terms. However, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the unexpected influx of the Bahutu refugees in such large numbers in the North and South Kivu provinces of the country is contributing to serious problems of environmental degradation as a consequence of socio-political conflicts in the Central African Region. The challenge facing mankind is to determine the extent and magnitude of the environmental impacts caused by the Rwandan (Bahutu) refugees in Zaire and the steps that should be taken to reduce such impacts to a minimum acceptable level (e.g., Biswas and Tortajada, 1995). This will not be easy but estimates can be made.

#### **4.1. Ecological-biological impacts**

It is a matter of course that with the involuntary movement of people en masse, many environmental impacts are likely in the ecological-biological dimension of the environment. Soils, water, flora and fauna will all be affected in various ways. In extreme cases the refugees may arrive in a new environment in form of dead bodies. At the start of the Rwandan genocidal war in Rwanda, some 40,000 dead bodies were estimated to have arrived in Lake Victoria via River Kagera. For a long time many Ugandans stopped eating fish. This greatly affected the socio-economic status of peasants who earned a living by fishing. The impacts of the dead bodies on biological forms and the food chains of which they were a part must have been enormous.

As people move, they may not follow existing roads or paths but may move anywhere in the landscape. In this way they compact the soil with their feet and those of their animals. This interferes with the filtration of water into the soil, leading to soil erosion by water and to reduction in the productivity of the ecosystems through which the people are moving. Therefore, resources along the route may be over-stressed, threatening the food security of the resident people.

Quite often the vegetation may be impacted because the people need to put up makeshift shelters and get energy in the form of firewood for their temporary shelters. Destruction of vegetation may mean destruction of the habitats of the various fauna which inhabit them or of the food resources on which they depend. Or else the animals may be scared away from their habitats by the huge moving population. The mountain Gorilla, for example was greatly affected by the Hutu refugees settling in their habitats.

The refugees may affect the habitats in other ways as they move. Their faeces and urine, once introduced into the landscape, can become pollutants of the soils. Where these contain disease organisms, the environmental health of the area may be drastically reduced. Both refugees and residents will become heavily infested by parasites leading to serious environmental diseases. If it rains the human-based pollutants may be washed into lakes, wells or river water, polluting it or leading to eutrophication.

Disease micro-organisms that thrive in dirty (polluted) water such as those responsible for typhoid fever, tuberculosis, dysentery and anthrax, become part of the environment. Even food remains may eventually be located in the waters where upon disease-causing micro-organisms may subsist and reduce the environmental health of an area further.

Unquestionably, the most serious environmental problem created by the Rwandan (Bahutu) refugees in North and South Kivu provinces of Zaire, where camps were established, is deforestation within and around camps (Biswas and Toirtajada, 1995). A study team of the United Nations Development programme (UNDP) which visited Eastern Zaire to assess the damage done to the environment by the enormous refugee influx found that in South Kivu, deforestation and associated environmental costs have been significant.

The Zairean Government has estimated that the South Kivu province lost some 3,758 hectares of forest land during the first 3 weeks of the arrival of the refugees. On a long-term basis, however, these losses do not appear to be as serious as in North Kivu; the refugee camps of South Kivu appear to have been better planned in terms of site selection. In North Kivu, the most severely affected parts are in Goma (about 300 ha. affected) and its surrounding areas and in the Des Virunga National Park.

Des Virunga National park is one of the areas of conservation interest in the ecological-biological dimension of Zaire's environment that was gazetted as National park (the others are Garamba National Park, Kahunzi Biega National Park, Kudenlugus National park, Mailco National park, Salonga National Park and Upemba National Park). Interestingly the refugees avoided Kahuzi Biega just to the West of Rwanda and proceeded to Des Virunga which is to the North West of Rwanda and just to the Southwest of Uganda. Des Virunga National Park, which has been a World Heritage site since 1979, has an exceptionally rich flora, high diversity and a multitude of endemic species of plants.

As far as the fauna is concerned, Des Virunga represents the protected zone with the highest number of mammalian species in Zaire, and no less than 23 species are in the 1994 IUCN Red List of Threatened Animal. Apparently the Park is also Africa's richest bird sanctuary with 698 species, 25 of which are endemic and 65 are considered to be endangered species (Biswas and Tortajada, 1995). The environmental concern is that, since the arrival of the Rwandan refugees, the Park is losing an estimated 7000 to 10,000m<sup>3</sup> of wood per day.

