
NAMIBIA'S 12 POINT PLAN FOR INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

C J Brown
Directorate of Environmental Affairs
Private Bag 13306, Windhoek, Namibia
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INTRODUCTION

This document sets out Namibia's Environmental Management Plan for the Directorate of Environmental Affairs from the year of Independence (1990) until 1995.

Before Independence in 1990 there was little environmental planning in this country, and no organisation was designated as being responsible for this task.

At Independence, the Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism was created and, shortly thereafter, Cabinet delegated to this Ministry broad environmental responsibility. In July 1992, a new Directorate was created within the Ministry to take on this broad environmental responsibility, namely the Directorate of Environmental Affairs (DEA).

This Directorate, which began operating about nine months prior to its formal creation, is responsible for:

- a) Environmental Planning,
- b) Environmental Co-ordination, and
- c) Environmental Protection,

both within the Ministry and at the national level. The main objectives of the Directorate are to:

- * Promote sustainable development;
- * Protect biotic diversity;
- * Maintain ecological life-support systems;
- * Democratisise environmental management;
- * Educate the Namibian public to environmental issues;
- * Promote the training of Namibians in the field of environmental management.

To achieve the above, the DEA has been given the following broad mandate:

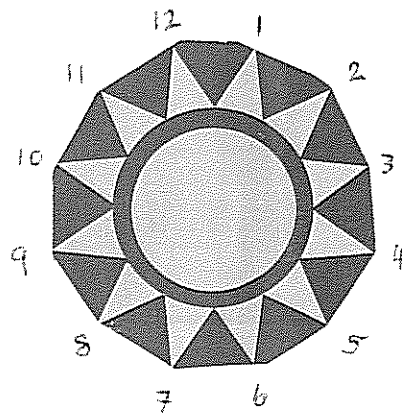
- * Future strategic planning for environmental conservation;
- * Co-ordination of planning at national and regional levels and, where appropriate, within the Ministry;
- * Establishment of environmental and conservation priorities in terms of national policy;
- * Co-ordination of land-use planning;
- * Co-ordination of community-based conservation programmes;
- * Development of policies, plans, action plans, audits, environmental profiles, legislation and other documentation to address the above.

NAMIBIA'S 12 POINT ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN

The "environment" is an extremely broad and cross-cutting subject that affects the lives of each and every Namibian. It is also an extremely complex and inter-connected web, of which people and their activities form an integral part. To tackle present environmental problems and prepare ourselves for future issues requires that we divide up "environmental management" into a number of discrete programmes, activities and products.

Each of these activities, programmes and products must firstly be directed to meet our national needs, and secondly, they must take into account international developments and objectives, be they regional activities or global actions.

To meet these requirements, a comprehensive 12 point plan is proposed which sets out a national programme for achieving the primary objectives listed earlier.



1. CONSTITUTION

The environmental clauses in the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia (Articles 95(l) and 91(c)) are the first steps in establishing national intent and giving national direction. These clauses establish the framework for environmental protection and management in Namibia.

Article 95 Promotion of the Welfare of the People

The State shall actively promote and maintain the welfare of the people by adopting, inter alia, policies aimed at the following:

- (l) maintenance of ecosystems, essential ecological processes and biological diversity of Namibia and utilization of living natural resources on a sustainable basis for the benefit of all Namibians, both present and future; in particular, the Government shall provide measures against the dumping or recycling of foreign nuclear and toxic waste on Namibian territory.

Article 91 Functions of the Ombudsman

The functions of the Ombudsman shall be defined and prescribed by an Act of Parliament and shall include the following:

- (c) the duty to investigate complaints concerning the over-utilization of living natural resources, the irrational exploitation of non-renewable resources, the degradation and destruction of ecosystems and failure to protect the beauty and character of Namibia.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

The development of environmental policies is an ongoing activity, as new situations will always be arising. However, because of the absence of past policies, there has been an urgent requirement to prepare policies on the more important activities of the Ministry.

A large number of policies have been developed by the DEA, ranging from the results of post-independence conferences and workshops to independent policies on tourism on state land, environmental impact assessment, and many others. The more important policy papers are listed below.

- * Conservation of biotic diversity and habitat protection
- * Land-use planning: towards sustainable development
 - Communal State Land
 - Private Commercial Farmlands
 - Proclaimed State Land
 - Urban Areas
 - Wetland Systems

- * Research on natural resources and environmental management
- * Communications, extension and environmental education
- * Finances
- * Legislation
- * Human Resource Management, including sections on:
 - Affirmative Action
 - Orientation and Training
- * Organisation and Administrative structure (which formed the basis of our Rationalisation report)
- * Namibia's Environmental Assessment Policy
- * Namibia's Park Management Plan Policy
- * Wildlife and other natural resource management and utilisation in communal areas

3. ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

Namibia's environmental legislation is largely outdated, badly fragmented and incomplete. There needs to be a full review of this legislation, including the Wildlife Ordinance (4 of 1975).

