

Water for the XXI Century: Vision for Action

**The Vision for a Sustainable
Environment**



Current Situation

- Poverty is the main cause of environmental degradation, low income and weak investment profile of the Southern Africa region. The degradation of the environment is also a cause of poverty. Hence cause and effect feed into each other creating a vicious cycle.
- There is scant recognition of the environment as a legitimate water consumer. The deflection of small and big rivers and the construction of dams upstream led to changes to the natural river flows. The downstream impacts are generally not taking into account.

Current Situation

- There are several factors that contribute to the environmental degradation, namely uneven population distribution, inappropriate agriculture and animal farming methods, deforestation, over-exploitation of resources, leading to increased poverty and weak health and sanitary conditions.
- The Southern Africa region has a highly diverse ecosystem, and important centers of endemism. There is a large number of endemic species in risk of extinction due to environmental degradation.


Current Situation

- The lakes, rivers and wetlands of Southern Africa have various endemic species of fish, constituting an important source of protein, specially for the local communities.
- These ecosystems are of vital importance as they serve as habitat and spawning local for various species of migratory birds, recruitment local of young specimens of fish and prawn. Wetlands are also vital as biological filter and by reducing the effects of natural disasters such as droughts and floods.

Current Situation

- Another cause for the degradation of the environment are bad practices in the management of waste, such as discharging dangerous substances which contaminate the superficial and underground water flows.
- The lack of monitoring and supervision of environmental pollution, the non enforcement of existing regulation and the low amount of the fines are frequent.

Existing Potential

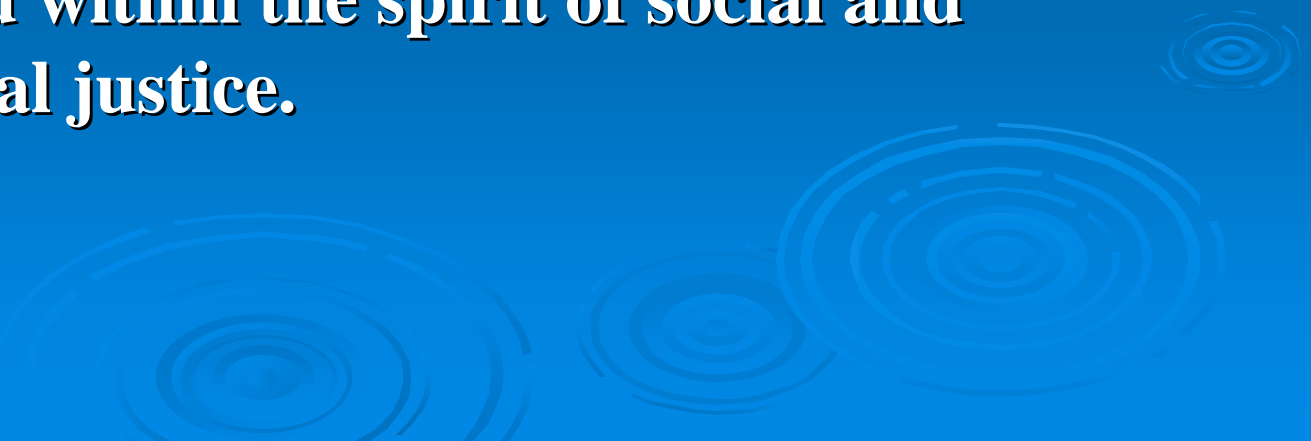
- The sustainable management of resources based on agro-sylviculture, local and traditional knowledge and appropriate awareness on environmental issues can contribute to solve the causes of poverty.
 - The combination of monitoring and effective implementation of national regulatory structures can result in an effective pollution control.
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Existing Potential

- The implementation of international and regional agreements such as the SADC Protocol on System Flows of Common Rivers and SADC's environment and development policy and strategy can help achieve the objective of an integrated regional structure for the sustainable use of the environment.

Vision

The people of Africa call for a desirable future, in which the environment of the region is preserved, despite all the competing uses of water and recognizing the existing problems within the natural ecosystems, so that the environment can be sustainably improved, used and managed within the spirit of social and environmental justice.

The background of the slide is a solid blue color. At the bottom, there are several faint, concentric circular ripples that resemble water droplets or raindrops, adding a visual texture to the design.

Implications


- Great efforts, finance and political will will be needed in order to mitigate and restore as much as possible the damaged ecosystems, taking into account the increasing competition for water resources from the various sectors.



Proposed Actions

- I. **Protect the Biodiversity and Optimize the Multiple Use of Water:**
 1. Establish protocols for the management of dams, ensuring at the same time the involvement of all stakeholders;
 2. Establish sustainable financing mechanisms for the management of the dams;

Proposed Actions

3. Establish mechanisms that allow for awareness and capacity building of stakeholders, mainly woman and underprivileged groups;
 4. Ensure sufficient water to maintain the integrity of the ecosystem, including marine and costal life (estuaries);
 5. Account for total environmental and social costs in all the processes for policy formulating and planning;
 6. Adopt and implement pollution control mechanisms, such as the principle of “Polluter Payer”.
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Proposed Actions

- II. **Train Local Communities in the Management of the Environment :**
 1. Speed up the capacity building process;
 2. Develop and use local knowledge;
 3. Develop and teach appropriate, adaptable and viable technologies to ensure the continuity of the process;
 4. Decentralize the administration and decision making to the lower levels, including local administration, helping the capacity building process.

Proposed Actions

III. Ensure that all Water Resources Development Scenarios Reflect the Constrains Resulting from Natural Systems in Maintaining the Integrity of the Resource Base :

1. Determine the environmental constrains to development through the institutionalization and implementation of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA);
2. Demand a compulsive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for individual development projects;
3. Locate development projects according to the EIA and implement the environmental management plans resulting from the EIA;

Proposed Actions

4. Improve the Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) in order to create awareness amongst the decision making bodies responsible for policies related to environmental issues;
5. Promulgate, promote and enforce present legislation in order to ensure, as far as possible, that the regulated systems are operated according to the natural flow variations; and
6. Harmonize regional drink and sea water quality standards.

Actions Proposed by the Working Group

1. The ecological flows are integral part of the protocols on dam management and any other activity related to water resources exploration;
2. According to I.6 (Adopt and implement pollution control mechanisms, such as the principle of “Polluter Payer”) fines have to be established according to the damages done to the environment and incentives for good behavior have to be created and efforts to protect and/or maintain the environment recognized;
3. Incorporate environmental education in school curricula from the primary level on;

4. Ensure informed public participation in all the planning and decision making processes concerning development projects;
5. Effective monitoring and supervision of quality and quantity of water resources;
6. Promote scientific research related to issues relevant to the field in coordination with high education and research institutions and local initiatives.



**Thank You Very Much for Your
Attention!**