Initially, refugees collected wood primarily for their own cooking and lighting, and cut poles for the construction of their makeshift houses. However, the UNDP team found that the refugees had already started a full scale commercial activity of selling charcoal, fuel wood and other forest products, including poached meat. These activities are most pronounced in the Kibumba Camp, where the affected area is estimated to be 5 km. long and 4 km wide in some places. There are fears in the political and conservation circles in Zaire, and globally, that if these activities continue unchecked they will have long-term adverse implications for the natural resources and the total environment of Des Virunga National Park.

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of refugees located within the Des Virunga National Park on 6th October, 1994 were: Kibumba Camp, 135,000, Mugunga Camp; 125,000 and Kitale Camp, 110,000

It is not surprising that soon after the arrival of Rwandan refugees in Zaire, many were reported to be dying/have died from environmental disease such as cholera, typhoid, and dysentery. Disposal of human and solid waste in all the refugee camps in North and South Kivu was a serious problem. The situation in Des Virunga worsened. Extensive deforestation, including uprooting of plants is resulting in accelerated soil erosion in most refuge camps and all their surroundings areas. Gullies, deepening with each heavy rainfall, are now a constant part of the landscape.

At the same time, many land-use changes due to the presence of the refugees are evident. With the onset of the rains in March 1995, the refugees were expected to begin sowing. The agricultural activities they initiate are likely to have long-term impact. Even if the refugees leave, reclamation of the land for afforestation is unlikely. Instead the Zairians may take over the deforested land

to continue the agricultural practices initiated by the Rwandan refugees. Already portions of the buffer zone of Des Virunga National Park and even the Park itself have undergone land use changes. There are defecation areas for the Kibumba Camp, administrative quarters of the UNHCR, medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF), Oxfam and other organisations

These facts go a long way to show that once refugees are in a new environment, they automatically become a pollutant and, therefore, begin degrading the environment. When the refugees are finally resettled, their impact will be similar to those exerted while moving but they will tend to be far more pronounced and environmentally-destructive. As the new settlement continues it will tend to expand and explode and social collapse is inevitable.

#### 4.2. Socio-economic impact

One consequence of forced movement is that the right of refugees to development is denied. They become marginalised from the socio-economic (development) process. Integration into social institutions is virtually absent. The refugees' economic base is completely eroded, and in essence the refugees are at the mercy of nature. The only way they can be integrated is through humanitarian/emergency programmes. Unfortunately such programmes tend to be reactionary, welfare-oriented and focused on symptoms, ignoring the real causes of the refugee malaise.

- 1) In Rwanda following the 1994 RPF/A invasion, the population may now be divided into four categories:- The returnees, the victims, the survivors, and the perpetrators. The returnees are mainly Batutsi and some Bahutu exiles and refugees who returned with RPF/A. Victims are both Batutsi and Bahutu. The term survivor has been applied to only Batutsi but should also apply to Bahutu as well because the genocide in Rwanda involved both Batutsi and Bahutu. 'Perpetrators' is a term applied to the Bahutu by those in power in Rwanda. In Rwanda to be a Muhutu is to be presumed the latter (Mamdani, 1995). One may even say that the whole population of Rwanda is more or less a refugee population. The socio-economic impacts of such a population on the Rwanda environment remains to be assessed.
- 2) In Uganda's Luwero Triangle where significant numbers of refugee soldiers participated in Museveni's bush war, the socio-economy of the area was greatly disrupted by displacement of the local peasantry. Later the same area suffered depletion of cattle herds when the Rwandan herders left the area for Rwanda following the 1994 July invasion of Rwanda.
- 3) In Zaire, the sheer size of the population of refugees has affected the socio-economy of the country, either through pressure on the environment and resources or by sharing the fragile infrastructure of the country.

We have already shown the linkage between economic/environment policies and the destruction of the socio-economic basis of survival of the local people. With the increasing individualisation of society (i.e., focusing development efforts on the individual), it is difficult to see how aid agencies will re-orientate themselves to focus on the needs of the whole community of refugees. Yet if progress is to be made, there must be a focus on reducing the negative socio-economic impact of refugees on their new areas of abode by enhancing their socio-economic status in more sustainable ways. The real problem that must be tackled is the tendency of refugees to constrain the food resources, social resources and space resources of their new surroundings.

### 4.3. Socio-cultural impact

Forced migration has perhaps its greatest impact in the socio-cultural dimension of the environment. In fact, in any human situation the rate of change in the environment is greatest in this dimension. When people are forced to move an important effect is that the socio-cultural fabric of these people is broken. Their lifestyles, dreams, aspirations, myths, totems and other culturally-based practices are constrained. Their cultural integrity is also threatened since they are made to leave the environment in which they were nurtured. The refugee status of the Bahutu in Zaire illustrated this point very well. The refugees were not only worried about the loss of nationhood or belonging; they are also worried about socio-economic, political and cultural survival.