This task is presently receiving attention, as part of a three-year programme with the assistance of funding and expertise from Norway. A full-time environmental lawyer will be appointed as team leader, and it is proposed that the programme will be run jointly by the DEA and the Office of the Attorney-General.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN (NEAP)

The objective of this programme is to identify the priority activities within different sectors in the country that need to be developed to achieve environmentally sustainable development. These activities need to be costed and projects carefully planned. These projects could then be exposed for funding by means of a small and carefully selected donor conference.

The first step in this process has been completed, with the publication of Namibia's Green Plan intended for September 1993. The Green Plan identifies the main environmental issues facing Namibia and the actions required. In summary, the most important actions are:

- * helping to ensure that Namibia has clean air, water and land;
- * supporting the sustainable use of our natural resources;
- * protecting our special spaces and species;
- * preserving the integrity of the Namib Desert;
- * highlighting the importance of protecting wetlands in arid regions;
- * guarding against the threat of desertification;
- * promoting global environmental security; and
- * encouraging environmentally responsible decision- making at all levels through information and democratisation.

Namibia's Green Plan highlights a number of social, environmental and cross-cutting issues that require priority attention as part of Namibia's Environmental Action Plan.

The World Bank has shown an interest in supporting the development of Namibia's Environmental Action Plan. It is very aware of, (and agreeable to?), Namibia's intention to manage this project to its conclusion without outside interference.

5. BIODIVERSITY INFORMATIONS SYSTEM (BIS)

Namibia is in a strong position regarding its data base on biodiversity. We are involved in the largest biodiversity project in Africa (the southern African bird atlas project - SABAP), and we have good data on many other groups.

To meet recent national and international demands on biodiversity data, we need to make our information more readily accessible in published form. Also, we need to establish a national biodiversity task force under the chairmanship of this Ministry to co-ordinate biodiversity research, monitoring, publication and activities with neighbouring countries as well as with the international community (e.g. our responsibilities to the biodiversity convention).

6. PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMES

A number of important programmes and activities fall into this category, some of which this Ministry is promoting and managing, others in which we provide support to other organisations.

The two most important activities are:

- a) the development of a strong, sustainable tourism sector and industry run mainly by the private sector with government support and incentives provided via the Directorate of Tourism and Resorts in this Ministry. The DEA is committed to support this objective, particularly in the area of integration between resource management and tourism development, and
- b) a community-based natural resource management programme which the DEA is currently developing. This programme has projects in East and West Caprivi, Bushmanland, the Kuiseb, and has started work in Damaraland and Owambo. These projects are currently funded by WWF-US and the Biodiversity Programme, with US-AID committed to providing funding for four years for the first three projects and Owambo.

The above programme is based on community involvement and partnership in management and decisions regarding natural resources, and in receiving direct benefits resulting from the wise use of these resources. Communities are assisted by a development officer, and communities participate by selecting community game scouts and by establishing environmental management committees.

The present major constraint to this programme is that discriminatory laws

regarding rights of use of natural resources prevent people in communal areas from obtaining direct benefits from wildlife and forestry products. This issue is being addressed at high levels within government.

Other partnership projects which we support are the Ministry of Agriculture's Sustainable Animal and Rangeland Production Project (SARP) which promotes sustainable use of communal areas, the Land-use Planning Committee established with the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement which aims at promoting and co-ordinating wise land-use practices and planning, etc.

In addition, we need to establish a "contact group" between this and other Ministries and the NGO community. This "contact group" could meet quarterly with the objective of keeping everyone informed of developments and activities.

7. REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILES

There is limited readily-available environmental information on any part of Namibia outside of proclaimed conservation areas. This places serious restrictions on our ability to plan for sustainable development. Good environmental data are needed for (a) regional land-use planning, (b) industrial and infrastructural development, and (c) the further development of the community-based natural resource management projects.

For this reason, a series of regional profiles are needed to assist in planning for the above developments. At the moment, development is taking place in a vacuum, often resulting in unsustainable and inappropriate activities.

It is envisaged that each regional profile will take nine months to produce in published form. At the same time, appropriate data will be entered into a computer-based geographic information system (GIS). The first two areas would be Caprivi (this would be the pilot study to the programme), followed by Owambo. Thereafter, a cross-sectoral working committee to be established for the project would be responsible for deciding national priorities.

The Netherlands Government has expressed an interest in the programme, and has offered to fund the programme for the first two regions. Thereafter, they would evaluate the success of the programme before deciding on a further commitment.

