

EIAs in Developing Countries An International Perspective



Environmental Assessment at a Crossroads

OAIA Conference
21 October 2009, Toronto

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Brief Intro to UNU-INWEH

The UN Think Tank on Water



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What is UNU?

Created: 1972 by UN General Assembly

Mission: to contribute, through research and capacity building, to efforts to resolve the pressing global problems that are the concern of the United Nations, its Peoples and Member States

Roles:

- ❑ Think tank for the UN system
- ❑ International community of scholars
- ❑ Bridge between global scholarship, UN system and policy community
- ❑ Builder of capacities
- ❑ Platform for dialogue



What is UNU-INWEH?

- Created: 1996
- The water “academy” of UNU, supported by Canada (through CIDA) and hosted by *McMaster University*
- Serving as the **UN Think Tank for Water**
- A capacity-development and water-science agency, helping to address the Millennium Development Goals for water



Safe Water as the Key to Global Health



Corinne J. Schuster-Wallace

www.inweh.unu.edu

Stemming Decline of the Coastal Ocean: Rethinking Environmental Management



WATER AND ECOSYSTEMS Managing Water in Diverse Ecosystems To Ensure Human Well-being



Edited by Caroline King with Jennifer Ramkissoo, Miguel Clusener-Godt and Zafar Adeel

People in Marginal Drylands

Managing Natural Resources to Improve Human Well-being

A policy brief based on the Sustainable Management of Marginal Drylands (SUMAMAD) project

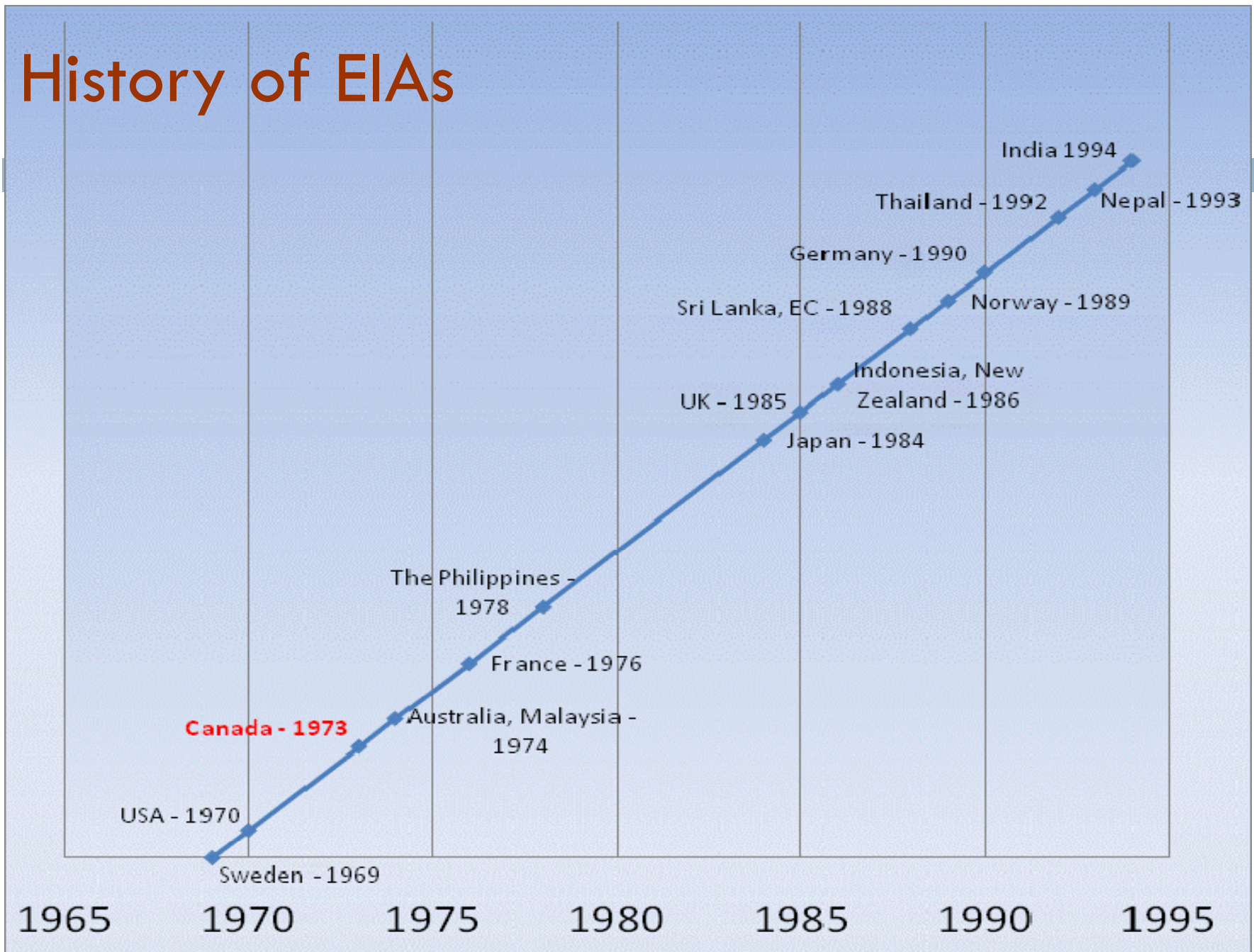
Zafar Adeel, Caroline King, Thomas Schaaf, Richard Thomas and Brigitte Schuster



