



Deutscher Tropentag, October 11-13, 2005, Hohenheim

“The Global Food & Product Chain—  
Dynamics, Innovations, Conflicts, Strategies”

## Political Regulation of Soil Protection in China and India

NANA KUENKEL

*Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Agricultural Economics and Social Sciences, Germany*

### Abstract

China and India both have long traditions in soil conservation. These efforts have increased recently in the course of a rising awareness for environmental concerns.

This paper analyses the state and development of national political regulation of soil conservation in China and India. The analysis is based on a review of primary documents, literature and web-based information. The comparative perspective on China and India yields insights into important political factors of environmental policy.

The work is guided by an approach to environmental policy analysis focusing on the following determinants of environmental policy: the structure of the environmental problem, actors and their strategies, structural context factors (political, institutional and economic conditions) and situational factors (e.g. natural disasters). In the case of developing countries, international influences from development aid or international conventions are rather strong. Therefore, this work extends the framework to incorporate these influences.

The paper first presents the developments of soil conservation policies and legislation in an international perspective highlighting the general difficulties in regulating this particular environmental problem. International activities are rather weak compared to other environmental topics, but can nonetheless be seen as incentives to increase national conservation efforts.

China's political efforts in soil conservation range back to the first half of the last century. Throughout the decades, afforestation was a major means of soil conservation in China. In recent times, environmental policies have benefited from a high priority in the national administration. An increasing attention to natural resources only occurred in the last years. This can be seen in parts influenced by international activities, among them the United Nation Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), but also an increased concern following the Yangtze flood in the late 1990s. Implementation proves difficult, especially at the community level.

In India, introduction of a soil protection legislation is hindered by the federal system, in which the states are responsible for land. Environmental movements, focusing strongly on livelihood-issues like the protection of forests for indigenous use, played a strong role in placing natural resource management on the political agenda. Measures for soil protection are strongly characterised by participative and integrated approaches.

**Keywords:** China, India, policy analysis, soil protection policy