Matters were made worse by new arrivals finding themselves in a completely alien socio-cultural environment. They had either to adapt, adopt or perish. This reality has caused a lot of strain on the refugees. However, because of the large number of refugees that invaded Zaire's socio-cultural environment in the North and South Kivu provinces, the resident culture was also adversely affected by the new culture of these arriving.

## 5. Long Term Consequences of Refugee Malaise

Environmentally-speaking, the long-term consequences of a refugee problem on the source area and the destination area of refugees are enormous and require serious assessment.

Citing Rwanda as an example, the outflow of the Hutu ethnic group from the country where they were the majority, and the influx into the country of the small population of Tutsi mainly from Uganda, who forced them (the Bahutu) to move, may in time lead to the sprouting of bushes both in Uganda's and Rwanda's Savannah. With the sprouting of bushes in Rwanda's Savannah, the scourge of trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) which has periodically struck neighbouring Uganda may become serious. The Tsetse fly, which is the vector of the causative organism of trypanosomiasis, thrives in the thick bushes. The Tutsi are mainly cattle-keepers. They, together with their cattle, will be exposed to the debilitating disease if the habitats of Tsetse fly are recreated in Rwanda with dire consequences for both animals and people. The situation is not helped by the departure of millions of Bahutu for Zaire

It is understood that when the Hutu trekked out of Rwanda, their houses and other properties were taken over by the Batutsi arriving mainly from Uganda. It is also understood that there is a lot of military activity in the refugee camps in Zaire where the Bahutu are kept. The Bahutu are bitter that their right to property, even in their absence, is not being respected by those in power - the Batutsi. They determined to return and take over their property. What this means in the long term is that the environmental security of Rwanda is still threatened. We should expect further damage to the environment of Rwanda as the majority Bahutu dispute with the minority Batutsi

Uganda was greatly affected by the departure of the cattle-keeping Batutsi. Virtually everywhere in Uganda, it was Batutsi refugees who looked after the cattle of Ugandans. At the time of their departure for Rwanda, the Batutsi took most of the cattle. Areas like Teso and Lango were completely depopulated of their cows. The social system of these people, which depended on cattle, collapsed. However, the long-term socio-economic and socio-cultural impacts of the departing Batutsi on Uganda remain to be assessed.

## 6. Environmental Stabilisation and Reconstruction

Meanwhile, however, mankind must look for ways of stabilising the environmental situation in Rwanda. There can be no reconstruction of the Rwandan environmental setting in the long-term unless mankind comes to grips with the real problems and issues behind the Rwanda crisis. Progress will only come if effort is focused in the socio-cultural dimension of the Rwandan environment, particularly in the political sphere.

It is true that behind every failure or success is the issue of leadership. In Rwanda political leadership has been based on fear - either fear of the Tutsi by the Hutu or vice versa. All institutional and infrastructure arrangements of governance have been geared towards one ethnic group keeping the other from political leadership. Resolving this problem and its environmental consequences requires political action by the Rwandans themselves.

So long as animosity continues to dominate between the Tutsi and the Hutu; so long as suspicions continue to characterise social, economic, political and cultural interactions between the two communities, we should expect further, perhaps worse, environmental disruptions in future.

We must convince the Hutu and the Tutsi that Rwanda belongs to them all; that together they swim or sink. Unless this is realised, no amount of regional or global effort -(humanitarian or political) will succeed in saving the environment of Rwanda from continuing collapse through repeated political or armed conflicts, which produce more refugees.

The current leadership in Rwanda must realise that there is no tension between justice and reconciliation (Mamdani, 1995). Moreover justice delayed is justice denied. The political cost of delayed justice can be extremely high. It could be as high as sending Rwanda into another cycle of revenge and attrition.

There is wide-spread demand for justice within Rwanda itself. This is not a demand confined to the Batutsi who survived genocide. It is also a demand of important sections of the Bahutu who either protected Batutsi friends, wives, husbands and neighbours, did not participate in the genocide or were forced to do so under threat of losing their own lives.

Delayed justice is eroding political support for reconciliation, and with that, whatever moral and political basis for the present government in Kigali. During a visit (August 1995) to Rwanda President Museveni of Uganda "ordered" the Government of Rwanda to quickly punish the perpetrators of genocide in Rwanda with death. This is not a solution. The solution is in solving the cause of their actions.

