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Petroleum platform in Mauritania

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Extractive activities: impacts on renewable resources, governance, economies, societies and territories

Studies have been carried out by CIRAD researchers in recent years on long-term extractive activities and changes in the strategies of companies, governments and civil society, and also on discussion and negotiation conditions, their potential and limitations. The main aims of these studies have been to determine the impacts of extractive activities in New Caledonia (nickel) and Guinea (iron), to develop a regional development plan for the petroleum area in Chad, within the framework of projects supported by the World Bank, and to build a discussion platform on petroleum and gas extraction activities in Mauritania, under the aegis of UICN (*Union Internationale pour la Conservation de la Nature* - World Conservation Union).

A process has been under way since 2007 to tap the benefits of this individual and collective experience, and several thesis studies have been initiated. Two seminars were organized by teams of the CIRAD Environments and Societies department (UMR TETIS, UMR MOISA, UPR ARENA) on the topic of supporting territorial development processes with respect to extractive activities. This provided an opportunity to bring together this informal (so far) community of researchers interested in the issue of the impact of nonrenewable resources (mines, oil, gas) on renewable resources, governance, economies, societies and territories. Various studies were presented at the first meeting (March 2007). The second meeting (September 2007) was open to other institutions (BRGM, *Université de Paris I/Panthéon-Sorbonne*, UICN Seaprise Commission, *Groupe de recherche sur les activités minières en Afrique* (GRAMA) of the *Université du Québec à Montréal*, University of Brasília, and

the *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales Sede Ecuador* (FLACSO) based at the University of Quito, etc.).

These exchanges revealed the extent to which, in many developing countries and French overseas regions, extractive activities are catalysts of change in nature/stakeholder-societies/areas relationships at different scales or organization levels. The analysis findings also prompted researchers to go further into the comparison of extractive activities and the renewable resource domain (agroindustry, logging, fisheries, etc.). Questions on their socioeconomic, political and environmental impacts take similar forms in the different sectors. Similarly, issues associated with revenue sharing and possibilities of implementing more efficient regulations would warrant further in-depth investigation. The question of research ethics and conduct was specifically investigated, while we intervene in settings marked by major asymmetries between stakeholders, with considerable economic and financial imperatives concerning their activities.

A multistakeholder (researchers, NGOs, companies, public decision makers, students) network, called the Network for Applied Research on Mining, Oil and Gas Activities (NARMA), was founded to promote information exchange and analysis. It is open to all interested people who accept to join the discussion.

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