An International Perspective



History of EIAs



Source: Modak and Biswas, 1999

History of EIAs

- Recognition of environmental impacts of development projects

- Increased focus on EIAs
 - ▣ Greater awareness of environmental impacts
 - ▣ Economic drivers – cost-saving
 - ▣ Financial lenders' constraints
 - ▣ Emphasis by the international development community

- Interest in SEAs still emerging
 - ▣ The general trend is positive
 - ▣ National and local politics still over-ride strategic concerns



Constraints in Developing Countries

- Limited technical/human capacity
 - ▣ Greater dependence on “foreign” consultants

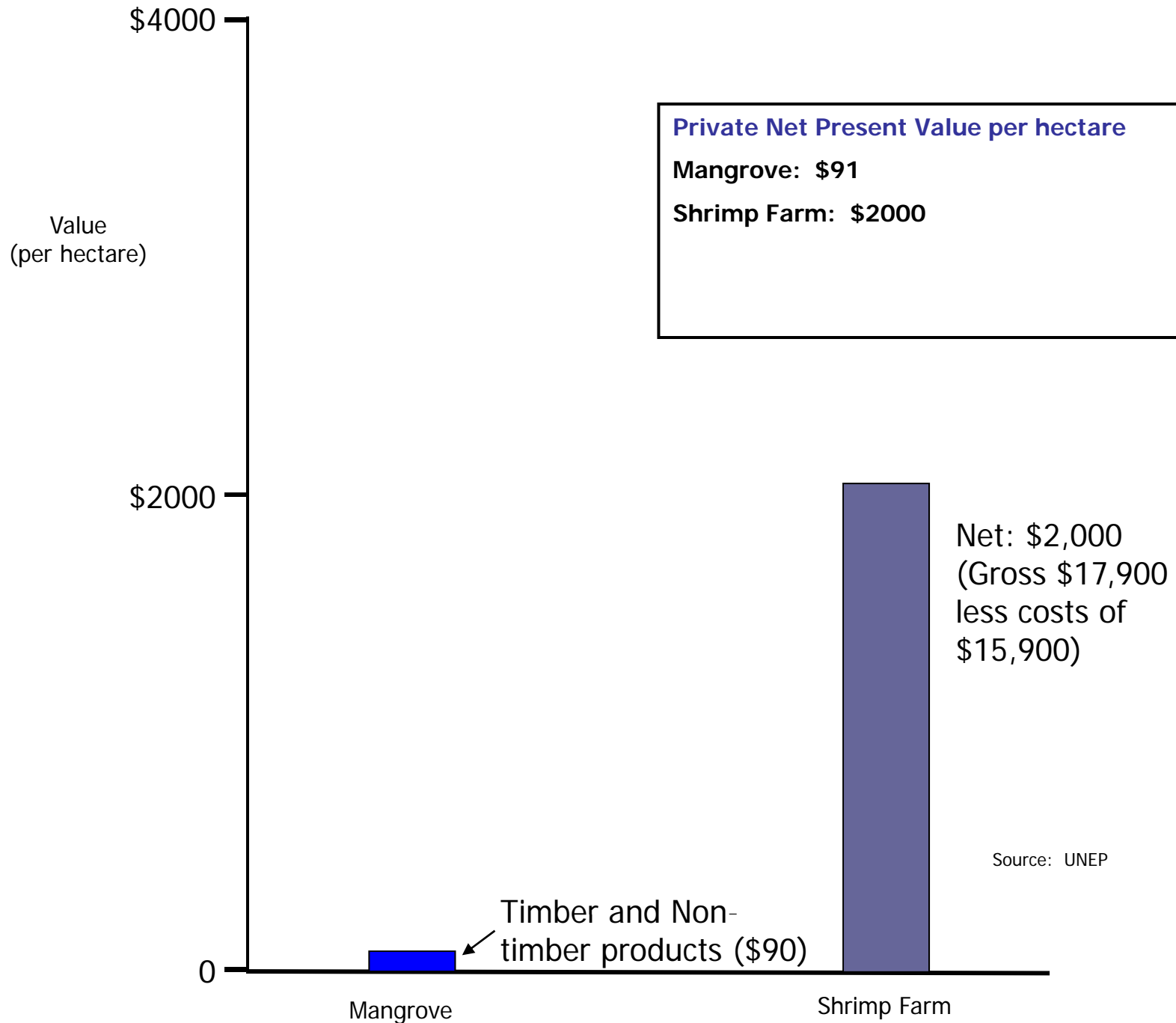
- Limited knowledge of ecosystem functioning
 - ▣ Insufficient baseline information
 - ▣ Improper costing of ecosystem services

