

Peer review of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development in Africa

(Session was in French)

Sponsor: International Organization for Francophonie (OIF)

This course was given by Mr. Boufeldja Benabdallah of the Energy and Environment Institute of OIF), Mr. Christian Brodhag, Interministerial Delegate for Sustainable Development in France, Mr. Alain Edouard Traore, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Environment and Livelihood in Burkina Faso, and Mrs. Delphine Ouedraogo of the same Ministry. The role of the International Organization for Francophonie in relation to the National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSD) has been to assist francophone developing countries in formulating, implementing and peer reviewing the NSSD. NSSD has been recognized as a key process in identifying development priorities, outlining economic opportunities, improved governance, greater legal consistency and contributing to improve the credibility of a country vis-à-vis the rest of the world.

In order for NSSD to be successful, it requires an institutional vision, the development of which in relation to NSSD was an objective for France. Given the existence of numerous strategies promoted by different international organizations, course stressed the need for convergence among the main ones including National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSSD), the Millennium Development Goal- related national development strategy, Poverty Reduction Strategy. The linkages between NSDD and the Social Responsibility of Organizations were also analyzed through the framework proposed by the International Standard Organization (ISO 26000).

The experience of the peer review of the NSSD in Burkina Faso was detailed. The NSSD was built by extending the existing strategy for poverty reduction in Burkina. Six conditions were identified for the success of the peer review process: political commitment, multi-actors coordination, pedagogy, quality of the background report, quality of the communication on this report and the commitments of the peer countries. During the preparatory phase, a steering committee was created; an inter-ministerial coordination office was then established while peer countries were chosen. The next phase was devoted to the preparation of the initial report, which was then examined at a review meeting. Discussions there were reflected in the final report. The peer review was finally organized under the authority of the Prime Minister from Burkina. The crucial challenges identified during this peer review process included potential political implication and inter-ministerial coordination.

Lessons learned from the peer review experience in Burkina Faso included the key role of multi-stakeholder participation, and the flexibility to adjust financial resources to the ambitions of this process. Also noted was the importance of the choice of indicators to measure the needs and gaps in the review of the NSSD.