

THE CURRENT STATUS OF UNFCCC ARTICLE 6 WORK PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION IN NAMIBIA

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INTRODUCTION

Namibia is an arid country, situated on the Atlantic coast of southern Africa and borders South Africa, Botswana, Angola and Zambia. The total land area is approximately 824,268 sq. km and altitude range from sea level to 2,606 m. The annual average rainfall range is 25 mm in southwest to 700 mm in north east. The vegetation type is mainly woodlands, savannah and low growth forest with a landscape consisting mainly of desert and exposed bedrock. Water resources are limited to mainly ephemeral rivers and so wetlands and other water bodies tend to be temporary. Perennial rivers exist only at the northern and southern borders.

The estimated population of Namibia is approximately 1.9 million (2001 census data) with a population growth rate of 2.6% per annum (2001 census data). Females make up approximately 51.3% and life expectancy is about 43 years. HIV/Aids are major factors in such a low life expectancy. The population density is 2 persons per square kilometer and there are at least thirteen distinct ethnic groups within the country.

Namibia is classified as a lower middle income country with GDP growth of 4.1% (1994 – 2000) and GDP per capita \$N8,300. Main economic activities are mining, manufacturing and agriculture. There is a very highly skewed income distribution and unemployment averages 35% of the labor force. Approximately 70% of population practice subsistence farming on approximately 41% of the land (State owned communal areas) while less than 1% of population own 44% of the land as “commercial farms”.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND PREDICTED IMPACTS

The country has been classified, based on its aridity and other factors, as highly vulnerable to climate change and its effects. The predicted impacts of climate change on Namibia include the following:

- *Sea level rise* – a 30 to 100 cm rise is forecasted by 2100
- *Warming of Benguela current* - this could impact negatively on fish stocks

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- *Evaporation* – predicted to rise by 5% per degree of warming even with unchanged rainfall
- *CO2 Emissions* – predicted to triple by 2100
- *Temperature* - mean annual and monthly maximum and minimum temperatures will increase by 2 to 6 °C over the same period
- *Rainfall* – will be highly uncertain but range from increase of 30 mm to decrease of 200 mm below current annual average

VULNERABILITY CLIMATE CHANGE

Water is most vulnerable and it is predicted that there will be an absolute water scarcity by 2020 without climate change. The agriculture sector will suffer livestock losses and reduced crop yield due to drought. Food supply/security will be threatened while the fishing and marine sectors will be subject to fluctuations. Endemic species are also vulnerable and some local species could be lost. Health will be affected with predicted increase in malaria, respiratory infections as well as diarrhoea and other waterborne diseases. Increased drought will also increase the risk of shortage of clean drinking water for sections of the population.

POLICIES AND MEASURES

Namibia is a Party to the Rio and other environment conventions and there are several national policies and legislation are in place to protect the environment.

There is no specific climate change policy in place but a climate advisory committee was established in 1997 and the climate change country study completed in 1999.

The Namibia climate change committee was established in 2001 to oversee preparation of the Initial National Communication (INC) among other things.

UNFCCC ARTICLE 6 WORK PROGRAM ELEMENTS

The UNFCCC Article 6 Work Program, also called the New Delhi Work Program contains the following key elements which serve to guide its implementation.

- Education
- Training
- Public Awareness
- Public Access To Information
- International Cooperation

NAMIBIA ARTICLE 6 WORK PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Currently there is no formal implementation plan in place for Article 6 in the country. A number of elements are however being implemented as part of other national environmental activities. Use has been made of the INC resources for public awareness and education purposes.

EDUCATION

Environmental awareness and education programs have been conducted by government and non-Governmental Organizations. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development and the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources have been the leaders in this area. Additionally, the NGO sector has been led by the Desert research Foundation of Namibia, the Namibia Environmental Education Network and the Rossing Foundation among others. Although the programs are not specifically geared at climate change they do facilitate and include elements of climate change in their outputs.

Under the INC process, a double-sided climate change poster, featuring both text and graphics has been produced for use in high schools and other educational institutions. The INC itself is also being distributed to selected recipients, including senior government officials, libraries and educational institutions, students doing research among other clientele. A number of other environmental public education initiatives are underway that in some way support climate change. These include the production and distribution of State of the Environment Reports as well as geographic atlases of the geographical regions of Namibia.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism has established in 2001 an environmental information and data collection unit and this has led the way in the production of these public education materials. This Unit is complemented by the Resource Center and Library which is open to the public during normal working hours.

TRAINING

There is no national training program in place that focuses on climate change. However, formal and informal training of staff in government agencies, communities and non-governmental organizations have been conducted. The National Meteorology Service has recently developed a plan to recruit and/or train significant number of staff and personnel to engage in the systematic monitoring and analysis of climate data over the long-run. There have been a number of informal local level workshops conducted in climate change and other related areas over the past five years. The two existing tertiary level institutions have adhoc courses related to climate change within the various formal degree and diploma programs that they offer.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

The government through the national climate change program is in the process of implementing a public awareness program for climate change. This will involve the use of a climate change booklet as well as the previously mentioned poster. The booklet is currently in English only and, with the assistance of UNEP, it is hoped to translate it into at least one indigenous language for distribution among sections of the population who are not versed in the English language.

Other environment and natural resource management programs conduct public awareness activities that include or are related to climate change. These programs include the National Biodiversity Program and the Namibia Program to Combat Desertification, both operating out of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. Public awareness activities are also facilitated during the celebration of international environment days and issues.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The public education initiatives mentioned above as well as the environmental information and data collection unit in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism are used to support activities that make information more easily accessible to the public on climate change and the environment. The Resource Center of the ministry is currently developing center developing a climate change collection of books, research papers, popular articles, UNFCCC materials and publications, IPCC documentation, compact discs and other sources of relevant information. All information contained is available to the public at large for use within the center while take out use is limited to employees of the government and inter-library users.

Public access to climate change and other information is also provided through internet which is available for use free of cost to the public. A comprehensive search catalogue using the CDISIS data base is also available for public use.

FUTURE APPROACH TO ARTICLE 6 WORK PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

1. ESTABLISH CLIMATE CHANGE OFFICE

Namibia will seek to establish a national climate change office to do the following:

- Provide support for the climate change focal point and for capacity building with the various national and local level institutions involved in the climate change processes in Namibia;
- Coordinate data and information collection and processing;
- Data distribution to interested parties for decision making and other purposes;
- Undertake and coordinate various public awareness initiatives as well as activities in support of Article 6; and
- Coordination between the Rio conventions locally and internationally.

2. DEVELOP NATIONAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The development of a national strategy and action plan for climate change will seek to achieve among others the following outputs:

- Policy development and integration of climate change into national development mechanisms such as development plans and national budgets;
- Broad-based multi-sectoral approach on implementation;

- Include focus on Article 6 Work Program elements and activities; and
- Resource allocation to support implementation, including Article 6.

3. RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Namibia does not possess in adequate amounts the financial and/or technological resources required to fully support implementation of the Article 6 Work Program within the country. It will seek to overcome this constraint through the following means:

- Access resources from financial mechanism and other Convention related sources;
- Access resources through national budget and other in-country sources; and
- Participate in regional and international cooperation programs and activities.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be made with respect to implementation of UNFCCC Article 6 Work Program in Namibia:

- Namibia is an arid country with high a reliance on natural resources, agriculture and tourism for its economic and social development.
- Namibia is highly vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change and has limited technical and financial capacity for adaptation
- Article 6 implementation in process but to be more effective it requires coordination and support from national and international agencies.
- Future implementation will be done as part of national climate change strategy and action plan that will identify resource requirements and sources of support.