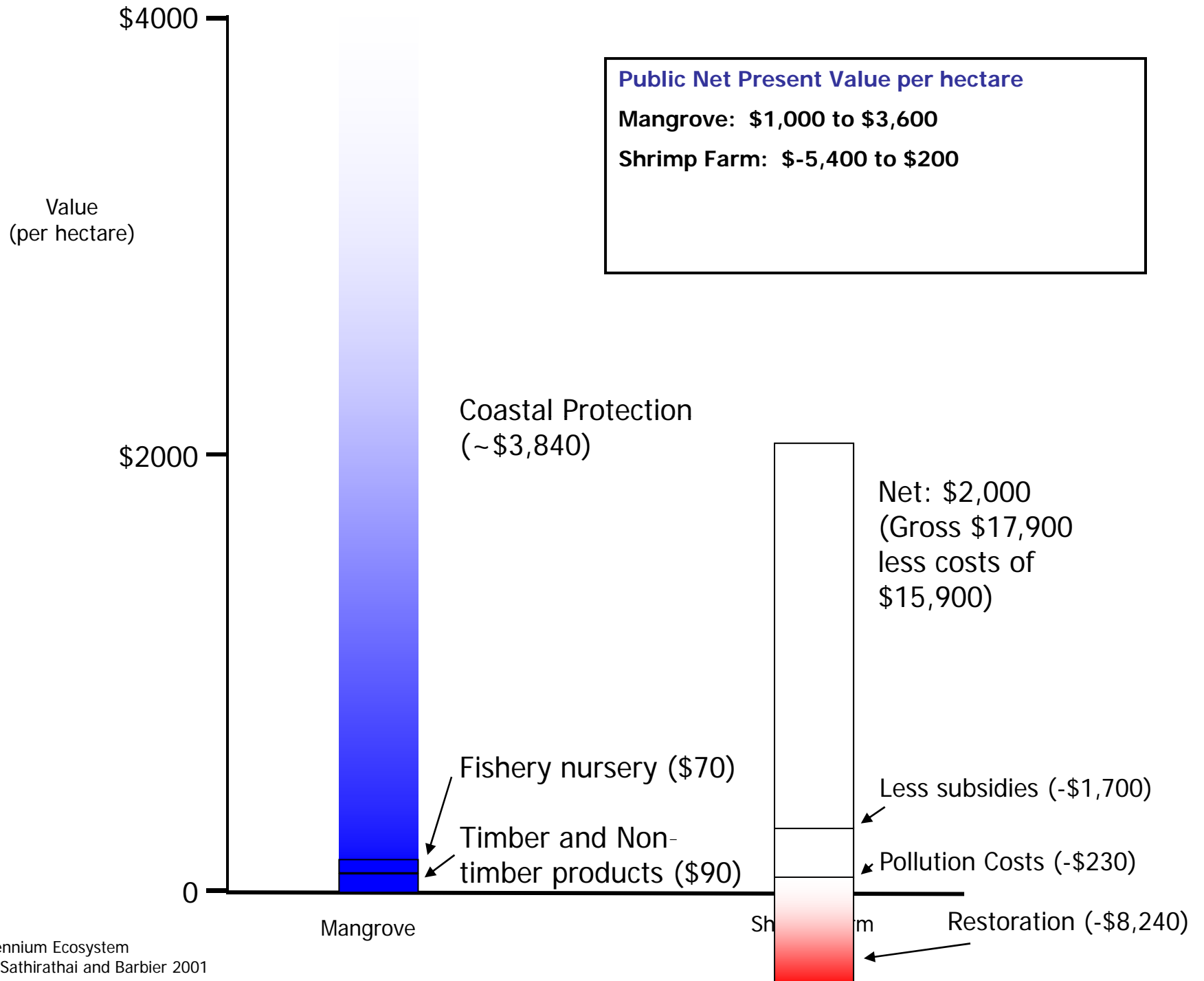
- Absence of a culture of stakeholder engagement
 - ▣ Top-down, command-n-control management approach











Source: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment; Sathirathai and Barbier 2001

Challenges in Developing Countries

- Exaggerated focus on EIA as a mechanistic process
- Quality of EIAs is generally questionable
- Virtually no interest in long-term monitoring or post-EIA evaluations
- Minimal implementation of EIA laws
 - ▣ Presence of corruption in government, judiciary and enforcement circles
 - ▣ Confusion in the chain of authority



Some Concluding Thoughts...

- The concept of EIAs still needs to be strengthened
 - ▣ Dissemination and awareness raising at policy level are critical
 - ▣ Capacity development, including financial resources, is key

- Environmental legislation that reinforce EIA are needed
 - ▣ Lack of such legislation in most developing countries
 - ▣ The need is urgent in view of massive off-shore developments

- Major investment in long-term monitoring is needed
 - ▣ Linked to post-EIA evaluation
 - ▣ Linked to pro-active environmental management





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