

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

FOR THE POST *WORLD SUMMIT FOR* *SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (WSSD) ERA*

BACKGROUND

A major challenge facing the world today is *how to implement sustainable development*. There is no clear roadmap and there are few specific targets.

Namibia was amongst those countries that embarked on a vigorous and original programme of action to move towards a sustainable development approach. Much of this was experimental and exploratory. Namibia has been one of the more successful countries in finding appropriate approaches that are returning tangible results. However, as well as the successful programmes, there are less successful programmes that are not making tangible differences.

A review of Namibia's National Assessment report to the WSSD (GRN/UNDP/Capacity 21, 2002) highlights the many areas of progress. The report is rather short on failures, as Namibia was reticent to broadcast its less successful initiatives and the areas where no or few initiatives have been undertaken.

The important point, however, is that Namibia **took the initiative** created by Rio to plan and implement its own action policies, programmes and approaches. We used the momentum and the awareness created by Rio to move a national process forward. And this has put us out ahead of many other countries.

An assessment of large international environmental summits and conferences shows that they cannot, of themselves, cause the implementation of action plans. They can simply help create the right operational environment – an awareness and a conducive set of frame conditions – to assist countries, organisations and individuals to implement appropriate projects and programmes. It is far easier to promote local and national change and introduce new ideas within the framework of a global movement than it is if working in isolation. Therein lies the greatest value of environmental mega-conferences. After that, it is up to the individuals, organisations and countries to get things going.

THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (WSSD)

The objectives of the WSSD were (a) to share experiences between individuals, institutions, countries and regions on what works and what does not; and (b) to set some targets on real priority issues for the next decade or two.

An assessment of the WSSD suggests that the first objective was achieved. Many venues and parallel events offered full programmes of meetings, panel discussions, workshops, presentations, theatre, debates, demonstrations, etc. each addressing some aspect of sustainable development – new ideas, new innovative technologies, different projects and programmes, new information, approaches to monitoring, educating, awareness-raising, etc. In essence, lots of new thinking, new ideas and new approaches to share on how the sustainable development paradigm might successfully be implemented

The second objective, of setting some vital targets, worked less well (Table 1). As can be seen, the most important areas of sustainable development, both for industrialised and developing countries, achieved no tangible targets and firm agreements.

TABLE 1: Important areas in which no tangible agreements were achieved.

Issue	What's been agreed
Energy	Gave up demands for targets and timetable on increased use of renewable energy.
Biodiversity	To 'significantly reduce' the loss of species by 2015. No specifics could be agreed.
Poverty	A solidarity fund to wipe out poverty – no amount, no timetable.
Climate change	Urges ratification of Kyoto protocol – no targets, nothing new.
Trade	Reaffirms phasing out of subsidies, though not to end those important to the US & EU!
Good governance	Wording stressed the need to fight corruption, boost democracy and the rule of law, but not as a condition to aid.

Targets were set in two important areas. For **water and sanitation** it was agreed that the number of people without clean water and sanitation (currently two billion worldwide) would be halved by 2015. This is an ambitious target, because in 15 years, the world population will have almost doubled. In Namibia, the implications of achieving these targets are set out in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Implications of targets on providing clean water and sanitation in Namibia.

Urban, rural and total populations	1990	2000	2015	No. people per year
Urban population %	27	35	48	
Urban: clean water %	93	98	99.5	38,420
Urban: sanitation %	85	93	98	39,470
Rural population %	73	65	52	
Rural: clean water %	<50	70	86.5	20,330
Rural: sanitation %	10	21	64.5	39,480
Total population x10 ⁶	1.4	1.8	2.5	

In 2000 Namibia's urban population was about 35% of the total population of 1.8 million – thus the urban population was some 630,000 people. By 2015, the urban population will be about 48% of the total population estimated to be 2.5 million – thus some 1.2 million people, an estimated increase of **over 90% in 15 years!** By contrast, the rural population is estimated to grow by about 11% over 15 years. To halve the number of people without access to clean water and sanitation involves halving the current people in this category plus all the future people. Namibia will have to provide clean water to about 38,420 additional urban people and 20,330 additional rural people **per year**, and sanitation to 39,470 additional urban people and 39,480 additional rural people **per year**. Assuming that there are on average six people per household, Namibia would need to supply about 9,800 additional households with clean water each year (about 65% of them in urban areas), and about 13,160 additional households with sanitation each year (split equally between rural and urban areas). It would, of course, be far cheaper to reaching targets by focussing the development in the urban areas, though some balance would be desirable.

Are these targets achievable? What are the implications in terms of budget and other capacities? Do the Ministries, Municipalities and Local Authorities responsible for their implementation even know about them?