8. PROTECTED AREA NETWORK

Approximately 13% of Namibia is set aside in 14 protected areas run efficiently for habitat and biodiversity protection. These areas underpin our important and fast-growing tourism industry, which is based on wildlife, wilderness and scenery.

The establishment of our protected area network, however, was never scientifically based. As a result, many important vegetation types, habitats and special features are under-represented, or not represented at all.

A task force needs to be established to evaluate the protected area network, what areas need better representation and how this could be achieved. The protected area network of parks is a vital component in the national strategy to conserve biotic diversity and to promote the tourism industry.

The DEA, in close collaboration with the other Directorates in the Ministry, has developed a procedure for establishing Park Management Plans. These management plans will allow full integration of short to long term planning with the day-to-day work within parks, thereby allowing for the development of goal-orientated management programmes. Management plans will be established or revised for our parks at the rate of about two per year.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

A number of attempts have been made in the past to establish a national environmental association, none of which have been particularly successful. This has resulted in a fragmented approach to EE (which might not be a bad thing), with various organisations setting up and running their own activities, in relative isolation from each other.

This Ministry has decided to develop two main education centres (Namutoni and Waterberg), and thereafter to expand to other centres, establish small satellite centres and possibly use mobile units.

At present, this Ministry in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and various non-governmental organisations are developing an environmental education network to help co-ordinate and support efforts in different organisations throughout the country.

Training is a key issue in the environmental field. Qualified and experienced staff are leaving faster than they are being replaced. Also, to promote our affirmative action programme, a good, well-managed and dynamic training programme is necessary at three levels, (a) pre-service training (bursary programme), (b) in service training and (c) promoting a career in environmental management in schools and university. This training programme requires two full-time staff within the Ministry and supporting equipment and facilities. The GTZ have indicated that they would be interested in this area, and they are presently evaluating a project proposal.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

There is no basic information on pollution levels in Namibia caused by the industrial and mining sectors. Before monitoring and action programmes can be established, such basic information will need to be collected. The DEA has therefore initiated an "Industries Project", aimed at collecting data on toxic and hazardous waste production, and management procedures in different industries within the country.

The management and administration of pollution in Namibia falls to at least five different Ministries; there is currently little collaboration between them.

Their responsibilities are ill defined, and their effectiveness is not known. It is therefore proposed to hold a workshop in October 1993 in which the different organisations explain their jurisdictions, legislations, abilities, etc. This will allow us to evaluate and, if necessary, improve our present system, and also to start developing a national policy and strategy.

The DEA has also developed a draft national Environmental Assessment Policy for use in development projects. This policy recommends the establishment of an Environmental Commissioner, employed in the DEA but housed in the National Planning Commission (to which the NPC has agreed), and an Environmental Board, chaired by this Ministry. Cabinet has approved in principle the establishment of an Environmental Commissioner.

In the future, we will need to establish a national environmental auditing procedure, and introduce natural resource accounting. These programmes should be initiated only after completion of our Environmental Action Plan.

11. SPECIAL ISSUES PROGRAMME

A number of projects are of such importance that, despite the fact that they could be accommodated in one of the other topics, they warrant their own programme. These include important resource programmes, e.g. water and wetlands, or large, national issues such as desertification.

The latter is an issue that is becoming increasingly important, both at home and internationally. This Ministry is taking the lead in convening a "Desertification" programme, starting with a workshop and progressing to monitoring, research and education projects. In addition, some experimental work will be developed on reversing the process of desertification.

This programme is being established between the DEA, the Desert Ecological Research Unit of Namibia (Gobabeb) and GTZ.

A second important programme that needs to be initiated within the next year or two is one on "State of the Environment Reporting". This should be run as a series of specific, technical and highly analytical reports. After a period (e.g. 5 years) a second report on the same topic should be commissioned, to evaluate what positive and negative changes have taken place. The preparation of these reports should be contracted out, but be under the overall management of the DEA. After the technical report on a specific subject has been published, this should be reproduced in more accessible format (e.g. booklets, posters, radio talks, etc.), depending on the subject and the target audience.

12. INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

In this last point is included both regional and global programmes.

At present, this Ministry has promoted our becoming party to RAMSAR (on wetlands), while the DEA has compiled submissions for Namibia to accede to the Basel Convention, the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol. The last two were recently approved by the General Assembly.

Namibia is also in the process of ratifying the Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity.

CONCLUSION

This 12 point plan is aimed at promoting sustainable development and wise natural resource management throughout Namibia. These are the fundamental objectives of Agenda 21 resulting from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. All the activities listed here, whether completed (e.g. environmental clauses in our constitution), in progress or proposed as important future actions, are in direct support of our commitment to the UNCED process.