If the problem of Rwanda is largely political requiring political solutions in the first place, then failure to take this course of action on the global scale will only produce solutions which will themselves be the problems. Future generations of Rwandans will blame the present generation for its failure to help solve the crisis in Rwanda. By this token, the idea of a global early warning device, though attractive, will only be geared towards dealing with symptoms, and not the cause of the problem; it will be still a reactionary and not an anticipatory strategy. Nevertheless, such a device could be useful in predicting the resilience of the environment following the outflow or influx of refugees for other purposes if not for solving the crisis. It cannot prevent the crisis.

## 7. New Policies and Programmes Needed

What is suggested here is that in order to deal with the refugee problem in Africa in general and Rwanda in particular - we need new policies and programmes bred in the continent by the Africans themselves. All that the global community would then be required to do would be to extend backup support, mainly financial, without taking everything in hand.

The current policies and programmes of the humanitarian community remain essentially exogenous in origin and outward-looking. The people of Africa who are often the cause and the victims of environmental refugee malaise are not participating in the conception, design, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the success of these policies and programmes. More often than not, they are simply mobilised, so that without the opportunity to participate at every stage in the policy cycle, they are not empowered to deal with the crisis. The result is that environmental problems are on the increase in spite of having beautiful environmental blue prints in place.

The humanitarian community should combine efforts with the democratic forces in countries where despotism and governance, based on ethnic considerations is the main cause of the millions of internal or external refugees, so that a human rights approach to political life can begin to take root in those countries. The humanitarian community must have, among its priorities, aiding the forces of pluralism and the diversity of political thought and practice so that monolithic tendencies which are the raw material for despotism may be eroded. This is important. Whatever good programmes of refugee redress may be in place, if there is no unity between national forces of pluralism and diversity and the humanitarian community, the work of the latter will always be made hopeless by new political and military conflicts. The environment will continue to be harmed and to collapse, and poverty will continue to degrade the environment, thereby compromising the environmental basis of survival even further. What the humanitarian community can do is to make political accountability and transparency, as well as participation in decision-making of all people at all levels of society, tools in the struggle against human rights violations. These tools should be a component of every new policy or programme designed to address the refugee problem.

In the majority of cases, how people are led or ruled is an attitude of the mind. The mind may be narrow in perception and manifestation as a consequence of failure of the leader or ruler to see problems, issues and challenges in a multidimensional manner. Perhaps there are no people in the world who are as narrow-minded and as parochial as politicians. Yet these are the real decision-makers. They make the decision to go to war or to have peace; to kill and to save life; to work for peace or against peace. Quite often their objective in political leadership is short-term political, economic and social gains for themselves and their families/dependants. Because of this predisposition, the politicians are environmentally illiterate and socio-culturally deficient. They are, therefore, ill-equipped to deal with issues of global effects such as environmental refugee malaise. It would be wishful thinking to expect such politicians to be credible partners in the search for environmentally sound solutions - solutions which will not become the problems themselves.

Educational programmes are needed to reorient the thinking and attitudes of all those who must necessarily be involved in the struggle for justice, human rights and decent living for a refugee. In particular, programmes are needed to retrain political leaders with a view to turning them into environmental leaders as well. Funds are required to support such programmes.

For example at Makerere University's Department of Political Science, a new programme of Master of Arts in Public Administration and Management (MPA) includes a strong component of environmental management. Practising politicians are encouraged to attend such a course so that they may be sufficiently environmentally literate to appreciate the linkage between politics, environment, the socio-economic (development process) and the environmental refugee problem. We believe that introducing practising politicians to such a course would enable them to be equipped with the creativity, innovation, initiative and imagination necessary to deal with the daunting problem of refugees. The course has the added advantage of being multi-disciplinary.



## 8. The Future

All indications are that environmental refugee problems will continue to get worse if the status quo continues. The continent of Africa cannot hope to enjoy sustainable development when its environment is polluted with millions of refugees. Indeed the more refugees that populate the continent, the more it should be realised that environmental and development failure is the rule rather than the exception

We propose that all national and international agencies that are interested in ushering in an era of environmental sanity and all-inclusive development for the people of Africa be committed to environmental policies that do not dispossess the indigenous people of their resources. The people of Africa will have to participate in their development and not be mobilised for the development of others. Participation means empowerment. Therefore, all national and international agencies claiming to be involved in efforts to develop the people of Africa need to resolve to be agents of empowerment of the people of Africa. This should be on top of the list of priorities, because empowering the people also means that they can now have their own destiny in their own hands and in their own environment. This is the way forward to environmental security towards the year 2000 and beyond.

