

Human Rights and Poverty Reduction:  
Realities, Controversies and Strategies  
An ODI Meeting Series

Edited by Tammie O'Neil

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## Preface

The Rights in Action Programme was established at ODI in 2003 by a team of researchers who shared a common interest in exploring the practical value of human rights for poverty reduction and humanitarian protection. Establishing common positions about issues such as the relative importance of different rights regimes or the conceptual or operational value of human rights for poverty reduction and humanitarian action has been challenging because of the multidisciplinary nature of the team and its range of research interests. However, whilst this diversity of perspectives had made consensus difficult, it has also greatly contributed to the richness of our discussions and the strength of our conclusions.

These tensions are writ large when projected onto the development and humanitarian fields. However, so too are the potential rewards. The central purpose of ODI's meeting series on Human Rights and Poverty Reduction was therefore to promote interdisciplinary dialogue and, to this end, we attempted to bring together professionals from different disciplines within each of the series' nine meetings, including economists, lawyers, doctors, NGO campaigners, trade unionists and academics. The series was held between January and March 2005 and was organised in two parts. The first four meetings addressed conceptual issues, such as: are the human rights and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) frameworks contradictory?; or can human rights be used to increase the accountability of aid agencies? The next five meetings then focused on specific sectors and contexts – water, HIV/AIDS, forestry, fragile states and humanitarian crises – in order to examine some of the practical issues involved in utilising a rights perspective.

This volume brings together the products of this meeting series: overview summaries of the meetings, the edited transcripts of the presentations and the background papers that were commissioned to accompany the series. Many people were involved in the organisation of the series and the production of this collection. I would like to thank the chairs, speakers and participants who contributed to the series and the UK Department for International Development for co-funding the series; the Rights in Action team and the Communications Office who were involved in the organisation of the series and its outputs; Roo Griffiths for editing the background papers; Pippa Leask, Joanna Adcock and Chris Taylor for layout and design; and Tammie O'Neil for managing and editing this publication and for her support in the establishment of the Rights in Action Programme.

If you would like to listen to any of the meetings or download the background papers or speakers' presentations, please visit the Rights in Action website: [www.odi.org.uk/rights](http://www.odi.org.uk/rights).

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2003-2006

## Abbreviations

<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CESCR</b>	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>CI</b>	Conservation International
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
<b>DFID</b>	UK Department for International Development
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>ECHR</b>	European Convention on Human Rights
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FBW</b>	Free Basic Water Policy (South Africa)
<b>FLEG</b>	forest law enforcement and governance
<b>FLEGT</b>	forest law enforcement, governance and trade
<b>GEAR</b>	Growth, Reconstruction, Employment and Development (GEAR)
<b>ICC</b>	International Criminal Court
<b>ICCPR</b>	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
<b>ICDP</b>	International Conservation and Development Project
<b>ICESCR</b>	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>ICJ</b>	International Court of Justice
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>IDTs</b>	International Development Targets
<b>IHL</b>	International Humanitarian Law
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IRWM</b>	integrated water resource management
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NGO</b>	non-government organisation
<b>OCHA</b>	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>ODI</b>	Overseas Development Institute
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>PROFOR</b>	Program on Forests
<b>PRSPs</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
<b>RBA</b>	rights-based approach
<b>TNC</b>	The Nature Conservancy
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNMIK</b>	United Nations' Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
<b>UNTAET</b>	United Nations' Transitional Administration in East Timor
<b>UPC</b>	Union of Patriotic Congolese
<b>UPE</b>	Universal Primary Education
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization
<b>WWF</b>	World Wildlife Foundation