

Reversing The Spiral: The Population, Agriculture, And Environment Nexus In Sub-Saharan Africa

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Poverty and environmental degradation in Africa: towards sustainable policy for reversing the spiral

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Abstract: The nexus of poverty and the environment has led to a situation where the poor are both the victims and perpetrators of environmental damage in Africa. This paper examines the primary issues contributing to the downward spiraling two-way relationship between poverty and environmental degradation in Africa, and then discusses and analyses priority areas of a managed and sustainable policy framework for reversing that spiral. It is argued that Africa entered the 21st Century as the world's worst failure in social, economic, human and technological development. Consequently, poverty is an enduring challenge in the regions for which policy formulation and implementation needs to be ratcheted up. Similarly, the approach to arresting environmental degradation in Africa must be given a greater focus within the context of the poverty and environmental damage nexus. This work shows that both local and national environmental concerns have immediate and directly attributable effects primarily on the poor.

Keywords: Africa; poverty; environment; sustainable policy.

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1 Introduction

Poverty, in all of its manifestations, remains a serious problem in Africa. While the incidence of poverty has fallen in most regions of the world since 1945, in Africa the proportion of people living in poverty has been increasing. This continued prevalence of poverty in Africa keeps its eradication as a central objective of socio-economic development. Also, strategies for reducing poverty in the African region have begun to pay more attention to the relationship between environmental degradation and 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

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