We have shown that many of the environmental impacts of the Rwandan refugees are significant. Corrective measures must be taken in the short, medium and long term, but within the context advanced here. A regional approach to the assessment of the environmental impacts of Rwandan refugees in Zaire must be pursued urgently, again in the context suggested herein. It cannot wait any longer.

Nobody is really secure - politically, economically, socially, culturally, intellectually or environmentally -if his/her security is in the hands of others. Such a person will sooner than later become a refugee internally and externally if not perpetually hooked to others for sustenance. Environmental security, which is greater than national security as perceived by governments will, if so ensured, impart the feeling of belonging and sovereignty to a people who will then stay on their ancestral lands with no crisis of confidence in the future.

There is need, as we enter the 21st century, for the humanitarian community to cease perceiving the Rwandan debacle as an ethnic conflict between Bahutu and Batutsi; that the issue is now to make the two ethnic groups share power on the basis of majority/minority. The debacle should be viewed in political terms, with historical explanations thoroughly grasped and incorporated in any solution. For example, the political developments in Uganda since Museveni decided to include large numbers of refugees in his NRA must not be ignored. Neither can the economic and social trends pitting Ugandans against foreigners, some of whom are Rwandan refugees, that are now dominating the country's socio-economic and socio-cultural fabric to the annoyance of Ugandans. How can we pacify forces in Uganda that believe that Rwandans have had an advantage over Ugandans during the reign of the NRM/A? What can the humanitarian agencies do to prevent another cycle of violence in Uganda that will pit the Ugandans against the Rwandans?

There is need to raise the capacity of Zaire's Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the implementation of projects geared towards redressing environmental refugee malaise in the country. At the same time, major international environmental NGOs should be sensitised to the environmental debacle in the North and South Kivu as soon as possible so that they can appreciate the critical environmental impacts already created by Rwandan refugees. It will also be necessary to sensitise the humanitarian agencies to the potential environmental impact of their decisions and actions. In particular, relief workers will have to be made aware that the urgency of their relief measures and proper environmental planning need to proceed side by side to ensure that there are no long-term adverse impacts to the host country.

How far we succeed in the war against environmental refugee malaise will depend partly on information. It will, therefore, be important to sensitise the media on the environmental impact of refugees. This will be necessary to mobilise international, regional and national opinion to remove the existing environmental damage and prevent its recurrence.

The time has come to shift the emphasis from environmental damage, which may force people to become refugees and seek better living conditions elsewhere, to assessment of the impact of refugees on the environment. As Biswas and Trotajada (1995) suggested recently, future success demands that several comprehensive case studies are initiated to ensure that the different environmental impacts due to the refugees can be identified and then their magnitude estimated. This knowledge base will be necessary before environmental concerns can be properly incorporated in refugee camp site planning.

As Mamdani (1995) suggests, Rwandans need to build a political community based on consent, not conquest. In Uganda, the NRM/A has been busy building a political community based on conquest. Failure seems to be outstripping success. Since 1986, the country has never had such a large number of internal refugees resulting from political and military conflicts. Rwanda should be encouraged to choose consent. This is important because Rwanda must begin to democratise and consent is a necessary ingredient in the link between democratisation and political order. Without political order, how can we hope to curtail a new generation of refugees?

Political order requires that there is acceptance of rules, rules applicable to all and acceptable to all, whether the minority or majority. The future of Rwanda will be dim without a minimum political consensus.' Those interested in the Rwandan debacle may recommend that the Rwandans institutionalise broad-based politics as spelt out in the Arusha Accord of 1992, so that there is power-sharing between Bahutu and Batutsi. This broad base, includes three types of representations: the winning tendency from the civil war (the RPF/A), representation of political parties that did not participate in the genocide (even if some individuals in these parties did) and individuals outside the RPF/A invited to join the broad base by RPF/A. What seems true is that the genocide in Rwanda created more suspicions amongst the people than the broad base can contain (Mamdani, 1995). The people of Rwanda must, therefore, be encouraged to go beyond mere power-sharing at the top - and build a consensus from the bottom up. As Mamdani rightly puts it, "*power-sharing can at best be curative; preventive measures require the building of a minimum consensus*" (Mamdani 1995).

We are convinced that the problem of environmental refugees is not insurmountable. We can overcome it by the means in this paper. We think that the people of Africa should be members of the global community of mankind in the 21st century, but refugees should not be part of that community. The challenge in making Africa a suitable home for all is to work tirelessly, within the next four years, to ensure that environmental conditions are promoted that encourage people to stay on their ancestral lands. Without these conditions, then we cannot talk of sustainable development.

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