

The Stockholm Seminars: Frontiers in Sustainability Science and Policy

This lecture is a part of a seminar series that cover a broad range of perspectives on sustainability issues, particularly focusing on the need for a sound scientific basis for sustainable development policy.

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Linking adaptation to climate change, poverty reduction and sustainable development: some lessons from the poorest country in the world (Niger)

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Beijer Hall, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences,
Lilla Frescativägen 4, Stockholm

The general consensus is that Africa's drylands continue to degrade and that the large sums of money invested in agriculture and natural resource management during the last 30 years have produced little or no impact. Some recent studies in Burkina Faso and Niger show a very different picture. One reason why impacts of investments are underestimated is that we do not adequately measure impacts. When economists calculate the costs and benefits of investments in soil and water conservation they tend to limit the benefits to impacts on crop yields and ignore, for instance, impacts on groundwater recharge and on vegetation. If such impacts would also be expressed in monetary terms then the cost-benefit calculations would change dramatically.

Chris Reij is human geographer and specialist in socio-economic aspects of natural resource management with more than 30 years experience, mainly in Africa, but also in Asia. He is a co-editor of *Sustaining the Soil* (Earthscan, 1996) and co-author of *Farmer Innovation in Africa, A Source of Inspiration for Agricultural Development*



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