

BRIEF NOTE

**COUNTRY EXPERIENCE ON NATIONAL REPORTS
(UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA)**

Introduction

Tanzania has shown continued determination for effective environmental management. Efforts are being made through economic reforms to nudge the economic system towards a free market economy with increased role for the independent sector. The Government is aware that the shift towards political pluralism, and the relinquishing by Government of the major sectors of the economy to the private sector will generate important indicators on how natural resources are used and managed, on the impact on the environment of the enlarged involvement of social groups in the development process, and on the nature of policy directions and investment decisions relating to the environment and natural resources. The Government is aware that increased investments in various sectors of the economy will bear on these variables, and that the restructuring and adjustment of the economy, including macroeconomic changes, will impact on the use and allocation of natural resources, and on the environment. It is therefore the position of the Government that the environment must be subjected to greater accountability and control, with more effective instruments having clear objectives in the interest of sustainable development.

Status and Initiatives

A number of important measures have been initiated by the Government to promote effective environmental management. Thus, the National Environmental Policy was finalised and adopted by the Government in November 1997. A number of key sector policies have recently been reviewed to reflect an increasing accent towards environmental quality objectives. The following sector policies, key to environmental protection were reviewed and have recently been adopted by the Government: the mineral sector Policy; Wildlife Policy; Fisheries Policy; Forestry Policy; and the National Land Policy. The Minerals Act has been reviewed and approved. Several sectors are currently undertaking the formulation or review of their policies to take account, among other concerns, environmental quality. The current state of environmental concerns in the country has been documented. A national analysis contained in the National Environment Action Plan of 1994 identifies six priority environmental concerns, namely: land degradation and deforestation; lack of accessible water supply and deteriorating water quality; environmental pollution; deterioration of aquatic systems; and loss of wildlife habitats and biodiversity. Several programmes and projects have been undertaken in the context of these broad problem-categories; some are on-going under various Government departments, other public institutions, the private sector

and Non-Governmental Organisations. The overall legislative framework is under review, and key environmental management tools are being codified and drafted to facilitate environmental planning, coordination and implementation oversight.

The Role of the National Focal Point

The Vice President's Office is the institution responsible for environment, among other functions and has the overall policy and implementation oversight mandate on environmental matters. It is the policy guidance institution and exercises oversight mandate for implementation of policies under the jurisdiction of line Ministries, identifies and assesses key environmental issues, builds consensus for the adoption of harmonised priorities and co-ordinates mutually reinforcing actions by various institutions.

The Department of Environment is the working cell of the Vice President's Office; it provides policy and technical back-up and executes the oversight mandate of the Office as required. The Department is the environmental conscience, undertakes policy analysis, develops policy choices and co-ordinates broad-based environmental programmes, plans and projects which go beyond single sector approaches, through interagency coordination processes. These strategic functions of the Department form the basis for effective inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination for optimisation of goal achievement within and across sectors.

In this context, the Department is also the Focal point for sub-regional, regional and multilateral environmental treaties. These treaties include agreements negotiated in the context of the East African Community (EAC), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the Africa region, or other initiatives through the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN). They also include global treaties such as the Convention on Biological Diversity; the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; the UN Convention to Combat Desertification; the Basel Convention to Control transboundary movement of hazardous wastes; the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone layer; the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the Ozone layer; the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; and the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent.

As a focal point the Department is responsible for coordinating the development of national positions regarding the treaties, overseeing and facilitating their implementation and national reporting to the respective secretariats. It is also responsible for coordinating the preparation of National Reports for the

Commission on Sustainable development. The National Report for Rio + 5 submitted to the UN General Assembly special session in 1997 was prepared through the coordination of the Department.

Inter-ministerial Coordination

Because of the cross-cutting nature of the issues covered under Agenda 21, and the division of Government functions, review of its implementation and preparation of National Reporting requires inter-ministerial coordination. This is ensured through a National Preparatory Committee composed of representatives from Government Departments, public institutions, research and academic institutions, the private sector and Non-Governmental organisations.

Reporting Requirements

National Reports are obviously a key element for the Commission on Sustainable Development in monitoring the implementation of Agenda 21 and provides another opportunity for national assessment process. This process promotes a multisectoral approach and allows for meaningful involvement, reflecting Agenda 21 as a mission to be commonly subscribed to by all sectors and stakeholders.

Facilitation of in-country consultations for the purpose of coordinating preparations of national reports through an open process of review is critical for meaningful output. This requires functional capability, to activate consultations proactively and in a manner that is anticipatory of the quality of the report. Unfortunately, the multiplicity of frameworks for internationally-generated programmes is already straining the available capacity to respond to requirements.

Strengthening National Focal Points to achieve increased effectiveness and coordination at that level remains vital. This requires financial resources to meet facilitation expenses and basic communication facilities to give operational reality to the work of Focal Points. Where focal points are adequately facilitated, various reporting requirements may be achieved.