The second target area was that of **fisheries** in which it was agreed to restore depleted fish stocks by 2015. This is an extremely ambitious target for most of the world's fisheries, and one that is unlikely to be achieved

in most oceans of the world. In the case of Namibia, however, where our marine fish resources are in considerably better shape than most, there is a fairly optimistic scenario that fish stocks could recover (through careful quota setting, monitoring and good management) to levels that support maximum sustained yields by 2016. On the basis of this scenario, the fisheries sector could grow at 6-9% per year. The situation in Namibia is shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Synopsis of the situation regarding fisheries in Namibia

Fishery	Species	Current state	Comments
Pelagic	Pilchard	Severely overexploited	No fishing until stock recovers
	Anchovy	Low abundance	Adverse environmental conditions – low quotas
Midwater	Horse mackerel	Abundant	Favourable conditions
Demersal	Hake	Improving	Recovering from over fishing
	Monkfish	Uncertain – but good recruitment	Status will improve with TAC and management
	Kingklip	Stock growing	Not a directed catch
	Sole	Unknown	Mostly in shallows protected by 200 m trawler restriction
	Rock lobster	Slow consistent increase since 1992	TACs conservative to allow for recovery
Deep sea	Orange roughy	Decrease in availability – cause uncertain	Long lived, low production. VERY conservative quotas needed
	Red crab	Stable	Co-managed with Angola
Line fishing	Snoek	Seems to be on increase	
	Kob	Overexploited	Restrictions on angling needed
	Steenbras	Overexploited	Restrictions on angling needed
	Barbel	Healthy	
	Blacktail	Precarious	More restricted bag limit

As can be seen from the above, the main challenge is to restore pilchard, anchovy and rock lobster populations, and not to deplete those of orange roughy and a number of line-fish species.

Unfortunately, the situation is not as simple as restricting quotas, because environmental factors play a large role in determining the fish population dynamics. In the case of Namibia, with good environmental luck and continued good management, the fisheries target agreed at WSSD could be achieved

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

While these United Nations environmental mega-conferences tend to give disappointing results when rated against the expectations that are raised, mainly by poorly informed components of civil society and hyped up by the media, their real potential lies in how they are used **after** the event – locally, nationally and globally.

Setting targets for all nations of the world, and getting agreement on these targets, has always been difficult. Many nations place their own national interests (often fairly insignificant interests at that) firmly ahead of global interests. It is also pertinent to observe that many of the most prosperous nations are least prepared to make real concessions in relative terms to effectively address global issues, global equity and global development. It is clear that humanitarian and environmental issues are simply not really important to some industrialised nations.

Despite the fact that few targets were agreed at the WSSD, there is no good reason why countries should not go ahead and set themselves challenging targets for sustainable development. Also, there is no good reason why progressive and like-minded countries in both the industrial and developing worlds should not come together and work in partnership to achieve these targets. The worst and most indefensible thing that we could do would be to say that, because a few countries undermined a good idea and a global process, that we should thus do nothing. Indeed, much can be done. As we did after Rio, we developed our own approaches. After WSSD, with no targets provided, we should develop our own. Then we should make sure that we implement programmes to achieve these targets.

Namibia is not starting from scratch on this. Indeed, we have an excellent foundation. We have the Constitution and Namibia's Green Plan. More recently, we have our second National Development Plan (NDP₂) and an emerging long-term vision in the form of Namibia's Vision 2030 process and documents. We have priorities, we have targets, and we have strategies. The challenge for us is to reduce these to a few manageable interventions. Essentially, we need to focus down on the 10% or fewer strategic interventions that will make 90% or more of the impact and the on-the-ground difference. Then we need to implement. Implement for **real results**, not just to show how busy we are. To implement for results we need to understand what those results are. We need to set the **right targets** and measure our progress against those targets. How many planning meetings were held is the **wrong** target. How much additional money coming into a household is the **right** target if the income is sustainable. A tangible and measurable improvement to the resource base is another **right** target.

We need to reduce bureaucracy and other obstacles to sustainable development. We need to form flexible, responsive and dynamic partnerships – what the President calls *smart partnerships* - and we need to pull in all sectors of society – individuals, community groups, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, parastatals, academic institutes and government – wherever there are dynamic and interested people. But we must no longer allow middle-level bureaucrats and technocrats – both in government and NGOs - to slow us down, either because they are not sufficiently dynamic, interested, competent or secure in their ability or position. We need outcomes-based approaches, not restrictions and reservations.

We need to use the momentum created by the WSSD to identify our priority issues, to set our targets and to achieve those targets. It is our country and our future. No one else will do it for us.

STRATEGY

A strategy requires definition of **what** needs to be done, by **whom**, with what **resources** and **when**. The approach is set out in Table 4 below.

Step	What	Who	When	Resources
1.	Take the agreed targets set at WSSD and interpret these for Namibia, i.e. calculate what the targets would look like in Namibian terms, as done in Table 2. Are these targets sufficiently challenging, or could we do better? If the latter, then derive more challenging targets.			
2.	For issues where no targets were set at WSSD, the following steps should be taken. Draw on Namibia's Green Plan, NDP ₂ , Vision 2030 and other strategic documents to identify the top priority issues that, if well addressed will make the greatest impact on sustainable development in Namibia. Not more than 10-12 key issues. Set realistic but challenging targets for what should be achieved under each of the prioritised issues in 5, 10 and 15 year's time.			
3.	For the issues under both Steps 1 & 2 above, prepare implementation approaches for how these targets could be reached. These implementation approaches would essentially each be in the form of an extended concept paper per issues. If projects/programmes are already in place under these issues, critically assess and review these, in terms of scope, approach and, most important, effectiveness against derived targets. Don't be afraid to close down and re-plan. Just tweaking projects that do not adequately deliver against targets rarely salvages them – often because the wrong people are involved, or there are other fatal flaws.			
4.				

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